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**WANG CH'UNG**

**LUN-HÊNG**

Traduit et annoté par  
**Alfred FORKE**

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## Lun-hêng

Un document produit en version numérique par Pierre Palpant, collaborateur  
bénévole,  
Courriel : [ppalpant@uqac.ca](mailto:ppalpant@uqac.ca)

à partir de :

## WANG CH'UNG, LUN-HÊNG

[WANG CHONG, LUNHENG]

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## 1. Book I, Chap. I

### *Fêng-yü. Success and Luck*

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p2.030 By one's conduct one may always prove oneself a worthy man, but one can never be sure of success in one's official career. Worthiness is the outcome of natural gifts, but success depends upon time. Some one may have remarkable talents, and lead a pure life ; that is by no means a guarantee that he will become noble and exalted, and another of poor talents and base conduct is not therefore doomed to wretchedness and meanness. It happens that men of genius and purity are unsuccessful and sink back into the *vile vulgus*, whereas the narrow-minded and the vicious rise above the heads of all others.

Every age has its own way of promoting scholars, and the scholars likewise have their methods of advancement <sup>1</sup>, but promotion is good luck and rejection bad one. Those who are illustrious, and live in high spheres are not necessarily clever, they are merely lucky, and those whose position is mean and low are not necessarily stupid, but unlucky. The lucky may eventually behave most disgracefully, yet they will find favour at the court of *Chieh*, and the unlucky may be ever so pure and disinterested, they will be slighted in the palace of *Yao* <sup>2</sup>.

This good or bad luck may occur in different ways. Sometimes a worthy person assists a wicked man, or great talents are coupled with small ones, or there are great talents on both sides, but the ways of one party are pure, and those of the other filthy, or a person is devoid of virtue, but ingratiates himself by his ability, or has no skill, but pleases by his beauty.

*Wu Yuan* <sup>3</sup> and *Po P'i* <sup>1</sup> both served *Fu Ch'ai*. *Po P'i* rose to the highest

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<sup>1</sup> At different times different qualities are appreciated, and scholars use different methods for obtaining advancement.

<sup>2</sup> *Chieh*, the last emperor of the *Hsia* dynasty, as usual the representative of bad government, and *Yao* a synonym for an excellent ruler.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 1.140, Note 2.



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honours, and *Wu Yuan* was put to death. Their conduct <sup>p2.031</sup> was different, but their master the same. Sometimes the conduct is the same, but the master different, that is also good and bad luck. Such was the case of *Yi Yin* <sup>2</sup> and *Chi Tse* <sup>3</sup>. Both of them possessed the same talents, but *Yi Yin* became prime minister and *Chi Tse*, a slave. The former met with *Ch'êng T'ang*, the latter with *Chou* of *Shang*.

Provided that a good sovereign is served with goodness, that he wishes to govern accordingly, and that a minister helps him with virtue and talents, then their conduct agrees, and luck is the necessary consequence. But if a bad prince is served with goodness, then he declines to adopt this mode of government ; his minister may assist him in the most loyal manner, but their ways and principles are so conflicting, that bad luck is the inevitable result.

Sometimes a wise and sage minister may come across a prince willing to practice his theories, but fails at the end. That was the same of *Confucius* and *Mencius*. *Confucius* was short of provisions in *Ch'ên* and *Ts'ai*, <sup>4</sup> and *Mencius* distressed in *Ch'i* and *Liang* <sup>5</sup>.

When there is not the proper time, a sovereign does not employ able men, and those whose talents are small and whose wisdom is shallow cannot make use of men of genius. To drive a Bayardo or a Green Ear <sup>6</sup> one must be a *Wang Liang* <sup>7</sup>, and to use a *Yü*, a *Chi* <sup>8</sup> and a *Kao Yao* as ministers a *Yao* or a *Shun* is required. If a man whose hands are able to manage a hundred Li horse endeavours to master a courser making a thousand Li <sup>9</sup>, he is sure to have a disaster, breaking the yoke and rending the halter, and should a prince be able to appreciate the talents of ordinary officials, use the wisdom

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<sup>1</sup> First minister of *Fu Ch'ai*, king of *Wu*, 495-473 B. C. See *Chavannes, Mém. Hist.* Vol. IV, p. 523 [css: [p. 21](#) ?].

<sup>2</sup> Minister of *Ch'êng T'ang*, the founder of the *Shang* dynasty.

<sup>3</sup> On Viscount *Chi* see p. 1.354. He was thrown into prison for having remonstrated against the excesses of his master *Chou Hsin*, the last emperor of the *Shang* dynasty.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 1.155, Note 2.

<sup>5</sup> The two States where the philosopher passed a great deal of his life.

<sup>6</sup> Two of the eight famous steeds of King *Mu*.

<sup>7</sup> A famous charioteer.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. p. 1.130, Note 3.

<sup>9</sup> A horse running a thousand Li a day, an impossible task, the quickest couriers making but 5-600 Li with many relays.

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of a great minister, his heart will prove obdurate and his mind impervious to reason. Thus excellent advice is repudiated, and worthies and sages are rejected, not because they are hated, or because their advice is disliked, but their ideals are too high, and their advice is hard to follow.

p2.032 When a great talent falls in with a small one, the latter cannot grasp it, and bad luck must be the result. When a minister of great talents meets with a very talented prince, there will be either good or bad luck, *Shun* and *Hsü Yu* <sup>1</sup>, *T'ai Kung* and *Po Yi* are instances. *Shun* and *Hsü Yu* were both sages, living at the time of *T'ang* <sup>2</sup>. Both fell under the notice of *Yao*. *Shun* continued the imperial sway, whereas *Hsü Yu* absconded in a mountain forest.

*T'ai Kung* and *Po Yi* <sup>3</sup> were both worthies who rose together in the kingdom of *Chou*. Both saw *Wu Wang*. *T'ai Kung* became a feudal lord, and *Po Yi* was starved to death. The principles of worthies and sages are the same, their intentions similar, and their aims agree, but the actions of *Shun* and *T'ai Kung* were fitting, and the conduct of *Hsü Yu* and *Po Yi*, *mal à propos*. They were not born in the proper age, and did not appear at the proper time.

Even if the principles are the same, there are differences in spite of this agreement, and even if the intentions agree, there are still discrepancies, for principles may be refined or coarse, and intentions more or less pure.

*Hsü Yu* was a helpmate for an emperor, but he was born under a ruler, and *Po Yi* would have assisted a ruler, but rose under the reign of a king <sup>4</sup>. Both walked the path of virtue, and practised benevolence and justice. Making virtue their main principle, they did not care but for what was pure, and insisting upon benevolence and justice, they felt at ease in the highest spheres only. That was the cause of their bad luck.

*Yao* was filthy and *Shun* impure, *Wu Wang* bloodthirsty and *T'ai Kung* a cruel tyrant. They were all equally squalid and equally coarse, and their

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<sup>1</sup> A hermit, see p. 1.439, Note 1.

<sup>2</sup> Viz. *Yao*, prince of *T'ang*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 1.168, Note 2.

<sup>4</sup> Observe the gradation : [ ] [ ] [ ], rendered by emperor, ruler, king. *Wang Ch'ung* wishes to express by these terms three different degrees of sagehood.

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doings in harmony <sup>1</sup>. That was the cause of (*T'ai Kung's*) luck.

Thus when *Shun* was king of the world, *Kao Yao* assisted him in his administration, whereas *Pei Jên Wu Tsê* concealed himself p2.033 in the remotest hiding place and was seen no more <sup>2</sup>. When *Yu* was king, *Po Yi* acted as his helpmate, whereas *Po Ch'êng Tse Kao* declined to take office and tilled the ground <sup>3</sup>. The talents of *Kao Yao* did not surpass those of *Pei Jên Wu Tsê*, nor did *Po Yi* outshine *Po Ch'êng Tse Kao*, but the two former were promoted, while the two latter took their refuge into obscurity. The actions of those promoted were *à propos*, the conduct of those who retired were the reverse. The circumstances under which they retired were different. Notwithstanding their humble condition, they did not wish to advance. The princes did not necessarily reject their proposals or dislike their ideas, but there was no mutual sympathy.

*Shang Yang* <sup>4</sup> spoke three times to Duke *Hsiao* of *Ch'in*. The first two speeches were not listened to, but the last was accepted. The first were fit for emperors and kings only, the last an overture appropriate for an usurper. When he addressed a leading prince with words fit for an emperor or a king, they were spurned in spite of their elegance, but when they were made to suit an usurper, they were accepted in spite of their coarseness. Refinement was lost upon Duke *Hsiao*, coarseness was what he liked. It matters not whether a speech be good, but whether he who is spoken to think it so, nor must faculties be rare, provided only that he in whose service they are employed appreciates them.

The words of the groom <sup>5</sup> were platitudes, but the country-people liked

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<sup>1</sup> This statement in the mouth of a Chinese is little short of blasphemy, for the four men thus described are universally held to be China's greatest sages, even superior to *Confucius*. But we must refer it to what has been said above on the different degrees of virtue, which may be more or less pure and more or less refined. The highest degree is ascribed to *Hsü Yu* and *Po Yi* only, compared to whom even *Yao* and *Shun* appear coarse and vulgar.

<sup>2</sup> *Chuang Tse* makes *Pei Jên Wu Tsê* a friend of *Shun* who wished to resign the empire to him, but the former declined and drowned himself. (Cf. *Giles, Chuang Tse* p. 382.)

<sup>3</sup> According to *Chuang Tse*, *Po Ch'êng Tse Kao* had been a vassal of *Yao* and *Shun*, but disliked *Yü's* system of government. (*Giles eod.* p. 142.)

<sup>4</sup> Ou *Shang Yang* see p. 1.171, Note 2.

<sup>5</sup> The groom of *Confucius* who spoke to the country people who had taken away his master's horse. Cf. p. 1.69 and *Huai Nan Tse* XVIII, 19r.

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them, and *Tse Kung's* address was full of meaning, but the peasants would not listen to them.

A piper played a beautiful melody. Since the king of *Yüeh* did not like it, he fell into a vulgar tune at which the king was enraptured. Consequently, he who performs something excellent for a prince who does not care for good things, does not find favour in spite of his excellence, whereas another who does something bad for a sovereign who wants bad things, does not incur his displeasure notwithstanding his badness.

In this manner minor abilities may please the sovereign. Pleasing means good luck, not pleasing, bad luck. Some do not <sup>p2.034</sup> possess such wanton talents, but ingratiate themselves by their astuteness and cunning, and thus become lucky, e. g. the official who stole the hair-pin, and the companion who caused the cocks to crow. The former became intimate with *Tse Fan* <sup>1</sup>, and the latter won the good graces of *Mêng Ch'ang* <sup>2</sup>. *Tse Fan* liked the thieving official, and *Mêng Ch'ang* the wily companion.

If anybody is useful to a prince who can rely upon him, he is sure to be successful. Sometimes a man may not be of direct use, but the ruler likes him, as was the case with *Chi Ju* and *Têng T'ung* <sup>3</sup>. *Chi Ju* was a favourite of the emperor *Hsiao Hui Ti*, and *Têng T'ung*, of *Hsiao Wên Ti*. They were not endowed with the smallest talents, or the slightest abilities, but they had a handsome body, graceful bones, a smooth skin, and a wonderful complexion. People are fond of beautiful looks, consequently their luck was ensured.

It may happen that even people with ugly faces and bad looks are

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<sup>1</sup> A general of *Ch'u* who died in B.C. 575. The story here alluded is told in [Huai Nan Tse XII, 15r](#).

There was a clever thief much esteemed by *Tse Fan*, who had a *faible* for all kinds of skill. When the army of *Ch'u* under *Tse Fan's* command was pressed hard by the outnumbering forces of *Ch'i*, the thief in three consecutive nights entered the camp of the enemies and stole a cap, a pillow, and a *hair-pin*. The soldiers of *Ch'i* became nervous, and said that unless they retreated the thief would steal their heads next night. Then the army of *Ch'i* went home. *Huai Nan Tse* calls the general *Tse Fa*.

<sup>2</sup> *T'ien Wên* of *Ch'i*, Prince of *Mêng Chang*. The story of the cock-crowing will be found on p. 2.132.

<sup>3</sup> On the final downfall of this minion see p. 1.309.

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represented to a ruler as very attractive, as were *Mu Mu* <sup>1</sup> and *Wu Yen* <sup>2</sup>. *Mu Mu* was sent to the emperor *Huang Ti*, and *Wu Yen* chosen by the king of *Ch'i*. Therefore virtue and vice may be predetermined, but it is difficult to foresee success, because the likes and dislikes of a prince are uncertain, and the promotion of an official cannot be known beforehand.

p2.035 Happening to fall in with an employer, is the proper thing, and to harmonise with him, means advancement. Those who are promoted need not always be clever, or those who are not, un-intelligent. He who, when meeting with a prince, finds favour, advances, he who does not, loses his opportunity.

There is a wide-spread opinion that wise men can be successful and that, if they are not, it is their own fault, because they do not adapt themselves to their surroundings. They should watch the sovereign to learn his views, regulate their mind and cultivate their talents, pay attention to their words, and be careful about their expressions, await an opportunity to offer their services, and see how they can be useful to the ruler. Would they not be lucky then ? But now it is different. They cultivate useless talents and give impracticable advice. In summer they offer a stove, and in winter a fan. They do things which are not wanted, and say words which no one likes to hear. Then, of course, their bad luck and their misfortune is certain, for how could they thus become happy ?

Talents must be useful and advice profitable, every body knows that, but very often the useless obtain happiness, or those who have benefited their master, suffer punishment. And in summer time a stove may be used to dry moisture, or a fan in winter to fan the fire. Other people can be imitated, but it is impossible to meet a ruler's wishes. Words may be changed, but talents cannot be transmuted. When the reigning sovereign is fond of learning, and somebody is a literary man, he suits him. When, on the other hand, the prince is addicted to militarism, that same person would not suit him.

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<sup>1</sup> A wife of *Huang Ti*. Cf. p. 1.473, Note 3.

<sup>2</sup> Properly speaking, *Wu Yen* is not the name of the lady in question who was a native of a place *Wu-yen* in *Shantung*. Her name is *Chung-Li Ch'un*. At the age of forty years, she was still unmarried, but so impressed King *Hsüan* of *Ch'i*, 342-323 B. C., by her intelligence, that he made her his wife in spite of her ugliness. See *Giles, Biogr. Dict.* No. 519. The *Lieh-nü-ch'uan* (quoted in the *Pei-wên-yün-fu*) relates that she herself offered her services as a palace servant to the king, who afterwards married her.

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*Wên Wang* did not like war, and *Wu Wang* was not a friend of peace. A philosophical prince does not care for action, and an active one does not like arguments. Literature and words can quickly be learned by study, but actions and talents cannot be accomplished all at once. He who has not thoroughly mastered a science, cannot give the proper names, and if his expressions are mostly not correct, he does not find favour with the sovereign. If a study be made in a hasty manner, and names be given in a hurried way, one says that the faculties of the person in question are insufficient and not worth notice. How then should such a man be able to understand the prince and offer his remarks, or step forward and show his abilities ?

Of old during the *Chou* time, there was a great number of unsuccessful scholars. They were old, had white hair, and stood crying on the road-side. Others inquired what was the cause of their tsars. They rejoined : p2.036

— We scholars have had no chance. We are so sad, because we are old and have lost the right time. Hence our tears.

— How is it possible, said their interlocutors, that you scholars never had any chance ?

— When we were young, replied the scholars, we studied literature, and after we had completed our studies, we wished to take office, but the sovereign liked to use old men. This prince died, and his successor only wanted warriors. Then we turned to military science, but, when we had mastered all its branches, the military prince likewise died, and the young prince ascended the throne. He wished to employ young men only. Meanwhile we had become old. Thus we never had the slightest chance <sup>1</sup>.

For officials there exists a propitious time which cannot be sought, for it is impossible to imitate other people, or to know a prince's character, and still less can this be done by a man with the highest principles and loftiest aims who is not influenced by profit, or by persons with a strong nature and firm character who do not care for a prince. Moreover, luck cannot be

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<sup>1</sup> The *T'ai-p'ing yü-lan* chap. 488, p. 4r., quotes this passage.

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predetermined, and advice cannot be given in advance. By accident, one may meet with success and fall in with a sovereign's view, therefore they speak of luck. To observe a prince's ways, and to choose one's words with a view to acquiring honour, may be called calculation, but not luck.

In spring the seed sown grows, in autumn it is cut and harvested. Seeking things one obtains them, and doing things one completes them, but we cannot call that luck. That which comes of itself without any seeking, or is completed of itself without any doing, is called luck. It is like picking up things lost on the road, or taking something thrown away in the country, like the fertility of heaven and the productiveness of earth, or the assistance of ghosts and the succour of the spirits. That the spirit of a *Ch'in Hsi* secretly benefits, and the mind of a *Pao Shu* silently promotes a man, are cases of luck <sup>1</sup>. But ordinary people cannot argue on good and bad luck. They extol the lucky and decry the unlucky. They look to success and ask what has been accomplished, but cannot appreciate conduct or value powers and talents.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ch'in Hsi* recommended a friend to Duke *Mu* of *Ch'in* and committed suicide when his advice was not accepted. His death impressed the duke so much, that he took the protégé of *Ch'in Hsi* into his service. This story is told in p. 1.502. Of *Pao Shu* we know that he recommended his friend *Kuan Chung* to Duke *Huan* of *Ch'i*.

## 2. Book I, Chap. II

### *Lei-ho. Annoyances and Vexations*

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p2.037 Officials in their career may be hampered and checked, their characters may be slandered and pulled to pieces, their offences be mercilessly magnified, and their names be sullied and bespattered. That does not prove that their talents are inferior, or their conduct is iniquitous, or that their minds are unenlightened, and their ideas muddled. They have met with misfortune from abroad, and are hardly dealt with.

This is not only true of men, but of all other things as well. All living and moving things have to suffer annoyances and vexations. These annoyances come from without, not from within. Since their source is not to be sought there, those people who inconsiderately lay them to the charge of the sufferers, show a narrow mind and a regrettable want of judgment.

That plants grow in spring, we can warrant, but, whether they will bear fruit in autumn, nobody can predict. Their roots may suddenly be trampled upon by oxen and horses, and their stalks cut down with knives and sickles. Then their growth is impeded, and they do not ripen in autumn. Plants not ripening have suffered some injury and thus do not develop.

When rice has been touched by rats, it is spoiled and not fit for eating. The taste of this spoiled rice is the same as that of unsullied rice, but owing to the trespass of the rats, it is thrown away and not used. The annoyances and vexations of a noble character are similar in nature to those of the plants which did not develop, or the rice which is not used. Since they all come from without, they are to be looked upon as annoyances and vexations.

By purifying oneself and regulating one's conduct it is impossible to attract happiness, and by trembling fear and precautions one cannot eschew misfortune. The arrival of happiness and misfortune is good or bad chance. Therefore they say, 'That which is obtained not by one's own force is called happiness, and that which happens not through my own doing is called



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misfortune <sup>1</sup>. p2.038 But, when it is not my doing, whence does it come ? From my native place and from the administration.

In one's native place there are *three annoyances* and in the administration *three vexations* <sup>2</sup>. The annoyances originate in one's native place, and the vexations in the administration. In ancient and modern times remarkable men and excellent characters have experienced this.

Which are the so-called three annoyances and which the three vexations ?

People are not always careful enough in selecting their friends. As long as they agree, there is the greatest kindness, but when they disagree, an estrangement takes place, and this estrangement engenders envy and hatred. Then they slander the conduct of their former friend. That is the *first annoyance* <sup>3</sup>.

The accomplishments of men are of a higher or a lower order and cannot be quite equal. When several persons begin their career at the same time, the well gifted become illustrious <sup>4</sup>. The less able out of shame and anger then slander their betters. That is the *second annoyance* <sup>5</sup>.

Men in their intercourse cannot always be pleased. Cheerfulness leads to friendliness, anger to alienation, and alienation to animosity. In this frame of mind people slander others. That is the *third annoyance* <sup>6</sup>.

Now for the *first vexation*. Offices are few, and candidates many. The scholars compete for admission, and when admitted, fight for the posts. Calling upon the governor, they defame one another, sending in coloured reports. The governors are not perspicacious enough to detect the deceit and listen to their insinuations <sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Fatalism pure and simple.

<sup>2</sup> The two Chinese terms are synonymous and might be interchanged like their English equivalents.

<sup>3</sup> Quarrel of friends.

<sup>4</sup> Here again our author forgets his own theory that honour and happiness are not won by excellent qualities, but are the free gift of fate.

<sup>5</sup> Envy of less successful rivals.

<sup>6</sup> Strife through roughness of character.

<sup>7</sup> Unfair competition among officials. There is no great difference with the second annoyance which, however, refers more to private life.

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The *second vexation* is this : Governors and clerks have different propensities, and their doings are pure or foul. The generous clerks are enthusiasts for all that is noble and beautiful, and never p2.039 use other but pure words. The corrupt clerks resent this, and by degrees try to find fault with their rivals, slandering them for the smallest wrong, for which punishment is inflicted upon the latter <sup>1</sup>.

Or the governors are biased in favour of some of their subordinates and believe in what they say. These subordinates will, against all propriety, recommend their friends for extraordinary promotion. Those who oppose them, lose their sympathy and are slandered by them more than can be imagined. Honest officials daring to offer resistance and to propound different views, attract their hatred and are decried to the governors. That is the third vexation <sup>2</sup>.

Those who have not yet taken office have to suffer the three annoyances, and those who are in office, the three vexations. Even a *Confucius* and a *Mê Ti* could not avoid them, and men like *Yen Hui* and *Tsêng T'san* would not be free of them. How many hundred or thousand meritorious deeds soever they might accomplish, multitudes of envious persons would rise around them. Thorns and prickles would prick them and stick to their bodies and faces, and wasps and scorpions would sting the highly-principled <sup>3</sup>.

These six troubles are not the only ones, but the most conspicuous <sup>4</sup>, the world however does not perceive them. It does not see that owing to their doings the scholars have to suffer the three annoyances, and the officials, the three vexations. Those who remain uninjured they call undefiled, and those who have been calumniated, degraded. Those functionaries who advance in their career they regard as good, and those who are dismissed from office, as bad.

A man who continues unharmed and advances, is fortunate and praised,

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<sup>1</sup> Natural antipathy of the vicious against honest men.

<sup>2</sup> Favouritism.

<sup>3</sup> All metaphors denoting the insidious attacks of backbiters.

<sup>4</sup> Calumnation must be a very frequent trait of the Chinese character, since in all the six cases those dissatisfied resort to it.

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and another who is slandered and dismissed, is unlucky and blamed. But going thoroughly into the matter, we must admit that there are the three annoyances and the three vexations. Since those speaking about these matters ignore that people may be affected by these grievances, although their deeds be pure and virtuous, they mix mud with clay, and bespatter silk with black. But who knows that ? Purity is polluted, and whiteness covered with dirt. Flies like to sully white silk. He who is standing on a height is in danger, and those living in prosperity suffer losses. Those fallen down usually were in precipitous places.

p2.040 *Ch'ü P'ing's* purity was unblemished, but all the dogs of the city barked at him. Dogs bark at what appears strange to them. To condemn the noble-minded and suspect the genius is a sign of a poor head <sup>1</sup>.

A remarkable man endowed with all the virtues of a genius causes all the dogs to bark. Such being the case, is it necessary still to persuade the low class people and to harmonise with the worthless ? Those base and worthless people cannot be convinced.

Should then average people be taken as a model to preserve one's reputation and avoid slander ? Those who agree with ordinary people and preserve their reputation, are those goody persons, who in all their doings are irreproachable, so that they are not open to reprimands, and that to criticise them is useless <sup>2</sup>. Thus even *Confucius* was found guilty, and *Mencius* culpable.

Those who in ancient times excelled by virtue could not safeguard themselves. Therefore those who following their nature quietly awaited the annoyances and vexations to come, were the really virtuous and honest. Through the most injurious slanders and calumnies the real character of those men shone forth.

How should the traces of pure and noble deeds not be covered with the dust of envious slander ? The guitar players would fain have broken the

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<sup>1</sup> A verse quoted in somewhat altered form from the *Shi-chi* chap. 84, p. 6r. where it is spoken by *Ch'ü Yuan* before his death.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 2.147.

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fingers of *Po Ya* <sup>1</sup>, and the charioteers have crushed the hand of *Wang Liang* <sup>2</sup>. Why? Because they were all craving for the fame of exceptional skill, and hated those who surpassed them.

Thus the girl of *Wei* was a great beauty, but *Chêng Hsiu* <sup>3</sup> cut her nose off <sup>4</sup>, and *Chao Wu* <sup>5</sup> was loyal and honest, but <sup>p2.041</sup> *Wu Chi* <sup>6</sup> expelled him. Hunchbacks are full of envy, and big-bellied persons often deceitful.

For this very reason one does not sprinkle the dust in wet halls, and one does not shelter low cottages against the wind <sup>7</sup>. Plants too much shaken by the wind do not grow, and banks against which the water dashes do not remain high. *Yu-li*, *Ch'ên* and *T'sai* <sup>8</sup> may serve as an example, and the drowning in the *Yangtse* or the jumping into the *Yellow River* <sup>9</sup>. If those who vie in virtue to win fame in the eyes of the common people, or strive to preserve their reputation before the governors, do not meet with the disgrace of *Têng Hsi* <sup>10</sup>, or incur the penalty of *Tse Hsü* <sup>11</sup>, it is chance.

People do not assault the dead body of *Mêng Pên*, for its life is gone, nor do they throw water on a hundred bushels of burnt out embers, for the fire is extinct. If some one outshines all others by his intelligence, and sheds his

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<sup>1</sup> A famous lute-player of old who played so well, that a friend of his actually could see the scenes which he put into music, such as hills and water.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 2.031, Note 6.

<sup>3</sup> A queen of *Ch'u*, 4th cent. B. C.

<sup>4</sup> The king of *Wei* had sent the king of *Ch'u* a beautiful girl whom the latter liked very much. His consort *Chêng Hsiu*, in order to destroy her rival, told her that the king loved her, but disliked her nose, and that she had better cover it with a kerchief. The unhappy girl followed this advice. When the king expressed his astonishment the queen informed him that the girl could not endure the smell of the king's breath. This enraged the king so much, that he ordered the girl to have her nose cut off. *Han Fei Tse* (*T'ai-p'ing yü-lan* chap. 367, p.3v.).

<sup>5</sup> An officer of *T'sai*.

<sup>6</sup> A prince of *Wei*, died B. C. 244.

<sup>7</sup> Common people are not exposed to the dust of envious slander or to hurricanes caused by their rivals.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. p. 2.031, Note 3.

<sup>9</sup> Since the drowning in the *Yangtse* seems to refer to *Wu Tse Hsü*, whose body was thrown into the *Chien-t'ang* river or the *Yangtse*, the jumping into the *Yellow River* must be said of the violent death of *Têng Hsi*, of whom we merely know that he was put to death, but not how.

<sup>10</sup> A sophist of the 6th cent. B. C., on whom see my article 'The Chinese Sophists' p. 11 (*Journal of China Branch, R. Asiat. Society* Vol. XXXIV, 1901-02).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. p. 2.001, Note 1.

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lustre over a whole age, or if he surpasses all by his energy, and stands towering over all the crowd, he is always slandered and envied by ordinary people. In case a man attempts to neutralise the common attacks with his honest heart, the profit which he seeks turns into loss. It was for this reason that *Confucius* felt sad, and *Mencius* was full of sorrow.

Those possessed of great virtue attract calumnies and are carped at by other scholars. To avert these censures with appeasing words and to try to get rid of these dangerous grievances, is a hard task indeed.

The defamation of *Tsang T'sang* has not yet died out, and the opposition of *Kung-Po Liao* <sup>1</sup> is not yet broken. Ant-hills are p2.042 made into mountains, and rivulets into rivers and streams. The smallest good is distasteful to wicked people <sup>2</sup>.

If we speak of polluting, purity may be sullied, and whiteness covered with dirt, and if we speak of slander, the best and noblest man is envied, and the greatest talent sneered at. As regards punishment, the most loyal words cause misfortune, and the noblest deeds bring about shame and disgrace, and as for imperfections, even a gem may have a flaw, and a pearl, some small defect.

The elder brother of the lord of *Ch'ên-liu* <sup>3</sup> was renowned over all *Yen-chou* <sup>4</sup>. He had left the most brilliant traces, and not the slightest fault could be detected. When the time of entering the administration had come, the governor blackened his sterling character, so that he was disgraced and not employed.

Those who are not yet in office have to suffer the three annoyances, and those who have already been employed, are visited with the three vexations. Even *Confucius* and *Mê Ti* could not escape them, and *Yen Hui* and *Tsêng T'san* could not remain unscathed. For all love those only who enjoy the general applause, but slight the truly wise.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 2.007, Note 4.

<sup>2</sup> The smallest defects are thus magnified.

<sup>3</sup> A place in *Hunan*. Cf. p. 1.179, Note 6.

<sup>4</sup> One of the nine circuits of *Yü* comprising parts of *Chili* and *Shantung*.

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From dukes and marquises down, gems and pebbles are intermixed <sup>1</sup>, and as regards the actions of the wise and the scholars, good and bad ones are mingled. As the lapidary breaks the stones to take out the gem, so those who select the scholars reject the bad and keep the good. Therefore those who merely annoy and vex others sin against society. Which way should be taken to counteract them ?

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<sup>1</sup> Figuratively said of men.

### 3. Book I, Chap. III

#### *Ming-lu. On Destiny and Fortune*

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p1.144 Man's success as well as his troubles depend upon destiny. It determines his life and his death, and the length of his span, and it likewise provides for his rank and his wealth. From the princes and dukes downwards to the commoners, and from the sages and worthies down to the illiterate people, all those who have a head and eyes, and blood in their veins, each and every one possess their own destiny. If any one is to become poor and miserable, he will be involved in misfortunes and disasters, even though he passes through wealth and honour, whereas he for whom wealth and honour are in store, meets with happiness and bliss even in the midst of penury and misery. Therefore, whoever is predestinated for great things, rises by himself from his humble position, while another whose fate is misery, falls down from his high sphere.

Thus it seems, as if the gods lent their help to the wealthy and the great folks, and as if the mishap of the poor and low class people were the work of the demons. When future grandees study with others, they alone reach the goal <sup>1</sup>, and after having taken office, they alone are promoted from among their colleagues. What the future rich men strive for with other competitors, they alone obtain, and what they do conjointly, they alone complete. With poor and low people it is just the reverse. They fail in their studies, fail to be promoted, and fail to complete what they have begun. They make themselves guilty, suffer punishment, fall sick, die, and perish. The loss of wealth and honour means poverty and meanness.

Consequently, there is no guarantee whatever that men of high endowments and excellent conduct will in any case attain to wealth and honour, and we must not imagine that others whose knowledge is very limited, and whose virtue is but small, are therefore doomed to poverty and

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<sup>1</sup> Passing the examinations, which is mere luck.

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misery. Sometimes, men of great <sup>p1.145</sup> talents and excellent conduct have a bad fate, which cripples them, and keeps them down, and people with scanty knowledge and small virtue may have such a propitious fate, that they soar up and take a brilliant flight.

Wisdom and dullness, pure and mean conduct under given circumstances are character and natural gifts ; high and low rank in the official career, and wealth and poverty in business depend on destiny and time. Destiny is not amenable to coercion, or time to compulsion. The knowing, therefore, leave every thing to Heaven, placid, serene, and equanimous even in case their poverty or misery should be changed into wealth and honour.

When in digging a creek or cutting firewood a special energy be shown, or great strength be displayed, then by dint of digging the creek will be deepened, and by dint of hewing much wood will be cut down. Even people without a fate would thus obtain their ends, how then would poverty and meanness, disasters and dangers come in ? Perhaps heavy showers might interfere with the completion of the creek, or the wood-cutter might fall in with a tiger, before he had gathered much wood. The low rank of an official and the unprofitableness of a business are like the showers interrupting the digging of a creek, and like the tiger met by the wood-cutter.

Perhaps able men find no occasion to use their talents, and the wise cannot practise their wisdom, or they use their talents, but have no success, and practise their principles, but do not accomplish what they had in view. Though being as gifted and as wise as *Confucius*, it may happen that they never come to the front. The world seeing their high moral standard will ask,

— How is it that these sort of worthies and wise men do not become exalted ?,

and admiring their deep thoughts, they will say,

— Why do men of such a wonderful intellect not become rich ?

Rank and wealth depend upon fate, happiness and fortune are not connected with wisdom and intelligence. Therefore it is said that wealth cannot be acquired by calculations, nor rank be secured by talents. Profound philosophy does not procure riches, and the highest accomplishments do not



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win an official post. Those who carry silver in their bosoms and wear pendants of red jewels, are not necessarily a *Chi* <sup>1</sup> or a *Hsieh* <sup>2</sup> in talent, and those who amass gold or heap up precious stones, must not be a *Chu* of p1.146 *T'ao* <sup>3</sup> in wisdom. Not seldom simpletons are in possession of a thousand *chin*, and blockheads are made governors of a city. Officers may show the same ability in their administration, their different rank is the result of their fate, and in doing business people may display the same knowledge, their different wealth is the outcome of their fortune. It is fortune which determines wealth and poverty, through knowledge one does neither thrive nor perish, and it is destiny that fixes one's high or low position, through talents one does not advance or fail in one's career.

King *Ch'êng's* <sup>4</sup> ability did not equal that of the Duke of *Chou*, and Duke *Huan's* <sup>5</sup> intelligence fell short of that of *Kuan Chung*. Nevertheless *Ch'êng* and *Huan* were endowed with the most glorious fate, whereas the Duke of *Chou* and *Kuan Chung* received inferior appointments. In ancient times, princes very seldom did not learn from their ministers. Possessing an extensive knowledge the latter would, as a rule, act as their fathers and instructors. In spite of this insufficiency, the princes would take the place of sovereigns, and their ministers with all their accomplishments had to serve as their menials. That shows that rank depends upon destiny, and not on intelligence, and that wealth is good fortune, and has nothing to do with mental faculties.

Most people discussing these questions fancy that men of genius ought to be made generals and ministers, and that less gifted persons should become peasants and traders. Observing that scholars of great abilities are not called to office, they are surprised, and reproach them with incompetency for practical business, and likewise they wonder at other scholars, who have a

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<sup>1</sup> The god of cereals (cf. p. 130).

<sup>2</sup> The wise minister of *Shun* (cf. chap. 25).

<sup>3</sup> This was the name assumed by the famous minister of the Yüeh State *Fan Li*, when, having retired from public life, he lived incognito in *Ch'i*. Under this name he amassed a large fortune so, that *T'ao Chu Kung* has become a synonym for a 'millionaire'. (Cf. *Giles, Bibl. Dict.* No. 540.)

<sup>4</sup> King *Ch'êng* of the *Chou* dynasty (cf. chap. 20.).

<sup>5</sup> *Huan*, duke of *Ch'i* (cf. p. 176).

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turn of mind for the practical (but do not get on), and imagine that they must be too weak in theory. As a matter of fact, they are not aware that, though a person may be most admirable either in theory or in practice, it is merely destiny that governs his official status and his emoluments. When clever men undertake something at a lucky and propitious time, and happiness survenes, then people will call them clever, whereas, when they witness a decline, and the arrival of misfortune, they regard them as stupid. They do not know a lucky and inauspicious fate, or a thriving and declining fortune.

p1.147 *Po Kuei* <sup>1</sup> and *Tse Kung* <sup>2</sup> made a fortune by the transport of wares, and had heaps of gold and jewels. People spoke of their excellent methods and their great learning. *Chu Fu Yen* <sup>3</sup> was despised and slighted in *Ch'i*, which would have none of him. He went to the imperial palace, and presented a memorial, whereupon he was employed by the *Han*, and rose in office as high as a minister of State. *Hsü Yüeh* of *Chao* also sent up a memorial, when he as together with *Yen Chang*. His Majesty was pleased with his words, and appointed him secretary of a board. People praise the talents of *Chu Fu Yen* and the skill of *Hsü Yüeh*, but they are mistaken.

When literati are able to comment upon one classic, in which they have become well versed in the capital, as lucidly as *Kuang Chih Kuei* and as thoroughly as *Chao Tse Tu*, who passed the first and the second examinations at the first trial, and immediately were promoted to the rank of a secretary of a ministry and of an academician, people believe that they have obtained this by their profound knowledge of the classics and their genius, which is wrong.

In the case of able speakers <sup>4</sup> such as *Fan Chü* <sup>5</sup>, who in *Ch'in* was ennobled as a Marquis of *Ying*, and of *T'sai Tse* <sup>6</sup> who after he had spoken to

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<sup>1</sup> A keen business man, who flourished under the Marquis *Wên* of *Wei* in the 5th cent. B. C.

<sup>2</sup> A disciple of *Confucius*, who became very rich.

<sup>3</sup> *Chu Fu Yen* lived in the 2nd cent. B. C. He was an enemy of *Tung Chung Shu* (cf. p. 1.084).

<sup>4</sup> Who could explain a book, and solve knotty questions in the presence of the sovereign.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. p. 1.115.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. chap. 11.

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*Fan Chü*, was appointed alien minister <sup>1</sup>, they pretend that these happy results were brought about by the excellence of *Fan Chü* and *T'sai Tse*, but that is erroneous. All the above-mentioned persons were predestinated for opulence and nobility, and it was just the proper time for these lucky events to happen.

*Confucius* said,

— Life and death depend on Destiny, wealth and honour come from Heaven <sup>2</sup>.

Duke *P'ing* of *Lu* wished to see *Mencius*, but his minion *Tsang T'sang* slandered *Mencius*, and dissuaded him. *Mencius* said,

— It is Heaven <sup>3</sup>.

*Confucius*, a sage, p1.148 and *Mencius*, a worthy, exhorting people to conform to the right principles, did not confound truth and untruth. Since they spoke of destiny, it is evident that there is a destiny. *Huai Nan Tse* says in his work,

Benevolence and meanness depend upon time, not on conduct, and profit and loss are brought about by fate, not by knowledge.

And *Chia Yi* <sup>4</sup> states,

With Heaven one cannot fix a time, and with *Tao* one cannot lay plans. Early and late are predetermined by destiny. How could the time be known ?

When *Kao Tsu* fought against *Ch'ing Pu* <sup>5</sup>, he was hit by a stray arrow. His illness being very serious, the Empress *Lü Hou* consulted an able physician. This doctor said that the disease could be cured, but *Kao Tsu* abused him saying,

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<sup>1</sup> Because *T'sai Tsê* was not a native of *Ch'in*, but of *Yen*. King *Chao* of *Ch'in* (305-250 B. C.) made him his minister on the recommendation of *Fan Sui*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 1.136.

<sup>3</sup> See chap. 30.

<sup>4</sup> A scholar of the 2nd cent., who wrote the *Hsin-shu* and some poetry.

<sup>5</sup> The king of *Huai-nan*, who had revolted.

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— I, a simple citizen, have with my sword of three feet conquered the world. Was that not Heaven's decree? Destiny depends on Heaven. Even a *Pien Ch'ioh* <sup>1</sup> would be no use <sup>2</sup>.

— The heavenly appointment, of which Your Majesty speaks, cannot be won by skill or force.

*Yang Tse Yün* <sup>3</sup> teaches that to meet with what one desires, or not to meet with it, is fate, and the *Grand Annalist* asserts that wealth and honour do not exclude poverty and meanness, and that the latter do not exclude wealth and honour. That means that opulence and nobility may turn into indigence and humbleness, and that indigence and humbleness may be changed into opulence and nobility. Rich and noble persons do not desire poverty and misery, but poverty and misery may come of themselves, and poor and humble fellows may not strive for wealth and honour, yet wealth and honour fall to their sort spontaneously.

When in spring or summer people die in prison, and when in autumn and winter they wear an air of prosperity <sup>4</sup>, this is not the result of their works. The sun rises in the morning, and sets in the evening, not because people wish it, for the principle of Heaven is spontaneity. The King of *Tai* <sup>5</sup> arrived from *Tai*, and <sup>p1.149</sup> became the Emperor *Wên Ti* <sup>6</sup>. *Chou Ya Fu* <sup>7</sup>, an illegitimate son, was made Marquis of *Tiao*. At first, the King of *Tai* was not heir apparent, and *Chou Ya Fu* was not the legitimate son, but they encountered the proper time, and fell in with the right moment, which led to their elevation.

In case a person predestinated for poverty, acquires wealth by his exertions and his energy, he dies, when he has made a fortune, and should

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<sup>1</sup> A celebrated physician.

<sup>2</sup> The passage is quoted from the *Shi-chi*, chap. 8 ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 400](#)).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 1.124.

<sup>4</sup> According to Chinese customs executions of criminals take place in autumn.

<sup>5</sup> The fifth son of the emperor *Kao Tsu*. The empress *Lü hou* wished to leave the empire to one of the *Lü* princes, her own kinsmen.

<sup>6</sup> 179-157 B. C.

<sup>7</sup> Chief minister of *Han Wên Ti* (cf. chap. 11).

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another doomed to humility win honours by his talents and abilities, he will be dismissed, when he has made himself a position. They win wealth and honour by their energy and their genius, but are unable to keep in possession of fate and luck, just as a vessel holds but a certain quantity, and as a hand lifts but a certain weight. If a vessel holds just one pint, then one pint exactly fills it, but, as soon as there is more than one pint, it flows over. Provided that a hand can just lift one *chün* <sup>1</sup>, then it balances one *chün*, but, when one *chün* is exceeded, he who lifts it up, tumbles and falls.

Former generations knew the truth, therefore they ascribed every thing to destiny, and such is destiny indeed. Those who trust in destiny, can live in retirement and await their time. They need not exhaust their vitality, or harass their bodies, hunting after it — for it is like pearls and jewels, concealed in lakes and mountains. Heaven's fate is difficult to know. People are unable to find it out. Although their fate be propitious, they have no confidence in it, and therefore seek it. If they understood it, they would be aware that, though fleeing wealth and shunning honour, at length they cannot get rid of it.

Thus they presume that force overcomes poverty, and that diligence vanquishes misfortune. They exert themselves, and do their utmost to acquire wealth, and they cultivate their faculties, and purify their conduct to win honour. But neglecting the proper time, and acting in a wrong way, they will never obtain the wealth and honour they crave for. Even though they admit the existence of fate, they imagine that it must be sought.

He who is convinced that fate cannot be sought, maintains that it must come of its own accord. One obtains it of itself without any alien assistance, it is completed without any work, and it arrives spontaneously without any cooperation on the part of the recipient. The nerves and sinews of those who are to be <sup>p1.150</sup> rich, become strong of themselves, and those who are to have rank and titles, get a fine intellect spontaneously, just as in a thousand Li horse <sup>2</sup> the head, the eyes, the feet, and the hoofs all suit together.

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<sup>1</sup> 30 catties.

<sup>2</sup> A swift horse supposed to make a thousand Li in one day.

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That fate, if sought, cannot be obtained, does not mean that it can be won, if not affected. Men of great knowledge need not seek honour, for it comes of its own accord, and the active and energetic need not seek wealth, for it falls to them spontaneously. The happiness of wealth and honour cannot be attracted by any efforts, nor can the unhappiness of poverty and humbleness be simply avoided. Consequently, the fate of wealth and honour is obtained without any effort. Those who believe in fate will say they know that luck requires no seeking. When the heavenly fate is particularly lucky, it is obtained spontaneously without an effort, whereas, when it is unpropitious, all endeavours are of no help against it.

As creatures are born not because they have wished it, so men become exalted without having struggled for it. Human character is such, that some people are good of themselves without instruction, and that others never become good in spite of instruction. The heavenly nature is like fate. King *Yi* of *Yüeh* <sup>1</sup> escaped into the mountains, earnestly desiring not to become king, and wishing to find a substitute. But the people of *Yüeh* smoked his den so, that at last he could not escape, and ascended the throne by force. By Heaven's fate it had to be so. Though fleeing and running away from it, he could not avoid it at last. Thus he spontaneously obtained the honour which he had not sought.

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<sup>1</sup> He was assassinated by his younger brother in 376 B. C. ([Chavannes, \*Mém. Hist.\* Vol. IV, p. 433, Note 5](#)).

## 4. Book I, Chap. IV

### *Ch'i-shou*. Long Life and Vital Fluid

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p1.313 The fate which every one receives is of two kinds, one determines those events which he must encounter, the other is the fate of strength and weakness, of long or short life. The events to be encountered are war, fire, crushing, and drowning, etc. ; strength and long life, weakness and short life are connected with the copiousness and scarcity of the received fluid. War and fire, crushing and drowning can supervene, therefore there is not necessarily a period of invariable length for what has been received as fate <sup>1</sup>.

If the limit of strength and long life be a hundred years, then the fluid of those who do not reach a hundred years must be insufficient.

When the fluid is copious, the body becomes strong, and the body being strong, life lasts long. On the other hand, when the vital force is scanty, the body is weak, and with a weak body life is short. A short life is accompanied by much sickness. If the span be short, people die soon after they are born, and are annihilated, before they are fully developed. That is because their vital fluid is too little and too weak.

Those imbued with a copious and a strong fluid do not all at once end their lives. If people do not meet with any accidents, and, leading a quiet life, become exhausted and worn out, until they die for want of vitality, it is owing to the insufficiency of their vital fluid, which they have completely used up. Their fate is similar to that of those who expire soon after their birth and are cut off, before they have grown up. In all these cases the deficiency of the fluid is the reason, why those persons do not live a hundred years.

The fluid which fills men is either full and abundant — then they are

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<sup>1</sup> What has been received as fate is the vital fluid or life. The length of life depends on the quality of this fluid, but it can be shortened by accidents, such as war, fire, etc. coming from abroad, before vitality is exhausted, and death would ensue under normal conditions. The Chinese word used here, 命 means 'fate' as well as 'life'.

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strong and vigorous, or scanty and poor — then they are weak and feeble. Imbued with a full quantity, they are strong, p1.314 and live long, filled with a small dose, they are weak, and lose their bodies.

When Heaven and Earth produce things, sometimes these things do not grow to their full growth, and when father and mother engender a child, sometimes its full development is checked. It happens that a plant bears a fruit, but that this fruit withers, dies, and drops, and it also happens that people have a son who is killed in his youth. Had this fruit not withered, it would also have completed one year, and had the son not been killed, he would likewise have lived a hundred years. The decay of the fruit and the death of the son are brought about by the weakness of their vital force. Although their forms be complete, their feeble fluid does not suffice to fill them.

When the cries of a new-born infant are shrill and piercing, it will live long, when they are whining and pitiful, it will die young. Why ? Because, when the new-borns receive their fate of longevity or short life, the greater or smaller quantity of their fluid forms their nature <sup>1</sup>.

When a mother nurses her child at longer intervals, it will be fit for life, whereas, when she nourishes it very frequently, it will die. Why ? Because the nursing at intervals shows that the fluid is copious, and the child is strong. The frequent suckling proves the insufficiency of the vital fluid and the weakness of the baby.

A fondling is a son anterior to whom another son has already been brought up and died. They say that such a fondling cannot live, and call it a fondling. The idea is that, another son having already died, the mother is too anxious about the new one, and spoils his nature. The former son is dead, and the fondling is doomed, because he is nursed much too often. His fluid being too feeble, he cannot thrive. Though he may grow up, he is too easily affected by external influences. He will always be the first to catch a disease, and his alone will prove incurable.

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<sup>1</sup> And this nature becomes manifest by the way in which the new-borns cry. Strong babies have strong voices, weak ones give only a whine.



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A fate of a hundred years is the proper one. Those who cannot complete a hundred years, though they have no proper fate, still have a fate. In the same manner the proper height of the human body is ten feet <sup>1</sup>. Therefore a man is called *chang-fu* <sup>2</sup>, and p<sub>1.315</sub> *chang-jen* is an honorary designation for an old gentleman and an old lady <sup>3</sup>. A man not measuring ten feet has not the proper height, but nevertheless he possesses a body. A body cannot be declared to be no body because of its falling short of ten feet. And so fate cannot be said to be no fate on account of its not coming up to a hundred years.

Heaven does not distribute long and short fates, of which every one would obtain either. We may say that man receives his fate in his fluid from Heaven, which is the same, whether he finishes it sooner or later. There is a saying to the effect that, if somebody aspires to royalty and does not succeed, this pretender can remain a leading prince. Leading princes are unsuccessful pretenders to royalty. A pretender should rise to royalty, as a long life ought to come up to a hundred years. Unable to become a king, he retires and continues a leading prince, and thus he who cannot attain to a hundred years resigns himself to a premature death.

A king and a pretender do the same, but are given different names, the one an honourable, the other a contemptible one. A long and a short life are caused, as it were, by the same fluid, but they are of different duration, either long or short. How do we know that he who does not live a hundred years, and dies an untimely death, possesses a fate of a hundred years all the same? Because his bodily frame is as big and as tall as that of others. A body that has lived a hundred years does not differ from another of fifty years. The bodies not being different, the vital fluids cannot differ either. Birds and animals have other bodies than man, hence the length of their lives must differ from the human.

How can we prove that human life, if it be long, lasts a hundred years?

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<sup>1</sup> On the Chinese foot see p. 1.320 Note 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* explains the term *chang-fu* 丈夫 'Young man' as originally meaning a man of ten feet=*chang*.

<sup>3</sup> A husband thus addresses his father and mother-in-law.

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There are such cases in the world, and the Literati say that during the time of universal peace people used to be very tall, and live about a hundred years, which was the effect of the harmonious fluid. In the Canon of *Yao*, *Yao* says,

— I have been seventy years on the throne <sup>1</sup>.

He wished to abdicate, and found *Shun*. *Shun* was tried and had occupied the throne thirty years <sup>2</sup>, when *Yao* retired owing to his old age. Eight years afterwards he expired. Ninety-eight years had elapsed until his decease <sup>3</sup>. But he <sup>p1.316</sup> must already have lived, before he ascended the throne. Counting all these numbers together we arrive at an aggregate sum of over a hundred years.

It is further stated that

*Shun* was thirty years old, that he was tried thirty years, and that he was on the throne fifty years, when he went on high and died <sup>4</sup>,

which makes just one hundred years <sup>5</sup>.

*Wên Wang* said to *Wu Wang*,

— I am a hundred years, and you are ninety. I will give you three years of mine.

*Wên Wang* was ninety-seven years old, when he died, and *Wu Wang* ninety-three, when he departed <sup>6</sup>.

The Duke of *Chou* was a younger brother of *Wu Wang*. Between brothers there is generally no greater difference than ten years. After the death of *Wu Wang*, *Chou King* became regent. Seven years later he returned the

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<sup>1</sup> Quotation from the *Shuking* Pt. I, chap. III, 12 (*Legge* Vol. III, Pt. I, p. 25).

<sup>2</sup> The *Shi-chi* chap. 1, p. 20 (*Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 69*) writes twenty years.

<sup>3</sup> In that case *Shun* cannot have reigned for him longer than 20 years, for 70+20+8=98.

<sup>4</sup> Quotation from the *Shuking* (*Shun-tien*) Pt. II, Bk. I, chap. VI, 28 (*Legge* Vol. III, Pt. I, p. 51).

<sup>5</sup> The computation gives 110 not 100 years. We should read 'he was tried twenty years' instead of thirty, the reading adopted in the *Shi-chi* and defended by several old commentators. Cf. *Legge's* notes to the passage and *Chavannes loc. cit. p. 91 Note 2*.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted from the *Liki*, *Wên Wang shih-tse* (*Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 344*) [*Couvreur*]. The commentators are at a loss, how to explain that *Wên Wang* was only ten years older than his son, *Wu Wang*, and how he could give him some of his years.

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government, and retired owing to old age. That would make about a hundred years. The Duke of *Shao* was an elder brother of the Duke of *Chou*. At the time of King *K'ang* <sup>1</sup> he was still Senior Tutor, which would make more than a hundred years.

Sages are endued with the harmonious fluid, therefore the years of their destiny have the proper number. The harmonious fluid is conducive to a tranquil government. Therefore during the age of universal peace the number of tall and long-lived persons was particularly great. One hundred years is the proper number of years of a long human life, as autumn is the proper time for the fate of plants, since plants live until autumn, when they die.

Plants perishing before or after autumn are similar to men whose life either exceeds or falls short of a hundred years. The time before or after autumn corresponds to more or less than a hundred years. Some plants fade already after they have pierced the earth, as men may die soon after their birth. Other plants may pass the autumn without withering just like men whose years may eventually be from one hundred to three hundred.

p1.317 It is on record that *Lao Tse* lived over two hundred years <sup>2</sup>. The Duke of *Shao* became one hundred and eighty years old. *Kao Tsung* <sup>3</sup> reigned one hundred years, and King *Mu* of the *Chou* dynasty likewise one hundred <sup>4</sup>. Including the time before his ascension, there must have been upwards of one hundred and thirty-four years altogether.

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<sup>1</sup> 1078-1053 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> *Sse Ma Ch'ien* mentions this report in his biography of *Lao Tse* (*Shi-chi*, chap. 63, p. 3). Some said that *Lao Tse* became over 160 years old, others that he lived over 200 years, prolonging his life by the practice of virtue.

<sup>3</sup> The *Shuking* Pt. V, Bk. XV, 5 ([Legge Vol. III, Pt. II](#), p. 467) [[Couvreur](#)] expressly states that *Kao Tsung* = *Wu Ting* enjoyed the throne for fifty and nine years, not for a hundred. He reigned from 1324-1266 B. C.

<sup>4</sup> Thus the *Shuking* (*Lü-hsing*) Pt. V, Bk. XXVII, 1 ([Legge Vol. III, Pt. II](#), p. 588) [[Couvreur](#)] as *Wang Ch'ung* and others understand the passage (On Legge's different view cf. his notes). According to the *Shi-chi* King *Mu*'s reign lasted but 55 years. It is usually reckoned from 1001-947 B. C.

## 5. Book II, Chap. I

### *Hsing-ou. On Chance and Luck*

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p1.151 In their doings men may be clever or stupid, but with regard to the happiness or unhappiness, which fall to their share, they are either lucky or unlucky. Their works are good or evil, but, whether they meet with rewards or punishment, depends on their good or bad fortune. If several people suffer an armed attack at the same time, those who find a hiding place, are not wounded, and if some persons are overtaken by frost on the same day, those who obtain shelter, suffer no injury. It does not follow that the wounded or injured are wicked, or that those who found a hiding place or a shelter, are meritorious. To find a refuge or shelter is good luck, to be wounded or injured is bad luck. There are many who would be pleased to give proofs of their loyalty, but out of these some are rewarded, some punished ; many would fain benefit their country, but only some are trusted by their sovereign, the others he suspects. Those whom he rewards and confides in, are not necessarily trustworthy, nor are those whom he punishes and mistrusts, of necessity traitors. Reward and trust is good fortune, punishment and suspicion, bad.

From among the seventy odd pupils of *Confucius*, *Yen Hui* died in early youth. *Confucius* said,

— Unluckily his span was short, therefore he died.

If a short life be spoken of as unlucky, then longevity must be a matter of luck, and a short life, something unlucky. He who walks in the footsteps of sages and worthies, and expounds the doctrines of kindness and justice, ought to enjoy bliss and happiness. However, *Po Niu* <sup>1</sup> fell sick, and did not fare much better than *Yen Hui* ; they were both unlucky.

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<sup>1</sup> Another disciple of *Confucius*. On his sickness cf. [Analects VI, 8 \[Couvreur\]](#) and p. 1.165.

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Mole-crickets and ants creep on the ground. If man lifts his foot, and walks on them, the crickets and ants crushed by his feet die at once, whereas those which are untouched continue alive and unhurt. Wild grass is consumed by fire kindled by the friction of cart-wheels. People are fond of the grass which remained unburnt, and commonly call it 'lucky grass'. Nevertheless, that an insect has not been trodden upon, or some grass not been reached by p1.152 the fire, is not yet a proof of their excellence. The movement of the feet, and the spread of the fire are merely accidental.

The same reasoning holds good for the breaking out of ulcers. When the free circulation of humours is stopped, they coagulate, and form a boil ; as it begins to run, it becomes a sore : the blood comes out, and matter is discharged. Are those pores, where the ulcer breaks through, better than others ? No, only the working of the good constitution has been checked in some places.

When the spider has woven its web, some of the flying insects pass it unharmed, others are caught ; when the hunter has spread his nets, some of the beasts stirred up come to bay, the others escape. In the fishing nets thrown into rivers and lakes many fish are pulled out, others get away. It happens that robbers and the like, guilty of the worst crimes, are never found out, whereas people who have committed a small offence to be atoned for by a fine only, are immediately discovered. Thus, general calamities affect people differently. Such as are unlucky die of the shock, and the lives of the fortunate are spared. Unlucky means not favoured by circumstances. *Confucius* said :

— Man's life must be upright. A life without it is based on good fortune only <sup>1</sup>.

Accordingly, those who on a smooth road meet with accidents, have bad luck.

Should anybody standing at the foot of a high wall be crushed by its fall, or, while walking on a river bank full of crevices, be buried by the earth's collapsing under his feet, such a one would simply have met with an accident, that is to say would have been unlucky.

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects VI, 17](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

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The city gate of the capital of *Lu* was in a state of decay since a long time, and about to tumble down. When *Confucius* passed it, he hurried up, and quickened his pace. His attendants said to him :

— It has been like this ever so long.

*Confucius* replied saying,

— Its having so long remained so is just what displeases me.

*Confucius* was precautious in the extreme ; had the gate fallen down, just when he passed it, one might speak of him as unlucky. *Confucius* said,

— Superior men may have no luck, but there are none who have luck. Low people often have luck, and there are none quite devoid of luck <sup>1</sup>,

and further :

— The superior man keeps <sup>p1.153</sup> in safe places, thus awaiting his destiny, the ordinary man courts dangers, relying on favourable circumstances <sup>2</sup>.

Impostors like *Hung Ju*, and *Chieh Ju* <sup>3</sup>, though possessed of no virtue or ability, were nevertheless admired for their beauty ; unworthy of love, they found favour, and unfit to associate with, they were chosen as companions. According to right and reason this ought not to be. Therefore, the Grand Annalist devotes a chapter to them <sup>4</sup>. Bad characters who in a similar way, though perverting all moral principles, are honoured, and held in high esteem, are by a common name called adventurers.

If a man devoid of virtue receives favours, it amounts to the same, as if another without any fault of his own meets with misfortune. All creatures originally endowed with vitality become partly men, partly beasts, or birds. Of

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<sup>1</sup> The meaning is that the successes of superior men are due to their own excellence, not to mere chance, but that they are often visited with misfortune. With common people it is different. Their happiness is never their own work, but luck, which often favours them.

<sup>2</sup> *Chung-yung* (Doctrine of the Mean) chap. XV.

<sup>3</sup> Two minions of the emperors *Han Kao Tsu* (206-194 B. C.) and *Hui Ti* (194-187).

<sup>4</sup> *Shi-chi* chap. 125.

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human beings, men though they be one and all, some are honoured, others despised, some are rich, others poor. The rich man may hoard up heaps of gold, whereas a poor fellow is compelled to beg for his food. A noble-man will perhaps rise to the rank of a marquis, whilst the low born sinks into a state of slavery. It is not, because Heaven has given them different qualities.

Man's natural disposition may be kind or mean ; yet even if the conduct of some persons be equally honest and virtuous, happiness and misfortune are not equally divided among them, and although they practise benevolence and justice in the same way, success and failure are not the same. *Wên* of *Chin* <sup>1</sup> sought to acquire knowledge and virtue, and *Yen* of *Hsü* <sup>2</sup> acted with benevolence and justice ; the former was rewarded, the latter utterly ruined. A man of *Lu* <sup>3</sup> having avenged his father, remained quietly where he was, and did not flee. The pursuers let him off. *Niu Ch'üeh* was abducted by robbers ; he endured it fearlessly and with equanimity, but the robbers killed him. Now, knowledge and virtue are about the same as benevolence and justice, and not running away as much as fearlessness, nevertheless Duke *Wên* and the man of *Lu* were happy, and King *Yen* <sup>4</sup> and *Niu Ch'üeh*, unhappy, the p1.154 one had good luck, the others bad. The Duke of *Han*, *Chao*, while drunk fell asleep, and would have caught cold but for the master of caps, who covered him with a cloak. When the duke became aware of it, he made inquiries, and learnt that the master of caps had shown him this mark of his affection, yet he punished him for having transgressed his proper duties. A lackey in *Wei* perceiving that the charioteer was driving wrong, shouted from behind towards the chariot with a view to preserving it from danger, but was not called to account. The lackey when shouting towards the chariot, and the master of the caps when spreading the cloak, had the same intentions. The one was afraid that his master might catch cold, the other that his prince would be in danger. Both followed the impulses of goodness and kind-heartedness, but the man in *Han* was punished, the other in *Wei*, considered a faithful servant. The lackey had good fortune, the master of the caps not.

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<sup>1</sup> An old State in modern *Shansi*, where the Marquis *Wên* reigned from 779 -744 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> The name of a State, whose lords were viscounts, in modern *Anhui*.

<sup>3</sup> An old feudal State in *Shantung*.

<sup>4</sup> Higher titles used to be given to those feudal princes than they were entitled to.

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The same principle applies to things as well as to man. Bamboos several tenths of feet in height, and trees measuring some yards in circumference are cut down by artisans for use. Some are worked into tools, and carried here and there, others are not taken as material, and neglected. The artisans are not biased in favour of some, or prejudiced against others, but knives and adzes cut down the wood, as it were, by chance.

Grain, when steamed, becomes food ; out of cooked grain wine is distilled. Distilled wine has different flavours, it may be sweet or bitter. Cooked food tastes differently, being either hard or soft. The cook and the distiller while at work have not different intentions, but the movements of hands and fingers are subject to chance. Well done food is kept in different baskets, and sweet wine is filled in various vessels. Supposing an insect drops into such a vessel, then the wine is spilled, and not drunk ; should a mouse contaminate a basket, the food is thrown away, and not eaten.

The various plants are all good for something. Those which happen to be plucked by a physician, become medicine, others are left in the dried-up ravines, and burnt as fuel. So with metals : some are wrought into swords and halberds, some into spears and hoes ; so with wood : some is shaped into the beams of a palace, some into the pillars of a bridge. The same with fire : it may have to light a candle, or to burn dry grass ; the same with earth : some builds up halls and mansions, some serves as plaster for porches, and with water, which may be used for cleansing tripods and cauldrons as well as for washing filthy things.

p1.155 All things, whether good or bad, are used by man. If one can be sorry for those things, which in this respect have no luck and no chance, living creatures are still much more to be pitied.

*Shun* was a sage, and ought to have obtained perfect peace and happiness in life. But he had a blockhead for a father and a silly mother, and his brother was arrogant and brutal. They disliked him, the faultless, and punished him, although he did no wrong. His was extremely bad luck. *Confucius* was inferior to *Shun*. He never owned a foot of land in his life, but restlessly wandered about, seeking employment. His traces were



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obliterated <sup>1</sup>, and his food cut off <sup>2</sup>. In spite of their being sages these two personages were visited with bad luck and bad chance. *Shun* still happened to take over the empire, which *Yao* resigned to him, but *Confucius* died in *Chüeh-li*. If even with the qualities of a sage one has no luck, we cannot be surprised to find much bad luck and misfortune among ordinary men.

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<sup>1</sup> *Chuang Tse* XIV, 25v. (*T'ien-yün*) informs us that the traces of *Confucius* were obliterated in *Wei*. *Confucius* spent there many years of his life, but without gaining any influence on its prince, and therefore left no trace.

<sup>2</sup> When *Confucius* was travelling from the *Ch'ên* State to *T'sai*, his provisions became exhausted, and *Confucius* with his followers had to suffer hunger. [Analects XV, 1 \[Couvreur\]](#). *Ch'ên* and *T'sai* were situated in south-eastern *Honan*.

## 6. Book II, Chap. II

### *Ming-yi*. What is meant by Destiny ?

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p1.136 The Mênists <sup>1</sup> hold that man's death is not predestinated, whereas the Confucianists are of opinion that it is. The believers in Destiny rely on the authority of *Tse Hsia* <sup>2</sup> who says,

Life and death depend on Destiny, wealth and honour come from Heaven <sup>3</sup>.

Those who deny the existence of Destiny refer to the City of *Li-yang* <sup>4</sup>, which sunk into a lake in one night, and to *Po-Ch'i*, a general of *Ch'in*, who buried alive the troops of *Chao* after their submission below *Ch'ang-p'ing* <sup>5</sup>, altogether 400 000 men, who all died at the same time <sup>6</sup>. When in the *Ch'un-ch'iu* period <sup>7</sup> armies were defeated, sometimes, they say, the grass was hidden by thousands of dead bodies. In time of famine, all the roads are full of starving people. During epidemics caused by malarial exhalations, thousands of families are extinguished. If there really should be Destiny, how is it, they ask, that in *Ch'in* all were involved in the same catastrophe ?

The believers in Destiny will reply,

When the vastness of the earth, and the great number of its inhabitants is taken into account, it is not to be wondered at that the people at *Li-yang* and *Ch'ang p'ing* should equally be doomed to die. Those whose destiny it was to be drowned, assembled at *Li-*

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<sup>1</sup> The followers of *Mê Ti*.

<sup>2</sup> A disciple of *Confucius*.

<sup>3</sup> [Analects XII, 5](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>4</sup> A city in *Anhui*.

<sup>5</sup> A city in *Shansi*.

<sup>6</sup> This massacre took place in 260 B. C. (Cf. *Mayers Reader's Manual* N. 544.)

<sup>7</sup> 722-481 B. C.

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*yang*, and those who were to be crushed to death, came together at *Ch'ang p'ing* for that purpose.

When *Han Kao Tsu* <sup>1</sup> began his career, a fortune-teller, who entered the territory of *Fêng* and *P'ei*, found many persons who were made counts afterwards. But not all the old and young people, men and women bore the mark of nobility. As a rule exceptional p<sup>1.137</sup> persons are met with occasionally only. Yet at *Li-yang* men and women were all drowned, and at *Ch'ang p'ing* the aged and the young were buried to the last. Among tens of thousands there were certainly many who had still a long life before them, and ought not to have died. But such as happen to live in a time of decay, when war breaks out everywhere, cannot terminate their long lives. The span allotted to men is long or short, and their age flourishing or effete. Sickness, disasters, and misfortunes are signs of decay. The States of *Sung*, *Wei*, *Ch'ên*, and *Chêng* were all visited with fire on the same day <sup>2</sup>. Among the people of the four kingdoms were certainly not a few whose prosperity was still at its height, and who ought not to have been destroyed. Nevertheless they all had to suffer from the conflagration, being involved in their country's doom, for the destiny of a State is stronger than that of individuals.

The destiny regulating man's life-time is more powerful than the one presiding over his prosperity. Man shows by his appearance, whether he will die old or young, and there are signs indicating, whether he will be rich or poor, high-placed or base. All this is to be seen from his body. Length and shortness of life are gifts of Heaven. Whether the structure of the bones be good or bad, is visible in the body. If a man's life must be cut off in its prime, he cannot live long, although he be endowed with extraordinary qualities, and if it be decreed that he shall be poor and miserable, the very best character is

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<sup>1</sup> The founder of the former *Han* dynasty, a native of *P'ei* in *Kiangsu*. *Fêng* was another region in the neighbourhood.

<sup>2</sup> This great fire, which on the same day broke out in the capitals of the four States, is recorded in the *Ch'un-ch'iu* Book X, 18 (Duke *Chao*) as happening in 529 B. C. It is believed to have been foreshadowed by a comet, which appeared in winter of the preceding year. — These four States were comprised in *Honan*, except *Sung* which occupied the northern part of modern *Kiangsu*.

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of no avail to him. — When *Hsiang Yü* <sup>1</sup> was going to die, he turned to his followers, and said,

— I am vanquished, but by fate, not by force of arms.

This is true, for in warfare *Hsiang Yü* was superior to *Kao Tsu*. The latter's rise was due to Heaven's decree only.

The destiny of the State is connected with the stars. Just as their constellations are propitious or unpropitious, the State is happy or unhappy. As the stars revolve and wander, men rise and fall. Human prosperity and distress are like the abundance and the scarcity of a year. Destiny is flourishing or declining ; things are either expensive or cheap. Within the space of one year, they are sometimes expensive, and at others cheap, as during p1.138 a long life prosperity and distress alternate. The prices of things do not depend on the abundance or scarcity of the year, nor is human prosperity the outcome of ability or ignorance.

How is it that *Tse Hsia* says,

— Life and death depend on Destiny, wealth and honour come from Heaven

instead of saying,

— Life and death come from Heaven <sup>2</sup>, wealth and honour depend on Destiny ?

For life and death there are no heavenly signs, they depend on the constitution. When a man has got a strong constitution, his vital force is exuberant, and his body strong. In case of bodily strength life's destiny is long ; the long-lived do not die young. Conversely, he who has got a weak constitution possesses but a feeble vital force, and a delicate bodily frame. Delicacy is the cause of the shortness of life's destiny ; the short-lived die early. Consequently, if we say that there is a destiny, destiny means constitution.

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<sup>1</sup> The rival of *Han Kao Tsu*, before the latter ascended the throne.

<sup>2</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* puts a construction upon the words of *Tse Hsia*, of which he probably never thought. *Tse Hsia* used Destiny and Heaven as synonyms, as we do.

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As regards the transmission of wealth and honour, it is like the vital force, viz. an effluence emanating from the stars. Their hosts are on heaven, which has their signs. Being born under a star pointing at wealth and honour, man obtains wealth and honour, whereas under a heavenly sign implying poverty and misery, he will become poor and miserable. Thus wealth and honour come from Heaven, but how is this brought about ? Heaven has its hundreds of officials <sup>1</sup> and multitudes of stars. Just as Heaven emits its fluid, the stars send forth their effluence, which keeps amidst the heavenly fluid. Imbibing this fluid, men are born, and live, as long as they keep it. If they obtain a fine one, they become men of rank, if a common one, common people. Their position may be higher or lower, and their wealth bigger or smaller, according as the stars distributing all this, rank higher or lower, are larger or smaller. — Heaven has many hundred officials and multitudes of stars, and so we have on earth the essence of tens of thousands of people, of the Five Emperors and the Three Rulers <sup>2</sup>. Heaven has his *Wang Liang* and *Tsao Fu* <sup>3</sup>, men have them also. He who is endued with their essence, becomes skilled in charioteering.

It is said that three different kinds of destiny can be distinguished, the *natural*, the *concomitant*, and the *adverse* one. One <sup>p1.139</sup> speaks of natural destiny, if somebody's luck is the simple consequence of his original organisation. His constitution being well ordered, and his bones good, he needs not toil in order to obtain happiness, since his luck comes of itself. This is meant by natural destiny. Concomitant destiny comes into play, when a man becomes happy only by dint of hard work, but is pursued by misfortune, as soon as he yields to his propensities, and gives rein to his desires. This is to be understood by concomitant destiny. As for adverse destiny, a man may, contrary to his expectations, reap bad fruits from all his good deeds ; he will rush into misfortune and misery, which will strike him from afar. Therefore, one can speak of adverse destiny.

Every mortal receives his own destiny ; already at the time of his

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<sup>1</sup> Namely the stars.

<sup>2</sup> The first legendary rulers of Chinese history.

<sup>3</sup> Two famous charioteers of old, the latter the driver of the eight celebrated steeds of King *Mu* of *Chou*.

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conception, he obtains a lucky or an unlucky chance. Man's nature does not correspond to his destiny : his disposition may be good, but his destiny unlucky, or his disposition bad, and his fate lucky. Good and bad actions are the result of natural disposition, happiness and misfortune, good and bad luck are destiny. Good deeds may lead to mishap, then the disposition is good, but destiny cruel, and likewise misdeeds may result in happiness, in that case man's nature is wicked, but fate smiling. Nature is good or bad of its own accord, and so is fate lucky or unlucky. A favourite of fate, though not doing well, is not, of necessity, deprived of happiness for that reason, whereas an ill-fated man does not get rid of his misfortune, though trying his best.

*Mencius* said :

To strive for a thing, one must have wisdom, but whether he attains it, depends upon destiny <sup>1</sup>.

With a good disposition one can struggle for it and, if fate be favourable, obtain it ; should, however, fate be averse, one may with a good nature strive for it, but never get it.

Bad deeds are followed by misfortune. Yet the robbers *Chê* and *Chuang Ch'iao* <sup>2</sup> were scourges to the whole empire. With some thousands of other bandits, whom they had collected, they assaulted and robbed people of their property, and cut them to pieces. As outlaws they were unequalled. They ought to have been disgraced ; far from it, they finished their lives as old men. In the face of this, how can the idea of a concomitant destiny be upheld ?

Men with an adverse destiny do well in their hearts, but meet with disasters abroad. How is it that men like *Yen Yuan* <sup>3</sup> and p1.140 *Po Niu* came to disgrace ? They were both virtuous, and should have been rewarded by a concomitant destiny with bliss and happiness. Wherefore did they meet with misfortune ? *Yen Yuan*, confined to his study, killed himself by his great

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<sup>1</sup> *Mencius*, Book VII, Pt. I, chap. 3 [[Legge](#)] [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> Two famous robbers of antiquity, especially the former, to whom a chapter is devoted in *Chuang Tse*.

<sup>3</sup> The same as *Yen Hui*, the favourite disciple of *Confucius*.

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talents <sup>1</sup>, *Po Niu*, while living quite alone, caught a horrible disease. *Ch'ü P'ing* and *Wu Yuan* were the most loyal ministers of their sovereigns, and scrupulously fulfilled their duties as servants to the king <sup>2</sup>. In spite of this, the corpse of *Ch'ü P'ing* was left unburied in *Ch'u*, and in *Wu Yuan's* body was cooked. For their good works they should have obtained the happiness of concomitant destiny, but they fell in with the misfortune of adverse fate. How is such a thing possible ?

Concomitant destiny excludes adverse destiny, and adverse destiny, a concomitant one. On what basis can the scholastic distinction of three kinds of destiny then be established ? Moreover, fate is already visible from the structure of bones at the time of birth, now, if it be said to follow the actions, it comes afterwards, and is not yet there from the beginning. Wealth and honour, poverty and misery are determined at the first moment of receptibility of the human being, they do not arrive only in company with his actions, after the individual has grown up.

A man with a natural fate will die at the age of a hundred years, another with a concomitant fate at the age of fifty, but he whose fate is adverse, meets with distress from the moment he receives vitality ; as people say, he is confronted with ill-luck already as an embryo. He may have been born during a thunderstorm and, when he is grown up, die young.

These are what they call the three destinies, there are also distinguished three kinds of natures : *natural*, *concomitant*, and *adverse*. Naturally man is endowed with the five virtues, concomitant nature corresponds to that of father and mother, and adverse nature is caused by meeting some unpropitious object <sup>3</sup>. Thus a pregnant <sub>p1.141</sub> woman eating a hare will bear a

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<sup>1</sup> He worked too hard, and died at the age of thirty-two. His hair had turned quite white already. (Cf. *Legge, Analects*, Prolegomena p. 113.)

<sup>2</sup> *Ch'ü Yuan* or *Ch'ü P'ing*, a faithful counsellor of Prince *Huai* of *Ch'u* in the 4th century B. C., committed suicide by drowning himself, because his admonitions were disregarded. The dragon-boat festival is celebrated in commemoration thereof. *Wu Yuan* or *Wu Yün*, a minister of the last king of *Wu* circa 520 B. C. was sentenced to perish by his own hand. His body was afterwards sewn into a leather wine-sack, and cast into the river near *Soochow*, where he has been deified as the spirit of the water like *Ch'ü P'ing*. This is the common tradition. (Cf. *Mayers Manual* N. 879 and *Giles, Biogr. Dict.* N. 2358. According to *Wang Ch'ung* the body of *Wu Yuan* was cooked.)

<sup>3</sup> The term nature is used in the sense of spiritual nature, disposition, as well as for

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harelipped son. In the *Yüeh-ling* <sup>1</sup> it is stated that, in the same month the thunder is about to utter its voice, and that those who are not careful of their behaviour, will bring forth crippled children, and have great calamities.

They become dumb or deaf, lame or blind. The embryo having been affected by external influences, the child's character will be violent and rebellions. *Yang Shê Shih Wo's* <sup>2</sup> voice, after his birth, sounded like that of a wolf. When he grew older, he showed a wicked disposition ; he met with misfortune, and died. He got this character already, when still in his mother's womb. The like holds good for *Tan Chu* <sup>3</sup> and *Shang Chün* <sup>4</sup>. Character and destiny are there from the beginning. Therefore the *Li* points out a method to instruct embryos <sup>5</sup>. As long as the child is in the uterus, the mother must not sit down, if the mat be not properly placed, nor eat anything not cut in the proper manner. Her eyes must see but the proper colours, and her ears hear but the proper sounds. When the child grows up, it must be given intelligent teachers and good instructors, who will make it familiar with the relations of sovereign and subject, father and son, for at that period its virtue or depravity will become manifest. If at the moment, when the child receives the vitalising fluid, the mother does not take care to keep her heart free from wild fancies and fears of wickedness, her child, when grown up, will not be good, but fierce and refractory, and look ugly and wicked. A heavenly maiden explained to *Huang Ti* <sup>6</sup> that to have five wives not only entails bodily injury on father and mother, but also most seriously affects the characters of sons and daughters.

Men have their destiny and luck, contingencies and chance. By destiny

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constitution, *i. e.* physical qualities.

<sup>1</sup> The *Yüeh-ling* is the Book III, N. 6 of the *Li-Ki*, the Book of Rites. The 'same month' referred to in the passage, quoted from the *Yüeh-ling*, is the second month of spring. *Wang Ch'ung* seems to have had in view the final paragraph as well, which says that, if in the last month of winter the spring ceremonies were observed, the embryos would suffer many disasters. (Cf. *Legge, Li Ki*, Book IV, p. 260 and 310 [*Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXVII].)

<sup>2</sup> A native of *Chin*, 6th cent. B. C.

<sup>3</sup> The unworthy son of the emperor *Yao* 2357 B. C.

<sup>4</sup> The degenerated son of the emperor *Shun* 2255 B. C.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Ta-tai-li* chap. 3, p. 6v (*Han Wei tsung shu*).

<sup>6</sup> The first emperor, a mythical personage.



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they are wealthy and poor, exalted and base ; their luck is thriving or declining, flourishing or fading. Those whose destiny it is to be rich and honoured, meet with a thriving luck ; they enjoy perpetual tranquillity, and are never in jeopardy. On p1.142 the other hand do such as are doomed to poverty and misery, fall in with a declining luck ; they are the victims of ill-fortune ; always in trouble, they know no pleasure.

A *contingency* is some extraordinary change, such, for instance, as were experienced by *Ch'êng Tang*<sup>1</sup>, when he was kept a prisoner in *Hsia-tai* and by *Wên Wang*<sup>2</sup>, when detained at *Yu-li*. For sages, with all their perfections, to be thrown into jail, this certainly can be called an extraordinary contingency. But however great the change may be, in the case of a favourable destiny and a thriving luck it does no harm. This is what they call a contingent mishap. That winch befell *Yen Tse*<sup>3</sup> must be regarded as a great one. Let us suppose that a weapon be pointed at a man's breast, that the bright blade be already touching his neck, that he rush forward to certain death, or that he oppose himself to the points of swords and halberds, let such a man be saved just at the moment, when he expects to die, then his destiny is so good, and his luck so flourishing, that the misfortune he encounters cannot injure him. At *Li-yang* and *Ch'ang p'ing*, where the catastrophe took place<sup>4</sup>, were certainly people with a propitious fate and a thriving luck, who were all crushed to death in the same night. The disaster they met with was so paramount, that their good fate and thriving luck could not ward it off. This may be compared to the antagonism between water and fire. If the water is stronger, it quells the fire, and if the fire is stronger, it overcomes the water. To find employment, a man must get hold of an employer. In spite of a propitious fate and thriving luck nobody will be able to

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<sup>1</sup> The founder of the *Shang* dynasty, who was imprisoned by the last emperors of the *Hsia*.

<sup>2</sup> The ancestor of the house of *Chou*. He was incarcerated at *Yu-li* by the last emperor of the *Shang* dynasty.

<sup>3</sup> Under *Yen Tse*, *Yen Ying*, a celebrated statesman of the Dukes of *Ch'i*, is usually understood. Since *Yen Ying* was very successful in his career, no misfortune whatever being recorded of him, I would suggest to alter [ ] into [ ], abbreviated for [ ] *Yen Hui*, the name of the ill-fated disciple of *Confucius*, whose misfortune, his untimely death, is mentioned above p. 266 and elsewhere.

<sup>4</sup> See above p. 1.136.

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show what he is capable of, unless he comes into contact with a master who takes an interest in him <sup>1</sup>.

The word *chance* conveys the idea of good and evil derived from accidents. A culprit, who succeeds in making his escape, has <sup>p1.143</sup> good fortune, whereas it is bad fortune, if an innocent man be arrested. He who after a short incarceration obtains his release, has a propitious destiny and thriving luck so, that the misfortune of an untimely end cannot affect him.

Now for the meaning of *incident*, which will be illustrated by the service offered to a sovereign. Provided that somebody serve the sovereign in the proper way, that the latter appreciate his words, and afterwards employ him, this is a lucky incident. Conversely, if the prince disprove of the man's ways so, that he dismisses him, and sends him away, this is an unlucky incident. Should a man after a short period of disgrace still get an appointment through the recommendation of a higher official, he owes it to his good destiny and thriving luck, which do not allow that the harm caused by an unlucky incident keeps on for long.

Contingencies and chance either tally with destiny and luck or disagree with them. To hit on good chances, and thus reach the goal, or to meet with bad ones, and be ruined, is tallying with destiny and luck. To fall off in mid-career, without completing what is to come, good being suddenly turned into evil, this is contrary to fate and luck. In this world men's dispositions and destinies are auspicious or unfavourable, their happiness and misfortune flourish or decline. All depends on contingencies. According to the chances they have, they either live or die. But those who accomplish all their good or bad deeds, and obtain all their heart's, desires, are few.

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to good luck, according to our author, he who seeks employment requires a contingency, he must find some one who appreciates him.

## 7. Book II, Chap. III

### *Wu-hsing. Unfounded Assertions*

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p1.325 Men receive the vital fluid from heaven at their birth, and are all given a fate fixing the length of their lives, in accordance to which their bodies exist for a longer or shorter period. Just so vases are formed out of clay by the potter, and plates from copper by the founder. As the shape of a vessel, once completed, cannot be made smaller or bigger, thus the duration of the corporeal frame having been settled, cannot be shortened or prolonged. The said fluid forms the constitution, which determines fate and shapes the body. The fluid and the material body pervade each other. Life and death correspond to fixed periods. The body cannot be transformed, and likewise fate cannot be lengthened or shortened. We may elucidate the question as to the duration of human life by observing the potter and founder.

Some one might object saying,

— True, if a potter uses his stuff to make a vase, this vase, after its completion, lasts, until it breaks, but cannot be formed anew. If, however, a founder casts a plate out of copper, although it be finished, it can be melted again, and be made into a cup or, if that is not possible, into a vessel. Although men, who owe their spirits to heaven, all have a destiny fixing their span, by which their bodies are regulated, they can, if they know the right way and an effective elixir, change their bodies and prolong their lives all the same.

I reply,

— If a founder recasts a finished vessel, he must first liquefy it in fire, before he is able to enlarge or diminish, extend or shorten it. If a man desiring to protract his years, should wish to be like the copper vessel, there must be some sort of a furnace with coal, where the change and the transmutation of his body could take

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place. The body having been changed, the lifetime might also be extended. How could men, in order to change their bodies, undergo a smelting process like a copper vessel ?

The Li Ki states,

When the water pours down, one does not offer fish or turtles for food <sup>1</sup>.

Why ? Because, when the <sup>p1.326</sup> rain water rushes down, snakes and reptiles are changed and become fish or turtles. Since they give up their original real nature and are transformed only for a while, the servants take care and dare not offer them to their masters for food. Would men desirous of having their bodies transmuted, be satisfied with a change like that of reptiles and snakes ? Those reptiles which are liable to a change are worse off than those which do not change at all. Before they change, they are not eaten by men, but, when they have been transformed into fish and turtles, men eat them. Being eaten, their long lives are cut short, and that is not what people desire.

Years and months change, and the intrinsic fluid may transform one species into another. Frogs become quails, and sparrows turn into clams. Man longing for bodily transformation would like to resemble quails and crabs. These are in the same plight as fish and turtles. Man fishes for crabs and eats them, when he catches them. Although without a metamorphose of the body, life cannot be lengthened, this result <sup>2</sup> cannot be aimed at.

Duke *Niu Ai* of *Lu* was laid up with a malady for seven days, when he was transformed into a tiger. <sup>3</sup> *Kun* <sup>4</sup> when banished to Mount *Yü-shan* turned into a moose. Do those who seek transformation desire to become a tiger like *Niu Ai*, or a moose like *Kun* ? The life of a tiger or a moose is not longer than the

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<sup>1</sup> *Li ki* chap. I, No. 1 (*Chü-li*), p. 20v. ([Legge's translation Vol. I, p. 84.](#)) Various reasons have been assigned by the commentators for this rule. They say, in opposition to *Wang Ch'ung*, that during heavy rain-falls fish are so easily got as not to be valuable, or that then they are muddy and not fit for eating. This last reason seems the most plausible.

<sup>2</sup> To become like a quail or a crab.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from *Huai Nan Tse*, who adds that the tiger devoured his brother, when he opened the door.

<sup>4</sup> A legendary minister of *Yao* and father to Great *Yü*.

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human. In this world the human nature is the noblest of all, therefore the transmutation of a man into a bird or a beast cannot be desirable. It would be a great boon, if an old man could be transformed into a youth, or if at least the white hair could turn black again, the lost teeth grow once more, and the animal forces be strengthened, so that the person could jump about, devoid of all decrepitude. This would be grand indeed ! Where would be the advantage of a transformation, if life were not prolonged thereby ?

If a thing is transformed, its concomitant fluid, as it were, favours the change. Human work may produce new forms, it is not Heaven which transforms things in order to prolong their duration. No more can a transformation be brought about by eating divine herbs or wonderful drugs. A man constantly using cordials can p1.327 thereby merely strengthen his constitution and add to his years. A sudden transmutation is not caused by the real heavenly fluid or the true nature, with which men are endowed. Heaven and earth do not change, sun and moon are not transformed, and the stars do not disappear. Such is their real nature. As man has received part of their real fluid, his body cannot be transformed either : men do not sometimes become women, or women men. A high mound may be turned into a valley, or a deep ravine into a hill. But then the change keeps pace with human labour, it is a change by labour, not by inherent nature.

At the rise of the *Han* dynasty, an old man presented *Chang Liang* <sup>1</sup> with a book, and then was transformed into a stone. Therefore the essence of a stone was a propitious omen for the rising *Han*. Similarly the essence of the River <sup>2</sup> became a man who gave a jade-badge to the envoy of *Ch'in*, which was an unlucky augury, indicating the downfall of *Ch'in* <sup>3</sup>.

The silkworm feeds on mulberry leaves, when it grows old, it sets to spinning, and becomes a cocoon, and the cocoon again is changed into a moth. The moth has two wings, and in its altered form widely differs from the silkworm. Grubs change into chrysalises, and these turn into crickets. The

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<sup>1</sup> An adherent of the founder of the *Han* dynasty. The Taoists have claimed him as one of their patriarchs and mystics. See p. 1.235.

<sup>2</sup> The *Yellow River*.

<sup>3</sup> This event is told in detail on p. 1.233.

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crickets are born with two wings, and are not of the same type as grubs. A great many of all worms and insects alter their shapes and transform their bodies. Man alone is not metamorphosed, being the recipient of the real heavenly fluid. Born as a child, he grows into a man, and, when he is old, into greybeard. From birth to death there is no metamorphose, for such is his original nature. Creatures which by their nature are not transformed, cannot be induced to do so, whereas those which must pass through a metamorphose, cannot forego it. Now, the length of life of those transformed creatures does not compare favourably with that of non-transformed ones. Nothing would be said, if a man desirous of a metamorphose could thereby prolong his years, but if he only changes his body without increasing his years, he would be merely on a level with crickets. Why should he like this ?

Dragons are reptiles which appear sometimes, and then again become invisible, and which sometimes are long and sometimes short. It is in their nature to undergo transformations, but not for good, <sup>p1.328</sup> since after a short while, they relapse into their previous state. Ergo, every thing considered, we find that the human being, endowed with an unchangeable body, is not liable to metamorphoses, and that his years cannot be prolonged.

*Kao Tsung* <sup>1</sup> having witnessed the abnormal growth of a paper mulberry <sup>2</sup>, is reported to have repented of his faults, changed the style of government, and enjoyed happiness for one hundred years <sup>3</sup>. This is not correct. Of Duke *Ching* of *Sung* <sup>4</sup> it is said that on his having uttered three excellent maxims, the planet *Mars* left out three solar mansions, and twenty one years were added to the duke's life <sup>5</sup>, which is likewise unfounded. Duke

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<sup>1</sup> Posthumous name of the *Shang* emperor *Wu Ting*, 1324-1265 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> A paper mulberry tree grew in the court of the Emperor, which had two spans of circumference on the second day already. This was, of course, regarded as a portent. Cf. *Lun-hêng* [chap. 18,] Bk. V, p. 1 (*Yi Hsü*) where the legend is told in full.

<sup>3</sup> According to the *Shuking* Pt. V, Bk. XV (*Legge* Vol. III, Pt. II, p. 467) *Kao Tsung* reigned 59 years.

<sup>4</sup> 515-451 B. C.

<sup>5</sup> This story is told in full in *Lun-hêng* Bk. IV, p. 9v. which seems quoted from [Huai Nan Tse XII, 11v](#). The planet Mars being in the constellation of the 'Heart', the astrologer *Tse Wei* informed the Duke that Heaven was going to inflict a punishment upon him, advising him, however, to shift this misfortune on his prime minister, or on his people or on the year. The prince thrice declined to allow others to suffer in his stead, giving his reasons for each refusal. These are the three good maxims of our

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*Mu of Ch'in* <sup>1</sup> is believed to have been rewarded by God <sup>2</sup> with nineteen extra years on account of his conspicuous virtue, an untruth too. *Ch'ih Sung* <sup>3</sup> and *Wang Ch'iao* <sup>4</sup>, they say, became genii by their love of *Tao*, and lived on without dying, also a falsehood.

Let us suppose that a man is born, gets a body, and is given the name A, then he always preserves this body called A through his whole life up to his death. Adherents of *Tao* are said to have become genii, but it never has happened that A was transformed into B ; neither can the body pass through a metamorphose, nor years be added. Wherefore ? Because of the body, the vital force, and the constitution, which are from heaven. The body being p1.329 spring, the vital force is summer <sup>5</sup>. Man's lifetime is the outcome of his vitality. The body follows the vital force in its actions. If the vital force and the constitution are not the same, there must be a diversity in the bodies also. The life of an ox is half as long as that of a horse, and a horse lives half as long as man. Therefore, the outward forms of the ox and the horse must be different from the human. Having obtained the shape of an ox or a horse, one cannot but get their spans too. As oxen and horses do not change into men, their lifetime is also shorter than that of human beings.

Because of *Kao Tsung* and the like it is not stated that they underwent a transmutation, but simply that their lifetime was lengthened, people put faith in these reports. The force pulsating in the veins of the body is like rice hoarded up in a sack. The bulk of a picul sack also corresponds to a picul. If rice be taken away or more added, the sack appears smaller or bigger. The vital force determines the length of the human life. It is like the rice, and the body like the sack. In order to increase or diminish the lifetime, the body too

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text. *Tse Wei* then changed and congratulated the Duke, saying that Heaven had heard the three excellent sentiments uttered by him, that the same night it would cause Mars to pass through three solar mansions, and that it would add twenty-one years to his life, each mansion consisting of seven stars and each star representing one year.

<sup>1</sup> 658-619 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> *Shang Ti*, the supreme being, God.

<sup>3</sup> A magician of the time of *Shên Nung*.

<sup>4</sup> A prince of *Chin* 571 B. C., who became a Taoist and an immortal. He was seen riding through the air upon a white crane. *Mayers*, No. 801.

<sup>5</sup> The meaning is, as summer is preceded by spring, thus the body exists, before it is informed by the vital force.

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must become bigger or thinner, it cannot remain the same. Should anybody think the human body to be quite different from a sack, and that the vital force cannot well be compared to rice, we may still take another illustration from a gourd. The juice of a gourd is like the human blood, its pulp like flesh. Now, let a man take away or add some juice but so that the gourd's form remains unaltered ; he will be unable to perform this. It being impossible to man to diminish or to replenish the juice of the gourd, how can Heaven extend or curtail the human span ? As the human life can neither be lengthened nor shortened, who could have done such a thing in the case of *Kao Tsung* and others, so that we might speak of an increase of years ? The assertion that *Kao Tsung* and others were metamorphosed, and their years increased would after all be credible, but the statement advanced now that their years were prolonged, no mention being made of any transformation of their bodies, is past all belief for the following reason :

Man receives the vital force from Heaven. When it is complete, the body is informed. During life both work harmoniously together up to the last, death. Since the body cannot be transformed, the years cannot be increased either. As long as man <sup>p1.330</sup> lives, he can move, but when he dies, he collapses. At death the vital force vanishes, and the body is dissolved and decomposed. As a man, while in possession of life, cannot be metamorphosed, how should his years be prolonged ?

What changes on the body from birth to old age is the hair and the skin. The youth's hair is black, the aged man's, white. Later on, it turns yellow. But this change concerns the hair alone, not the body. A youngster has a white skin, an old man a dark one, which, later on, becomes blackish, as if covered with dust. Respecting the yellow hair and the dusty skin the *Li-ki* says :

We will have yellow hair and wizened faces indefinitely <sup>1</sup>.

If the hair changes, people reach an old age and die late. Despite this, bones and flesh do not change ; the limit of life being reached, death ensues.

From amongst the five elements earth alone admits of several

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<sup>1</sup> This verse does not occur in the *Liki*, but in the *Shiking* Pt. IV, Bk. III, Ode II (*Legge, Classics Vol. IV, Pt. II, p. 635*) : 'He (the ancestor) will bless us with the eyebrows of longevity. — We will have yellow hair and wizened faces indefinitely'.



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transformations. Moistened with water, it can be shaped into a horse, and this again be altered into a human being, but be it noted that it must not yet have been put in a kiln and burned. If, after having been modelled as a utensil, it has already been hardened by burning in the kiln, a new transformation is out of the question. Now, man may be thought of as having been baked and moulded in the furnace of Heaven and Earth. How can he still undergo a change after his shape has been fixed ?

In representing the bodies of genii one gives them a plumage, and their arms are changed into wings with which they poise in the clouds. This means an extension of their lifetime. They are believed not to die for a thousand years. These pictures are false, for there are not only false reports in the world, but also fancy pictures. However, man in reality does not belong to the class of crickets and moths. In the thirty-five kingdoms beyond the sea there live plumigerous and feathered tribes. Feathered relates to their pinions <sup>1</sup>. These people are the produce of their soil, it cannot be said that their bodies were covered with plumage and feathers through the influence of *Tao*. *Yü* <sup>2</sup> and *Yi* <sup>3</sup> visited *Hsi Wang Mu* <sup>4</sup>, p1.331 but she is not reported to have had a plumage or feathers. There are also immortals in foreign countries, but they are not described as having a plumage and feathers, and, conversely, the plumigerous and feathered tribes are not said to be immortal. As plumage and feathers are not ascribed to the immortals, these attributes cannot imply immortality. How then can it be inferred that the genii must live for ever, because they have wings ?

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<sup>1</sup> For more details see the *Shan-hai-king*.

<sup>2</sup> Great *Yü* 2205-2197.

<sup>3</sup> A minister of *Yü*.

<sup>4</sup> A Taoist goddess. Cf. my article '*Mu Wang und die Königin von Saba*' in the *Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen zu Berlin* Vol. VII, 1904.

## 8. Book II, Chap. IV

### *Shuai-hsing. The Forming of Characters*

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p1.374 Speaking of human nature one must distinguish good and bad characters. The good ones are so of themselves, the wicked can be instructed and urged on to do good. A sovereign or a father seeing that his subjects or sons have good characters, provides for them, exhorts them, and keeps them out of the reach of evil. If the latter come into contact with it, they assist and shield them, and try to win them back to the cause of virtue. It is by the transition of virtue into wickedness and of wickedness into virtue that the characters are formed.

The duke of *Shao* admonished King *Chêng* saying :

— Now you for the first time carry out Heaven's decree. Oh ! you are like a youth with whom all depends on his first years of life <sup>1</sup>.

By youth is meant the age up to fifteen. If a youth's thoughts are directed towards virtue, he will be virtuous to the last, but if his propensities tend to badness, he will end badly.

The *Shiking* says

What can that admirable man be compared to <sup>2</sup> ?

The *Tso-chuan* answers,

He is like boiled silk ; dyed with indigo, it becomes blue ; coloured with vermilion, it turns crimson.

A youth of fifteen is like silk, his gradual changes into good or bad resembling the dying of boiled silk with indigo and vermilion, which gives it a blue or a red colour. When these colours have once set, they cannot be altered again.

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<sup>1</sup> *Shuking*, The Announcement of *Shao* V, Bk. XII, 18-19. *Wang Ch'ung* reads 'alas' instead of [].

<sup>2</sup> *Shiking* I, Bk. IV, Ode IX, 2 where we read now 'what can he give ?' instead of 'what can he be compared to ?' [[Legge](#)] [[Couvreur](#)].

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It is for this reason that *Yang Tse* <sup>1</sup> wept over the by-roads and *Mê Tse* <sup>2</sup> over boiled <sub>p1.375</sub> silk. They were sorrowful, because men having gone astray from the right path cannot be transformed any more. Human nature turns from good into bad, and from bad into good only in this manner. Creepers growing amidst hemp, stand upright without support by themselves. White silk yarn placed amongst dark, becomes black without boiling. Creepers are not straight by nature, nor is the black colour an attribute of silk yarn. The hemp affording support, and the dark silk lending the colour, creepers and white silk become straight and black. Human nature bears a resemblance to creepers and silk yarn. In a *milieu* favourable to transformation or colouring, it turns good or bad.

*Wang Liang* and *Tsao Fu* were famous as charioteers : out of unruly and vicious animals they made good ones. Had they only been able to drive good horses, but incapable of breaking bad ones, they would have been nothing more than jockeys and ordinary equerries. Their horsemanship would not have been remarkable nor deserving of world-wide fame. Of *Wang Liang* the saying goes that, when he stepped into a chariot, the steeds knew no exhaustion.

Under the rule of *Yao* and *Shun* people were neither seditious nor ignorant. Tradition says that the people of *Yao* and *Shun* might have been invested with fiefs house by house <sup>3</sup>, whereas those of *Chieh* and *Chou* <sup>4</sup> were worthy of death door by door. The people followed the way prescribed by the three dynasties. That the people of the holy emperors were like this, those of the wicked emperors otherwise, was merely the result of the

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<sup>1</sup> *Yang Chu*, the philosopher of egoism. The story referred to here is told in *Lieh Tse* VIII, 10v [[Wieger](#)]. A sheep had been lost on by-roads. When *Yang Chu* heard of it, he became thoughtful and changed countenance. No mention is made of his having wept. *Wang Ch'ung* seems to have quoted from *Huai Nan Tse* XVII, 25v, who expressly mentions *Yang Tse's* weeping.

<sup>2</sup> *Mê Ti*, the philosopher of altruism. We read in his works : *Mê Tse* chap. 3, p. 4 (What colours) and in the *Lü-shih-ch'un-ch'iu* chap. 2, No. 4, p. 8 (Colouring) that *Mê Tse* witnessing the dying of silk said, *heaving a sigh*, 'Dyed blue, it turns blue, and dyed yellow, it turns yellow' and then he goes on to explain, how man also takes the colour of his environments, especially of those with whom he has intercourse, wherefore 'colouring' is a very serious affair. Nothing is said about his having shed tears.

<sup>3</sup> So excellent were they all.

<sup>4</sup> The last emperor of the *Hsia* dynasty, the type of a tyrant.

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influence of their rulers, not of the people's original nature.

The covetous hearing of *Po Yi's* <sup>1</sup> fame became disinterested, and the weak resolute. The news of *Liu Hsia Hui's* <sup>2</sup> reputation made the niggardly generous and the mean liberal. If the spread of fame alone could bring about such changes, what then must be the effect of personal intercourse and tuition ?

The seventy disciples of the school of *Confucius* were each of them able to creditably fill the post of a minister of state. <sup>p1.376</sup> Conforming to the holy doctrines, they became accomplished scholars, and their knowledge and skill grew tenfold. This was the result of teaching ; thus latent faculties were gradually developed. Before they joined *Confucius'* school, they sauntered about in the streets as quite ordinary and in no wise exceptional people. The most ungovernable of all was *Tse Lu*, who is generally reported to have been a common and unsteady individual. Before he became *Confucius'* pupil, he wore a feather hat and a pig skin belt. He was brutal and unmannerly. Whenever he heard some reading, he tossed up his feather hat, pulled his belt, and uttered such a yell, that he deafened the ears of the worthies and sages. Such was his wickedness. *Confucius* took him under his guidance. By degrees he polished and instructed him. The more he advanced in knowledge, the more he lost his fierceness, and his arrogance was broken. At last he was able to govern a state, and ranked in the four classes <sup>3</sup>. This is a shining example of how a man's character was changed from bad into good.

Fertility and sterility are the original nature of the soil. If it be rich and moist, the nature is good, and the crops will be exuberant, whereas, if it be barren and stony, the nature is bad. However, human efforts : deep ploughing, thorough tilling, and a copious use of manure may help the land, so that the harvest will become like that of the rich and well watered fields.

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<sup>1</sup> *Po Yi* and *Shu Ch'i*, two brothers famous for their disinterestedness in refusing to ascend the throne of their father, lest the other should be deprived of it. *Mayers* No. 543.

<sup>2</sup> An official of the State of Lu famous for honesty and upright character, often mentioned by *Confucius*.

<sup>3</sup> The four classes, into which the ten principal followers of *Confucius* were divided. Cf. [Analects XI, 2 \[Couvreur\]](#).

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Such is the case with the elevation of the land also. Fill up the low ground with earth, dug out by means of hoes and spades, and the low land will be on a level with the high one. If these works are still continued, not only will the low land be on a level, but even higher than the high land. The high ground will then become the low one. Let us suppose that the human natures are partly good, partly bad ; as the land may be either high or low. By making use of the good effects of education goodness can be spread and generalized. Reformation being pushed on and instruction persevered in, people will change and become still better. Goodness will increase and reach a still higher standard than it had before, just as low ground, filled up with hoes and spades, rises higher than the originally elevated ground.

T'se <sup>1</sup> though not predestinated thereto, made a fortune. His capital increased without a decree from Heaven which would have p1.377 him rich. The accumulation of wealth is due to the cleverness of the rich men of the time in making a fortune. Through this ability of theirs they are themselves the authors of their growing wealth without a special decree from Heaven. Similarly, he who has a wicked nature changes his will and his doings, if he happens to be taught by a Sage, although he was not endowed with a good character by Heaven.

One speaks of good swords for which a thousand *chin* <sup>2</sup> are paid, such as the *Yü-ch'ang* <sup>3</sup> sword of *T'ang-ch'i* <sup>4</sup> and the *T'ai-a* sword <sup>5</sup> of *Lung-ch'üan* <sup>6</sup>. Their blade is originally nothing more than a common piece of iron from a mountain. By the forger's smelting and hammering they become sharp-edged. But notwithstanding this smelting and hammering the material of good swords is not different from others. All depends on excellent workmanship

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<sup>1</sup> A disciple of *Confucius*, whose full name was *Tuan Mu T'se* alias *Tse Kung*, possessed of great abilities. He became a high official.

<sup>2</sup> The name of the ancient copper coins, which first were called 'metal', not 'gold', as may be seen from the works on coinage.

<sup>3</sup> This sword is said to have been fabricated by the famous blade-smith *Ou Yeh* in the kingdom of *Yüeh*.

<sup>4</sup> A place in *Honan*.

<sup>5</sup> This sword is the work of *Ou Yeh* of *Yüeh* and *Kan Chiang* of *Wu*, both celebrated sword-cutlers, who wrought it for the King of *Ch'u*.

<sup>6</sup> A place most likely in *Chekiang*, called 'Sword river' under the *Sung* dynasty. *Playfair, Cities* No. 4650.

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and on the blade-smith's ability in working the iron. Take a sword worth only one *chin* from *Tung-hsia*, heat it again, and forge it, giving it sufficient fire, and smoothing and sharpening its edge, and it will be like a sword of a thousand *chin*. Iron and stones are made by Heaven, still being worked, they undergo a modification of their substance. Why then should man, whose nature is imbued with the five virtues, despair of the badness of his character, before he has been thoroughly worked upon by Worthies and Sages ?

The skillful physicians that in olden days were held in high esteem, knew the sources where virulent diseases sprang from, and treated and cured them with acupuncture and medicines. Had they merely known the names of the complaints, but done nothing besides, looking quietly on, would there have been anything wonderful in them ? Men who are not good have a disease of their nature. To expect them to change without proper treatment and instruction would be hopeless indeed.

The laws of Heaven can be applied in a right and in a wrong way. The right way is in harmony with Heaven, the wrong one owes its results to human astuteness, but cannot in its effects be <sup>p1.378</sup> distinguished from the right one. This will be shown by the following. Among the 'Tribute of *Yü*' <sup>1</sup> are mentioned jade and white corals <sup>2</sup>. These were the produce of earth and genuine precious stones and pearls. But the Taoists melt five kinds of stones, and make five-coloured gems out of them. Their lustre, if compared with real gems, does not differ. Pearls in fishes and shells are as genuine as the jade-stones in the Tribute of *Yü*. Yet the Marquis of *Sui* <sup>3</sup> made pearls from chemicals, which were as brilliant as genuine ones <sup>4</sup>. This is the climax of Taoist learning and a triumph of their skill.

By means of a burning-glass one catches fire from heaven. Of five stones liquefied on the *Ping-wu* <sup>5</sup> day of the 5th moon an instrument is cast, which,

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<sup>1</sup> The Tribute of *Yü*, *Yü-kung*, is also the name of a book of the *Shuking*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Shuking* Pt. III, Book I (*Legge, Classics* Vol. III, Pt. I, p. 127).

<sup>3</sup> A principality in *Hupei*.

<sup>4</sup> The time of this Marquis of *Sui* is unknown. His pearls are very famous in Chinese literature. According to one tradition the Marquis found a wounded snake, and cured it. Out of gratitude the snake presented him with a precious pearl, which shone at night. *Wang Ch'ung* makes the Marquis produce artificial pearls himself.

<sup>5</sup> A number of the sexagenary cycle used for the designation of years, months, and

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when polished bright, held up against the sun, brings down fire too, in precisely the same manner as, when fire is caught in the proper way. Now, one goes even so far as to furbish the crooked blades of swords, till they shine, when, held up against the sun, they attract fire also. Crooked blades are not burning-glasses ; that they can catch fire is the effect of rubbing. Now, provided the bad-natured men are of the same kind as good-natured ones, then they can be influenced, and induced to do good. Should they be of a different kind, they can also be coerced in the same manner as the Taoists cast gems, *Sui Hou* made pearls, and people furbish the crooked blades of swords. Enlightened with learning and familiarized with virtue, they too begin by and by to practise benevolence and equity.

When *Huang Ti* fought with *Yen Ti* <sup>1</sup> for the empire, he taught bears, leopards, and tigers to combat for him in the wilds of *Fan-ch'üan*. After three battles he gained his end, and *Yen Ti* was routed.

*Yao* yielded the empire to *Shun*. *Kun* <sup>2</sup>, one of his vassals, desired to become one of the three chief ministers, but *Yao* did <sub>p1.379</sub> not listen to this request. Thereupon *Kun* became more infuriated than even ferocious animals are, and wished to rebel. The horns of animals, all in a line, served him as a rampart, and their lifted tails were his banners. They opposed and tackled their foe with the utmost determination and energy. — If birds and beasts, which are shaped otherwise than man, can nevertheless be caused to fight, how much more so man's own kindred ? Proceeding on this line of argument we have no reason to doubt that (by music) the multitudinous animals were made to dance, the fish in the ponds to come out and listen, and the six kinds of horses <sup>3</sup> to look up from their fodder <sup>4</sup>.

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days.

<sup>1</sup> *Yen Ti* is usually identified with *Shên Nung* and said to have been his predecessor, but we do not learn that he fought with *Huang Ti* for the empire.

<sup>2</sup> According to *Kang Hi*, *Kun* [a] would be the same as [b] *Kun*, *Yao's* Minister of Works, who in vain endeavoured to drain the waters of the great flood. His son *Yü*, who subsequently became emperor, succeeded at last in regulating the water courses. Here we seem to have a different tradition.

<sup>3</sup> Six kinds of horses were distinguished in the studs of the *Chou* emperors, according to their height. *Tcheou Li* (*Chou Li*), trad. par [Biot, Vol. II, p. 262](#).

<sup>4</sup> There are many myths illustrative of the power of music. *Hu Pa* played the guitar, so that the fish came out to listen, and *Po Ya* played the lute in such an admirable way,

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The equalization of what varies in different categories as well as the differentiation of what is the same in similar classes, does not depend on the thing itself, but is man's doing.

It is by instruction that living beings are transformed. Among the Three *Miao* tribes <sup>1</sup> some were honest, some disreputable. *Yao* and *Shun* made them all alike by conferring the boon of instruction upon them.

Suppose the men of *Ch'u* and *Yüeh* <sup>2</sup> to settle down in *Chuang* or *Yü* <sup>3</sup>. Having passed there months and years, they would become pliant and yielding, and their customs changed. They say that the people of *Ch'i* are soft and supple, those of *Ch'in* unsteady and versatile, of *Ch'u* lively and passionate, of *Yen* <sup>4</sup> dull and simple. Now let us suppose that people of the four States alternately went to live in *Chuang* and *Yü* for a certain time, the prolonged stay in a place remote from their country would undubitably bring about a change of their character.

A bad natured man's heart is like wood or stone, but even wood and stone can be used by men, why not what really is neither wood nor stone? We may hope that it will still be able p1.380 to understand the precepts of superior men. Only in the case of insanity, when a person sings and weeps in the streets, knowing neither east nor west, taking no heed of scorching heat or humidity, unaware of his own madness and unconscious of hunger and satiety, nature is deranged and upset, and there is no help. As such a man sees nothing before him, he is afraid of nothing.

Therefore the government does not abolish the officers of public instruction or dispense with criminal judges, wishing thereby to inculcate the observance of the moral laws. The schools guide people at first, the laws control and restrain them later on.

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that the horses forgot their fodder, and looked up to harken. *Han-shih-wai-chuan*, quoted by the *P'ei-wên-yün* fu chap. 96.

<sup>1</sup> The aborigines of China.

<sup>2</sup> They were settled in modern *Hukuang* and *Chekiang*.

<sup>3</sup> An allusion to *Mencius* Bk. III, Pt. II, chap. 6 [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)], where the difference of the dialects of *Ch'i* and *Ch'u* is pointed out. *Chuang* and *Yü* were two quarters in the capital of *Ch'i*.

<sup>4</sup> The *Ch'i* State was in northern *Shantung*, *Ch'in* in *Shensi*, and *Yen* in *Chili*. The characteristic of the inhabitants of these provinces is partly still true to-day.



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Even the will of a *Tan Chu* might be curbed ; the proof is that the soldiers of a big army are kept in order by reproofs. Men and officers are held in check to such an extent, that they look at death as a return.

*Ho Lu* <sup>1</sup> put his soldiers to the test by the 'Five Lakes' <sup>2</sup>. They all cut their arms with swords, that the blood trickled down to the ground. *Kou Chien* <sup>3</sup> also gave his men a trial in the hall of his inner palace. Those who jumped into the fire and perished, were innumerable. Human nature is not particularly fond of swords and fire, but the two rulers had such a power over their men, that they did not care for their lives. It is the effect of military discipline to make light of cuts and blood.

*Mêng Pên* <sup>4</sup> was bold, but on hearing the order for the army he became afraid. In the same way the officers who were wont to draw their swords to fight out, whose merits were first, went through all the ceremonial, and prostrated themselves (before the emperor), when *Shu Sun T'ung* <sup>5</sup> had fixed the rites. Imperious and overbearing first, they became obedient and submissive. The power of instruction and the influence of virtue transform the character. One need not sorrow that a character is bad, but it is to be regretted, if it does not submit to the teachings of the sages. Such an individual owes his misfortune to himself.

Beans and wheat are different from rite and millet, yet their consumption satisfies the appetite. Are the natures of low and <sup>p1.381</sup> superior men then of a different kind ? They resemble the Five Grains <sup>6</sup>, all have their use. There is no fundamental difference between them, only their manifestations are unlike. The fluid men are endowed with, is either copious or deficient, and their character correspondingly good or bad. The wicked have received but a

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<sup>1</sup> King of the *Wu* State, 514-496 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> Another name of the *T'ai-hu* lake in *Kiangsu*, which consisted of five lakes, or five connected sheets of water.

<sup>3</sup> The ruler of the *Yüeh* State, 496 B. C., who overthrew the kingdom of *Wu*.

<sup>4</sup> A hero of enormous strength in the *Chou* epoch.

<sup>5</sup> An official of great power under *Han Kao Tsu*, who subdued the arrogance and superciliousness of the princes and nobles by the ceremonial they were made to undergo at an audience before the new emperor. *Shi-chi* chap. 99, p. 7v.

<sup>6</sup> Hemp, millet, rice, wheat, and beans.

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small dose of kindness, the irascible, plenty of temper. If kindness be insufficient, people do wrong, and there is not much hope for an improvement. With plenty of temper, people become violent, and have no sense of justice. Moreover, their feeling of sympathy is defective, joy and anger do not happen at the proper time, and they have baseless and unreasonable fears. Reckless men like that commit outrages, therefore they are considered bad.

Man has in his body the Five Qualities <sup>1</sup> and the Five Organs <sup>2</sup>. If he got too little of them, or if they are too small, his actions do not attain to goodness <sup>3</sup>. Man himself is either accomplished or deficient, but accomplishment and deficiency do not mean a difference of organisation. Use leaven in big, or in small quantities, and the result will be similar. In rich as well as in poor wine there is the same leaven. Good men as well as bad ones are permeated by the same original fluid. According to its greater or smaller volumen the mind of the individual is bright or dull.

*Hsi Mên Pao* would tighten his leathern belt, whenever he wanted to relax himself. *Tung An Yü* loosened his girdle strings, when he was going to rouse himself <sup>4</sup>. Yet neither passion nor indolence is the right medium. However, he who wears a belt or a girdle on his body is properly dressed. When the question arises, how deficiencies can be made good by means of belts and strings, the names of *Hsi Mên Pao* and *Tung An Yü* must be mentioned together <sup>5</sup>.

Houses of poor, wretched people are not in a proper state. They have holes in the walls under the roof, to which others take objection. When rich

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<sup>1</sup> The Five Cardinal Virtues : benevolence, justice, propriety, knowledge, and truth.

<sup>2</sup> The heart, the liver, the stomach, the lungs, and the kidneys.

<sup>3</sup> Human character, to wit the Five Qualities, depends on the volumen of the original fluid, the vital force, which shapes the Five Organs. According as they are bigger or smaller, the nature of the individual is different. This idea finds expression in the Chinese language. A man with a big heart is generous and liberal, with a small heart, mean. The fluid of the stomach is equivalent to anger.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 1.122.

<sup>5</sup> In both cases the belt or girdle is the same indispensable part of a gentleman's toilet, but the use made of it, and the results achieved, are quite different. The same may be said of human nature.

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and well-to-do people build houses, they have the walls made in a way, that they find there real shelter. The whole house is in good repair, and nobody could say anything against it <sup>1</sup>.

In *Wei* <sup>2</sup> the land was divided in lots of a hundred *mow*, in *Yeh* <sup>3</sup> alone the lots measured two hundred *mow*. *Hsi Mên Pao* irrigated his land with water from the *Chang* <sup>4</sup> and made it so fertile, that it yielded one bushel <sup>5</sup> per *mow*. Man's natural parts are like the fields of *Yeh*, tuition and education, like the water from the *Chang*. One must be sorry for him that cannot be transformed, but not for a man whose character it is difficult to govern.

In the streets of the city of *Loyang* <sup>6</sup> there was no water. It was therefore pulled up from the *Lo* by watermen <sup>7</sup>. If it was streaming quickly day and night, it was their doing. From this point of view kindness and justice must increase manifold in him who comes into close contact with an excellent man <sup>8</sup>. *Mencius'* mother changed her domicile, for she had ascertained this truth <sup>9</sup>.

Water amongst men is dirty and muddy, in the open country it is clear and limpid. It is all the same water, and it flows from the confines of heaven ; its dirtiness and limpidity are the effects of its environments.

*Chao T'o*, king of the southern *Yüeh*, was originally an honourable man of the *Han* State <sup>10</sup>, but he took to the habits of the southern barbarians,

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<sup>1</sup> Human nature is like those houses. They are all houses, and serve the same purpose, but some are in good repair, others in a wretched state.

<sup>2</sup> An ancient State in north *Honan* and south *Chili*.

<sup>3</sup> The modern *Chang-tê-fu*.

<sup>4</sup> A large tributary of the river *Wei* in *Honan*, near *Chang-tê-fu*.

<sup>5</sup> A *Chung*, an ancient measure equal to 4 pecks = 1 bushel, as some say. According to others it would be as much as 34 pecks.

<sup>6</sup> The capital of the *Chou* dynasty in *Honan*, the modern *Honanfu*.

<sup>7</sup> Probably with pump-works.

<sup>8</sup> The excellent man is like the river *Lo*. Streams of kindness and justice part from him.

<sup>9</sup> She changed her domicile for the purpose of saving her son from the bad influences of the neighbourhood.

<sup>10</sup> *Chao T'o* went to *Yüeh*, modern *Kuang-tung*, as general of *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti*, and subsequently became king of the southern barbarians, whose customs he adopted. *Lu Chia* was sent to him by the first emperor of the *Han* dynasty to receive his declaration of allegiance.

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disregarded the imperial commands, dressed his hair in a tuft, and used to squat down. He was so fond of <sup>p1.383</sup> this, as if it had been his nature. *Lu Chia* spoke to him of the virtues of the *Han*, and impressed him with their holy power, so that he suddenly rose up, and felt remorse. He received the commands of his sovereign, and communicated them to the savages. Against his hair-dress and to his squatting he felt something like a natural repugnancy. First he acted in the aforesaid manner, afterwards thus. It shows what force instruction also has, and that nature is not the only factor.

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## 9. Book II, Chap. V

### *Chi-yen. Auspicious Portents*

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p1.173 Whenever men are predestinated for something grand by Heaven, auspicious portents are seen on Earth. When such appear on Earth, Heaven's destiny is at work. There are different kinds of omens, either do they appear in the men themselves or they are lucky signs, or take the form of a sort of halo.

*Huang Ti* is reported to have been an embryo for 20 months, before he was born. After birth his intelligence was marvellous. Weak as he was, he could already speak. When he was full-grown, he took the lead of all the feudal princes, who submitted to his sway. He taught the bears to fight, and thus defeated *Yen Ti*, who was completely routed. His nature was different from that of other people, therefore he remained for ten months longer in his mother's womb. Being predestined to become emperor, he taught the creatures, and they were subservient to him.

*Yao's* body was like the sun, when closely inspected, viewed at a distance, he appeared like a cloud. When the great flood rose up to the sky, and snakes and dragons did mischief, *Yao* employed *Yü* for the regulation of the water and the expulsion of the snakes and dragons. The water, when regulated, flowed eastward, and snakes and dragons absconded. His bones were abnormal, thence the extraordinary events. As he was endowed with a wonderful intellect, portents appeared in things. Since by fate he was to become noble, he ascended the imperial throne as a marquis of *T'ang*.

Previous to his meeting with *Yao*, *Shun* was living unmarried in a nasty, out-of-the-way place. *Ku Sou* <sup>1</sup> together with *Hsiang* <sup>2</sup> attempted to kill him. They bade him complete the building of a granary, and kindled a fire underneath. They directed him to dig a well, and then they threw earth down

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<sup>1</sup> The harsh and unfeeling father of the virtuous *Shun*.

<sup>2</sup> *Shun's* wicked brother.

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from above. *Shun* contrived to get out of the granary unharmed by the fire, and to make his escape from the well by one side, unhurt by the earth<sup>1</sup>. When *Yao* heard of this, he summoned him, and gave him an office on trial. *Shun* filled his post with great credit, and no disorder occurred. He would enter a solitary, big forest without being pounced upon by tigers and wolves, or being bitten by vipers or snakes. In the midst of thunderstorm and a gushing rain-shower he did not go astray<sup>2</sup>. Men bent upon his assassination, could do him no harm, and wild birds and reptiles with venomous stings were unable to wound him. Suddenly he attained imperial sway, and mounted the throne of the son of heaven.

Prior to *Hou Chi's*<sup>3</sup> time, his mother<sup>4</sup> walked upon the footstep of a giant. Others say that she put on *Ti Ku's*<sup>5</sup> clothes, or that she rested in *Ti Ku's* place. At all events, she became *enceinte* with a child, which she cast away in a narrow alley, regarding it as an ill omen. But oxen and horses did not dare to tread upon it. She placed it on ice, but the birds covered it with their wings. From all these auspicious signs converging on the baby's body, the mother learned, what wonderful qualities it possessed. Therefore, she brought it up. When *Hou Chi* had attained to manhood, he assisted *Yao*, and rose to the rank of a minister of war.

The *Wusun*<sup>6</sup> Prince bearing the surname of *K'un Mo* had his father slain by the *Hsiung-nu*<sup>7</sup>, and was himself thrown into the desert, still alive. The birds fed him on flesh, which they carried in their beaks. The *Shan Yü*<sup>8</sup> was amazed at this, which appeared to him supernatural. He took care of the boy,

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Mencius* Book V, Pt. I, chap. II ([Legge p. 222-223](#)) [[Couvreur](#)] and *Shi-chi* chap. I, p. 23 [[Chavannes](#)].

<sup>2</sup> *Vid. Shuking* Pt. II, Book I, chap. II.

<sup>3</sup> A mythical personage, the 'Lord of the Grain', said to have been Director of Husbandry under *Yao* and *Shun*.

<sup>4</sup> The word mother, required by the context, must be supplemented in the original.

<sup>5</sup> A legendary emperor prior to *Yao*, *Hou Chi's* father, after one tradition.

<sup>6</sup> A *Kirghis* tribe settled in the N. E. of *Ferghana* in the 2nd cent. B. C. (*Shi-chi* chap. 123, p. 4).

<sup>7</sup> The powerful Turkish tribes, which were China's northern neighbours during the *Han* time, perhaps the *Huns*. Long wars were waged between the Chinese and the *Hsiung-nu*.

<sup>8</sup> The title of the chieftain of the *Hsiung-nu*.

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and, when he had grown strong, he gave him a military post. After he had won many laurels, the *Shan Yü* put the people formerly obeying his father again under *K'un Mo's* command, and directed him always to guard the Western City <sup>1</sup>.

p1.175 *Hou Chi* was not to be cast away, therefore the oxen and horses did not kick him, and the birds covered and protected him with their plumage. *K'un Mo* was not doomed to die, therefore the birds came with flesh in their beaks to feed him.

A servant girl of the king of *T'o-li* <sup>2</sup> of the northern *Yi* <sup>3</sup> was with child. The king wanted to kill her. The girl said by way of apology :

— A vapour, big as an egg, descended from heaven, and made me *enceinte*.

Afterwards, she was delivered of a child, which she threw away into a pig-stye. The pigs sniffed at it, but it did not perish. Then it was removed again to the horse stable, in order that the horses should kill it, but the horses also only sniffed at it, and it did not die. The king thereupon imagined that the child would become a sovereign, and therefore ordered the mother to take it back, and had it nursed by his slaves. The boy received the name of *Tung Ming*. He was employed as a shepherd for cattle and horses. As he was an excellent archer, the king got afraid, that he might deprive him of his kingdom, and therefore wished to kill him. *Tung Ming* went southward to the *Yen-hu* river, where with his bow he beat the current, when the fish and turtles came and formed a floating bridge, enabling *Tung Ming* to cross. Then the fish and turtles separated again so, that the troops pursuing him could not follow. Subsequently he became king of *Fu-yü*. Among the northern *Yi* there is a kingdom of *Fu-yü* <sup>4</sup>.

When *Tung Ming's* mother first became pregnant, she perceived a vapour

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<sup>1</sup> This passage is taken almost literally from the *Shi-chi* chap. 123, p.9v. The *Shi-chi* still adds that *K'un Mo* was suckled by a she-wolf.

<sup>2</sup> A State in northern *Corea*, *Ma-tuan-lin* chap. 324, p. 14v., where our passage is quoted.

<sup>3</sup> Barbarous, non Chinese tribes in the east.

<sup>4</sup> In *Liaotung*.

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descending from heaven, and, when she threw the newly born away, pigs and horses sniffed at him. After he had grown up, the king desired to kill him, but the fish and turtles, which he had shot, formed a floating bridge. According to heaven's fate he was not to die, therefore he was saved from pigs and horses. As he was predestinated to become king of *Fu yü*, the fish and turtles formed a bridge to help him.

When *Yi Yin* <sup>1</sup> was about to be born, his mother dreamt that she saw a man, who said to her :

— Water flows from the mortar <sup>2</sup>. Forthwith travel eastward.

The mother took note of this, and, on the next morning, found out that really water came out from <sub>p1.176</sub> the mortar <sup>3</sup>. She went 10 Li eastward. When she looked back to her native place, all was under water. *Yi Yin's* destiny was not to be drowned, consequently his mother had a dream, and went away.

The same principle holds good for the city of *Li-yang* <sup>4</sup>. Those whose fate was like that of *Yi Yin*, were certainly roused beforehand, and removed to another place before the catastrophe.

When Duke *Hsiang* of *Ch'i* got into trouble, Duke *Huan*, the crown-prince, had to fight for his throne with *Tse Chiu* <sup>5</sup>. *Kuan Chung* assisted *Tse Chiu*, *Pao Shu* <sup>6</sup> stood by Duke *Huan*. *Kuan Chung* in a combat against duke *Huan*, shot at him with arrows, and hit him on the buckle of his belt. Man is generally 7 feet high <sup>7</sup>, the belt clasps the waist, and the buckle attached to the belt covers only a spot less than an inch wide. Its smallness makes it difficult to be hit. Moreover, the pointed edge is curved on its polished surface. All the arrows hitting the buckle are deflected. Yet *Kuan Chung* just hit the buckle in

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<sup>1</sup> The chief minister of *T'ang*, the founder of the *Shang* dynasty 1766 B. C. Many legends are current about his origin.

<sup>2</sup> In ancient times holes in the earth were used as mortars.

<sup>3</sup> Namely the underground water.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 1.136.

<sup>5</sup> In 686 B. C. Duke *Hsiang* was assassinated by his nephew *Wu Chih* (*Ch'un-ch'iu* III, 8). *Tse Chiu* was a brother of Duke *Huan*.

<sup>6</sup> *Kuan Chung* and *Pao Shu Ya* were bosom-friends. At the recommendation of *Pao Shu Ya*, *Kuan Chung*, later on, entered into the service of Duke *Huan*, whom he had first opposed.

<sup>7</sup> The ancient Chinese foot was much smaller than ours.



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the middle. The arrow struck against it, and then fell down without deviating into the flesh on either side. Duke *Huan's* fate was wealth and honour, and a god helped him, so that the arrow hitting his buckle did not hurt him.

King *Kung* of *Ch'u* <sup>1</sup> had five sons : *Tse Chao*, *Tse Yü*, *Tse Kan*, *Tse Hsi*, and *Ch'i Chi*, who all were much liked by him. But having no son from his first wife, whom he might make his successor, he sacrificed to the mountains and rivers, and invoked the decision of the gods. Together with his second wife *Pa* he buried a jade badge in the ancestral hall, and bade his five sons to enter after having feasted, and make obeisance. The later king *K'ang* stepped over it, *Tse Yü* reached it with his elbow, *Tse Kan* and *Tse Hsi* both remained far from it. *Ch'i Chi* was carried in as a baby. With each prostration he pressed on the top of the jade badge. When King *Kung* died, *Tse Chao* became King *K'ang* <sup>2</sup>, but his son lost the kingdom. *Tse Yü* became King *Ling* <sup>3</sup>, but was p1.177 himself assassinated. *Tse Kan* reigned but ten odd days. *Tse Hsi* did not come into power, and even was afraid of being beheaded. All were exterminated and left no progeny. *Ch'i Chi* mounted the throne later, and continued the sacrifices of the house of *Ch'u*, for such had been the presage <sup>4</sup>.

The duration of the reigns of these princes corresponded to the distance they kept from the jade badge, when prostrating themselves. The piece of jade was in the earth, while the five sons, unaware of it, entered one by one, and bowed nearer or farther off. When they pressed down the top of the jade ornament, they were, so to speak, induced by their spirits to kneel down.

*T'u An Ku* of *Chin* <sup>5</sup> out of hatred destroyed the sons of *Chao Tun* <sup>6</sup>. After the death of *Chao So* <sup>7</sup>, his wife had a posthumous child. When *T'u An Ku*

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<sup>1</sup> 589-558 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> 558-543 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> 539-527 B. C.

<sup>4</sup> The *Shi-chi* chap. 40, p. 14 tells this story with nearly the same words, and has taken it from the *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Chao* 13th year [[Couvreur](#)]. *Vid. Legge, Chinese Classics* Vol. V, p. 650, 1st col. and [[Chavannes, Mém. Historiques](#) Vol. IV, p. 367].

<sup>5</sup> A minister of the State of *Chin* 597 B. C.

<sup>6</sup> Also a minister of *Chin* and rival of *T'u An Ku*.

<sup>7</sup> Likewise slain by *T'u An Ku*.

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heard of it, he sought it in the Palace <sup>1</sup>. The mother put it into her pantaloons, and swore the following oath :

The whole *Chao* family will be lost, if the child cries, it will not be so, if it does not utter a sound.

While being searched for, it did not cry at all. Then its escape could be effected, and its life be saved. *Ch'êng Ying Ch'i* <sup>2</sup> carried it away, and concealed it on a mountain. During Duke *Ching's* time <sup>3</sup>, *Han Chüeh* mentioned it to the duke, who together with *Han Chüeh* raised the orphan of *Chao* to his former rank, so that he could continue the sacrificial rites of his family under the name of *Wên Tse*. The orphan of *Chao* did not utter a sound, as though its mouth had been closed. Thus the elevation of *Wên Tse* was predetermined by fate.

The mother of *Han Kao Tsu*, dame *Liu*, reposed on the banks of a large lake. In a dream, she met with a spirit. At that time there was a tempest with thunder and lightning. In the darkness a dragon appeared on high. The son, of which she was delivered, had an excellent character, but was very fond of wine. He would buy wine on credit from Mrs. *Wang* and mother *Wu*. When he was drunk, he stopped, and lay down to sleep. Mrs. *Wang* and mother *Wu* then always saw some miraculous signs about him. Whenever he p1.178 remained to drink wine, the price of the wine then sold was many times as much as usual.

Later on he walked into the lake, and cut a big snake into pieces with his hand. An old woman filled the roads with her wails, crying that the Red Emperor had killed her son. This miracle being very striking was much talked about <sup>4</sup>.

*Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* used to say that in the south-east there was the spirit of a son of heaven. Therefore he travelled eastward in order to suppress it. This was *Kao Tsu's* spirit. Together with *Lü Hou* he concealed himself amidst

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<sup>1</sup> *Chao So's* widow, being a daughter of the ducal house of *Chin*, had sought refuge in the palace.

<sup>2</sup> A faithful adherent of *Chao So*.

<sup>3</sup> 598-579 B. C.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the detailed account given in Chap. 64.

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the marshes in the *Mang* and *T'ang* Mountains <sup>1</sup>. When *Lü Hou* with other people went in search for him, they always saw a vapour rising in a straight line above him, and thus discovered where he was <sup>2</sup>.

Later on *Kao Tsu* agreed with *Hsiang Yü* that whoever first entered the gates of *Ch'in*, should be king. *Kao Tsu* arrived first, which was deeply resented by *Hsiang Yü*. *Fan T'sêng* <sup>3</sup> said :

— I pray to look at his vapours. They all take the shape of a dragon, and have five colours : they are those of the son of heaven. He must be despatched forthwith.

When *Kao Tsu* went to thank *Hsiang Yü*, the latter and *Ya Fu* <sup>4</sup> hatched a plot to kill him. At their instigation *Hsiang Chuang* performed a dance with a drawn sword. *Hsiang Po*, who knew their intentions, began to dance together with *Hsiang Chuang*, and no sooner was the sword raised over *Kao Tsu's* head, than *Hsiang Po* covered him with his own body so, that the sword did not fall, and the murderous plot was not carried out <sup>5</sup>. At one time, *Kao Tsu* was rescued by *Chang Liang* and *Fan K'uai* <sup>6</sup>, and after all got off unhurt. Thereupon he swayed the whole empire.

When his mother conceived him, the spirit of a dragon made its appearance. When he grew up, peculiar clouds were seen about the wine shop. During the night, he killed a snake, and the snake's old mother lamented, and cried. *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* and *Lü Hou* saw an aureole above him. *Hsiang Yü* planned his assassination, but *Hsiang Po* protected him, and the scheme fell through. <sup>p1.179</sup> He found such helpmates as *Chang Liang* and *Fan K'uai*. For there being signs pointing to his future wealth and honour, all things obeyed him, and men lent him their help and support.

A younger brother of the Empress Dowager *Tou* <sup>7</sup>, of the name of *Kuang*

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<sup>1</sup> The *Mang* Mountains were situated in *Honan*, the *T'ang* Mountains in *Kansu*.

<sup>2</sup> These myths about the first emperor of the *Han* dynasty are related in almost the same words in the *Shi-chi* chap. 8, p. 1v.

<sup>3</sup> The famous counsellor of *Kao Tsu's* rival, *Hsiang Yü*.

<sup>4</sup> The title of *Fan T'sêng*.

<sup>5</sup> The story is told more in detail in the *Shi-chi* chap.7, p. 14v.

<sup>6</sup> Partisans of *Kao Tsu*, whose success is to a great extent due to their efforts.

<sup>7</sup> The wife of the emperor *Wên Ti*, 179-156 B.C., and the mother of *Ching Ti*, 156-140.

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*Kuo*, was, at the age of 4 or 5 years, robbed from his poor family, and sold, his people not knowing his whereabouts. More than ten times he was sold again to other families, till he came to *I-yang* <sup>1</sup>. There he went on the hills for his master to make charcoal : When it grew cold at night, over a hundred people lay down under the coal. The coal collapsed, and all were crushed to death, save *Kuang Kuo*, who managed to escape. He then divined himself, and ascertained that, after a certain number of days, he would be made a marquis. He left his home, and betook himself to *Chang-an* <sup>2</sup>. There he learned that the Empress *Tou* had lately settled her family at *Kuan-chin* in *Ch'ing-ho* <sup>3</sup>. He reported himself to the emperor. The Empress Dowager prevailed upon *Ching Ti* to grant him an audience. What he replied to the questions about his origin proved true, and the emperor made him rich presents. At the accession of *Wên Ti* <sup>4</sup>, *Kuang Kuo* was created a marquis of *Chang Wu*. When the coal heaps came down, more than a hundred people were killed, only *Kuang Kuo* escaped. Being preserved by fate for wealth and honour, he did not only keep alive, but was made a marquis to boot.

*Yü Tse Ta*, a native of *Tung-kuan* in *Ch'ên-liu* <sup>5</sup> came into the world at night. His mother beheld something like a skein of silk over him, which went up to heaven. She asked other people's advice about it. All were agreed that it was an auspicious fluid foreboding honour, which reached up to heaven. *Yü Tse Ta*, when grown up, became an official, and was promoted to the rank of Minister of Education.

*Kuang Wên Po* <sup>6</sup> from *P'u fan* <sup>7</sup> in *Ho-tung* <sup>8</sup> was likewise born about midnight. At that time some one called his father's name p1.180 from without doors. The father went out, and replied, but nobody was to be seen, only a

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<sup>1</sup> A district in *Honanfu*.

<sup>2</sup> The capital under the former *Han* dynasty.

<sup>3</sup> *Ch'ing-ho*, a State in *Honan*, the present prefecture of *K'ai-fêng-fu*, of which *Kuan-chin* formed a district.

<sup>4</sup> Probably a misprint for *Wu Ti* ; for *Wu Ti*, not *Wên Ti* succeeded *Ching Ti*.

<sup>5</sup> In *K'ai-fêng-fu* (*Honan*).

<sup>6</sup> The *T'ai-p'ing-yü-lan* quoting this passage writes *T'ang Wên Po*. Nothing more is to be learned about this person from the cyclopedias.

<sup>7</sup> The modern *P'u-Chou* in *Shansi*.

<sup>8</sup> Literally : the country east of the (Yellow) River.

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big wooden stick was planted next to the door. He understood well that it was different from common ones. The father took the stick into his house, and showed it to somebody, who prognosticated the future from it, saying :

— A lucky omen, indeed. When *Kuang Wên Po* is grown up, he will study, and in his official career be appointed prefect of *Kuang-han* <sup>1</sup>.

*Kuang Wên Po* was to be wealthy and honoured, therefore his father was presented with the stick. The diviner, as it were, implied that the stick represented the strength of the child.

On the day *Chia-tse* <sup>2</sup> in the twelfth moon of the first year *Chien-p'ing* <sup>3</sup>, when the Emperor *Kuang Wu Ti* saw the light in the second hall of the seraglio in the rear of the *Chi-yang* palace <sup>4</sup>, his father was magistrate of *Chi-yang* <sup>5</sup>. During the night this room was lighted of itself without there being any fire. His father summoned the secretary *Ch'ung Lan*, and despatched him to consult a fortune-teller. For that purpose *Ch'ung Lan*, accompanied by the groom *Su Yung*, went to *Wang Ch'ang Sun's* place. *Wang Chang Sun* said to the two :

— That is a lucky thing, I cannot say more.

That same year a blade of grain grew among house-leek and wall-pepper. It had three roots, one stalk, and nine ears, and was by one to two feet higher than a common one, it being an auspicious blade <sup>6</sup>.

At the beginning of *Yuan Ti's* <sup>7</sup> reign a phenix alighted on the *Chi-yang kung*. Hence there exists still to-day in the *Chi-yang* palace a phenix cottage.

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<sup>1</sup> An ancient name of the region about *Ch'êng-tu* and *Tung-ch'uan* in *Sse-chuan*.

<sup>2</sup> The first number of the sexagenary cycle.

<sup>3</sup> 6-2 B. C.

<sup>4</sup> This palace, once used by the Emperor *Han Wu Ti* as a travelling lodge, had been closed. *Kuang Wu Ti's* father finding his yamen too wet to live in, had moved into the old palace, and installed himself in the halls at the back.

<sup>5</sup> The modern *T'sao-chou-fu* in *Shantung*.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *T'ai-p'ing-yü-lan* (*Kuang Wu Ti*) where the *Tung-kuan Han-chi* is quoted.

<sup>7</sup> *Han Yuan Ti* 48-32 B. C. The *Tung-kuan Han-chi* relates that the phenix came down at the birth of *Kuang Wu Ti*, 6 B. C.

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*Yuan Ti* together with *Li Fu* and others travelled into the region of *Ch'ai* <sup>1</sup>. On the road they fell in with insurgents, and greatly alarmed, fled to the old cottage of *Chi-yang*. When they arrived, they beheld a red glare like fire just south from the road leading to the old cottage. A stream of light went up to heaven, and after a moment was gone.

p1.181 At *Wang Mang's* time, the Lord Marshal *Su Po A* could distinguish the currents of air. When, on an embassy, he passed through the suburb of *Ch'uang-ling* <sup>2</sup>, he found the air very brisk and fresh. *Kuang Wu Ti* came to *Ho-pei* <sup>3</sup>, where he had an interview with *Su Po A*. He put to him the question :

— How did you know that a lucky wind was blowing, minister, when you passed *Ch'uang-ling* ?

— Only because I saw the air brisk and fresh, was *Su Po A's* reply.

Ergo, when by Heaven's decree a new man is to rise, and a wise emperor to come forth, the manifestations of the original fluid before and after can clearly be made out <sup>4</sup>. But, when there is only a succession of power, and a continuation of former institutions, insomuch as the latter serve as a basis, then the manifestations of the heavenly fluid are not worth mentioning <sup>5</sup>. When there is a complete revolution, and a new dragon rises, he starts from very small beginnings, and passes first through all sorts of calamities, as in the case of *Han Kao Tsu* and *Kuang Wu Ti* <sup>6</sup>. Were they not ushered in with wonderful signs from heaven, men, and spirits, and great splendour ?

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<sup>1</sup> An old name of *T'ai-an-hsien* in *Shantung*.

<sup>2</sup> A city in *Honan*.

<sup>3</sup> Under the *Han* a district 'north of the Yellow River', corresponding to the modern *P'ing-lu-hsien* in *Shansi*.

<sup>4</sup> In case of a great political revolution.

<sup>5</sup> In case of regular succession, the son following the father.

<sup>6</sup> Both founders of new dynasties.

## 10. Book III, Chap. I

### *Ou-hui*. Coincidences

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p.2.001 Fate holds sway over happiness and misfortune, being a spontaneous principle and a decree to meet with certain incidents. There is no alien force, and nothing else exercises an overwhelming influence or affects the final result.

The world speaks of *Tse Hsü*<sup>1</sup> falling upon his sword, and of *Ch'ü Yuan*<sup>2</sup> drowning himself. *Tse Lan* and *Tsai P'i* had slandered them to the princes of *Wu* and *Ch'u*, and they died innocently. It just so happened that the lives of the two were to end, that *Tse Lan* and *Tsai P'i* defamed them, and that King *Huai*<sup>3</sup> and *Fu Ch'ai*<sup>4</sup> put faith in their trumped up charges. It so happened that these princes were short-sighted, so that their officers could be slandered. The lives of the two unfortunate men chanced to be naturally of short duration. It would seem as if there were two chances and three coincidences<sup>5</sup>, but, as a matter of fact, there is but fate and nothing else.

When the *Hsia* and *Yin* dynasties were just on the verge of ruin, the crimes of *Chieh* and *Chou* happened to be rife, and when the stars of the *Shang* and *Chou*<sup>6</sup> were just in the ascent, the virtues of *T'ang* and *Wu*<sup>7</sup> happened to be flourishing.

*Kuan Lung Fêng*<sup>8</sup> met with a violent death, and *Chi Tse*<sup>9</sup> and *Pi Kan*<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Wu Tse Hsü* or *Wu Yuan*.

<sup>2</sup> On *Wu Tse Hsü* and *Ch'ü Yuan* see p. 1.140, Note 2.

<sup>3</sup> King *Huai* of *Ch'u*, 327-294 B. C.

<sup>4</sup> *Fu Ch'ai*, king of *Wu*, 495-473 B. C.

<sup>5</sup> I presume that the two chances are good and bad chances, and the three coincidences, the meeting of a king, a virtuous minister, and a slanderer.

<sup>6</sup> Two ancient dynasties.

<sup>7</sup> The founders of the last named dynasties.

<sup>8</sup> Minister to the tyrant *Chieh*.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. p. 2.031, Note 2.

<sup>10</sup> A nobleman put to death by the emperor *Chou*.

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both expired in jail. At that time the corruption of *Chieh* and *Chou* was at its height, and the spans of the two men were to terminate. The words of *Yi Yin* <sup>1</sup> were listened to, and the advice of <sup>p2.002</sup> *Lü Wang* <sup>2</sup> was accepted. That was the period, when *T'ang* and *Wu* were going to rise, and the time, when the two statesmen were to be employed.

The destiny of a subject may be lucky or unlucky, and a virtuous or a vicious sovereign meets with him. *Wên Wang's* time was to be glorious, and it was *Lü Wang's* fate to become exalted. *Kao Tsung's* <sup>3</sup> reign was to be peaceful, and *Fu Yüeh's* <sup>4</sup> virtue to chime in with it. Not that *Wên Wang* and *Kao Tsung* were born for their two subjects, or that *Lü Wang* and *Fu Yüeh* were created for their two sovereigns. The sovereign being wise, and the minister virtuous, they heard of each other's fame. Everything being adjusted above, and well ordered below <sup>5</sup>, their lots came to be linked together.

When *Yen Yuan* <sup>6</sup> died, the Master said,  
— Heaven is destroying me <sup>7</sup>,  
and at the death of *Tse Lu* he exclaimed,  
— Heaven has cursed me.

These were expressions of the grief of *Confucius* and not in accord with the true principle. *Confucius* was not predestinated to become an emperor, and the lives of his two disciples were not to be long. The fate allotted to them *viz.* not to become an emperor and not to live long, was not the same, but their lots coincided, and just happened to be connected.

The wonder of the two dragons had to appear, just when King *Li* of *Chou* happened to open the box, and when *Pao Sse* had to destroy the *Chou* State, it so happened that the nature which King *Yu* had obtained proved to be

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 2.031, Note 1.

<sup>2</sup> The counsellor of King *Wu*, more generally known by the name of *T'ai Kung*, his surname being *Lü Shang* (*Giles, Biogr. Dict.* No. 1862).

<sup>3</sup> *Kao Tsung* = *Wu Ting*, an emperor of the *Shang* dynasty. Cf. p. 1.317, Note 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Fu Yüeh*, originally a poor man, became minister of the emperor *Kao Tsung*.

<sup>5</sup> Sovereign and minister both doing their duty.

<sup>6</sup> *Yen Yuan* = *Yen Hui*, a disciple of *Confucius*. See p. 1.151.

<sup>7</sup> Quotation from [Analects XI, 8](#) [[Couvreur](#)].



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wicked <sup>1</sup>. The two dragons did not induce King *Li* to commit crimes, nor did *Pao Sse* beguile King *Yu*. All these were merely chances and coincidences, which came together of themselves.

The weird ditties of children turned out true, when the extraordinary cockfight took place by hazard <sup>2</sup>, and the prophecy by p2.003 the *mainah* was fulfilled, when the calamity happened to befall *Chao* of *Lu* <sup>3</sup>. Those ditties did not cause the fighting, nor did the *mainah* bring about the misfortune of the prince : the date of these events came of itself, and human activity coincided by chance.

It was *Yao's* fate to yield the empire to *Shun*, and *Tan Chu's*, to be unprincipled, and when the power over *Yü* <sup>4</sup> had to pass over to the *Hsia* dynasty, *Shang Chün's* conduct had to be flagitious. The two sons were not induced to wickedness, in order to procure the empire to *Shun* and *Yü* <sup>5</sup>. Goodness and badness, right and wrong came together by hazard.

As regards the rising and setting of *Mars* and the *Pleiades*, *Mars* comes out, when the *Pleiades* are down, and hides, when the *Pleiades* are visible. It is not the nature of fire <sup>6</sup> that it should counteract the *Pleiades*, but by chance their times are not the same, and their courses are different.

When the first moon rests in the cyclical sign *yin*, the constellation *K'uei* <sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The story is told in full p. 1.321 and on p. 2.163.

<sup>2</sup> The cocks of two nobles of *Lu* were in the habit of fighting. The one noble sheathed the head of his cock, and the other gave metal spurs to his. This cockfight increased the enmity of the two gentlemen who were instrumental in bringing about the dethronement of Duke *Chao* of *Lu*. See *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Chao* 25th year (*Legge, Classics Vol. V*, p. 710) [[Couvreur](#), p. 387].

<sup>3</sup> The *mainah* or *mino* bird — *Legge* calls it the *mino-grackle* — is a kind of thrush or starling which uses to breed in holes of walls and banks. The fact that in the 25th year of Duke *Chao* of *Lu* it was seen building its nest in a tree, was interpreted as a bad augury for the duke, who in the same year was compelled to leave his State and flee to *Ch'i*. For more details see *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Chao* 25th year (*Legge, Classics Vol. V*, p. 709, Par. 3) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>4</sup> *Shun's* territory *Yü*.

<sup>5</sup> The emperor *Yü*.

<sup>6</sup> *Mars* is called the 'Fire Star'.

<sup>7</sup> *K'uei* is the constellation  $\alpha, \beta, \gamma, \delta$  of *Ursa major*, the other three stars :  $\epsilon, \zeta, \eta$  being called *Shao*, the 'handle' of the Dipper *i. e.*, the *Tail* of the *Great Bear*. From time immemorial the Chinese have determined the seasons and the month by the revolution of the *Great Bear*, regarding its *Tail* as the hand of a natural clock. In the beginning of the first Chinese moon it points to the cyclical sign *yin viz. E.N.E.* [...]

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of *Ursa major* is opposed to the sign *shên*. It is not the establishment of *yin* which causes the ejection of *shên*, but the revolutions of the two constellations happen to be thus balanced.

p2.004 When the father dies, the son succeeds him and, when the mother-in-law expires, the daughter-in-law takes her place <sup>1</sup>. The succession of son and daughter are not the causes of the decease of father and mother, but the years of old and young people follow each other of themselves.

They say that autumn's breath blights grain and grass. They cannot stand it, and fade away and die. This idea is wrong : Plants germinate in spring, grow in summer, and ripen in autumn. Then they just wither and die spontaneously. The *Yin* fluid then happens to be in abundance and falls in with them. Whence do we know this ?

Some plants do not die in autumn, their vitality not yet being exhausted. Man lives a hundred years ere he breathes his last, and plants live one year before they die. If people aver that at death the *Yin* fluid destroys them, what kind of fluid does man encounter when his life ceases ? Some perhaps may return that ghosts kill him. If, when man expires, ghosts appear, and when plants die, cold air supervenes, all this would be mere accident. Men see ghosts before their end, but some perceive them without dying. Plants meet cold when they die, but it happens also that they encounter cold and yet do not wither.

Those who are crushed by a falling building, or buried under a collapsing bank, are not killed by the essence of the house or the fluid of the bank. The house was old, and the bank in decay. Unfortunate men happened to be on the spot just at the moment when the down-fall took place.

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(*T'ai-p'ing yü-lan* chap. 18, 1v. The *Yüeh-ling* here quoted is not that of the *Liki*). See also : *Astronomy of the Ancient Chinese* by Chalmers in *Legge's Shuking, Prolegomena* p. 93.

I have translated [] by 'opposed to'. *Shên* W.S.W. is exactly opposite to *yin* E.N.E. The expression seems to refer to the supposed antagonism of the cyclical signs and their attributes. Cf. p. 1.105 and chap. 73.

<sup>1</sup> As long as her mother-in-law is alive, the daughter-in-law who lives in the same family with her husband has to obey her commands like her own daughter, and does not become her own mistress before the death of the mother-in-law, when she succeeds to her position.

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The moon fades in heaven, and shells shrink in the sea <sup>1</sup>. The wind follows the tiger, and the clouds accompany the dragon <sup>2</sup>. Belonging to the same sort and permeated by a similar fluid, their natures can mutually affect one another. When, however, creatures p<sub>2.005</sub> and things fall in together, and good or bad luck happen simultaneously, there is no influence exercised by one fluid upon another.

The worst penalty which can be inflicted on a murderer, is capital punishment. The punishment of the murderer must be heavy, and the life of him who has to die, must be cut off. Therefore the destruction coming down from above, first aims at the life of the criminal. When, however, a holy emperor displays his virtue, those having good luck first enjoy it. And then, if a kind edict be issued in the palace, the culprit who has still long years to live comes out of jail. In that case Heaven has not prompted the holy emperor to issue such an edict for the sake of the culprit whose time of death has not yet come. The holy emperor happened to promulgate an act of grace, and the prisoner by chance escaped death.

It is like man's sleeping at night, and rising in the morning. At night the light of the moon fades, it is impossible to work, and man's forces are likewise exhausted, so that he desires rest. When the morning sun shines brightly, he awakes from his slumbers, and his power is restored as well. Heaven does not make him work during the day, and repose at night. Working goes along with the day, and rest corresponds to the night.

The wild geese assemble at *Kuei-chi* <sup>3</sup>, having left the cold region of *Chieh-shih* <sup>4</sup>. When they arrive they find the fields of the people just ready. Walking about them, they feed on grass and corn. When the corn has been

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<sup>1</sup> Again the usual symbolism supposing a mysterious sympathy between the moon representing the liquid element and the animals living in the water. *Huai Nan Tse* III, 2r. says that when the moon, the ruler of the *Yin*, fades, the brains of fish decrease, and when it dies shells and oysters shrivel. The moon, says the *Lü-shi ch'un-ch'iu*, is the source of all *Yin*. It being bright, all oysters are full, and the *Yin* is exuberant ; when it is dark oysters are empty, and all *Yin* shrinks together. The moon appears in the sky, and all the *Yin* creatures undergo their transformations in the deep. (*T'ai-p'ing yü-lan* chap. 942, p. 1v.)

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 1.279, Note 2.

<sup>3</sup> In *Chekiang* province.

<sup>4</sup> A mountain on the north shore of the gulf of *Pechili*, in the prefecture of *Yung-p'ing*.

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eaten, and the food been used up, the spring rains then just set in. Then they leave the hot climes for the north, returning again to *Chieh-shih*.

The elephants tilling the tumulus acted in the same manner <sup>1</sup>. It is on record that *Shun* was buried in *Ts'ang-wu* <sup>2</sup>, and that elephants became his labourers, and that *Yü* was interred at *Kuei-chi*, and had crows as tenants <sup>3</sup>. This is an untruth and an absurd statement.

When a husband has the physiognomy of a short-lived man, the wife he marries must soon become a widow, and when <sup>p2.006</sup> such a woman who is soon to be widowed marries, she falls in with a husband who dies young. There is a common belief that, in case males and females die prematurely, the husband injures his wife, and the wife does harm to the husband. There can be no question of mutual injury, it is all the outcome of fate, which works spontaneously.

Provided that a flame be quenched by water, then we are justified in speaking of water injuring fire. But when fire just goes out of its own accord, and water happens to pour down on it spontaneously, we must say that both have destroyed themselves and did not injure one another. Now the untimely death of males and females is not analogous to the quenching of fire by water, but may be compared to the two elements extinguishing and pouring down of themselves.

The son injuring his father and the younger brother ruining the elder are on the same line. Since they are living under the same roof, their fluids come into contact. They become weak and sickly and pine away until they give up their ghost, but how can this be called injury ? It also happens that somebody dies abroad, more than a thousand Li away, by sword or fire, crushed or drowned. There cannot have been a collision of fluids ; how could any harm have been produced ?

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<sup>1</sup> The tilling was accidental.

<sup>2</sup> A place in *Hunan* in the *Ning-yuan* district.

<sup>3</sup> This tradition is mentioned in the *Ti-wang shi-chi* quoted by the *T'ai-p'ing-yü-lan* chap. 81, p. 2v. and chap. 82, p. 2r. where it is said that below the grave of *Yü* crows weeded the land. No further explanation of these rather obscure passages is given. How did those animals till the burial ground of the old emperors, and what does it mean ?

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The aunt of *Wang Mang*, Lady *Chêng*, was bespoken in marriage to two gentlemen, who both died, and when she was on her way to *Chao*, its prince also passed away. Before her fluid could have reached them, she destroyed three persons from afar, what a pity ! <sup>1</sup>

*Huang Ts'e Kung* married the daughter of a sorcerer in the neighbourhood, after a soothsayer had pronounced her mien to be noble. Therefore *Huang Ts'e Kung* rose to the rank of a prime minister. As a matter of fact, this was not so. *Huang Ts'e Kung* was predetermined to become a nobleman, when, on a journey, he encountered the woman. She was likewise to be exalted, therefore she entered *Huang Ts'e Kung's* house. It was a coincidence, and they met at the proper time <sup>2</sup>.

Luckless people make no profit as merchants, and as agriculturists reap no grain. Their nature does not spoil the merchandise, but their fate prevents the grain from growing. Predestinated p2.007 for poverty, they deal in unprofitable goods, and hampered with bad luck, they plant seed which does not bear fruit.

The world says that dwellings are propitious or unpropitious, and that in moving, special attention should be paid to the year and the month <sup>3</sup>. This is not a correct statement of facts. The ways of Heaven are difficult to know, but provided that an unlucky fellow, or a doomed family build a house, they simply will select a site of ill omen, and when they change their residence, they just happen to choose a calamitous year or month which should be avoided. When an entire family thus rushes into disaster, so that its ten odd members all perish, unable to do anything against it, they all must be persons whose prosperity is shattered and whose fate put an end to them.

The same reasoning holds good concerning the promotion and translation of officials. When the time of their removal has come, their sovereign lends an ear to slanderous reports, and when it is time that they should advance, some excellent man recommends them. When a scholar is about to take office, some superior man assists virtue, and when he is going to be

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.306.

<sup>2</sup> This story is told in full in p. 1.307.

<sup>3</sup> These subjects will be found thoroughly discussed in chap. 69-73.

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dismissed, some villain has defamed talent.

*Kung-Po Liao* <sup>1</sup> impeached *Tse Lu* to *Chi Sun* <sup>2</sup>. *Confucius* said,

— It is fate <sup>3</sup>.

*Tsang Ts'ang* <sup>4</sup> of *Lu* slandered *Mencius* in the presence of Duke *P'ing*, and *Mencius* remarked that it was Heaven <sup>5</sup>. As long as the time for a new doctrine has not yet come, one meets with backbiters, and before Heaven lends its help, the talk of malicious people prevails. Therefore *Confucius* spoke of fate, and did not cherish enmity against *Kung-Po Liao*; and *Mencius* referring to Heaven did not bear a grudge against *Tsang Ts'ang*. They clearly saw that time and fate must be spontaneous.

This is true of the success of a ruler introducing reforms as well. If he is to become illustrious, there happens to be a time of peace, and when there is to be a time of rebellion, his prosperity will be ruined. The time of peace and revolution, victory and defeat is like the progress and the reverses, the good and bad fortune of an individual, which are encountered by chance.

The appearance of wise and sage men at various times falls under the same law. A pious emperor soars up like a dragon all p2.008 at once, and an able help-mate is found out and instated in the very nick of time. People imagine that because *Han Hsin* and *Chang Liang* supported the king of *Han*, *Ch'in* was wiped out and *Han* came to power, insomuch as *Kao Tsu* won the crown. It was *Han Kao Tsu's* destiny to become emperor by himself at a time, when *Han Hsin* and *Chang Liang* were to flourish by themselves. Thus both sides met. If they had sought each other on purpose, and for this reason *Han Kao Tsu* rose in *Fêng* and *P'ei* <sup>6</sup>, among the young folks there many had physiognomies indicative of wealth and honour, yet Heaven did not aid *Kao Tsu* through them.

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<sup>1</sup> A relative of the ducal house of *Lu*.

<sup>2</sup> A member of one of the three powerful families of *Lu*.

<sup>3</sup> See [Analects XIV, 38 \[Couvreur\]](#) and p. 2.010, Note 4.

<sup>4</sup> A favourite of Duke *P'ing* of *Lu*.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. p. 1.422.

<sup>6</sup> Regions in the province of *Kiangsu*, where the founder of the *Han* dynasty, a native of *P'ei*, began his career.

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Whether fate and physiognomies be grand or mean, there is only a casual coincidence. Viscount *Chien* of *Chao* deposed his heir-son *Po Lu* and raised *Wu Hsü*, the son of a concubine. *Wu Hsü* happened to be intelligent, and he was predestined to become prince of *Chao* to boot <sup>1</sup>. People say that *Po Lu* was depraved and not equal to *Wu Hsü*. *Po Lu* was doomed to baseness, moreover his mind was muddled.

The scholar *Han An Kuo* rose to be Minister of State. They say that he owed this to *I K'uan*, but that is not the case <sup>2</sup>. High honours were in store for the Minister, and by hazard he fell in with *I K'uan*.

*Chao Wu* <sup>3</sup> hidden in the pantaloons did not cry the whole day. Nobody shut his mouth or prevented him from giving a round, but it was his lot to live, therefore he chanced to escape by sleeping.

Thus marquises who have won laurels on the battle-field must needs cut the heads of those slain in battle, and merchants of wealthy houses will snatch away the property of poor families. As regards those noblemen who are deprived of their land and degraded, or officers and ministers who are dismissed, their guilt is made public when their income is highest. Noxious air always infects those people whose fates are short <sup>4</sup>, and in a year of dearth the indigent have to suffer starvation <sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.226 and 1.307.

<sup>2</sup> The relations between *Han An Kuo* and *I K'uan* are related in p. 1.309.

<sup>3</sup> The famous 'Orphan of *Chao*' who later on became the hero of the well known drama translated by Stanislas Julien, which is not a mere copy of the 'Mysterious Box', as v. *Gottschall* (*Das Theater and Drama der Chinesen*, Breslau 1887, p. 108) seems to intimate, the subject being much older and semi-historical. For more details see p. 1.177.

<sup>4</sup> Others remain uninjured.

<sup>5</sup> Because they are doomed to die.

## 11. Book III, Chap. II

### *Ku-hsiang. On Anthroposcopy*

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p1.304 It is a common belief that fate is difficult to foresee. Far from it, it can easily be known, and by what means? By means of the body and its bones. As man derives his destiny from heaven, it becomes visible in his body. An inquiry into these manifestations leads to the knowledge of fate, just as from a look at measures one learns their capacity. By manifestations I understand the osseous configurations.

According to tradition *Huang Ti* had a dragon face, *Chuan Hsü* was marked with the character *Wu* on his brow, *Ti K'u* had joined teeth, *Yao's* eye-brows had eight colours, *Shun's* eyes double pupils, *Yü's* <sup>1</sup> ears three orifices, *T'ang* had double elbows, *Wên Wang* four nipples, *Wu Wang's* <sup>2</sup> spine was curbed backwards, *Chou Kung* <sup>3</sup> was inclined to stoop forward, *Kao Yao* <sup>4</sup> had a horse's mouth, *Confucius'* arms were turned backwards <sup>5</sup>. These Twelve Sages either held the positions of emperors and kings, or they aided their sovereigns, being anxious for the welfare of the people. All the world knows this, and the scholars speak of it.

These reports being given in the Classics and Annals can be relied upon. The light literature, such as journals, letters, and memoirs which the Literati do not read, afford a great many more instances: *T'sang Hsieh* had four eyes and became one of *Huang Ti's* officials. *Ch'ung Erh*, prince of *Chin* <sup>6</sup>, had a double rib, and became the foremost of all the feudal lords. *Su Ch'in* <sup>7</sup> with a

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<sup>1</sup> *Huang Ti*, *Chuan Hsü*, *Ti Ku*, *Yao*, *Shun*, and *Yü* are mythical or half legendary rulers of old China.

<sup>2</sup> *T'ang*, *Wên Wang*, and *Wu Wang* are the founders of the *Shang* and *Chou* dynasties.

<sup>3</sup> *Tan*, Duke of *Chou*, a younger brother of *Wu Wang*, whom he helped to win the throne.

<sup>4</sup> A minister of *Shun*.

<sup>5</sup> Like the wings of a bird.

<sup>6</sup> *Ch'ung Erh* reigned as marquis of *Chin* from 634-626 B. C.

<sup>7</sup> A famous statesman who in 333 B. C. succeeded in forming a league of the Six



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bone p1.305 on his nose obtained the premiership in all the Six Kingdoms. *Chang Yi* <sup>1</sup> having a double rib was also made a minister in *Ch'in* and *Wei*. *Hsiang Yü*, who owing to his double pupils was regarded as a descendant of the Emperor *Shun*, shared the empire with *Kao Tsu*. *Ch'ên P'ing* <sup>2</sup>, a poor fellow who had not enough to eat and drink, had nevertheless a very fine appearance, which surprised every one so much, that they exclaimed : what on earth does *Ch'ên P'ing* eat to become such a portly man. *Han Hsin* <sup>3</sup> was rescued from the axe of the executioner, when he caught the eye of the duke of *T'êng*, and was pardoned also on account of his extraordinary appearance. Fine looks and stateliness can be characteristics as well <sup>4</sup>.

*Kao Tsu* had a high nose, a dragon face, a fine beard and 72 black spots on his left leg <sup>5</sup>. *Lü* from *Shan-fu* <sup>6</sup> was skilled in prognosticating from looks. When he saw *Kao Tsu's* carriage, he thought him very remarkable, and therefore gave him his own daughter, the later empress *Lü Hou*, to wife. Afterwards she gave birth to Prince *Hsiao Hui* <sup>7</sup> and to the princess *Yuan* of *Lu*. *Kao Tsu* was first a headborough on the river *Sse* <sup>8</sup>. Then he gave up his post, and took to farming, again living with *Lü Hou* and his two children on his farm, when an old man passed by, and asked for a drink. In return he divined *Lü Hou's* fate by her features saying :

— Madam, you belong to the great folks of the empire.

Called upon to foretell the fortune of her two children, he said in regard of *Hsiao Hui* :

— The cause of your greatness, Madam, will be this son,

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States : *Yen*, *Chao*, *Han*, *Wei*, *Ch'i*, and *Ch'u* against *Ch'in*.

<sup>1</sup> A celebrated politician of the 4th century B. C., in early life a fellow-student of *Su Ch'in*.

<sup>2</sup> A partisan of the founder of the *Han* dynasty, *Kao Tsu*, one of the Three Heroes, who in early youth lived in great poverty and subsequently rose to the highest honours.

<sup>3</sup> Another adherent of *Han Kao Tsu*, also one of the Three Heroes, the third being *Chang Liang*. He was to be executed for treason, but was pardoned.

<sup>4</sup> As anomalous features.

<sup>5</sup> This passage occurs in the *Shi-chi* chap. 8, p. 2, which treats of *Han Kao Tsu*.

<sup>6</sup> A place in *Shantung*.

<sup>7</sup> He succeeded his father *Kao Tsu* in 194 B. C.

<sup>8</sup> A river in *Shantung*.

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and with respect to *Yuan of Lu* :

— You are all noble.

When the old man had left, *Kao Tsu* came home from abroad. Upon being informed by *Lü Hou* of what had taken place, he ran after the old man, and stopped him, wishing to hear his own fortune too. The old fellow rejoined :

— Before, the lady and her children bore a resemblance to you in their looks, but p1.306 your mien is so grand, that words fail me to describe it <sup>1</sup>.

Afterwards the empire devolved upon *Kao Tsu*, as the old man had foretold.

If we draw a general principle from this, we find that members of the same family all show their nobility in their appearance. Belonging to the same caste and animated by a similar spirit, they must necessarily have some kindred traits in their mental and physical qualities. It however happens that two persons of different classes and incongruous minds meet together. A grandee, when marrying, gets a great lady for his wife, and a gentlewoman also finds a noble lord. If two individuals meet despite discrepancies of appearance, a sudden death ensues. In case they have not yet come into contact, one party is overtaken by death previously.

*Wang Mang's* aunt Lady *Chêng* was bespoken in marriage. When the moment came for her to go, the bridegroom suddenly died. The same thing happened a second time. Then she was given away to the Prince of *Chao*, but the Prince had not yet taken her, when he breathed his last. *Nan Kung Ta Yu* of *Ch'ing-ho* <sup>2</sup> met with Lady *Chêng's* father, the Honourable *Chih*, with whom he was acquainted, and prognosticated her fate saying :

— She is so exalted, that she will become the mother of the empire.

At that time *Hsüan Ti* <sup>3</sup> was emperor and *Yuan Ti* heir-apparent. Through the governor of the principality of *Wei*, *Chih* then gave her in marriage to the

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Shi-chi loc. cit.* which slightly differs.

<sup>2</sup> A city in *Shantung* ; *Playfair* No. 1642.

<sup>3</sup> 73-48 B. C.

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heir-apparent, who was very pleased with her, and became father to a son of the name of *Chün Shang*. At the death of *Hsüan Ti* the heir-apparent ascended the throne, Lady *Chêng* was made empress, and *Chün Shang* heir-apparent. When *Yuan Ti* <sup>1</sup> died, the heir-apparent assumed the reins of government and became the emperor *Ch'êng Ti* <sup>2</sup>, and Lady *Chêng* became empress-dowager and thus mother of the empire. Lady *Chêng* had something in her features indicative of her future imperial motherhood. The two men to whom she was betrothed first, and the Prince of *Chao* had no marks showing that they would be fathers of the empire, therefore the two died, before the marriage could take place, and the prince expired. The two *fiancés* and the Prince of *Chao* were not predestinated for imperial sway, and Lady *Chêng* was apparently no match for them.

p1.307 The prime minister *Huang T'se Kung* <sup>3</sup>, who was originally a border warden in *Yang-hsia* <sup>4</sup>, travelled with a soothsayer in the same carriage, when they perceived a woman seventeen or eighteen years old. The fortune-teller pointed to her and said :

— This woman will be raised to high honours, and become consort to a marquis.

*Huang T'se Kung* stopped the carriage, and looked at her carefully. The fortune-teller said :

— If this woman will not become noble, my divination books are of no use.

*Huang T'se Kung* inquired about her, and learned that she was from the next village, a female belonging to the *Wu* family. Thereupon he married her, and afterwards really gained high honours, was given the post of a prime minister, and created a marquis <sup>5</sup>. Since *Huang T'se Kung* won wealth and honour, his wife had to be on a par with him. Consequently, when they were brought together, they both became illustrious. Had *Huang T'se Kung's* fate

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<sup>1</sup> 48-32 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> 32-6 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> *Huang T'se Kung* was prime minister of the emperor *Hsüan Ti*, died 51 B. C.

<sup>4</sup> In *Honan*.

<sup>5</sup> A parallel passage occurs in the *Han-shu*, quoted in the *T'ai p'ing yü-lan* 729 p. 4.

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been mean, he would not have got that woman as a consort, and had they not tallied together as man and wife, they would have had the same misfortune as the two persons above mentioned and the Prince of *Chao*. If an entire family has a glorious destiny, then later on every thing turns to their honour and advantage, whereas in case of incongruity of osseous structure and physical shape they will be separated and die, and cannot enjoy great happiness long.

In noble families even servants and slaves as well as cattle and horses which they rear are not like the common ones. From the looks of the slaves one sees that they do not easily die. The cattle and horses often produce young. The seeds in the fields grow up luxuriantly, and quickly put forth ripe grains. In commerce those sort of people manage to get excellent merchandise, which sells without delay. Those who know fate, find out the great folks amidst low people, and discern the miserable among the magnates. Judging from the osseous structure and distinguishing the lines on the skin, they discover man's fate, which always confirms their predictions.

Viscount *Chien* of *Chao* <sup>1</sup> bade *Ku Pu Tse Ch'ing* tell the fortunes of his sons. He found none of them lucky, until he came to the son of the slave-girl *Chai*, *Wu Hsü*, whom he declared to be a peer. *Wu Hsü* had an excellent character, and was stamped a <sup>p1.308</sup> nobleman to boot. Later on Viscount *Chien* put the heir-apparent aside, and raised *Wu Hsü*, who afterwards became Viscount *Hsiang* <sup>2</sup>.

A soothsayer said of *Ch'ing Pu* <sup>3</sup> that he would be tortured, but then become prince, and he really was made a prince after having suffered punishment <sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> 516-457 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> 457-425 B. C. Cf. p. 1.226 and *Shi-chi* chap. 43, p. 8 seq. [[Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. V, p. 42](#)].

<sup>3</sup> A military adventurer of the 2nd century B. C. His surname was originally *Ying Pu*. It was changed into the sobriquet *Ch'ing Pu* 'Branded Pu', after he had been branded in his early life. He made his escape, joined in the rebellions which led to the rise of the *Han* dynasty, and was rewarded with the title and the fief of a 'Prince of *Kiukiang*'. *Mayers Reader's Manual* No. 926.

<sup>4</sup> Quotation from *Shi-chi* chap. 91, p. 1.

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The father of *Wei Ch'ing* <sup>1</sup>, *Chêng Chi* had illicit intercourse with a maid of the princess *Yang Hsin, Wei*. *Wei Ch'ing* was born in the *Chien-chang* Palace. A convict read his destiny in his features and said

— He is noble, and will be invested with the rank of a marquis.

*Wei Ch'ing* replied :

— For a slave it is quite enough not to be whipped or reviled. How could he dream of a marquise ? <sup>2</sup>

Afterwards *Wei Ch'ing* entered the army as an officer. Having distinguished himself in several battles, he rose in rank, and was promoted, till he was made generalissimo with the title of marquis of ten thousand families.

Before *Chou Ya Fu* <sup>3</sup> became a marquis, *Hsü Fu* predicted his fortune saying :

— Within three years hence Your Honour will be a general and minister, and have the control of the empire. You will rank so high, that among your fellow officials there will not be your equal. But nine years later, you will die of starvation.

*Chou Ya Fu* replied laughing,

— My elder brother already inherits the title of marquis. When the father dies, the son succeeds to his title. Why do you hint at my becoming marquis ? But should I really attain to this dignity, as you say, how can you pretend that I shall die of starvation ? Explain this to me.

*Hsü Fu* pointed to the perpendicular lines converging at the corner of his mouth, and said,

— This means death by starvation.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.169.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from the *Shi-chi* chap. 111, p. 1 v.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Giles Biogr. Dict.* No. 426, where the end of *Chou Ya Fu* is told a little differently.

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Three years passed. His brother, marquis *Shêng* of *Chiang* <sup>1</sup> was punished for an offence. *Wên Ti* <sup>2</sup> was in favour of the marquis of *Chiang's* son. The wise councillors proposed *Chou Ya Fu*, who thereupon was created marquis of <sup>p1.309</sup> *T'iao* <sup>3</sup> and succeeded the marquis of *Chiang*. During the six later years of *Wên Ti's* reign the *Hsiung-nu* invaded the Chinese territory, and *Chou Ya Fu* became general. When *Ching Ti* <sup>4</sup> assumed the government, *Chou Ya Fu* was appointed prime minister. Later on he retired on account of sickness. His son bought from the imperial arsenal five hundred mail-coats, which he wanted for his father's funeral. The coolies employed at the job were irritated against him for not having received their money. Knowing that fiscal property had been clandestinely purchased, out of spite they denounced *Chou Ya Fu's* son to the throne. *Ching Ti* gave orders for trying and torturing *Chou Ya Fu*, who did not eat for five days, spat blood, and died <sup>5</sup>.

*Têng T'ung* took the fancy of *Wên Ti*, who held him in higher esteem than a minister, presented him with enormous sums of money, and treated him almost as his equal <sup>6</sup>. A fortune-teller predicted his destiny. The verdict was that he would become poor and miserable and die of starvation. When *Wên Ti* died, and *Ching Ti* had mounted the throne, *Têng T'ung* was punished for unlawful coinage. On examination *Ching Ti* found *Têng T'ung* already dead. He stopped at the deceased man's house, but did not discover a single cash <sup>7</sup>.

The prime minister *Han* <sup>8</sup> when a youngster borrowed 50 cash from a fortune-teller, and together with him entered the Imperial Academy. The fortune-teller divined the successes of the scholars in the academy. Pointing at *I Ku'an* <sup>9</sup> he intimated that this youth would rise so high as to become a chief minister of state. *Han* sent the fortune-teller with his card to *I Ku'an*,

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<sup>1</sup> The capital of the *Chin* State in *Shansi*, the modern *Chiang-chou*.

<sup>2</sup> *Han Wên Ti* 179-156 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> Another ancient city in *Shansi* not far from *Chiang*.

<sup>4</sup> *Han Ching Ti* 156-140.

<sup>5</sup> Quotation in an abridged form from *Shi-chi* chap. 57, p. 6v. seq.

<sup>6</sup> *Têng T'ung* was a million of the Emperor *Wên Ti*.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Têng T'ung's* biography in *Shi-chi* chap. 125, p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> *Han An Kuo*, 2nd cent. B. C.

<sup>9</sup> Died 112 B. C.

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with whom he contracted the most intimate friendship. He exerted himself to the utmost in order to show his reverence. For the purpose of living together with *I Ku'an* he moved his residence, and drew as near as possible. *I Ku'an* was sick, *Han* nursed him like a servant. His kindness towards *I Ku'an* was greater than towards those of his own blood. Later on his name became famous all over the world. *I Ku'an* obtained the post of a secretary of state. The local officials had to obey his orders. He recommended his friend to the throne for an <sup>p1.310</sup> appointment at the court. *Han* subsequently was promoted to the post of a prime minister.

The convict, *Hsü Fu* and the men who told the fortunes of *Têng T'ung* and *I Ku'an* can be considered as soothsayers who knew fate. These sort of people examine the symptoms of the physical frame, and perceive wealth and honour, poverty and disgrace, just as we on seeing plates, know the use thereof. Fine vessels are used by the higher classes, coarse ones with the same certainty find their way to the poor. Sacrificial vases and tripods are not put up in outer buildings, and gourds are not to be found in the principal hall. That is a matter of course. That noble bones do not meet with the hardships of the poor, and that wretched features never share the joys of the grand, is on the same principle.

Vessels used as measures may contain a peck or a picul. Thus between the human ranks there is a difference of high and low. If vessels are filled over their size, their contents runs out, and is lost. If the limit of a rank is surpassed, the holder perishes. By making in our discussion of fate this comparison with a vessel, in order to ascertain the nature of anthroposcopy, we arrive at the conclusion that fate is lodged in the corporeal form.

But not only are wealth and honour, poverty and wretchedness visible in the body, pure and base conduct have also their phenomena. Pre-eminence and misery are the results of fate, pure and base conduct depend on character. As there is a method determining fate by the bones, there is also such a science doing the same for the character. But, whereas there are famous soothsayers, it is not known that a science determining the character by the features exists.

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*Fan Li* <sup>1</sup> left *Yüeh*. From *Ch'i* <sup>2</sup> he despatched a letter to the high officer *Chang* reading as follows :

When the flying birds are all exterminated, the good bow is put away. When the cunning hare is dead, one cooks the greyhound. The king of *Yüeh* has a long neck and a mouth like a beak. One may share hardships, but not enjoy happiness with him. Why do you not leave him ?

The officer *Chang* could not leave, but he pretended sickness, and did not go to court, whereupon the king sent him a sword, by which he died <sup>3</sup>.

p1.311 *Wei Liao* <sup>4</sup>, a native of *Ta-liang* <sup>5</sup>, proposed to *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* <sup>6</sup> a scheme to conquer the empire. *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* accepted his proposal and conferred upon him the highest distinctions, giving him the same dresses and the same food as he had himself. *Wei Liao* said,

— The king of *Ch'in* <sup>7</sup> has a high nose, long eyes, the chest of a vulture, the voice of a jackal, the look of a tiger, and the heart of a wolf. He knows no kindness. As long as he is hard up, he is condescending, but, when he has got what he wanted, he despises men. I am a simple citizen, yet he always treats me with great condescension. Should I really serve the king of *Ch'in*, he would gain his ends, and the whole world would be robbed. I can have no dealings with him.

Thus he went away <sup>8</sup>.

*Fan Li* and *Wei Liao* correctly determined future events by observing the

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<sup>1</sup> A native of the *Yüeh* State, and minister of King *Kou Chien* of *Yüeh*, in modern *Chekiang*, 5th cent. B. C.

<sup>2</sup> An old State in *Shantung*.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from the *Shi-chi* chap.41, p.8v. The last clause is abridged.

<sup>4</sup> *Wei Liao* wrote a work on the art of war.

<sup>5</sup> An ancient name of *K'ai-fêng-fu*.

<sup>6</sup> The first emperor of the *Ch'in* dynasty 221-209 B. C.

<sup>7</sup> *Shih Huang Ti's* kingdom in *Shensi*.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in an abridged form from the *Shi-chi* chap. 6, p. 6 seq. [[Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 114](#)].



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outward signs of character. Things really happened, as they had foretold from the features. It is evident, therefore, that character and destiny are attached to the body.

The instances quoted in the popular literature are universally regarded as true. Besides there are a great many cases in olden and modern times not much heard of, which are all well founded. The spirit comes from heaven, the body grows on earth. By studying the body on earth one becomes cognizant of the fate in heaven, and gets the real truth.

*Confucius* is reported to have examined *T'an T'ai Tse Yü* <sup>1</sup>, and *T'ang Chü* <sup>2</sup> to have divined for *T'sai Tsê* <sup>3</sup>, and that both of them were mistaken. Where did their error come from? The signs were hidden and too delicate. The examination may have for its object the interior or the exterior, the body or the voice. Looking at the outside, one perhaps misses the inside, and occupied with the body, one forgets the voice.

When *Confucius* came to *Chêng* <sup>4</sup>, he lost his disciples. He stood by himself near the east gate of *Chêng*. Some man of *Chêng* asked *Tse Kung* <sup>5</sup> saying :

— There is a man near the east gate with a <sup>p1.312</sup> head like that of *Yao*, a neck like that of *Kao Yao*, and shoulders resembling those of *Tse Ch'an* <sup>6</sup>. But from his waist downward he is by three inches shorter than *Yü*. He is worn out like a stray dog.

*Tse Kung* informed *Confucius*. *Confucius* laughed heartily and said,

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<sup>1</sup> A disciple of *Confucius*, extremely ugly, but very talented. Cf. [Analects VI,12 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> A famous physiognomist 3rd cent. B. C.

<sup>3</sup> A native of *Yen*, who first studied physiognomy with *T'ang Chü* and later on was appointed minister by King *Ch'ao Hsiang* of *Ch'in* (305-249 B. C.).

<sup>4</sup> In *Honan*.

<sup>5</sup> A disciple of *Confucius*.

<sup>6</sup> The appellation of *Kung Sun Ch'iao*, a famous minister of the *Chêng* State in the 6th cent. B. C.

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— My appearance, never mind, but like a stray dog ! just so, just so <sup>1</sup>.

In the matter of *Confucius*' appearance the man of *Chêng* was wrong. He was not clever, and his method was very superficial. *Confucius* made a mistake with *Tse Yü*, and *T'ang Chü* was in the wrong with *T'sai Tsê*, as the man of *Chêng* in looking at *Confucius* did not apprehend his real appearance. Judging from his mien *Confucius* was deceived with *Tse Yü*, and going by words he was in error in regard of *Tsai Yü* <sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> A quotation from *Shi-chi* chap. 47, p. 12v. Cf. *Legge, Analects, Prolegomena* p.78.

<sup>2</sup> One of the disciples of *Confucius*, whose character was not quite on a level with his fluency of speech, wherefore the Master said of him, 'In choosing a man for his gift of speech, I have failed as regards *Tsai Yü*'.

## 12. Book III, Chap. III

### *Ch'u-ping*. Heaven's Original Gift

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p1.130 A man predestinated at his birth for wealth and honour, is imbued with the spontaneous fluid from the beginning. After he has been brought up, and grown to manhood, his lucky fate manifests itself.

*Wên Wang* received a scarlet bird, *Wu Wang*, a white fish and a red crow <sup>1</sup>. The scholars are of opinion that with the bird Heaven's decree was transmitted to *Wên Wang*, which in the case of *Wu Wang* was done by the fish and the crow. Thus *Wên Wang* and *Wu Wang* would have received their fate from Heaven, which used the bird, the fish, and the crow to pass it on to them. Heaven used a scarlet bird to invest *Wên Wang*, but *Wên Wang* did not receive the mandate of Heaven <sup>2</sup>. Then Heaven took a fish and a crow, and enfeoffed *Wu Wang*. This would imply that primarily the two received no fate from above, and that it was not before they purified themselves, and did good, and the news thereof reached Heaven, that Heaven endowed them with imperial honours. The bird, the fish, and the crow would then be heavenly messengers carrying the investiture, which emperors must have received to have the power over life and death. However, a thorough investigation shows us that fate has nothing to do with these cases.

Fate is what comes over people at the beginning, when they are created. They then receive their mind as well as their fate. Mind and fate come together and at the same time. The mind does not precede, or fate follow. How can this be made clear ?

*Ch'i* <sup>3</sup> served under *Yao* as territorial official, became superintendent of agriculture, and therefrom received the title of *Lord of Agriculture (Hou Chi)*.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Shi-chi*, chap. 4, p. 8 ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 216 Note 1](#), and [p. 226](#)).

<sup>2</sup> *Wên Wang* did not yet attain the imperial dignity, which subsequently devolved upon his son, *Wu Wang*.

<sup>3</sup> The ancestor of the *Chou* dynasty.

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His great-grandson Duke *Liu* lived at but later on moved to *Pin* <sup>1</sup>. His great-great-grandson *Tan Fu*, the p<sub>1.131</sub> 'Old Duke' had three sons : *T'ai Po*, *Ch'ung Yung* and *Chi Li*. The son of *Chi Li* was *Ch'ang*, the later *Wên Wang*. When he was still in his swaddling clothes, there appeared portents indicative of his holiness. Therefore *Tan Fu* said :

— It is through *Ch'ang* that my family will become illustrious.

When *T'ai Po* <sup>2</sup> heard of it, he retired to *Wu* <sup>3</sup>, tattooed himself, and cut his hair in order to make room for *Chi Li*. *Wên Wang* is believed to have met with his fate at that period. Yet Heaven's fate is already at work, when man comes into being. *Tan Fu*, the Old Duke, found it out very soon,, but it was already there, before *Wên Wang* was even conceived by his mother. The fate which emperors acquire becomes their mind internally and their body externally. To the body belong the features and the osseous structure, which man gets at his birth.

Officials with a yearly income of more than a hundred piculs, but of a lower rank than princes and counts, such as *lang-chiang* <sup>4</sup>, *ta-fu*, and *yuan-shih* <sup>5</sup>, or provincial officials like intendants and prefects, in short, all salaried functionaries have obtained a fate predestinating them for wealth and honour, which after their birth is apparent in their faces. *Hsü Fu* and *Ku Pu Tse Ch'ing* perceived these signs <sup>6</sup>. Officials rise in office, some to the ranks of lords and ministers. They are predestinated to grandeur and a very exalted position. An emperor possesses the highest dignity, and his rank is the most exalted. At his birth, he is endowed with a glorious fate, and his body shows peculiar

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<sup>1</sup> *T'ai* and *Pin* were both situated in *Shensi*.

<sup>2</sup> The *Shi-chi* chap. 4, p. 4 relates that *T'ai Po* as well as *Ch'ung Yung*, whom the *Shi-chi* styles *Yü Ch'ung*, retired to the barbarians out of regard for their younger brother *Chi Li*.

<sup>3</sup> The kingdom of *Wu*, the modern province of *Kiangsu*, at that time still inhabited by aborigines, hence the tattooing.

<sup>4</sup> Chamberlains of the Palace Guard.

<sup>5</sup> These offices are mentioned by *Mencius* Bk. V, Pt. II, chap. 2 [[Legge](#)] [[Couvreur](#)], who informs us that a chief minister had four times as much income as a *ta-fu*, and a *ta-fu* twice as much as a *yuan-shih*. *Legge* translates 'great officer' and 'scholar of the first class', which does not say much. I would like to say 'Director of a Department' and 'First Clerk'.

<sup>6</sup> Two renowned physiognomists, cf. chap. 11.

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signs of nobility at that time. The 'Old Duke' was well aware of this, when he beheld the remarkable four nipples <sup>1</sup>, for these four nipples were the marks of a Sage. *Wên Wang* received the heavenly decree making him a sage, when he was still in his mother's womb, or did the four nipples grow only, after he had become a man, and practised virtue ? p1.132 As regards the four nipples, we know also that lambs have them already as embryos. Dame *Liu* sleeping by a big lake dreamt that she met with a genius, and thereupon gave birth to *Kao-Tsu* <sup>2</sup>. At that time, he had already obtained his fate : When *Kuang Wu* <sup>3</sup> was born in the *Chi-yang* palace, a brilliant light shone in the room at midnight, though there was no fire. One of the soldiers *Su Yung* said to the secretary *Ch'ung Lan* :

— This is a lucky thing,

and nothing more <sup>4</sup>. At that time *Kuang Wu* had already got his destiny. The assertion that *Wên Wang* and *Wu Wang* received Heaven's decree together with the scarlet bird, the fish, and the crow is, therefore, erroneous. Heaven's order once being issued, an emperor arises, and there is no further need for another decree.

Favoured with a fate conferring the highest distinctions upon them, emperors are born as a matter of course, as will be seen from the following : Old men of wealthy families hoard up thousands of *chin* <sup>5</sup>. They come into the world with the physiognomies of rich men. They work, and produce, and amass wealth, until, in their old age, they have become rich old folks. Emperors are the old men in possession of the empire. Their fate is inherent to their bodies, precisely as with birds the distinction between cocks and hens exists already in the egg-shell. When the eggs are hatched, cocks and hens creep out. After days and months their bones wax stronger, and at last the cocks pair with the hens quite of their own accord. They are not taught to do so, after they have grown up so, that they would dare to pair only then. This

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<sup>1</sup> A peculiarity of *Wên Wang*, cf. chap. 11.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 1.177.

<sup>3</sup> The first emperor of the Later *Han* Dynasty, 25-58 A. D.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 1.180.

<sup>5</sup> Old coins.

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is a spontaneous act, after their constitution has been strengthened. Now emperors are the cocks in the empire. They are destined to become emperors. This, their destiny comes down upon them, when they are still in an embryonic state in the same manner, as the future grandees get their peculiar physiognomies, which they possess at their birth, and as the cocks are formed in the egg.

This is not only true of men and birds, but of all organisms. Plants and trees grow from seeds. They pierce the earth as sprouts, by their further growth stem and leaves are formed. Their length and coarseness are developed from the seeds. Emperors are the acme of greatness. The stalk of the 'vermillion grass' is like a needle, the sapling of the 'purple boletus' like a bean. Both <sup>p1.133</sup> plants are auspicious. There is something auspicious about emperors also, who come into existence, endowed with the heavenly fluid.

Some people believe that emperors have received Heaven's decree, when they are born, but that Heaven invests them again, when they assume the supreme power, just as lords, ministers, and the lower grades await the imperial brevet, before they dare to take charge of their post, and that the scarlet bird, the fish, and the crow were emblems of the investiture by august Heaven. That would mean that human affairs are ordered and regulated by Heaven's interference, whereas spontaneity and inaction are the principles of Heaven. To enfeoff *Wên Wang* by means of a scarlet bird, and *Wu Wang* through a white fish, would be on purpose.

*Kuan Chung* divided gain with *Pao Shu* <sup>1</sup> and apportioned more to himself <sup>2</sup>. *Pao Shu* did not give it him, and he did not ask for it <sup>3</sup>. That is, they knew each other, one regarded the other as his own self, and had no scruples about taking anything for himself. A Sage takes the empire, as *Kuan*

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<sup>1</sup> *Kuan Chung* and *Pao Shu Ya* lived in the 6th cent. B. C. They were intimate friends, and are the Chinese Damon and Pythias.

<sup>2</sup> The *Shi-chi* chap. 62 p. 1v, Biography of *Kuan Chung*, states that *Kuan Chung* cheated his friend. He there admits himself that in doing business with *Pao Shu Ya*, he took more than his share of the gain, but that he did it, because he was very poor, and not out of greed.

<sup>3</sup> *Kuan Chung* took more than his share not on purpose, out of greed, but unintentionally.

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*Chung* the property <sup>1</sup>. Amongst friends their is no question about giving or taking. August Heaven is spontaneous <sup>2</sup>. If it really issued orders, then its principle would be purpose, whereas friendship is spontaneous.

When *Han Kao Tsu* slew the big snake <sup>3</sup>, who prompted him to do so ? Did an order from Heaven arrive first, which encouraged him to do the deed ? It was an outburst of his valour, a spontaneous impulse. The slaying of the big snake, the destruction of *Ch'in* <sup>4</sup>, and the killing of *Hsiang Yü* <sup>5</sup>, all amount to the same. That the two *Chou* emperors *Wên Wang* and *Wu Wang* received Heaven's decree, and defeated the *Yin* dynasty, must be understood in the <sup>p1.134</sup> same sense. If *Kao Tsu* took the reins of government without a special order, it cannot be true that *Wên Wang* and *Wu Wang* alone were invested through a bird and a fish.

The objection may be raised that in the 'Announcement to *K'ang Shu*' it is stated that :

God heard of it, and was pleased, and Heaven gave *Wên Wang* a great charge <sup>6</sup>.

If such a decree were impossible, how could the Annals and Classics speak of a great command given by Heaven to *Wên Wang* ? — The expression great command does not signify that Heaven issued orders to *Wên Wang*. Whatever a Sage does, he fulfills the commands of Heaven. He agrees with Heaven, as if he had done what Heaven bade him. In the *Shuking K'ang Shu* is just admonished and exhorted to do good, therefore it is mentioned that Heaven above heard of *Wên Wang's* good deeds, and thereupon gave him a great charge.

The *Shiking* says :

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<sup>1</sup> The empire falls to the share of the Sage, he takes it as a matter of course, but does not long for it.

<sup>2</sup> His actions are like those of intimate friends : natural, unpremeditated, and spontaneous.

<sup>3</sup> This incident is told more fully on p. 1.178.

<sup>4</sup> The imperial house of *Ch'in*, which was dethroned by *Han Kao Tsu*.

<sup>5</sup> *Hsiang Yü* committed suicide, when defeated by *Han Kao Tsu*.

<sup>6</sup> *Shuking* Pt. V, Book IX, 4 [[Couvreur](#)].

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(God) sent his kind regards round to the west, and then gave an abode <sup>1</sup>.

This is the same idea. Heaven has no head and no face, how could it look about. Man can look around. Human qualities have been ascribed to Heaven. It is easy to see that. Thus one speaks of looking about. Heaven's command given to *Wên Wang* and his looking are very much the same. In reality Heaven gives no orders, which can be proved in this way :

The perfect man resembles Heaven and Earth in virtue, sun and moon in brightness, the four seasons in regularity, and ghosts and spirits with regard to lucky and unlucky omens. When he acts first, Heaven does not disagree with him, and, when he follows Heaven, he conforms to his periods' <sup>2</sup>.

If in order to act there would always be a decree of Heaven required, how could there be actions preceding that of Heaven, and others following it. Since the Sage acts, without waiting for Heaven's decree, just on the impulse of his heart, sometimes he takes the initiative, sometimes he follows Heaven, which means that he is always in harmony with Heaven's periods. Hence it is said that Heaven does not disagree, and that the Sage conforms to Heaven.

The *Analects* <sup>3</sup> say :

Great is *Yao* as a sovereign ! Heaven is great, and *Yao* corresponded to him.

Emperors correspond to <sup>p1.135</sup> Heaven, that is to say, they are not in opposition to, and obey Heaven. Bringing the spontaneous nature into harmony with Heaven, that is the meaning of the great command given to *Wên Wang*. *Wên Wang* had his own ideas, and acted by himself. He was not driven on by Heaven, nor was the scarlet bird commissioned to tell him that he should be emperor, whereupon he dared to assume the imperial sway. *Wên Wang's* scarlet bird and *Wu Wang's* white fish were not messengers

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<sup>1</sup> [Shiking Pt. III, Book I, Ode VII, 1](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> Quotation from the [Yi-king, Ch'ien Hexagram](#) (N.1). The commentator says that the Sage and Heaven are always in accordance, no matter who acts first, because they both follow the same principles.

<sup>3</sup> *Analects* VIII, 12.



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bringing the assurance of Heaven's glorious help.

Whatever a lucky man begins, turns to his advantage. He finds adherents without seeking them, and auspicious objects without taking any trouble to get them. A latent sympathy pervades all things. If he be induced to come forth, and to hear and look, and he then sees something very propitious, it is mere spontaneity. When *Wên Wang* was going to stand up as emperor, the scarlet bird happened to appear. The fish jumped up, and the bird came flying, and *Wu Wang* chanced to perceive them <sup>1</sup>. It was not Heaven which sent the birds and the white fish. The lucky objects were moving about, and the Sages met them. Of the white fish which jumped into the Emperor's boat, *Wang Yang* <sup>2</sup> said that it was a chance. At the time, when *Liu K'un* <sup>3</sup>, president of the Banqueting Office, was still governor of *Hung-nung* <sup>4</sup>, a tiger crossed the Yellow River. The emperor *Kuang Wu Ti* said that it was nothing but a curious coincidence, and a spontaneous act, and that nobody had sent the tiger. What *Wang Yang* called a chance and *Kuang Wu Ti* a coincidence, were all, so to speak, instances of spontaneity.

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<sup>1</sup> *Shi-chi* chap. 4, p. 8. [[Chavannes, Mém. Hist.](#)]

<sup>2</sup> A famous teacher and in later years a minister, of the 1st cent. A. D.

<sup>3</sup> A native of *Honan*, died 57 B. C. *Giles, Biogr. Dict.* N. 1323.

<sup>4</sup> A city in *Honan*.

## 13. Book III, Chap. IV

### *Pên-hsing. On Original Nature*

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p1.384 Natural feelings and natural disposition are the basis of human activity, and the source from which morals and music spring. Morals impede, and music checks the excesses of original nature. The natural disposition may be humble, modest, and yielding. The moral laws are enforced with a view to generalizing such praiseworthy qualities. The natural feelings may be good or bad, cheerful or angry, mournful or merry. Music is made in order to make every one behave respectfully. What morals and music aim at are the natural feelings and natural disposition.

The ancient literati and scholars who have written essays have all touched upon this question, but could not give a satisfactory answer. The philosopher *Shih Tse* <sup>1</sup> of the *Chou* time held that human nature is partly good and partly bad, that, if the good nature in man be cultivated and regulated, his goodness increases, and if his bad nature be, his badness develops. Thus in the human heart there would be two conflicting principles, and good and evil depend on cultivation. Accordingly, *Shih Tse* composed a chapter on cultivation.

*Fu Tse Chien*, *Ch'i Tiao K'ai* and *Kung Sun Ni Tse* <sup>2</sup> also discuss this subject in very much the same way as *Shih Tse*, all declaring that nature is partly good, partly bad.

*Mencius* wrote a chapter on the goodness of nature <sup>3</sup>, contending that all men are originally good, and that the bad ones are corrupted by the world.

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<sup>1</sup> His full name is *Shih Shê*. He was one of the seventy disciples of *Confucius* and a writer. The Catalogue of the *Han-shu* chap. 30 mentions twenty-one chapters of his pen. *Faber* in his *Doctrines of Confucius* p. 29 states that the title of the lost work of *Shih Shê* was 'yang-shu', and that he is said to have been a disciple of *Chi Tiao K'ai*, whom vide.

<sup>2</sup> All disciples of *Confucius*, whose writings were still extant during the *Han* dynasty, but are now lost. According to *Liu Hsin's* Catalogue *Fu Tse Chien* alias *Fu Pu Ch'i* wrote 16 chapters, *Ch'i Tiao K'ai* 12, and *Kung Sun Ni Tse* 28.

<sup>3</sup> *Mencius* Bk. VI, Pt. I [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)].

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Men, he says, are created by heaven and earth ; they are all provided with a good nature, but when they grow up and come into contact with the world, they run wild, p1.385 and are perverted, and their wickedness increases daily. According to *Mencius'* opinion, man, when young, would be invariably good.

*Wei Tse* <sup>1</sup> said,

— I have formerly remarked, that as a child the prince (*Chou*) did not show off.

When *Chou* was a child, *Wei Tse* observed that he had no good character. Inclined to evil, he did not eclipse the common people, and when he had grown up, he caused endless revolutions. Therefore *Wei Tse's* remark.

When *Yang-Shê Shih-Wo* <sup>2</sup> was born and Lady *Shu* saw him, and upon entering the hall heard him cry, she went back and said,

— His voice is that of a wolf. He has a reckless character, destitute of all affection. But for him the *Yang Shê* family would not perish.

Afterwards she declined to see him. When he had grown up, *Ch'i Shêng* made a rebellion, in which *Shih-Wo* took part. The people killed him, and the *Yang Shê* family was extinguished thereby <sup>3</sup>.

*Chou's* wickedness dated from his childhood, and *Shi-Wo's* rebellion could be foretold from the new-born's whine. As a new-born child has not yet had any intercourse with the world, who could have brought about his perversion ?

*Tan Chu* was born in *Yao's* palace, and *Shang Chün* in *Shun's* hall. Under the reign of these two sovereigns, the people house by house were worthy of being entrusted with fief. Those with whom the two might have mixed, were most excellent, and the persons forming the suit of the two emperors, were all most virtuous. Nevertheless, *Tan Chu* was haughty, and *Shang Chün*

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<sup>1</sup> The Viscount of *Wei*, a kinsman of prince *Chou i. e. Chou Hsin*, the last emperor of the *Shang* dynasty, who lost the throne through his wickedness and tyranny (1154-1122 B. C.).

<sup>2</sup> The *Yang Shê* family was very powerful in the *Chin* State. Lady *Shu* had married one *Yang Shê* and was thus related to *Yang-Shê Shih-Wo*.

<sup>3</sup> This took place in the *Chin* State in 513 B. C.

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brutal. Both lacked imperial decorum to such a degree, that they were set up as a warning to coming generations.

*Mencius* judges men by the pupils of their eyes. If the heart be bright, says he, the pupils are clear, if it be dark, the pupils are dim <sup>1</sup>. However, the clearness and dimness of the eyes reaches back to as far as man's birth. These differences are due to the different fluids received from heaven. The eyes are not clear during childhood, or dimmed, when man grows, and associates with other people. Nature at first is spontaneous, goodness and badness are <sup>p1.386</sup> the outcome of different dispositions. What *Mencius* says about original nature is not true.

Yet something may have contributed to the idea of the goodness of nature. A man may be benevolent or just, it is the wonderful proficiency of his nature, as in his locomotion and movements he shows his extraordinary natural ability. But his colour, whether white or black, and his stature, whether long or short, remain unchanged until old age and final death. Such is his heavenly nature <sup>2</sup>.

Everybody knows that water, earth, and other substances differ in their natures, but people are not aware that good and evil are due to different natural dispositions. A one year old baby is not inclined to violent robbery. After it has grown up, its greed may gradually develop, and lead to ferocity and aggressiveness.

*Kao Tse*, a contemporary of *Mencius* denies the difference of goodness and badness in nature, comparing it to flowing water which led to the east, runs eastward, and to the west, westward. As water cannot be divided according to its eastern or western direction, a division of men into good and bad ones is untenable <sup>3</sup>. Therefore *Kao Tse* asserts that human nature is similar to the nature of water. Such being the case, water may well be used as an illustration.

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<sup>1</sup> *Mencius* Bk. IV, Pt. I, chap. XV [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> The spiritual nature, may be transformed, but not the physical one. Human nature is so wonderful, that even originally bad people may by much training become benevolent and just. *Mencius* seeing these wonderful results was misled into the belief that human nature was originally good.

<sup>3</sup> *Mencius* Bk. VI, Pt. I, chap. II [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)].

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Nature is as metal is metal, and wood, wood. A good man has a natural bent towards goodness, and a wicked man to wickedness. Man is endowed by heaven with a spontaneous mind, and has received a uniform disposition <sup>1</sup>. Therefore portents appear at the time of birth, from which man's goodness and badness can be discovered.

People with whom no difference of good and bad exists, and who may be pushed one or the other way, are called average people. Being neither good nor bad, they require instruction in order to assume a certain type. Therefore *Confucius* says that with people above the average one can discourse on higher subjects, but that with those under the average one cannot do so <sup>2</sup>. *Kao Tse's* comparison with channelled water applies only to average people, but does not concern extremely good or extremely bad persons. p1.387 According to *Confucius* people are nearly related to one another by character, but become very different by habit <sup>3</sup>. The character of average people is the work of habit. Made familiar with good, they turn out good, accustomed to evil, they become wicked. Only with extremely good, or extremely bad characters habit is of no avail. Therefore *Confucius* holds that only highly cultured and grossly ignorant people cannot be changed <sup>4</sup>. Their natures being either good or otherwise, the influence of sages, and the teaching of wise men is impotent to work a change. Since *Confucius*, the Nestor in wisdom and virtue, and the most eminent of all philosophers, asserts the unchangeability of highly cultured and grossly ignorant people, we may conclude that *Kao Tse's* sayings are not correct.

However, there is some foundation for *Kao Tse's* view. The *Shiking* <sup>5</sup> says :

What can that admirable man be compared to ?

The *Tso-chuan* answers :

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<sup>1</sup> Either good or bad, not partly good and partly bad.

<sup>2</sup> [Analects II, 19 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>3</sup> [Analects XVII, 2 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>4</sup> [Analects XVII, 3 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>5</sup> *Shiking* I, Bk. IV, Ode IX, 2. *Vid.* above p. 1.374. [[Legge](#)] [[Couvreur](#)].

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He is like boiled silk ; dyed with indigo it becomes blue, coloured with vermilion it turns crimson.

Leading water eastward or westward is like dyeing silk blue or red. *Tan Chu* and *Shang Chün* were also imbued with *Yao* and *Shun's* doctrines, but *Tan Chu* remained haughty, and *Shang Chün* cruel. The extremely bad stuff they were made of did not take the blue or the red colour.

In opposition to *Mencius*, *Sun Ching* <sup>1</sup> wrote a chapter on the wickedness of nature, supposing human nature to be wicked, and its goodness to be fictitious. Wickedness of nature means to say that men, when they are born, have all a bad nature, and fictitiousness that, after they have grown up, they are forcibly induced to do good. According to this view of *Sun Ching*, among men, even as children, there are no good ones.

*Chi* as a boy amused himself with planting trees. When *Confucius* could walk, he played with sacrificial vessels. When a stone is produced, it is hard, when a fragrant flower comes forth, it smells. All things imbued with a good fluid develop accordingly with their growth. He who amused himself with tree planting, p1.388 became the minister of *T'ang* <sup>2</sup>, and the boy who played with sacrificial vessels, the sage of *Chou*. Things with a fragrant or stony nature show their hardness and fragrance. *Sun Ching's* opinion is, therefore, incompatible with truth, yet his belief in the wickedness of nature is not quite without foundation :

A one year old baby has no yielding disposition. Seeing something to eat, it cries, and wants to eat it, and beholding a nice thing, it weeps, and wants to play with it. After it has grown up, its propensities are checked, and its wishes cut down, and it is compelled to do good.

*Liu Tse Chêng* <sup>3</sup> objects that in this case heaven would have no fluid.

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<sup>1</sup> One of the Ten Philosophers, whose work has come down to us. He lived in the 3rd cent. B. C. His original surname *Hsün* — hence *Hsün Tse* — was changed into Sun under the reign of the Emperor *Hsüan Ti* of the *Han* dynasty, 73-48 B. C., whose personal name was *Hsün*. Cf. *Edkins*, 'Siün King the Philosopher' in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Shanghai* Vol. XXXIII, p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> Viz. of *Yao* who reigned at *T'ang*, in *Chili*.

<sup>3</sup> A famous author, more generally known by the name *Liu Hsiang*, 80-9 B. C., whose works we still possess.

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Where would the first good deed come from, if the *Yang* and the *Yin* principles and good and evil were not counterbalancing each other ?

*Lu Chia* <sup>1</sup> says that, when heaven and earth create men, they predispose them in favour of propriety and justice, that man can see what for he has received life and act accordingly, which accordance is called virtue. *Lu Chia* thinks that the human mind is turned towards propriety and justice, and that man also can discover what for he has come into life. However, the right-minded do good of their own accord without waiting for this discovery, and the evil-minded disregard propriety and defy justice, although they see quite clearly in the matter. It is impossible that justice should win them to the good cause. Thus the covetous can speak very well on disinterestedness, and the rebels on good government, robber *Chê* <sup>2</sup> condemns theft and *Chuang Ch'iao* <sup>3</sup> stigmatises lawlessness. They have a clear conception of themselves, and know how to talk on virtue, but owing to their vicious character they do not practise what they say, and the good cause derives no benefit from it. Therefore *Lu Chia's* opinion cannot be considered the right one.

*Tung Chung Shu* <sup>4</sup> having read *Mencius* and *Sun Ching's* writings, composed himself an essay on natural feelings and natural <sup>p1.389</sup> disposition, in which he says : Heaven's great principles are on one side the *Yin*, on the other the *Yang*. The great principles in man are on one side the natural feelings, on the other natural disposition. The disposition comes out of the *Yang*, the feelings out of the *Yin*. The *Yin* fluid is base, the *Yang* fluid humane. Who believes in the goodness of nature sees the *Yang*, who speaks of its wickedness the *Yin*. That is, *Tung Chung Shu* means to say that *Mencius* saw only the *Yang*, and *Sun Ching* the *Yin*.

The opinions of the two philosophers may well thus be distinguished, but as regards human nature, such a distinction does not hold good. Goodness and badness are not divided in this way. Natural feelings and natural

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<sup>1</sup> A politician and scholar of the 3rd and 2nd cent. B. C., author of the 'New Words', the same as mentioned above p. 383 as envoy to the king of the southern *Yüeh*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 1.139.

<sup>3</sup> Another outlaw.

<sup>4</sup> An author of the 2nd cent. B. C. who wrote the 'Dew of the Spring and Autumn' which is still extant.

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disposition are simultaneously produced by the *Yin* and the *Yang* combined, either more or less copiously. Precious stones growing in rocks are partly of a single colour, partly multicoloured, how can natural feelings or natural disposition growing in the *Yin* and *Yang* be either exclusively good? What *Tung Chung Shu* says is not correct.

*Liu Tse Chêng* teaches that the natural disposition is formed at birth, that it is inherent to the body and does not come out, that on the other hand natural feelings arise from the contact with the world, and manifest themselves outwardly. That which manifests itself outwardly, he calls *Yang*, that which does not appear, he calls *Yin*. Thus *Liu Tse Chêng* submits that the natural disposition is inherent to the body, but does not come out, whereas the natural feelings unite with external things, and appear outwardly. Therefore he designates them as *Yang*. The natural disposition he designates as *Yin*, because it does not appear, and has no communication with the outer world. *Liu Tse Chêng's* identification of natural feelings with *Yang* and disposition with *Yin* leaves the origin of these qualities quite out of the question, insomuch as the *Yin* and the *Yang* are determined in an off-hand way by outward manifestation and non-appearance. If the *Yang* really depends on outward manifestation, then it may be said that natural disposition also comes into contact with external things.

In moments of haste, he cleaves to it, and in seasons of danger he cleaves to it <sup>1</sup>.

The compassionate cannot endure the sight of suffering. This non-endurance is an effluence of benevolence. Humility and modesty are manifestations of natural disposition. These qualities have all their external objects. As compassion and <sup>p1.390</sup> modesty manifest themselves outwardly, I am afraid that the assertion that natural disposition is something inside without any connection with external things, cannot be right. By taking into consideration merely outwardness and inwardness, *Yin* and *Yang*, without reference to the goodness and badness of nature, the truth cannot be known. As *Liu Tse Chêng* has it, natural disposition would be *Yin*, and natural feelings *Yang*, but

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<sup>1</sup> A quotation from [Analects, IV, 5](#) [[Couvreur](#)], where we read that the superior man always cleaves to benevolence.



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have men not good as well as bad passions ?

From *Mencius* down to *Liu Tse Chêng* the profoundest scholars and greatest thinkers have propounded a great many different views without, however, solving the problem of original nature in a satisfactory way. The arguments of the philosophers *Shih Tse*, *Kung Sun Ni Tse*, and others of the same class <sup>1</sup> alone contain much truth. We may say that it is easy to understand the subject, but the difficulty is to explain the principle. Style and diction may be ever so brilliant and flowery <sup>2</sup>, and the conceptions and arguments as sweet as honey, all that is no proof of their truth.

As a matter of fact, human natural disposition is sometimes good, and sometimes bad, just as human faculties can be of a high or of a low order. High ones cannot be low, nor low ones high. To say that human nature is neither good nor bad would be the same as to maintain that human faculties are neither high nor low. The original disposition which Heaven gives to men, and the destiny which it sends down, are essentially alike. By destiny men are honoured or despised, by nature good or bad. If one disputes the existence of goodness and badness in human nature, he might as well call in question that destiny makes men great or miserable.

The nature of the soil of the Nine Provinces <sup>3</sup> is different in regard to goodness and badness. It is yellow, red, or black, of superior, average, or inferior quality. The water courses are not all alike. They are limpid or muddy, and run east, west, north or southward. Man is endowed with the nature of Heaven and Earth, and imbued <sup>4</sup> with the spirit of the Five Qualities. He may p1.391 be benevolent or just, it is the wonderful proficiency of his nature. In his locomotion and movements he may be majestic or agile, it is his extraordinary natural ability. But his colour, whether white or black and his stature, whether long or short, remain unchanged until old age and final

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<sup>1</sup> Who maintain that human nature is partly good and partly bad.

<sup>2</sup> The text has [] which looks like a name : the Record of *Fêng Wên Mao*. The fact, however, that a philosopher of the name of *Fêng Wên Mao* is unknown, and the symmetry of the context leads me to the conclusion that instead of [] we should read [] and translate, as I have done.

<sup>3</sup> In prehistoric times China was divided into nine provinces, hence the term the Nine Provinces has become a synonym of China.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 381 Note 2.

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death. Such is heavenly nature <sup>1</sup>.

I am decidedly of opinion that what *Mencius* says on the goodness of human nature, refers to people above the average, that what *Sun Ching* says on its badness, refers to people under the average, and that, if *Yang Hsiung* teaches that in human nature goodness and badness are mixed together, he means average people. Bringing people back to the unchanging standard and leading them into the right way, one may teach them. But this teaching alone does not exhaust human nature.

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<sup>1</sup> The last sentences are repeated from p. 1.386.

14. Book III, Chap. V

*Wu-shih. The Nature of Things*

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p1.103 The literati declare that Heaven and Earth produce man on purpose. This assertion is preposterous, for, when Heaven and Earth mix up their fluids, man is born as a matter of course unintentionally. In just the same manner a child is produced spontaneously, when the essences of husband and wife are harmoniously blended. At the time of such an intercourse, the couple does not intend to beget a child. Their passionate love being roused, they unite, and out of this union a child is born. From the fact that husband and wife do not purposely beget a child one may infer that Heaven and Earth do not produce man on purpose either.

However, man is produced by Heaven and Earth just as fish in a pond, or lice on man. They grow in response to a peculiar force, each species reproducing itself. This holds good for all the things which come into being between Heaven and Earth.

It is said in books that Heaven and Earth do not create man on purpose, but that man is produced unintentionally, as a matter of course. If anybody holds this view, how can he admit that Heaven and Earth are the furnace, all things created, the copper, the *Yin* and the *Yang*, the fire, and all the transformations, the working? If the potter and the founder use fire in order to melt the copper, and to burn their ware, their doings are dictated by a certain purpose. Now, they own that Heaven and Earth create man without a purpose, that, under given circumstances, he grows spontaneously. Can it be said of the potter and founder, that they too make their ware purposeless, and that it grows naturally, and of its own accord?

If a comparison is not to the point, it cannot be called an analogy, and if words do not express the truth, the statement cannot be considered correct. It may be urged that the purport of the above simile is but to show that the heavenly fluid, with which man is imbued, is not quite uniform, as the moulds

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into which the liquid copper runs, and the fire applied in burning earthenware, may be different, and that it is not said that Heaven and Earth create man in the same way as potters and founders do their business.

p1.104 Whenever human affairs are referred to, to explain human nature, they must be taken as a whole, which cannot be divided into different parts. When the eye tries to have a look at its own head, the head will turn, and when the hand grasps at the foot, the foot will move. Eye and head belong to the same organism, hand and foot to the same body <sup>1</sup>.

The potter and founder having first prepared the clay for the vessel, require a mould to form it, which is a designed act. Burning coal in order to have a fire, they regulate the furnace or stove, which is done on purpose also. Yet not all the molten copper gets a proper shape, and the burned vessels do not invariably turn out well, for their completion is not a designed act <sup>2</sup>.

Since Heaven and Earth cannot create man on purpose, the creation of all the other things and beings cannot be intentional either. The fluids of Heaven and Earth mixing, things grow naturally and spontaneously.

Tilling, weeding the ground, and sowing are designed acts, but whether the seed grows up, and ripens, or not, depends on chance, and spontaneous action. How do we know ? If Heaven had produced its creatures on purpose, it ought to have taught them to love each other, and not to prey upon and destroy one another. One might object that such is the nature of the Five Elements, that when Heaven creates all things, it imbues them with the fluids of the Five Elements <sup>3</sup>, and that these fight together, and destroy one another. But then Heaven ought to have filled its creatures with the fluid of

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<sup>1</sup> The meaning is that, if the creation of man by Heaven and Earth be compared to the melting of copper or the burning of earthenware, these latter processes must be taken in their entirety like a body or an organism. Touching one member, one affects the whole organism. One cannot single out some constituent parts of the process, such as the moulding or the firing. Then 'purpose' is comprised in the image, which thereby becomes distorted.

<sup>2</sup> The completion of a work done by man on purpose, depends on conditions and circumstances over which he has not always control. Man acts with a purpose, but the forces of nature which he sets in motion, and which bring about the final result, have no purpose.

<sup>3</sup> The Five Elements of Chinese natural philosophy : metal, wood, water, fire, and earth.

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one element only, and taught them mutual love, not permitting the fluids of the five elements to resort to strife and mutual destruction.

People will rejoin, that wishing to use things, one must cause them to fight and destroy each other, because thereby only can they be made into what they are intended to be. Therefore they p1.105 say, Heaven uses the fluids of the Five Elements in producing all things, and man uses all these things in performing his many works. If one thing does not subdue the other, they cannot be employed together, and, without mutual struggle and annihilation, they cannot be made use of. If the metal does not hurt the wood, the wood cannot be used, and if the fire does not melt the metal, the metal cannot be made into a tool. Thus the injury done by one thing to the other turns out to be a benefit after all. If all the living creatures overpower, bite, and devour one another, it is the fluids of the Five Elements also that compel them to do so.

Ergo we are to understand that all created things must injure one another, if they are to be useful. Now tigers, wolves, serpents, snakes, wasps, and scorpions attack and hurt man. Did then Heaven design man to be made use of by those animals ?

Furthermore, because the human body harbours the fluids of the Five Elements, man practises the Five Virtues, which are the outcome of the Five Elements. As long as he has the Five Organs in his bosom, those fluids are in order. If, according to this view, animals prey upon and destroy one another, because of their being endued with the fluids of the Five Elements, the human body with the Five Organs in its breast ought to be a victim of internecine strife, and the heart of a man living a righteous life be lacerated by discord. But what proves us that there is really an antagonism of the Five Elements, and that therefore animals oppress each other ?

The sign *Yin* corresponds to wood, its proper animal is the tiger <sup>1</sup>. *Hsü* corresponds to earth, its animal is the dog. *Ch'ou* and *Wei* correspond to

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<sup>1</sup> In the ancient, so called natural philosophy of the Chinese, a cyclical character, such as *Hsü*, *Ch'ou*, *Wei*, etc., and a certain animal are supposed to correspond to each of the five elements. From the relations between the elements one has drawn conclusions concerning their attributes. The greatest Chinese scholars have indulged in these plays, and mistaken them for natural science.

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earth likewise, *Ch'ou* having as animal the ox, and *Wei* having the sheep. Wood overcomes earth, therefore the dog, the ox, and the sheep are overpowered by the tiger. *Hai* goes with water, its animal being the boar. *Sse* goes with fire, and has the serpent as animal. *Tse* means also water, its animal being the rat. *Wu* also corresponds to fire, its animal is the horse. Water overcomes fire, therefore the boar devours the serpent. Fire is quenched by water, therefore, when the horse eats the excrements of rats, its belly swells up <sup>1</sup>.

p1.106 However, going more thoroughly into the question, we are confronted with the fact that not unfrequently it does not appear that animals overpower one another, which they ought, after this theory. *Wu* is connected with the horse, *Tse* with the rat, *Yu* with the cock, and *Mao* with the hare. Water is stronger than fire, why does the rat not drive away the horse ? Metal is stronger than wood, why does the cock not eat the hare ? *Hai* means the boar, *Wei* the sheep, and *Ch'ou* the ox. Earth overcomes water, wherefore do the ox and the sheep not kill the boar. *Sse* corresponds to the serpent, *Shên* to the monkey. Fire destroys metal, how is it that the serpent does not eat the monkey ? The monkey is afraid of the rat, and the dog bites the monkey. The rat goes with water, and the monkey with metal. Water not being stronger than metal, why does the monkey fear the rat ? *Hsü* is allied to earth, *Shên* to the monkey. Earth not forcing metal, for what reason is the monkey frightened by the dog ?

The East is represented by wood, its constellation is the Blue Dragon <sup>2</sup>, the West by metal, its constellation is the White Tiger. The South corresponds to fire, and has as constellation the Scarlet Bird, the North is connected with water, its constellation is the Black Tortoise <sup>3</sup>. Heaven by emitting the essence of these four stars produces the bodies of these four animals on

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<sup>1</sup> To wit the horse is hurt by the rat, because fire, the element of the horse, is quenched by water, which corresponds to the rat.

<sup>2</sup> The points of the compass, the stars, hours, days, months, and years, colours, grains, etc. have all been incorporated into the afore-mentioned scheme, based on the interaction of the elements.

<sup>3</sup> These Four Constellations are the Four Quadrants into which the Twenty-eight Stellar Mansions are divided. (Cf. *Mayers Manual*, Pt. II, N. 91 and 313.)

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earth <sup>1</sup>. Of all the animals they are the first, and they are imbued with the fluids of the Five Elements in the highest degree. Now, when the dragon and the tiger meet, they do not fight, and the scarlet bird and the tortoise do each other no harm. Starting from these four famous animals, and from those belonging to the twelve horary characters <sup>2</sup>, we find that all the other animals endowed with the Five Elements, can much less be prompted to strife and discord by their natural organisation.

As all created things struggle and fight together, the animals subdue one another. When they try to tear their enemies to pieces, p1.107 and devour them, all depends on the sharpness of their teeth, the strength of their muscles and sinews, the agility of their movements, and their courage.

If with men on earth the power is not equally divided, or their strength equally balanced, they vanquish and subjugate one another as a matter of course, using their strength to subdue, and their swords to despatch their foes. Man strikes with his sword just as the beasts butt, bite, and scratch with their horns, teeth, and claws. A strong arm, pointed horns, a truculent courage, and long teeth win the victory. Pusillanimity, short claws, cowardice, and blunted spurs bring about defeat.

Men are audacious or faint-hearted. That is the reason why they win or lose their battles. The victors are therefore not necessarily endowed with the fluid of metal, or the vanquished with the essence of wood <sup>3</sup>.

*Confucius* afraid of *Yang Hu* <sup>4</sup> took himself off, covered with perspiration. *Yang Hu's* colour was not necessarily white, and *Confucius* was not blue-

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<sup>1</sup> Those four constellations are stars, but not animals, though they bear the names of animals. How then could Heaven produce animals from their essence ?

<sup>2</sup> The Twelve Horary Characters are the Twelve Branches or Twelve Cyclical Signs applied to the twelve double hours of the day. They as well as their corresponding animals have been enumerated above, though not in their regular sequence. The Twelve Animals are : Rat, ox, tiger, hare, dragon, serpent, horse, sheep, monkey, cock, dog, boar. (*Vid. Giles, Dict.* p. 1383.)

<sup>3</sup> Metal is stronger than wood, as we were told above.

<sup>4</sup> *Yang Hu* was the principal minister of the *Chi* family, one of the three leading families in the *Lu* State, *Confucius'* country. *Yang Hu* being an usurper, scheming to arrogate the whole authority of the *Lu* State to himself, *Confucius* refused to see him. (Cf. [Analects XVII, 1 \[Couvreur\]](#).)

## Lun-hêng

faced <sup>1</sup>. Because the falcon pounces upon pigeons and sparrows, and because the hawk-owl kills, and devours wild geese, it does not follow that the falcon and the hawk-owl are born in the south, or that pigeons, sparrows, and wild geese inhabit the west <sup>2</sup>. It is but bodily strength and courage that lead to victory.

In the mansion there will always be people disputing, and in the cottage, litigating. In a law-suit there must be right and wrong, in a discussion truth and error. He who is in error, and in the wrong, loses, whereas he who tells the truth, and is right, wins.

It may happen, however, that in arguing, the glib-tongued, whose speech flows with flippant rapidity, win, and that the ineloquent, who falter and stammer in their speech, are beaten. The tongue plays the same roll in debates as swords and halberds in battles. Sharp swords, long halberds, strong and quick hands and feet secure the victory. Blunt swords, short spears, and slow hands and feet cause the defeat.

p1.108 Whether one creature vanquishes the other, depends on its bodily strength, or its prowess, or its dexterity. If a small being is courageous, and possesses a quick tongue and nimble feet, a small animal may overpower a big one, and a big one without bodily strength and destitute of powerful horns or wings, may succumb to a small antagonist despite its bigness. The magpie eats the skin of the hedgehog, and the shrike swallows the snake, for the hedgehog and the snake are not very nimble. Gnats and mosquitoes are not as strong as the ox or the horse, yet these latter are tormented by gnats and mosquitoes, which are a very audacious lot.

The horns of a stag are strong enough to pierce a dog, and a monkey might well catch a rat with its hands, but the stag is brought to bay by the dog, and the monkey driven away by a rat, for they do not know how to make use of their horns and claws. Thus an ox, ten years old, is lead by a herdsboy, and an elephant, eight cubits high, obeys the hook of a young

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<sup>1</sup> White overcomes blue.

<sup>2</sup> Because the south is supposed to be stronger than the west.



## Lun-hêng

Annamese mahout, all for want of skill. With cleverness a small creature gets the better of a big one, but without it the weak succumbs to the strong.

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## 15. Book III, Chap. VI

### *Chi-kuai*. Miracles

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p1.318 The Literati pretend that Sages are not born from human sperm, but that they are endowed with a special essence from Heaven. The mother of *Yü* swallowed pearl-barley, and gave birth to *Yü* <sup>1</sup>, whence the *Hsia* dynasty has its surname *Sse*. *Hsieh's* mother consumed a swallow's egg, and was delivered of *Hsieh* <sup>2</sup>, whence the *Yin* dynasty derived its surname *Tse* <sup>3</sup>. The mother of *Hou Chi* walked in the foot-steps of a giant, and bore *Hou Chi* <sup>4</sup>, whence the *Chou* received their surname *Chi* <sup>5</sup>. The *Shiking* says,

There was no rending and no tearing, thus *Hou Chi* was born <sup>6</sup>.

They further state that *Yü* and *Hsieh* were born unnaturally, issuing from their mother's back, and that *Hou Chi* was born naturally. There was no rending and no tearing, the mother's body did not suffer, hence the expression : no rending and no tearing. The descendants of those born unnaturally die an unnatural death, while the descendants of those born naturally die naturally. Therefore *Chieh* and *Chou* <sup>7</sup> were executed, and *Nan Wang* <sup>8</sup> was deprived of his cities. These words seem to be self-consistent,

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<sup>1</sup> This legend is mentioned in the *Wu Yüeh Ch'un-ch'iu*, the Chronicle of *Wu* and *Yüeh*, by *Chao Yeh* of the 1st cent. A. D.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Chap. 83. The *Shiking* Pt. IV, Bk. III, Ode 3 only says that Heaven commissioned the swallow to descend and give birth to *Hsieh* ([Legge Vol. IV, Pt. II, p. 636](#)). [[Couvreur](#)]

<sup>3</sup> 子, which also may signify an egg.

<sup>4</sup> *Chiang Yuan*, the mother of *Hou Chi* 'trod on the toe-print made by God' says the *Shiking*, Pt. III, Bk. II, Ode 1 ([Legge Vol. IV, Pt. II, p. 465](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>5</sup> *Yü Hsieh*, and *Hou Chi* are the ancestors of the Three Dynasties : *Hsia*, *Yin*, and *Chou*. The *Shuo-wên* observes that because the mothers of these Sages were moved by Heaven, Son of Heaven became a term for a Holy Emperor.

<sup>6</sup> *Shiking* Pt. III, Bk. II, Ode I, 2 [[Legge](#)] [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>7</sup> The last emperors of the *Hsia* and the *Yin* dynasties.

<sup>8</sup> The last reigning emperor of the house of *Chou* (314-256 D.C.), who in 256 had to surrender 36 cities to the King of *Ch'in* and in the same year died as a prisoner of *Ch'in*.

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therefore p1.319 people believe them, and since, in addition, evidence is given to establish their truth, they rely on these utterances.

The *Chan-shu* <sup>1</sup> also relates of the mother of *Yao*, *Ching Tu*, that she conceived from a red dragon, when she went out into the country, and gave birth to *Yao*. From the chronicle of *Kao Tsu* <sup>2</sup> we learn that dame *Liu* was reposing on the banks of a large lake. In her dream she met with a spirit. At that time there was a tempest with thunder and lightning and a great darkness. *Tai Kung* <sup>3</sup> went near, and perceived a dragon above her. She became *enceinte* and was delivered of *Kao Tsu*. These instances of the supernatural action of spirits are not only narrated, but also written down, and all the *savants* of the day swear by them. A thorough investigation, however, will show their futility.

The statement of the *Shiking* that there was no rending and no tearing *viz.* that the mother's body was not much affected may be true, but the assertion that *Yü* and *Hsieh* issued from their mother's back is irrational. When cicadas are born, they break forth from the back of the larvae. Did Heaven in generating those sages follow the law of the larvæ ?

Hares conceive by licking the pubescence of plants. When the leveret is born, it issues from the mouth of the hare. Since the mother of *Yü* swallowing the barley and that of *Hsieh*, who consumed the swallow's egg, were like hares licking the pubescence, their sons ought likewise to have issued from their mouths, and not from their backs. Consequently the statement about the back is preposterous.

In the world many persons die a sanguinary death by the sword, and it is not necessary that their first ancestor should have had an unnatural birth. When the *Ch'in* lost the empire, *Yen Yüeh* <sup>4</sup> beheaded *Hu Hai* <sup>5</sup>, and *Hsiang Yü* <sup>6</sup> executed *Tse Ying* <sup>1</sup>. Was the forefather of the *Ch'in*, *Po Yi* <sup>2</sup> born

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<sup>1</sup> A book of prophecies wrongly ascribed to *Confucius*.

<sup>2</sup> *Shi-chi* chap. 8, p. 2. [Cf. [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 325](#)].

<sup>3</sup> The father of *Kao Tsu*.

<sup>4</sup> The son-in-law of the powerful eunuch *Chao Kao*, who contrived the death of the emperor. Cf. [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 213 seq.](#)

<sup>5</sup> The Emperor *Erh Shih Huang Ti*, son of *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti*, 209-206 B. C.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. p. 1.178.

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unnaturally ? Ergo the thesis of natural and unnatural births based on the ancestors of the Three Dynasties is erroneous.

p1.320 Moreover, pearl-barley is a plant, a swallow's egg a bird, and a giant's foot-prints are earth. These three things are bodies, but not a fluid, how could they procreate a man ? With regard to Sages people suppose that they receive the essence of Heaven, which is an exceptionally fine fluid, wherefore their doings are so different from those of the masses. Now the progenitors of the Three Dynasties are born from a plant, a bird, and earth. Could these be regarded as very fine essences ?

Since among the productions of Heaven and Earth man is the noblest, the others are common. Now, if the essence of those common things should be the sperm for the noblest creature, man, how could it be very fine ?

Let us suppose that a pigeon or a sparrow emitted their fluid into a wild goose or a wild swan, it would never produce an egg. Why ? Because a pigeon and a sparrow are too small, compared with a wild goose and a wild swan. Now, the body of a swallow measures but five inches, and the stalk of pearl-barley not more than several feet. How could the two women who swallowed the egg and the grain have begot a creature of seven feet <sup>3</sup> ?

Supposing that one melts the copper required for a tripod and pours it into the mould of a cash, it is plain that one could not produce a tripod. Now the giant is the Spirit of Heaven, therefore his foot-prints were so big <sup>4</sup>. The man with the huge foot-prints is like the molten copper for a tripod, and *Chiang Yuan's* <sup>5</sup> body like the mould of a cash. Should the giant emit his fluid into *Chiang Yuan*, her body would be much too small to receive the whole essence, and without this whole essence *Hou Chi* could not have been born.

If *Yao* and *Kao Tsu* were really the sons of dragons, their nature as sons ought to have been similar to that of their dragon fathers. Dragons can ride

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<sup>1</sup> A child which occupied the throne 65 days only.

<sup>2</sup> The forester of the Emperor *Shun*.

<sup>3</sup> Man measures seven feet according to the measurement of the *Chou* epoch, when 1 foot was like 20 cm., and 7 feet = 1,40 m.

<sup>4</sup> The *Shiking loc. cit.* explicitly states that the foot-prints were made by God.

<sup>5</sup> The name of *Hou Chi's* mother.

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on the clouds, and *Yao* and *Kao Tsu* should have done the same.

All plants growing from earth resemble their own species, but not earth, for they are not produced by earth, which merely nourishes and feeds them. A mother with child is like the earth feeding plants. The mothers of *Yao* and *Kao Tsu* received the emissions of the dragons, as earth receives the seeds of plants. Since growing plants are similar to their own species, the two emperors also should have been like dragons.

p1.321 Of animals with blood males and females pair. When they come together and see one of their own kind, their lust is excited, they wish to satisfy it, and then are able to emit their fluid. Should a stallion see a cow, or a male sparrow a hen, they would not couple, because they belong to different species. Now, dragons and man are of a different species likewise. How then could a dragon be moved by a human being so as to impart its fluid ?

Some say <sup>1</sup> that, when the *Hsia* dynasty was near its downfall, two dragons fought together in the court, and spat their saliva on the ground. When the dragons had disappeared, their saliva was preserved in a casket, until King *Yu* of the *Chou* <sup>2</sup> dynasty opened it. Then the saliva of the snakes changed into a black lizard, which slipped into the seraglio, where it had intercourse with a palace girl. The result was the birth of *Pao Sse* <sup>3</sup>.

A black lizard belongs to another class than man, how could it become enamoured with a palace girl, and emit its fluid ? The intercourse with the black lizard was vicious, therefore *Pao Sse* caused disasters, and overthrew the *Chou* dynasty. When different species recklessly mix together, their offspring becomes unprincipled and mischievous. Now, the mothers of *Yao* and *Kao Tsu* had illicit intercourse <sup>4</sup>, why did the two emperors become wise and sage men, and were quite different from *Pao Sse* ?

They say that Viscount *Chien* of *Chao* was sick and for five days did not

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<sup>1</sup> For details cf. *Shi-chi* chap. 4, p. 25 ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 281](#)) which quotes a passage from the *Kuo-yü*, and *Lun-hêng* Bk. V, p. 1v. (*I-hsü*).

<sup>2</sup> 781-771 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> The famous favourite of King *Yu*, who ruined the empire by her extravagance.

<sup>4</sup> With two dragons.

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know anybody. When he awoke, he said,

— I have been to God's abode. There appeared a brown bear. God bade me shoot it ; I hit the animal, and it died. Then came a spotted bear ; I hit it also, and it died. After the two bears had died, I asked a ghost on the road. The ghost said : 'The brown and the spotted bears are the forefathers of two ministers of *Chin*' <sup>1</sup>.

Bears are animals, and as such of a different class from man. How should they become of the same class and the ancestors of the two ministers ? The time, when the ancestors of the two ministers, the brown and the spotted bears, killed by Viscount *Chien*, were doomed to die, was one of luck for the Viscount *Chien*. He saw them as in a dream. They were empty semblances and must <sup>p1.322</sup> not have been real. Should they really have existed, then perhaps the two bears were first metamorphosed into human beings, before they engendered the two ministers.

*Niu Ai*, Duke of *Lu*, was changed into a tiger during a sickness <sup>2</sup>. Man can be transformed into an animal, as animals can become men. Probably the black lizard, which entered the harem, was also first changed into a man.

Between heaven and earth it does not happen that creatures of a different species mix and couple. Should Heaven have the same law as man, their likes and dislikes would also be similar. Man does not like different species, therefore Heaven would not consort with such either. Although man is created by Heaven, he is like the lice which are produced on man. Man does not love those lice, for what reason then should Heaven desire to beget through man ? Different classes have different natures, and their sentiments and desires do not agree. Heaven and Earth are husband and wife. Heaven emits its fluid into Earth and produces the various things. Man is born by propagation. If Sages are formed of a very fine essence, yet they receive the fluid from their fathers, and are not endowed with a special essence from Heaven.

Should the recipients of a special essence become Sages, *Hsieh* and *Hou Chi* are not Sages, and, if it be necessary that all Sages should have received

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 1.225, where this story is told in detail.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 1.326.

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a special fluid, the Twelve Sages <sup>1</sup> did not all meet this requirement. What fluid did the mothers of *Huang Ti*, *Ti K'u*, *Chuan Hsü* and *Shun* receive, and what did the mothers of *Wên Wang*, *Wu Wang*, *Chou Kung*, and *Confucius* swallow to become pregnant ?

Perhaps the surnames of the Three Dynasties : *Sse*, *Tse*, and *Chi* gave the impetus to the invention of those unfounded and marvellous stories, as the legend of *Huang Ti's* ascension to heaven originated from the local name of *Ting-hu* <sup>2</sup>. Not only are they irrational, but those names are also misinterpreted. When *T'sang Hsieh* <sup>3</sup> invented writing, he made the signs agree with the ideas. *Chiang Yuan* walked into the foot-prints of a giant. 'Foot-print' (*chi*=跡) means a 'basis' (*chi*=基), therefore the surname should be 'his' (*ch'i*=其) with 'earth' (*tu*=土) below, but it is 'woman' (*nü*=女) with 'chin' (*i*=臣) at its aide. This <sup>p1.323</sup> is not the character *chi*=基 or *chi*=跡 nor in accordance with the circumstances <sup>4</sup>, whence their truth becomes very doubtful.

Judging by the surname *Chi* of the *Chou* of those of the *Hsia* and *Yin*, we arrive at the conclusion that *Tse* and *Sse* have nothing to do with a swallow's egg or pearl-barley. May be that the mothers of *Yü*, *Hsieh*, and *Hou Chi* were just going to conceive, when they happened to swallow a grain of pearl-barley and a swallow's egg, or walked upon the foot-prints of a giant. The world is fond of the marvellous, a propensity which has been the same in ancient and modern times. Unless they see wonders, people do not believe that a person possesses extraordinary faculties. Thus they explain surnames according to their preconceived ideas. The world puts implicit faith in these explanations, and they are therefore regarded as true. Sages have repeatedly uttered their doubts, but they could not solve them, and the shallow discussions of the scholars of the day cannot discriminate between right and wrong.

The literati, who approve of all that is old, have put forward those

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.304.

<sup>2</sup> For this legend *vid.* p. 1.332.

<sup>3</sup> A minister of *Huang Ti*, cf. p. 1.244.

<sup>4</sup> The surname *Chi* does not point to the foot-prints which *Chiang Yuan* is believed to have walked upon.

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arguments. The *Shiking* says that there was no rending and no tearing, which means to say that by *Hou Chi's* birth the body of his mother was not much affected. From this the literati, perverting the right principles, have derived the story of the unnatural birth of *Yü* and *Hsieh*. The fecundation by the dragon and the dream of the meeting with the spirit are of the same nature. The mothers of *Yao* and *Kao Tsu* were just about to become *enceinte*, when they met with a thunder-storm and a dragon carrying clouds and rain along. People seeing these phenomena then told the stories.

A dream that one meets with a dragon is an augury of the birth of a wise son. Is a dream of a meeting with ghosts not like a dream of a *rendez-vous* with a spirit ? How could it be real ? When the mother had intercourse with the dragon in the wilds, and when the dragon appeared on high, *Yao* and *Kao Tsu* perchance received their destiny of wealth and honour, for a dragon is an auspicious animal, and to meet it appearing above is a lucky omen and a sign that fate has been received.

When the Emperor *Kuang Wu Ti* saw the light in the *Chi-yang* palace, a phoenix alighted on the ground, and an auspicious grain grew in one room <sup>1</sup>. When Sages are born, and strange birds and auspicious things appear as portents, strange and auspicious <sup>p1.324</sup> things become visible indeed. If, however, we are to regard the children born then as the offspring of those things, should we consider the Emperor *Kuang Wu Ti* as the essence of the auspicious blade or the fluid of the phoenix ?

According to the chapters on the pedigree of the Emperors <sup>2</sup> and the Genealogical Tables of the Three Dynasties <sup>3</sup> *Yü* was the son of *Kun*, and *Hsieh* and *Hou Chi* were both sons of the Emperor *K'u*, their mothers being second wives of *K'u*. *Yao* also was a son of the Emperor *K'u*. Why then must the wives of kings and emperors walk into the country ? Although the ancient times are noted for their simplicity, yet there were already certain rules of propriety established. And why did these ladies bathe in the rivers ? <sup>4</sup> It

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.180.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. 2-4 of the *Shi-chi* [[Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I](#)].

<sup>3</sup> Chap. 13 of the *Shi-chi* [[Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. III](#)].

<sup>4</sup> As the mother of *Hsieh* did, when she swallowed the egg, cf. chap. 83 [p. 1.464].



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follows that the assertion about the Sages receiving a special fluid from Heaven and their mothers becoming pregnant by swallowing something is a fallacy.

As a matter of fact Sages have their prototypes among their ancestors ; being as virtuous as *Wên Wang* and *Wu Wang*, they still find their peers. *Confucius*, playing the flute, knew that he was a descendant of the *Yin* <sup>1</sup>, and *Hsiang Yü*, having double pupils, was cognisant of his being a scion of *Shun* <sup>2</sup>. The Five Emperors and Three Rulers had all *Huang Ti* as their ancestor. He was a Sage, who first received a grand destiny. Therefore all his descendants became emperors and rulers. At their births there were miracles of course, which, if they did not appear in things, became manifest in dreams.

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<sup>1</sup> We learn from *Lun-hêng* Bk. XXIV, p. 3 [chap. 38] that it was against the custom to make music on the anniversaries of the downfall of the *Hsia* and *Yin* dynasties, as one did not write on the death day of *T'sang Hsieh*, the inventor of writing. I infer from this that the last emperors of the *Hsia* and *Yin* dynasties were famous for their music, and that *Confucius* feeling in himself a talent for music imagined that he was a descendant of the *Yin* emperors.

<sup>2</sup> *Shun* had double pupils as well, *vid.* p. 1.304.

## 16. Book IV, Chap. I

### *Shu-hsü. Falsehoods in Books*

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p2.240 The world trusts in delusive books, taking everything indited on bamboo and silk for the records of wise and sage men and for absolutely true. In this belief they uphold, hum, and read them. When they see that really true records disagree with these fallacious books, they regard those records as light literature unworthy of faith. Recondite truth can still be found out, and profound or abstruse meanings, be determined. By explaining the words and elucidating the text, right and wrong are easily discovered. When all is recorded indiscriminately, the authors do not investigate things ; they are not critical enough, and do not think of what they say.

Those who transmit the sayings of scholars, mostly wish to produce something wonderful and unprecedented. They will write a book which causes ordinary readers to stand aghast and stare in blank amazement, and compose a work unheard of, to win the name of an uncommonly clever writer.

There is the following narrative :

When *Chi Tse* <sup>1</sup> of *Yen-ling* <sup>2</sup> was once travelling, he saw a piece of gold left on the roadside. It was the fifth month of summer, and there was a man who had put on a fur-coat and was gathering fuel <sup>3</sup>. *Chi Tse* shouted for the fuel-gatherer to fetch him the gold on the ground <sup>4</sup>.

The gatherer dropped his sickle, stared at him, and clapping his hands exclaimed,

— How haughty you are, and how you look down upon others !  
Your outward appearance is that of a p2.241 gentleman, but you

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<sup>1</sup> A prince of *Wu*, p. 1.523, Note 1.

<sup>2</sup> See *eod.*, Note 2.

<sup>3</sup> This coat was probably the only garment which the man possessed, who seems to have been a sort of a hermit not caring for changes of temperature or worldly affairs.

<sup>4</sup> Notice the modern construction. Cf. p. 2.104, Note 2.

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talk like a ruffian. Now, in the fifth month of summer I have donned my fur to gather fuel. Why should I take up gold ? <sup>1</sup>

*Chi Tse* apologised and inquired after his name and style, but the fuel-gatherer replied,

— You are a student who of human features knows nothing more than the skin. How could I tell you my name and surname ?,

and he took no further notice of him.

The world believes in the truth of this story, but it is idle talk, I dare say. *Chi Tse* was apprehensive of a revolution in *Wu*, because its people would have him become their lord. He would not consent, on any account, and proceeded to *Yen-ling*, never to return. His unselfishness remained the same from first to last.

*Hsü Yu* <sup>2</sup> yielded the empire, and he did not long for a marquissate. *Po Yi* turned his back upon his country, and died of hunger. He did not covet a crooked blade <sup>3</sup>. In the matter of disinterestedness we may draw an inference from great acts upon small ones, but should not surmise great ones from small ones.

*Chi Tse* was able to resign the throne of *Wu*, — how should he be covetous of gold lying on the ground ? When *Chi Tse* went on a mission to a powerful State, on his way he passed through *Hsü*. The prince of *Hsü* was fond of his sword, but at that time he did not yet give it him. On his return, the prince of *Hsü* was no more. Then he unbuckled his sword, suspended it on a tree over the grave, and went away. In his unselfishness he would not become unfaithful to his former intention <sup>4</sup>. How then should *Chi Tse*, who remained faithful to a deceased person and parted with his sword, out of greed call out to a living man to fetch the gold on the ground ?

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<sup>1</sup> So far the *Pei-wên-yün-fu* underquotes this story from the *Kao-shih-chuan* of *Huang-Fu Mi*, 3rd cent. A. D.

<sup>2</sup> A hermit. See p. 1.438, Note 1.

<sup>3</sup> [Huai Nan Tse XIII, 19r.](#) says the same of *Confucius* : 'Confucius refused *Lin-ch'iu* (a town which the duke of *Ch'i* had offered him as fief) and did not steal a crooked blade'. The crooked sword is perhaps used here as an emblem for a feudal lord.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 1.523.

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Before *Chi Tse* had left *Wu*, he was a prince, and after he had left it, he was the sovereign of *Yen-ling*. When a prince or a sovereign goes out, he has his retinue in front and in the rear, and carriages are following. It is plain that he cannot walk quite alone on the highway. If he was not ashamed of taking the gold, p2.242 why did he not order his attendants to fetch it rather than to call upon the man in the furcoat ?

In regard to *Liu Hsia Hui's* behaviour, people say that even left in the dark and unseen, he would still continue his purification. The virtuous have the same conduct, and for a thousand years maintain the same ideals. Confined to a dark place, *Chi Tse* would still refrain from taking gold — how much less would he appropriate it on the road in bright daylight, and in the presence of all his men. That would not be like *Chi Tse*.

Perhaps it was thus that *Chi Tse*, seeing the gold lying about, out of pity for the fuel-gatherer in the fur, desired to help him with it, or at the time when he bade him take up the gold on the ground, he wished to give it him, and did not want it for himself, and then all the common traditions stated that *Chi Tse* wanted the gold.

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The books contain another report namely that *Yen Yuan* and *Confucius* both ascended Mount *T'ai* in *Lu*. *Confucius*, looking out to the south-east, saw that outside the palace gate of *Wu* a white horse was attached. He pointed it out to *Yen Yuan*, asking him whether he perceived the palace-gate of *Wu* <sup>1</sup>. *Yen Yuan* having replied in the affirmative, *Confucius* said,

— And what is outside the gate ?

The other rejoined,

— Something looking like suspended silk.

*Confucius* rubbed his eyes and corrected his error. Then both descended together. Afterwards the hair of *Yen Yuan* turned white, his teeth fell out,

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<sup>1</sup> In *Suchou* of the province of *Kiangsu* where the capital of the ancient kingdom of *Wu* was.

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and, subsequently, he died of sickness <sup>1</sup>. His spirit was not on a par with that of *Confucius*. Having overstrained his strength, all his brightness and vitality was consumed, therefore he died early. All common people who have heard of this, believe it, if, however, we go into the matter, we discover its futility.

In the text of the *Analects* there is no mention of this, neither have the *Six Classics* recorded it. If *Yen Yuan* was able to see farther than one thousand Li, he would have been equal to the Sage — wherefore then were *Confucius* and all the other scholars silent upon this ?

p2.243 The human eye can only see as far as ten Li, beyond this limit it does not perceive anything. The cause of this inability to distinguish is the distance. It is on record that Mount *T'ai* is of imposing height, but that at a distance of a hundred Li it does not appear as big as a snail, owing to the distance.

Between *Lu* and *Wu* the distance is over a thousand Li. If *Li Chu* <sup>2</sup> looked out for *Wu*, he would not perceive anything, and *Yen Yuan* should be able to distinguish it ? Provided that his talents were nearly perfect, and his sight different from that of other people, then the world ought to praise him as a second sage, instead of speaking of *Li Chu*.

The sight of the human eye is such, that big things are easily distinguished, whereas small ones are perceived with difficulty. Were *Yen Yuan* placed outside the palace-gate of *Wu* and turning his looks upon the shape of the *T'ai-shan*, it would be quite impossible for him to descry it, and it is still much more evident that viewed from the top of the *T'ai-shan*, the colour of the white horse would remain invisible to him. Not only could *Yen Yuan* not see it, even *Confucius* would be incapable of seeing it. How can we establish this proposition ?

The faculties of the ear and the eye are similar. As it is not possible to command a view of a hundred Li, so the ear cannot hear so far either. *Lu Chia*

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<sup>1</sup> At the age of 29, the hair of *Yen Yuan* had turned white, and at 32 he died. Cf. p. 2.089.

<sup>2</sup> A man of very keen sight of the time of *Huang Ti*, whose eyes were so good, that he could see the tip of a spikelet at a hundred paces distance. *Giles, Bibl. Dict.* No. 1116.

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says that, notwithstanding his keen sight, *Li Lou* <sup>1</sup> could not discern what was behind a curtain, and that the music-master *K'uang*, in spite of his keenness of hearing, could not hear beyond a hundred Li. The space between the palace-gate and Mount *T'ai* is more difficult to overlook than what lies behind a screen, or beyond a hundred Li.

King *Wu* of *Ch'in* conjointly with *Mêng Yüeh* lifted a tripod, which proved too heavy for him, for he burst a blood-vessel and died <sup>2</sup>. Lifting a tripod requires force, which issues from muscles and arteries. If these cannot stand the effort, they break, and death ensues. That is the natural course. Now *Yen Yuan* used his eyes to look to a great distance. Provided that the pupils of his eyes were unable to bear the strain, then he should have become blind, but the discolouring of his hair, and the loss of his teeth could not have been the consequence.

p2.244 The hair may turn white, and the teeth fall out in consequence of excessive study. If all the forces are strained without ceasing, the vital energy is exhausted, and this may lead to death.

*Po Ch'i* was deported, and his hair soon became white. We read in the *Shiking* that [by constant grief one becomes old] <sup>3</sup>. *Po Ch'i* thus tortured his mind, but *Yen Yuan* used his eyes and suddenly cast a glance at something for a moment. How could this have such a result ?

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The books of the Literati state that *Shun* was buried in *Ts'ang-wu* <sup>4</sup>, and *Yü* in *Kwei-chi* <sup>5</sup>. On their tours of inspection they had become old, and died, on their journey, in the border land. As sages they regarded the whole world as their home, and did not draw a distinction between far and near, or make a difference between inside and outside. Accordingly they were interred at

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<sup>1</sup> Another name for the afore-mentioned *Li Chu*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 2.089, Note 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Shiking*, Part II, Book V, Ode III, 2 ([Legge, Classics Vol. IV, Part II, p. 337](#)) [[Couvreur](#), § 2].

<sup>4</sup> A place in *Hunan* province. The *Shi-chi* likewise mentions it as the place where *Shun* died. [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 91, Note 3](#).

<sup>5</sup> *Loc. cit.* p. 162, Note 4 [[Chavannes, Mém. Hist.](#)]. *Kwei-chi* in the province of *Chekiang*.

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the place where they just halted.

To speak of *Shun* and *Yü* is right, but what they say about their progress, imaginary : *Shun* and *Yao* were both emperors reigning over a territory of 5 000 Li, which was situated between the *Four Seas*. The mode of government of the two emperors was continued uninterruptedly, and no change took place. According to the *Yao-tien* <sup>1</sup>, *Shun*, on his progress, went eastward as far as the *T'ai-Tsung* <sup>2</sup>, southward to Mount *Ho*, westward to the *T'ai-hua*, and northward to the *Hêng-shan* <sup>3</sup>. These were considered to be the *Four Sacred Mountains*. In the sphere within these four frontiers the feudal lords came and assembled at the foot of the sacred mountains. From far and near, and from the remotest out-of-the-way places they made their appearance <sup>4</sup>. Whatever the Sage undertook, he sought their welfare.

p2.245 *Yü* was a ruler like *Shun*, and things did not change. The places which he visited, on his inspections, were those where *Shun* had been. That *Shun* went to *Ts'ang-wu*, and *Yü* arrived at *Kuei-chi*, cannot be true <sup>5</sup>.

It is a fact that at the time of *Shun* and *Yü*, the Great Flood had not yet been regulated. *Yao* transmitted his power to *Shun*, who received it, and thus become emperor. He entrusted part of his work to *Yü*, viz. the regulation of the waters. After the decease of *Yao*, *Shun* was already old, and he banded over the empire to *Yü*. *Shun* regulated the waters in the south, and died in *Ts'ang-wu*, *Yü* worked in the east, and expired in *Kuei-chi*. Worthies and sages regard the world as their home, and they are buried accordingly.

*Wu Chün Kao* <sup>6</sup> asserts that *Kuei-chi* is originally the name of a mountain. When, in the *Hsia* period, *Yü* made a tour of inspection, a review was held on

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<sup>1</sup> Chapter of the *Shuking*. *Shun's* tour of inspection, however, is not related in the *Yao-tien*, but in the next chapter, the *Shun-tien* ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 35](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> Another name for the *T'ai-shan* in *Shantung*.

<sup>3</sup> The mountains are not named in the *Shuking*, except the first, and generally explained as the *Hêng-shan* in *Hunan*, the *Hua-shan* in *Shensi*, and the *Hêng-shan* in *Shansi*, the so-called Four Sacred Mountains. *Ho-shan* is but another name for the *Hêng-shan* in *Hunan*.

<sup>4</sup> These tours of the emperor took place every five years.

<sup>5</sup> In *Wang Ch'ung's* opinion these places were too distant from the capital and not reached by the emperors.

<sup>6</sup> See p. 1.469.

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this mountain. Hence a circuit was named. That would be the origin of *Kuei-chi*.

To say that a circuit received its name from a mountain is possible, but the assertion that *Yü*, on a tour of inspection, held a review on this mountain, is a fiction. On his tour he did not come as far as *Kuei-chi*, how could he hold a review on this mountain then ? If the view of *Wu Chün Kao* were to be accepted, and the meaning of *Kuei-chi* were really a review, how did *Yü* hold his review, when he arrived in the south ? In case *Yü* died already on his first progress to the east in *Kuei-chi*, *Shun* also, on his progress, arrived in *Ts'ang-wu* ; how about his review there ?

Provided that the many rulers, after having established their government, set out on a tour of inspection, and then, at once, held a review, then such reviews must have taken place on all the mountains in the four directions. In times of universal peace these rulers used to ascend Mount *T'ai* and sacrifice there. Of such sacrifices on Mount *T'ai* there are records of seventy-two, and those monuments which are obliterated and washed away, are innumerable. If really the emperors, on their progress, at once had a review, the places of such meetings round about must have been much more numerous than the sacrifices on Mount *T'ai*.

p2.246 The circuit cities have their names as things have theirs, which do not admit of explanation <sup>1</sup>. Should *Kuei-chi* alone make an exception ? In the *Chou* epoch its ancient name was *Wu* and *Yüeh* <sup>2</sup>. When these names originated, where did they come from ? When names were given during the time of the *Six States*, how had they to be formed ? The cities of the circuits of China are over a hundred <sup>3</sup>, the district cities exceed ten thousand, besides villages, boroughs, and hamlets, all have their proper names. Even sages would not be able to explain their meanings. *Wu Chün Kao* could account for *Kuei-chi*, but would be unable to interpret all the other geographical names, therefore his definition of *Kuei-chi* cannot be accepted either.

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<sup>1</sup> This statement is too sweeping. Many local names can be explained.

<sup>2</sup> These are the names of the ancient kingdoms to which *Kuei-chi* may have belonged, but not names of a city.

<sup>3</sup> *Chavannes* in his list of the circuits of the *Han* dynasty ([Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 534 seq.](#)) enumerates 108.



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The object of those inspections was to examine and correct the methods of government. At *Yü's* time, *Wu* was a country inhabited by naked savages, who cut their hair and tattooed their bodies. There was no need for examining, and how could a review have taken place ?

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It is on record that, when *Shun* was interred at *Ts'ang-wu*, elephants tilled the ground for him, and that, when *Yü* was buried at *Kuei-chi*, crows laboured in his field <sup>1</sup>. This is believed to have been the upshot of the virtues of the sages, Heaven causing birds and animals to reward them by such blessings. There is nobody on earth who does not share this view, but a critical test will show the futility of the statement.

The virtues of *Shun* and *Yü* did not surpass that of *Yao*, who was buried in *Chi-chou* <sup>2</sup>, or, as some say, in *Chung-shan* <sup>3</sup>. At *Chi-chou*, birds and animals did not till for him. If they solely worked for *Shun* and *Yü*, why did Heaven grant its favours with such partiality ?

Some hold that *Shun* and *Yü*, while controlling the floods, had no resting-place, and that, therefore, *Shun* died in *Ts'ang-wu*, and *Yü* in *Kuei-chi*. By their toils they displayed merit, therefore <sub>p2.247</sub> Heaven recompensed them ; and they were far away from China, therefore it pitied them.

Now, if Heaven rewarded *Shun* and *Yü*, making the crows labour and the elephants till, what profit did *Shun* and *Yü* derive from it ? In order to requite *Shun* and *Yü*, Heaven should have caused *Ts'ang-wu* and *Kuei-chi* to offer sacrifices to them in perpetuity, however it made birds and beasts work, and did not cause the people to sacrifice. Oblations would have been made on the tombs of *Shun* and *Yü*, whereas the cultivation of fields benefitted other people only. How could Heaven, shedding its blessings on the Sages, be so inconsistent, that it did not do them any good ?

These reasons must convince us that it is not correct to regard the

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 2.005.

<sup>2</sup> One of the Nine Provinces of *Yü*, comprising *Chili*, *Shansi*, and parts of *Honan* and *Manchuria*.

<sup>3</sup> In *Yung-ting hsien*, *Hunan*.

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labouring of the crows and the tilling of the elephants as special blessings conferred upon *Shun* and *Yü*. The facts are that *Ts'ang-wu* was a country where elephants abound <sup>1</sup>, and that in *Kuei-chi* hosts of birds used to alight. We learn from the *Yü-kung* that [the *P'êng-li* <sup>2</sup> being confined to its proper limits, the wild geese had places to settle on.] <sup>3</sup> The nature of Heaven and Earth finds expression in the doings of birds and beasts. Elephants stamp the ground of their own accord, and so do birds pick out plants. When the earth has thus been pounded, and the weeds are destroyed, it looks like a tilled field, and, when the soil has been loosened and the clods have been turned, man can forthwith proceed to plant.

There is a common saying that for *Shun* and *Yü* a grave was cultivated at *Hai-ling* <sup>4</sup>. A field tilled by a deer <sup>5</sup> is like one tilled by elephants, but how could the emperors have been buried in *Hai-ling* ?

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It has been recorded that the king of *Wu*, *Fu Ch'ai*, put *Wu Tse Hsü* to death, had him cooked in a cauldron, sewed into a <sup>p2.248</sup> leathern pouch, and thrown into the River <sup>6</sup>. *Wu Tse Hsü* incensed, lashed up the waters, that they rose in great waves, and drowned people. At present, temples for him have been erected on the *Yangtse of Tan-t'u* <sup>7</sup> in *Kuei-chi* as well as on the *Chekiang* river of *Ch'ien-t'ang* <sup>8</sup>, for the purpose of appeasing his anger and stopping the wild waves. The allegation that the king of *Wu* put *Wu Tse Hsü* to death and threw him into the River, is reliable, but it is absurd to say that,

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<sup>1</sup> This may have been the case in prehistoric times, but now-a-days there are no more elephants in *Hunan*.

<sup>2</sup> The *Poyang* Lake in *Kiangsi*.

<sup>3</sup> *Shuking* Part III, Book I, 38-39 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 108](#)) [[Couvreur](#)]. Our author seems to imply that in *Kuei-chi* there were as many birds as on the *Poyang* Lake.

<sup>4</sup> Probably a place in *Kiangsu*, see *Playfair* No. 2022.

<sup>5</sup> According to the popular tradition adduced by our author, a deer seems to have tilled the graves of the two emperors. I could not find any other reference to this story.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. p. 1.140, Note 2.

<sup>7</sup> 18 Li south-east of the district of the same name forming the prefectural city of *Chinkiang* in *Kiangsu*.

<sup>8</sup> See p. 1.064, Note 5.

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out of spite, *Wu Tse Hsü* lashed the waters, that they rose in waves.

*Ch'ü Yuan* full of disgust threw himself into the *Hsiang* <sup>1</sup>, but the waves of the *Hsiang* did not swell. *Shên T'u Ti* <sup>2</sup> jumped into the *Yellow River* and died, but the billows of the river did not rise. People will certainly object that as to violence and wrath *Ch'ü Yuan* and *Shên T'u Ti* did not equal *Wu Tse Hsü*. Now, in *Wei*, *Tse Lu* was pickled, and *P'êng Yüeh* was cooked in *Han* <sup>3</sup>. The valour of *Wu Tse Hsü* did not exceed that of *Tse Lu* and *P'êng Yüeh*. Yet these two men could not vent their anger, when they were in the tripod and the cauldron, they did not bespatter the bystanders with broth from the cooked flesh, or with sauce from the minced meat.

Moreover, *Wu Tse Hsü* first was put into the cauldron, and subsequently thrown into the river. Where was his spirit, when he was in the cauldron? Wherefore was it so timorous in the broth of the cauldron, and so bold in the water of the river? Why was his indignation not the same at these different times?

Furthermore, when he was thrown into the river, which river was it? There is the *Yangtse* of *Tan-t'u*, the *Chekiang* river of *Chien-sang*, and the *Ling* river of *Wu-t'ung*. Some maintain that he was thrown into the river near *Tan-t'u*, but the *Yangtse* has no great waves. Should any one say that he was thrown into the <sup>p2.249</sup> *Chekiang* river of *Ch'ien-t'ang*, it must be borne in mind, that not only the *Chekiang* river, but also the *Shan-yin* and the *Shang-yü* <sup>4</sup> rivers have waves.

Since all the three rivers have huge waves, was perhaps the body in the pouch divided, and its parts cast into the three rivers?

For human hatred there is still some justification, as long as the deadly enemy is alive, or some of his descendants are still left. Now the *Wu* State is

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<sup>1</sup> The common tradition is that *Ch'ü Yuan* drowned himself in the *Mi-lo* river (see Biography of *Ch'ü Yuan*, *Shi-chi* chap. 84, p. 7r.). The *Mi-lo* is an affluent of the *Hsiang*, cf. *Tu-shih fang-yü chi-yao* chap. 80, p. 16v.

<sup>2</sup> See *Shi-chi* chap. 83, p. 11v. where the commentator says that *Shên T'u Ti* lived at the end of the *Yin* dynasty. *Chuang Tse* (*Giles* p. 394) relates of him that, no heed being paid to his counsels, he jumped into the river with a stone on his back.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 1.218, Note 5.

<sup>4</sup> Both *Shan-yin* and *Shang-yü* are cities in *Shao-hsing-fu* (*Chekiang*).

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destroyed since long, and *Fu Ch'ai* has no scions. *Wu* is the present *Kuei-chi*, which has been transformed into a prefecture. Why does the spirit of *Wu Tse Hsü* still resent the wrong once done him, and never cease to excite the waves ? What does he demand ?

At the time of *Wu* and *Yüeh*, they had divided the *Kuei-chi* circuit, so that *Yüeh* was governing *Shan-yin* <sup>1</sup>, whereas *Wu* had built its capital in the present *Wu*. South of *Yü-chi* <sup>2</sup>, all the land belonged to *Yüeh*, north of *Ch'ien-t'ang*, to *Wu*. The river of *Ch'ien-t'ang* formed the frontier between the two kingdoms. *Shan-yin* and *Shang-yü* <sup>3</sup> were both situated in the territory of *Yüeh*. When *Wu Tse Hsü* in the river of *Wu* caused the waves, they ought to have come into the *Wu* territory ; why did they enter the land of *Yüeh* ? That *Wu Tse Hsü*, harbouring a grudge against the king of *Wu*, wreaked his malice on the *Yüeh* river, is contrary to reason, and not the act of a spirit.

Besides, it is difficult to excite the waves, but easy to move men. The living rely on the strength of their nerves, the dead must use their soul. Alive, *Wu Tse Hsü* could not move the living, or take care of his body, and himself caused its death. When the strength of his nerves was lost and his soul evaporated and dispersed, how could he still make waves ?

There are hundreds and thousands in the predicament of *Wu Tse Hsü*, who, crossing a river in a boat, did not reach the other shore. But the body of *Wu Tse Hsü* alone was boiled in hot water in a cauldron. When his bones and his flesh had been cooked soft and become a stew with broth, could he still do any harm ?

King *Hsüan* of *Chou* killed his minister, the Earl of *Tu*, and Viscount *Chien* of *Chao*, his officer *Chuang Tse Yi*. Subsequently, the <sup>p2.250</sup> Earl of *Tu* shot King *Hsüan*, and *Chuang Tse Yi* smote Viscount *Chien* <sup>4</sup>. These events seem to be true, and yet they are fictitious. Now not having his body intact, *Wu Tse Hsü* could not have acted like the Earl of *Tu* or *Chuang Tse Yi*, taking his revenge upon the king of *Wu*. How can the rolling to and fro of the waves be

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<sup>1</sup> Part of the present prefecture of *Shao-hsing* in *Chekiang*.

<sup>2</sup> The modern *Hsiao-shan-hsien* in *Hang-chou-fu*, *Chekiang*.

<sup>3</sup> District in *Shao-hsing-fu*.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 1.202.

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considered a revenge or a proof of *Wu Tse Hsü's* consciousness ?

Popular legends though not true, form the subjects of paintings, and, by these pictures, even wise and intelligent men allow themselves to be mystified <sup>1</sup>.

The earth has numerous rivers just as man, his veins and arteries. The blood flowing through them, these arteries throb and pulsate, and have their own times and measures. So it is with the rivers. Their flowing forwards and backwards in the morning and the evening <sup>2</sup>, is like human respiration *i. e.*, the inhalation and exhalation of air.

The nature of heaven and earth has remained the same from the oldest time. The Classic says,

[ The *Yangtse* and the *Han* pursued their common course to the sea.] <sup>3</sup>

So it was previous to *Yao* and *Shun* already. When the waters fall into the ocean, they merely accelerate their course, but, upon entering the three rivers <sup>4</sup>, they begin to roar and foam in their channel, which is usually shallow and narrow, and thus rise as great waves.

The *Ch'ü* river of *Kuang-ling* <sup>5</sup> has such great waves. A poet wrote the verse :

How majestic rolls the *Yangtse*, and lo ! the billows of the *Ch'ü* ! <sup>6</sup>

They are caused by the narrow passage. If, after having been murdered in *Wu*, *Wu Tse Hsü's* spirit was producing the great waves at *Kuang-ling*, this would certainly not be a sign of its intelligence <sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* seems to intimate that there were such pictures representing *Wu Tse Hsü's* wrath in the waves.

<sup>2</sup> This is only true of rivers near the sea, where the influence of the tide makes itself felt.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from the *Shuking* Part III, Book I, 47 (*Legge, Classics* Vol. III, Part I, p. 113).

<sup>4</sup> The above named three rivers of *Ch'ien-t'ang*, *Shan-yin*, and *Shang-yü* which have big waves.

<sup>5</sup> A place in *Kiangsu*.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted by the *Pei-wên-yün-fu* chap. 22b.

<sup>7</sup> If the high waves of a river must be the work of an angry spirit, then those of the

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p2.251 In deep channels the water flows quietly, but where there are shallows, sands, or stones, it rushes through, swells, and forms rapids. Billows and rapids are identical. If, as they say, *Wu Tse Hsü* is responsible for the great waves, who lives in the torrents to cause their rapids ?

When the billows enter the three rivers, they boil and wallop against the banks <sup>1</sup>, while in the middle no sound is produced. If *Wu Tse Hsü* is held to be the originator of these waves, then his body must lie extended in the deep water of the banks.

The rising of the waves follows the growing and waning, the bigness and smallness, the fullness and extinction of the moon <sup>2</sup>. If it is *Wu Tse Hsü* who causes the waves, his anger must be regulated upon the phases of the moon <sup>3</sup>.

Sometimes a storm excites the waters of the three rivers, that they drown people. Consequently *Wu Tse Hsü's* spirit must likewise cause the wind.

When *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* was about to cross the *Hsiang* river, he was overtaken by a storm. He inquired, which deities were sacrificed to on Mount *Hsiang*. His attendants replied, the daughter of *Yao* and the wife of *Shun*. *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti*, in a fit of rage, ordered three thousand criminals to cut down the trees on Mount *Hsiang* and trample upon it <sup>4</sup>. The assertion that *Wu Tse Hsü's* spirit caused the waves, is on a level with this statement that the ghosts of the two women produced the wind.

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The books say that, when *Confucius* was buried on the shore of the river

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*Ch'ü* near *Kuang-ling* might likewise be caused by *Wu Tse Hsü*, but it would be senseless to cause floods in a place where he did not suffer any wrong.

<sup>1</sup> This refers to the famous spring-tide or *Hangchou Bore* occurring at regular intervals and entering the *Ch'ien-t'ang* river.

<sup>2</sup> The ancient Romans already had a vague idea of the cause of the tides. *Cæsar* observed that at full moon the tide used to be higher than usual, and *Pliny* distinctly ascribes this phenomenon to the influences of the sun and the moon. Kepler was the first who based it on attraction.

<sup>3</sup> An absurdity, therefore the said spring-tide and the usual tides as well are caused by the moon and not by *Wu Tse Hsü*.

<sup>4</sup> This story is told in the *Shi-chi* chap. 6, p. 18r. (*Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 154 seq.*). Instead of [] which *Chavannes* renders by 'painting in red', *Wang Ch'ung* writes [] 'to trample upon'.

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*Sse*, its waters flowed backwards <sup>1</sup>. This is meant to intimate that the virtue of *Confucius* was so excellent, that it made p2.252 the waters revert and not sweep away parts of the tomb. The world puts faith in this, and in consequence the Literati in their discussions hold that the descendants of *Confucius* should be appointed to office, basing this claim on the alleged flowing backwards of the *Sse*. But a careful consideration reveals the absurdity of such utterances.

How can *Confucius* dead be the same as alive ? While alive, he could in his practices follow up the right principles and conform to Heaven. But after death his actions ceased. Heaven rewards the highest virtue, therefore the Five Emperors and the Three Rulers attracted lucky presages, which they kept during their lifetime, but not after their death. *Confucius* met with rebuffs during his life, and no one wanted his services, wherefore he said, with a sigh,

— The phoenix does not come ; the River sends forth no Plan : it is all over with me ! <sup>2</sup>

Alive, he did not find favour, and after death, he was rewarded ? The death of *Confucius* does not differ from that of the Five Emperors and the Three Rulers, on whom Heaven did not bestow its blessings. If *Confucius* was done the recipient of Heaven's grace after death, his soul must have been holy, and the genius of the Five Emperors did not possess such excellence <sup>3</sup>.

The river *Sse* was not endowed with intelligence, that it might flow backwards for *Confucius'* sake. If the Spirit of Heaven made it do so, why did this Spirit not induce mankind to honour *Confucius*, while he was alive <sup>4</sup> ? If, by the flowing backwards of the *Sse*, Heaven wanted to secure appointments for the posterity of *Confucius*, why did it not appoint *Confucius* himself, while alive, whose merit and virtue were in accordance with Heaven, and desired these appointments for his descendants ?

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 1.223.

<sup>2</sup> P. 1.405, Note 1.

<sup>3</sup> According to Chinese ideas the Five Emperors rank above *Confucius*.

<sup>4</sup> The *T'ai-p'ing-yü-lan* quotes this passage.

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That the *Sse* flowed backwards, is a hazard and a natural phenomenon. It happens that rivers revert in their course, for streams at times change their channels, or take a new course, which is the same as flowing backwards <sup>1</sup>. Therefore the flowing backwards of the *Sse* cannot be looked upon as a prodigy.

p2.253 Some records extolling the virtue of a prince of *Wei*, relate that his kindness was not only bestowed upon scholars, but that it even embraced birds and beasts. Once he was dining with some guests, when a hawk pounced upon a pigeon. The latter escaped under the prince's table, but the hawk pursued and killed it before his eyes. The prince was shocked, and called upon his men to spread nets everywhere. Several dozen hawks were caught. The prince charged them with the crime of having hit a pigeon. The one hawk which had done it bowed its head, and did not dare to look up. Upon this, the prince killed it. The world, by way of glorification, says that the prince revenged a pigeon, but that is idle talk.

A hawk is a creature whose feelings are other, and whose speech is different from ours. A sage would not be able to induce birds and animals to a moral conduct. Who is this prince, that he could cause a hawk to bow its head and accuse itself ? Such birds as hawks are counted by thousands, how could one single hawk, which, having previously hit upon a pigeon, had flown away, be caught again ?

If it bowed its head and acknowledged its guilt, it must have been a sage bird. Understanding the words of the prince, it must have known his ways as well, and knowing his ways, it would not have pounced upon a pigeon in his presence.

Even men cannot mend their faults. Birds differ from men ; to pretend that they can repent, is a prejudice of common people and a misapprehension of the real nature of the various classes of creatures.

Perhaps the prince really caught the hawk. Expecting that some one would get hold of its head, it violently turned its neck aside, which caused it such

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<sup>1</sup> This explanation is not very satisfactory, there being a great difference between flowing backwards and taking a new course. Perhaps *Wang Ch'ung* wanted to say that some natural obstacle forced the *Sse* to meander and eventually revert to its channel.



## Lun-hêng

pain, that it inclined its head, and therefore could not look up. Since the prince was a kind and just man, people, by saying that the hawk admitted its guilt, meant to belaud him. In the course of conversation many empty compliments are made, and real deserts usually are embellished by all sorts of fictions.

\*

It has been recorded that Duke *Huan* of *Ch'i* <sup>1</sup> married his seven cousins. That cannot be true, for it would be incest and a violation of the laws of consanguinity <sup>2</sup>. It is the nature of birds p2.254 and beasts not to take heed of the relation between ascendants and descendants, therefore they mix, unconscious of the laws of relationship. Duke *Huan* united all the feudal princes and set the empire right, guiding the masses with virtue, and ruling them with authority. For this reason the lords followed him, and nobody dared to disobey. This would not have been the case, if his private life had been so flagitious, that he imitated the instincts of beasts and birds.

He prevailed upon the princes to do homage to the royal house, for it was distasteful to him that the king should be deprived of his power, and his subjects disrespectful to him. If before the world he resented a want of decorum so much, how could he degrade himself at home by such utter disregard of propriety? If there had been such a discrepancy between his public and his private life, he would never have distinguished himself or won any influence <sup>3</sup>.

As to the depravity of *Chieh* and *Chou*, they are not charged with incestuous intercourse with their kin. Sober-minded critics are of opinion that the wickedness of *Chieh* and *Chou* was less than that of doomed *Ch'in*, and that the crimes of doomed *Ch'in* fell short of those of *Wang Mang*. Incest has never been laid at their charge. Had Duke *Huan* married his seven cousins, his viciousness would have left behind that of *Chieh* and *Chou* and be worse than that of *Ch'in* and *Wang Mang*.

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<sup>1</sup> 685-643 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> 'One must not marry a wife of the same surname' says the *Liki*, *Ch'ü-li* ([Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 78](#)) [[Couvreur](#)]. This prohibition is still in force to-day.

<sup>3</sup> As the leading prince.

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The *Ch'un-ch'iu* commends the smallest merit and condemns the slightest wrong. For what reason then did it not condemn the great crime of Duke *Huan*? *Wên Chiang* of *Lu* was a sister to Duke *Hsiang* of *Ch'i*, who had intercourse with her, for we read in the *Ch'un-ch'iu* under the second year of Duke *Chuang* :

[ In winter, the (deceased duke's) wife, the Lady *Chiang*, had a meeting with the marquis of *Chi* in *Kao*.] <sup>1</sup>

Why was the *Ch'un-ch'iu* so hard upon Duke *Hsiang*, recording his lewdness, and why so lenient to Duke *Huan*, concealing his crime and having no word of reproof for it? Should the passage have been lost in the Classic, wherefore do the commentators, *Tso Ch'iu Ming*, *Kung Yang*, and *Ku Liang* all hush it up?

The fault of Duke *Huan* consisted in his too great condescension towards the ladies of his harem. Six concubines enjoyed his special <sup>p2.255</sup> favour, and five princes contended to become his heirs <sup>2</sup>. *Ch'i* was thrown into confusion, and, when the duke died, it was not until three months later that his death was officially announced <sup>3</sup>. People hearing of these six favourites, and that no distinction was made between the sons of his wife and his concubines, then said that he misbehaved himself with his seven cousins.

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There is a notice in some books to the effect that Duke *Huan* of *Ch'i* carried his wife, when he received the feudal princes in audience. This would show that the duke's lust reached the last degree of indecency. If Duke *Huan* carried his wife on his back at great audience, how could he have outdone this feat at the wildest Bacchanal?

He had refined the manners of the scholars, inspiring them with awe and reverence by his majesty, — how could he, with his wife on his back, have led

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<sup>1</sup> *Legge, Classics Vol. V, Part I, p. 74.*

<sup>2</sup> On this episode cf. *Shi-chi* chap. 32, p. 12v. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. IV, p. 58 seq.](#)).

<sup>3</sup> According to the *Shi-chi loc. cit.* the corpse of the duke was left sixty-seven days on his death-bed, before it was placed into a coffin, so that the vermin crept through the door.

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on the princes to do homage to the royal house ?

At the meeting of *K'uei-ch'iu* <sup>1</sup>, Duke *Huan* was very proud and elated. The Heads of nine States then revolted from him. His angry looks could not prevent the revolt of the nine States. Now fancy the duke carrying his wife and affording them such a spectacle of lascivity ; would that have induced them to stand by him ?

Some say that *Kuan Chung* informed the princes that his master had ulcers on his back, which would not heal without the wife's assistance. The princes believed *Kuan Chung* and therefore did not rebel.

[Now in all places of ten families <sup>2</sup> an honest man like *Confucius* can be found.] <sup>3</sup> At that time, the princes had assembled over a thousand men. There was, doubtless, one among them experienced in the art of curing ulcers, so that the services of the duke's wife could be dispensed with.

p2.256 *Kuan Chung* concealed the duke's fault. Well aware that *Kuan Chung*, by doing so, deceived the princes, the latter would, no doubt, have become angry and revolted. How could the duke, under these circumstances, have presided over their meetings for long, or been successful as their leader ?

Some hold that in reality Duke *Huan* was unprincipled, but using able men and making *Kuan Chung* his minister, he acquired supremacy.

An unprincipled man is not better than a tyrant. He would believe slanderers, remove the virtuous, and injure the benevolent and the righteous. How could such a one employ a man like *Kuan Chung*, or keep officers to serve under him ?

*Chieh* killed *Kuan Lung Fêng* <sup>4</sup>, and *Chou* murdered the son of the king <sup>5</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> This meeting was held in 651 B. C. Cf. *Legge, Classics Vol. V, Part I, p. 152* and *Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. IV, p. 55*.

<sup>2</sup> In the smallest hamlets.

<sup>3</sup> *Confucius* in his modesty says so himself, *Analects V, 27 [Couvreur]*, but it is evident that not every hamlet possesses a *Confucius*.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Pi Kan* was the son of king *T'ai Ting*, 1194-1192 B. C. and an uncle of his murderer, king *Chou*. *Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 199, Note 1*.

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*Pi Kan*. An unprincipled sovereign cannot employ wise men. Provided that *Kuan Chung* was wise, then Duke *Huan* could not employ him, and if he did employ him, then Duke *Huan* cannot have committed all those excesses.

When the sovereign is virtuous and intelligent, he has pure and honest ministers. Virtuous ministers presuppose an enlightened ruler. How, then, can Duke *Huan* be accused of wantonness ?

An opponent might say that Duke *Ling* of *Wei* <sup>1</sup> was a sovereign without principles, who, all the same, knew virtuous ministers, and whom *Kuan Chung* assisted. Then from what does it follow that Duke *Huan* was not wanton ?

Duke *Ling* was unprincipled indeed, but the fact that he employed three able men, merely sufficed to preserve his life ; he did not achieve anything grand. Duke *Huan* honoured the arithmeticians <sup>2</sup> and raised *Ning Ch'i* <sup>3</sup> from his cart. To punish *Ch'u* for not having sent its tribute of reeds and grasses, he invested it with all his forces <sup>4</sup>. He united the feudal barons, and, quite alone, set the empire in order. He is such a hero as appears only once in a p2.257 thousand generations. That he should have carried his wife on his back, is nonsense.

The scholiasts to the *Shuking* relate that Duke *Chou* as a regent wore the silken ribbons of the emperor and his hat, and that, his back turned upon a screen and facing the south, he gave audience to the princes.

A partition between the door and the window is called a screen (*i*) Facing the south indicates the high dignity. If in sitting one turns the back upon the screen and looks southward, the screen is behind. Now, when Duke *Huan* held an audience of all the princes, he was perhaps sitting with his face turned to the south, and his wife stood behind. This has given rise to the

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<sup>1</sup> 534-493 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> A short reference to this fact is found in the *Han-shu*, *Biography of Mei Fu* chap. 67, p. 9v.

<sup>3</sup> A poor cart-driver, who was heard singing and beating the time on the horns of his oxen by Duke *Huan*. He took him into his service, and subsequently made him Privy Councillor. *Giles, Bibl. Dict.* No. 1568.

<sup>4</sup> This expedition took place in 656 B. C.

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popular tradition that he carried his wife on his back. It is like the story that *K'uei* had but one leg, or that Duke *Ting* of *Sung*, in digging a well, found a man in it.

At the time of *Yao* and *Shun*, *K'uei* was a great officer. He was by nature a great musician, and the tunes he played were most plaintive <sup>1</sup> and beautiful. People then used to say that playing like *K'uei* was full perfection. Of this popular tradition made the phrase that *K'uei* had but one leg <sup>2</sup>.

The emperor *Shun* was seeking everywhere a candidate for the post of president for sacrificial worship. Every one recommended *Po Yi*, [but he made obeisance and declined in favour of *K'uei* and *Lung*] <sup>3</sup>.

p2.258 The office of a minister of ancestral worship would correspond to that of a *tsung-chêng* of the *Han* time. The cutting of one leg would be an abnormality of the legs, and how could a man move about with only one leg ?

The *Hsia* emperor *K'ung Chia* was once hunting on the *Tung-ming* <sup>4</sup> mountain, when it began to rain and to become very dusky. The emperor entered a private house, where the mistress was just nursing a baby. Some said that a child to which an emperor had come would be noble, but others urged that a child not born for grandeur must needs remain mean. *K'ung Chia*

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<sup>1</sup> To be appreciated by the Chinese, music must be melancholy. Light music appears to them frivolous and licentious.

<sup>2</sup> This explication is ingenious, but not sufficiently grounded. It seems to be derived from *Huai Nan Tse* :

'Duke *Ai* of *Lu* asked *Confucius* saying,

— Is it credible that *K'uei* had only one leg ?

— *K'uei*, replied *Confucius*, was a man and in no way different from others but in his knowledge of tunes. *Yao* said '*K'uei* alone suffices', and he made him director of music. There can be no question of one leg.

A fuller version of this story is to be found in the *Lü-shih-ch'un-ch'iu* XXII, 6v.

A simpler explanation is that *k'uei* originally is the name of some one-legged monster, and that this peculiarity was ascribed to the bearer of this name as well. *Giles* would identify it with the *walrus* and accordingly translates a passage of *Chuang Tse* chap. VI, p. 14r.

'The walrus said to the centipede, 'I hop about on one leg, but not very successfully. How do you manage all these legs you have ?' (*Giles, Chuang Tse* p. 211.)

<sup>3</sup> Quotation from the *Shuking* Part II, Book I, 23 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 47](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>4</sup> As another reading *Tung-mo* is given. Neither name seems to be mentioned elsewhere. The *Lü-shih-ch'un-ch'iu* VI, 2v., from which this story appears to be taken, writes : 'the *P'in* mountain of *Tung-yang*, a region at the frontier of *Chili* and *Honan*.

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said,

— If it becomes my son, who will make it mean ?,

and he took the child with him. Once, when the boy was carving rafters, the axe cut his legs, and he finally became a doorkeeper <sup>1</sup>. Since *K'ung Chia* wished to ennoble him as his son, he had the greatest expectations, nevertheless, when he had cut his legs, he was of no use and therefore made a doorkeeper.

Now *K'uei* could not walk about with one leg. He might have made music even sitting, but for discharging the duties of a minister of ancestral worship one leg would not do <sup>2</sup>, as the doorkeeper, after having lost his legs, could not obtain rank and honour. *K'ung Chia* did not find a noble son, and *Po Yi* could not have yielded the post to *K'uei*.

Duke *Ting* of *Sung* <sup>3</sup> was a man of *Sung*. Before the well was bored, somebody had always to be despatched to fetch water. It was calculated that every day one man was thus occupied. After digging the well, he was no more sent to carry the water, and it could be reckoned that every day one man's day's work was economized. Therefore they said that Duke *Ting* of *Sung*, digging p2.259 a well, found a man. Popular tradition went a step farther, pretending that Duke *Ting*, digging the well, found a man in it <sup>4</sup>.

Man is born from man and not from earth. Piercing the earth and boring a well is not done with the object of finding a man.

In point of analogy, the story of Duke *Huan* carrying his wife comes in the same category. He was sitting, his back turned upon his wife, whence the

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.432, Note 2.

<sup>2</sup> As a rule a cripple cannot become an official in China.

<sup>3</sup> Of the 11th or 10th cent. B. C.

<sup>4</sup> This interpretation is much too far-fetched and not convincing. The story was probably believed, when it had been invented, and no further philological or psychological arguments are required to explain this simple fact.

The *Lü-shih-ch'un-ch'iu* XXII, 6v. gives a variation of this story :

'Mr. *Ting* of *Sung* had no well in his compound, and there was always a man employed in fetching water from outside, until he himself bored a well. Then he said to others : 'I have bored a well, and got a man'. This report spread and reached the prince of *Sung*, who summoned him and asked for an explanation. Then the man replied : I obtained a man's service, but not a man in the well.'

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statement that his wife was on his back. Knowing that having one's wife on one's back is indecent, they concocted the story of *Kuan Chung* curing ulcers through the wife.

If Duke *Huan* had laid aside his princely robe, when his wife was on his back, perhaps the female fluid could remove the ulcers, and his boils could be cured by his wife. But, on receiving the lords, Duke *Huan* was clad in heavy garments, and his wife likewise wore thick clothes. The female fluid thus being checked, of what benefit would it have been to carry his wife ?

Duke *Huan* bestowed much thought on the *savants*. He illuminated his palace, and was sitting there at night. By his meditations he attracted the scholars, and how should he have received the princes with his wife on his back during the day ?

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It is recorded in some books that *Nieh Chêng* <sup>1</sup> in *Yen Wêng Chung's* <sup>2</sup> service assassinated the king of the *Han* State. That is a falsehood, for at *Nieh Chêng's* time *Lieh* was marquis of *Han* <sup>3</sup>. In the third year of his reign, *Nieh Chêng* stabbed *Hsieh Lei*, a minister of *Han* <sup>4</sup>. In his twelfth year, the Marquis *Lieh* died, seventeen years <sup>5</sup> after the assassination of *Hsieh Lei* by *Nieh Chêng*. The p2.260 notice that the latter assassinated the king of *Han* is an invention of worthless books and unimportant chronicles, and not to be trusted <sup>6</sup>.

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There is another report that *Tan*, the heir-prince of *Yen* procured a bravo, *Ching K'o*, to assassinate the king of *Ch'in*, but he failed and was executed <sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> A famous bravo in *Honan*, who died in 397 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> Better known as *Yen Chung Tse*, an officer of *Han* and an enemy of *Hsieh Lei*.

<sup>3</sup> 399-387 B. C.

<sup>4</sup> In 397 B. C.

<sup>5</sup> This number, of course, is wrong. We must read ten years.

<sup>6</sup> The *Shi-chi* chap. 86, p. 8r. in the biography of *Nieh Chêng* only speaks of his assassination of *Hsieh Lei*, but the *Chan-kuo-ts'ê* says that, while stabbing *Hsieh Lei*, the assassin also struck the Marquis *Ai*, who reigned from 376-370 B. C.

<sup>7</sup> See p. 1.503, Note 2.

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Subsequently *Kao Chien Li* <sup>1</sup> again went to pay a visit to the king of *Ch'in* and play the harp for him. The king was pleased, but knowing *Kao Chien Li* to be a partisan of the prince of *Yen*, he had him blindfolded first, and then called upon him to thrum the harp. *Kao Chien Li* had put lead into his instrument, to make it heavy. While he was playing, the king of *Ch'in* could not restrain his feelings and, on his knees, moved nearer. *Kao Chien Li* then took his harp and struck him on the forehead <sup>2</sup>. The king began to sicken, and three months later died of the wound.

The assertion that *Kao Chien Li* struck the king of *Ch'in* with his harp is true, but the report that the king being struck, ailed three months and died, is false.

The king of *Ch'in* is nobody else than *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti*. In the 20th year of his reign, Tan, heir-prince of *Yen*, instigated *Ching K'o* to stab *Shih Huang Ti*, but *Shih Huang Ti* put *Ching K'o* to death ; that is known. In his 21st year, he ordered his general *Wang Chien* to attack *Yen*. He brought back the head of the crown-prince. In his 25th year, a new invasion was made into *Yen*, and its king *Chia* taken prisoner <sup>3</sup>. Later on — the year is not known — *Kao Chien Li* struck at *Shih Huang Ti*, but missed him and was beheaded. In his 27th year <sup>4</sup>, the emperor made a journey through the empire. He went to *Kuei-chi* and came to *Lang-yeh*. North he went as far as the *Lao* and *Ch'êng* Mountains and the sea. When in the west he arrived at *P'ing-yuan* Ferry, he was taken ill, and having reached the *P'ing* terrace in *Sha-ch'iu*, he expired <sup>5</sup>.

The Book of Prophecies <sup>6</sup> writes that if the emperor returned to *Sha-ch'iu*, he would come by his death. Some writers also state that, having suffered

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<sup>1</sup> A native of *Yen* and friend of *Ching K'o*. After the execution of the latter, he changed his name and, for a time, lived as a poor man and unknown, until his musical talent was found out. *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* pardoned his former connexion with *Ching K'o* and wished to hear him.

<sup>2</sup> The *Shi-chi* chap. 86, p. 18v. narrates the event, but says that *Kao Chien Li* failed to hit the emperor and was put to death.

<sup>3</sup> All these details are to be found in the *Shi-chi* chap. 6.

<sup>4</sup> This is a mistake. This journey was made in the 37th year = 211 B. C. Cf. *Shi-chi* chap. 6, p. 26v. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 184](#)). In his 27th year the emperor made another journey.

<sup>5</sup> *Vid.* p. 1.231 and 1.232.

<sup>6</sup> P. 1.319, Note 1.



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from the braises caused by the harp for three months, he ended his life in *Ch'in*. Thus the same person is by some believed to have died in *Sha-ch'iu*, by others in *Ch'in*, and concerning his death, people say that he had always been ailing from sores. The statements of this class of books is very often irreconcilable with truth, but ordinary people are unable to settle such questions.

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## 17. Book IV, Chap. II

### *Pien-hsü. Fictitious Phenomena*

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p2.152 There is a tradition that [during the time of Duke *Ching* of *Sung*, the Planet *Mars* stood in the constellation of the *Heart* <sup>1</sup>. The duke, alarmed, summoned *Tse Wei* <sup>2</sup> and asked him what it meant that *Mars* was in the *Heart*.

*Tse Wei* replied,

— *Mars* means a punishment of Heaven. *Sung* is that part of the earth which corresponds to the *Heart*. A misfortune is menacing Your Highness. Nevertheless, it can be shifted on the prime minister.

— The prime minister, said the duke, is required for the administration of the State. To bring death upon him would be most unfortunate.

*Tse Wei* suggested that it might be shifted upon the people, but the duke retorted by saying,

— When the people are dead, whom have I to care for ? It is better that I die alone.

*Tse Wei* said that it might be shifted on the year.

— If the people starve, replied the duke, they will perish. Should a ruler of men contrive the death of his people, with a view to preserving his own life, who would still consider me a sovereign ? It is inevitable that my life must come to a close, therefore speak no more of it.

*Tse Wei* took his leave, but turned to the north, he bowed again and said,

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<sup>1</sup> This phenomenon happened after 480 and before Duke *Ching's* death in 451 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> The astrologer of the court, cf. p. 1.158, Note 1.

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— Your servant begs to congratulate Your Highness. Heaven is on high, but it hears what is below. Your Highness has uttered three maxims worthy of a superior man. Heaven surely will confer upon you three favours. This night the planet will pass through three solar mansions, and the life of Your Highness will increase by 21 years.

Upon the duke inquiring how he knew this, he replied,

— Your Highness has three accomplishments <sup>1</sup>, hence the three favours, p2.153 and the three motions which the planet must make. By each it will pass seven stars <sup>2</sup>. One star is equivalent to one year. Three times seven makes 21. Therefore 21 years will be added to the life of Your Highness. Your servant desires to fall down on the steps of the palace and to await the event. Should the planet not pass, your servant is willing to die.

The same night the planet *Mars* really passed through three solar mansions,] <sup>3</sup> just as *Tse Wei* had predicted <sup>4</sup>. Thus, in fact, the prolongation of the duke's life by 21 years came into effect. Since the planet really passed, this prolongation took place, and, this prolongation being apparent, Heaven rewarded the duke for his goodness. Consequently, if some one be able to act like the duke, he would be sure to obtain the same blessing.

All this is absurd. Provided that almighty Heaven was wreaking its anger, and caused *Mars* to stay in the constellation of the *Heart*, owing to Duke *Ching's* personal wickedness, then even if he had listened to *Tse Wei's* advice, it would not have been of any benefit to him. In case Duke *Ching* was not the object of Heaven's wrath, although he took no heed of *Tse Wei's* words, it could not injure him.

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<sup>1</sup> *Huai Nan Tse* repeats : [...] 'three maxims of a superior man'.

<sup>2</sup> *Huai Nan Tse* : 'through each mansion it will move seven Li'.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted with some few alterations from [Huai Nan Tse XII, 11v](#). See also p. 1.328, Note 5.

<sup>4</sup> The same story is related in the *Shi-chi* chap. 38, p. 15v. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. IV, p. 245](#)), but more condensed, and the end is omitted. The planet passes through three degrees.

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[In the time of Duke *Ching* of *Ch'i* there appeared a comet <sup>1</sup>, and the duke enjoined upon the people to avert it by prayer. *Yen Tse* <sup>2</sup> declared,

— It boots not, and it is but a superstition. Heaven's way is not hidden, and its will must not be suspected. Why then deprecate it ? Moreover Heaven uses the Sweeping Star to sweep away filth. Your Highness' virtue is not filthy, wherefore should you pray ? Should however your virtue be tarnished, of what use would these deprecations be ?

The *Shiking* says : [This king *Wên*, Watchfully and reverently, With entire intelligence served God, And so secured the great blessing. His virtue was without deflection ; And in consequence he received the allegiance of the p2.154 States from all quarters.] <sup>3</sup>

If Your Highness' virtue does not degenerate, all the States round about will submit to you, what evil can befall you through a comet ?

The *Shiking* likewise has it that : I have no beacon to look at, But the Sovereigns of *Hsia* and *Shang*. It was because of their disorders That the people fell away from them <sup>4</sup>.

If the virtue declines and degenerates, the people will be scattered and lost, and all the incantator's and historiographer's prayers would be of no avail.

The duke was pleased and had his orders countermanded.] <sup>5</sup>

The prince of *Ch'i* wanted to avert the calamitous presage of the comet, as *Tse Wei* was endeavouring to remove the misfortune which *Mars* was portending. The duke of *Sung* would not listen to the advice which was given

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<sup>1</sup> In the year 516 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> A counselor of the duke of *Ch'i*.

<sup>3</sup> *Shiking* Part III, Book I, 2 ([Legge, Classics Vol. IV, Part II, p. 433](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>4</sup> A lost Ode.

<sup>5</sup> Quotation from the *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Chao* 26th year ([Legge, Classics Vol. V, Part II, p. 718](#)) [[Couvreur](#), p. 417]. This event is also recorded in the *Shi-chi* chap. 32, p. 19v. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. IV, p. 76](#)), but in quite a different way, especially *Yen Tse* uses other arguments.

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him, just as *Yen Tse* declined to comply with his master's order. Thus the prince of *Ch'i* was like *Tse Wei*, and *Yen Tse* took the place of the duke of *Sung*. The same calamity was sent down on both sovereigns, but Heaven only recognised the virtue of the duke of *Sung*, by making *Mars* pass through three solar mansions and adding 21 years to his span, and did not, for *Yen Tse's* sake, cause the comet to disperse nor prolong his life. Why was Heaven so biased and unjust in requiting goodness ?

When an honest man does good, his goodness springs from his heart, and his good maxims issue from his mind. They flow from a common source and are essentially the same. When Duke *Ching* of *Sung* worded the three excellent sentiments, his conduct must have been good before he gave utterance to them. That being the case, his administration was likewise good, and under a good government propitious omens abound, and bliss and happiness supervene. Then does the planet *Mars* not intrude upon the *Heart*. If, on the other hand, something was amiss in the dealings of Duke *Ching*, so that his administration became vitiated, under a perverted government dreadful prodigies must have appeared.

*Mars* staying in the *Heart* was like the paper-mulberry tree growing in court <sup>1</sup>. *Kao Tsung* removed this portent by his <sub>p2.155</sub> administration, not by words. In the same manner Duke *Ching* should have averted the extraordinary phenomenon of the planet *Mars* by his actions. Provided that Duke *Ching's* proceedings were blameworthy, and that, for this reason, *Mars* was staying in the *Heart*, how could he hope to touch Heaven, or how would Heaven have responded, if, instead of changing his government and reforming, he had merely propounded three excellent sentiments, but done nothing ? How can we substantiate our view ?

Let us suppose that Duke *Ching* had enounced three wicked maxims, could he have induced *Mars* to take its place in the constellation of the *Heart* thereby ? Since three bad maxims would not have had this effect, how should the three excellent sentiments have caused the planet to revert three solar mansions ? If by three good maxims 21 years were obtained, would, by the

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 2.161.

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utterance of a hundred fine things, the span of human life be extended to a thousand years ? The idea of a heavenly reward of virtue is preposterous, in reality there is nothing but fortune.

According to what *Tse Wei* said, Heaven is high, but hears what is low. The prince having spoken three maxims of a superior man, Heaven would confer three graces upon him.

Heaven has a body, and in this respect does not differ from earth. In all creatures possessed of a body, the ears are joined to the head, and it does not happen that the ears and the body are separated. As to Heaven's height, it is many ten thousand Li distant from us. Now, in case the ears be attached to Heaven, hearing words at the distance of several ten thousand Li, it would be unable to understand them. If a man, sitting on a high tower, were to look out for the ants on the ground, he could not distinguish their forms ; and how should he hear their sounds ? The simple reason is that the bodies of ants are so minute and not so big as the human, and that their sounds cannot transcend the vast expanse of air. Now the altitude of Heaven is quite a different thing to that of a tower, and the proportion of the human body, compared to Heaven, not merely like that of ants and man. They say that there is no such relation between man and Heaven as between ants and man, and urge that Heaven hears what man says and, according to its quality, sends good or bad luck. That is a misconception.

When the Savages from the four quarters come to China, they must use interpreters, to make themselves understood. Although they are similar to the Chinese in body and mind, their speech is unintelligible. Even the Five Emperors and the Three Rulers could p2.156 not do without interpreters, and understand the savages alone <sup>1</sup>. Now fancy Heaven with a body quite other than the human ; must not its speech be different as well ?

Man is not cognisant of Heaven's proceeding ; how should Heaven know what man is about ? If Heaven has a body, its ears are too high and far away, to hear what men say, and if it be air (air like clouds and fog), how could such hear human speech ?

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<sup>1</sup> Their wisdom and sagemess did not enable them to understand foreign languages.

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The phenomenalists assert that man lives between heaven and earth as fish in the water. By his actions he can affect heaven and earth, just as fish beat and agitate the water. The fish moving, the water is shaken and the air stirred up.

This is not true. Should it really be so, human influence would not reach up to Heaven. A fish, a foot long, moving in the water, would only stir up the water by its side in a circumference of several feet. If it were only as big as a man, the waves caused by it would not proceed farther than a hundred steps. Beyond a Li, the waters would remain tranquil and unruffled, owing to the distance.

If human activity affect the air far and near, it must be similar to that of the fish, and the air thus affected and responsive to the impetus, would be like the water. A tiny corporeal frame of seven feet <sup>1</sup> and in this frame a subtle breath <sup>2</sup> would hardly be more powerful than the fire rising from a sacrificial vessel, and should it, ascending from the earth, have any influence upon august Heaven with its tremendous height ?

Furthermore, Duke *Ching* was but a worthy. Worthies in their dealings do not come up with sages above, nor do they pass the line of wickedness below <sup>3</sup>. Of all the ages none were truer sages than *Yao* and *Shun*, and none greater criminals than *Chieh* and *Chou*. The proceedings of *Yao* and *Shun* were full of excellence, yet they had not the effect of moving the planet *Mars*. The government of *Chieh* and *Chou* was very wicked, but they overthrow the argument that Duke *Ching* escaped misfortune. Provided that, because of Duke *Ching's* three excellent sentiments, his life time was increased by 21 years, then *Yao* and *Shun* ought to have obtained a thousand years, and *Chieh* and *Chou* ought to have died early. That was not so ; they all completed their full span. *Yao* p2.157 and *Shun* as well as *Chieh* and *Chou* became nearly a hundred years old. Consequently *Tse Wei's* remarks are altogether without foundation, and what he says about the lengthening of life, is erroneous.

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<sup>1</sup> The small foot of the *Chou* time.

<sup>2</sup> Man.

<sup>3</sup> They are not bad, but not very good.

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*Tse Wei* also stated that Mars was Heaven's agent, that *Sung* was the territory on earth corresponding to the Heart, and that misfortune was awaiting its sovereign. Under these circumstances Heaven would have employed *Mars* to inflict calamity upon Duke *Ching*, but how could it be diverted upon the premier, the year, or the people ?

Heaven uses *Mars* as the king does the chief of the princes. When a feudal lord has been guilty of a capital crime, the king sends the chief of the princes, to besiege his State and take possession of it. The prince, then, is tried before the king's deputy, who knows that the guilt lies upon the prince <sup>1</sup>. He may, however, try to turn it off upon one of his own ministers or his subjects. Should a prince, following the counsel of a minister, instruct him to turn the guilt upon the State, would the chief of the princes, upon hearing of this, be inclined to entertain such a proposal ? Would he absolve the sovereign of all guilt and shift it upon his subjects ? The chief would not consent, because the guilt is the sovereign's and not the people's. Since he would not consent, the prince's guilt being too evident, how should *Mars* agree to divert the calamity upon the people ? Therefore *Tse Wei's* view is wrong.

Let us presume that Duke *Ching* had listened to the counsel of *Tse Wei*, how could he have affected Heaven by so doing ? Would, in case a prince disregarded the advice of his minister and took all the guilt upon himself, the chief of the princes, hearing of his resolution, acquit the culprit and dismiss him ? He would not condone his crime ; why then should *Mars* consent to pass through three solar mansions ?

Listening and not listening have nothing to do with luck and merit <sup>2</sup>. The alleged movement of the planet can therefore not be taken as a fact.

Heaven and man have the same law, in which good and evil do not differ. If something is impossible by human law, we know that it would not come into effect under heavenly law either.

p2.158 *Sung, Wei, Ch'ên, and Chêng* were simultaneously afflicted with a

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<sup>1</sup> In the later *Chou* epoch the king was much too weak to punish feudal lords either himself or by deputy.

<sup>2</sup> The exceptional phenomenon was either due to luck or merit, but not to the duke's listening to the counsel of *Tse Wei*.



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conflagration <sup>1</sup>. A change in the air could be observed in the sky. *Tse Shên* <sup>2</sup>, foreseeing the disaster, asked *Tse Ch'an* whether it might be averted, but *Tse Ch'an* took no notice. The law of Heaven had to be fulfilled, and human endeavour was powerless against it. Would the four States have got rid of the calamity in case *Tse Ch'an* had listened to *Tse Shên* ?

At the time when *Yao* met with the great flood, his ministers, no doubt, were no less clever than *Tse Shên* or *Tse Wei*, still they could not avert it. *Yao* had the same feeling as *Tse Ch'an*.

According to *Tse Wei's* statement *Mars* was Heaven's agent, the *Heart* had its corresponding place in *Sung*, and misfortune was threatening its sovereign. If these were facts, the disaster could not be avoided, and the planet not be averted.

Whenever heat and cold are anomalous, or wind and rain unseasonable, the philosophers on government hold that some fault has been the cause, and that good government and virtuous acts are apt to bring about the normal state again.

If, when *Mars* takes its position within the *Heart*, death and ruin are sure to follow, how can they be avoided, and how can administrative and moral reforms avert them ? Good government and virtuous acts cannot ward them off, and to say that the utterance of three inane sentences averted the planet, turned off the disaster, increased the years of life, and procured the enjoyment of a long time of bliss, is a mistake. According to *Tse Wei's* reply Duke *Ching* spoke of the calamity, which was threatening from *Mars*. That has no reference to heat and cold, wind or rain, but was an omen implying death and the end of life.

When a State is about to perish, or an individual to expire, a strange air is perceived in the sky, and a peculiar look in the face, and this look of the face no righteous deeds can wipe off, for it is the sign of death, which thus becomes visible. Since that expression on the face cannot be got rid of by words, how should the strange phenomenon on the sky be removed by

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<sup>1</sup> This great fire took place in B. C. 524, and is described in the *Tso chuan*, Duke *Chao* 18th year [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> A great officer of *Lu*.

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government ?

When a sick man is at the point of death, that peculiar expression is seen on his face, of which people sometimes say that it is the mark of certain death. Nevertheless it might be transferred on the neighbours or the slaves. But would that look of <sup>p2.159</sup> the dying man, who just cannot speak any more, be wiped off by some appropriate words, or his life, which comes to a close, be lengthened ? That expression cannot be done away with, and his life does not admit of any prolongation. Therefore, how could the planet *Mars* be averted, and how the years of Duke *Ching* be added to ?

Ergo, when *Mars* stood in the *Heart*, we do not know what happened that Duke *Ching* did not die.

Then it is said that the planet passed through three solar mansions. What does that mean ? Did the star three times transcend one mansion, or did it at once pass through three mansions ?

*Tse Wei* said that the prince had spoken three maxims worthy of a superior man, wherefore Heaven would certainly bestow three favours upon him. That very night the planet would transcend three mansions, and, in fact, the star went through three solar mansions. Now Duke *Ching* put forward three precious arguments at one sitting, whereupon the planet moved through three mansions. Provided that he had uttered ten excellent thoughts, would the star tien have gone through ten mansions ?

*Mars* occupying the *Heart*, reverted owing to the excellent sentiments ; if, conversely, Duke *Ching* had enunciated three bad ones, would *Mars* then have eclipsed the *Heart* ? Good words made it revert, and bad ones, proceed ; in case the speech of the duke had been neither good nor bad, would it then have remained quiet and motionless ?

Sometimes when *Mars* stands in the *Heart*, a drought, but not the death of the duke is imminent, and *Tse Wei*, ignorant of this, took it for an ill omen of death, trusting like common people in the efficiency of perfect sincerity <sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Sincerity and earnestness of purpose are supposed to move Heaven and cause phenomenal changes.

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It just so happened, no doubt, that *Mars* had to leave its position of itself, and that Duke *Ching* was not to die. The world then imagined that *Tse Wei's* words were true and that Duke *Ching* touched Heaven by his sincerity.

Or perhaps *Tse Wei* was aware that the planet in its course was just about to move, and he gave himself the air of knowing personally that this movement was the result of the prince's selflessness in regard to his subjects. Seeing that the number of stars was seven, he then called seven stars a mansion and obtained 21 years, computing the number of years from stars and mansions.

p2.160 His case is analogous to that of the Great Diviner of *Ch'i*. [Duke *Ching* of *Ch'i*, asked the Great Diviner, what he could do with his wisdom. The other returned that he could shake the earth. When *Yen Tse* called upon the duke, he said to him,

— I have asked the Great Diviner what his art availed him, and he replied that he could shake the earth. The earth is steady, can it be shaken ?

*Yen Tse* remained silent and made no reply. He went out, met the Great Diviner and said,

— Formerly I have observed that, when the *Hook* star is between the *House* and the *Heart*, an earthquake is imminent.

The Great Diviner assented. When *Yen Tse* had left, the Great Diviner went to see the duke.

— Your servant, said he, cannot shake the earth. It is steady and will move of its own accord.] <sup>1</sup>

*Tse Wei's* allegation as to the progress of the planet is like the Great Diviner's remark on the earthquake. The earth, being steady, moves of its own accord, yet the Great Diviner contended that he could move it. The planet is likewise steady and shifts its position of itself, but *Tse Wei* maintained that the prince could move it. If *Yen Tse* had not said that the *Hook* star was between the *House* and the *Heart*, the artful reply of the Great

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<sup>1</sup> Quotation from [Huai Nan Tse XII, 22r](#). See also p. 1.112.

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Diviner would not have been detected. In *Sung* there was no officer with *Yen Tse's* knowledge, therefore this one utterance of *Tse Wei* was afterwards held to be true.

In the chapter *Hsü Ch'in* of *Tse Wei's Shu-lu*,<sup>3</sup> we also have the notice that *Tse Wei* said,

— The prince spoke three excellent maxims, and *Mars* was liable to move. He then waited for this event, and, in fact, it left the solar mansion.

Nothing is said about three. Perchance the planet was bound to move, and *Tse Wei* took it for a corroboration of his view. It really withdrew from one mansion, of which, by exaggeration, people made three mansions. As they carelessly magnified the number of solar mansions, they likewise invented the 21 additional years.

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## 18. Book V, Chap. I

### *Yi-hsü.* Fictitious Prodigies

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p2.161 At the time of the emperor *Kao Tsung* of the *Yin* dynasty a mulberry and a paper-mulberry tree <sup>1</sup> grew together in his court <sup>2</sup>. After seven days, they were so thick already, that they would take two hands to span them. *Kao Tsung* summoned his physiognomist and asked him about it. The physiognomist replied that, though he knew, he could not tell it. Then *Tsu Chi* was questioned, who said,

— The mulberry and the paper-mulberry are wild plants ; their growing in the court denotes the down-fall of the dynasty.

*Kao Tsung* terrified began to practise virtue with stooping body. He would ponder over the government of former kings, illustrate the principle of feeding the old, regenerate extinguished States, re-establish the succession of extinct princely houses, and raise obscure scholars. Upon this the two trees died. Three years later, the princes of six States appeared at his court with interpreters <sup>3</sup>, and subsequently he enjoyed a hundred years of happiness <sup>4</sup>.

*Kao Tsung* was a wise sovereign. Alarmed at the growth of the two trees, he interrogated *Tsu Chi*. Following his counsel, he reformed his administration and personally changed his proceedings. The prodigy of the two trees then disappeared, the princes offered their allegiance, and he reigned many years. Owing to the earnestness of his reforms, plenty of lucky auguries and blessings came down upon him. This is a fiction.

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<sup>1</sup> For the last character, *Giles* No. 6229, (*Giles* 6228) = *Broussonetia papyrifera* should be written.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 1.328, Notes 1 and 2.

<sup>3</sup> They were non-Chinese States requiring interpreters to offer their submission.

<sup>4</sup> The same legend is referred to in the *Preface to the Shuking*, 22 (*Legge, Classics* Vol. III, Part I, p. 6), in the *Bamboo Annals* [*Biot*], and in the *Shi-chi* chap. 3, p. 7r. [*Chavannes*] and chap. 28, p. 2r. [*Chavannes*]. But in all these texts the phenomenon is said to have happened under the reign of *T'ai Mou*, 1637-1563 B. C. who consulted his minister *Yi Chih*. In the *Shi-chi* the two trees got a circumference of two spans in one evening.

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*Tsu Chi* declared that the down-fall of the dynasty was impending. The ruin of a dynasty is like the death of an individual. p2.162 A man being about to die, miracles appear. When a dynasty is on the verge of ruin, its time is up, and when a man expires, his fate is fulfilled. After his death he does not live again, nor does he continue to exist after his departure. How could *Tsu Chi's* reference to the government have averted the ruin, or how could *Kao Tsung's* reforms have helped to avoid the disaster ? A private person, beholding horrid signs, does not obtain luck by doing good ; how then should *Kao Tsung*, on perceiving the prodigy, be able to avert the misfortune by changing his government ? It being impossible to avert misfortune, how can the six States have been attracted, and how the king's life been prolonged up to a hundred years ?

Human life and death depend on the length of the span, not on good or bad actions, and so is the subsistence and decay of a State determined by the duration of its time <sup>1</sup>, not by the management or mismanagement of affairs. *Tsu Chi* explained the mulberry and paper-mulberry as an augury of decay. When this sign of ruin had already appeared, the discharge of filial duties was of no avail. What evidence can we adduce ?

Under Duke *Chao* of *Lu* a *mainah* appeared and built its nest <sup>2</sup>. *Shi Chi* traced up a queer ditty of boys of the time of *Wên* and *Ch'êng* referring to the *mainah*, and seeing that now it really had come and built its nest, he explained it as a bad omen. Subsequently Duke *Chao* was expelled by the *Chi* family and retreated to *Ch'i*. His dukedom in fact became empty and desolate, and his capital deserted. The appearance of the wild bird, which built its nest, was in *Shi Chi's* opinion indicative of misfortune, and so he explained it.

If Duke *Chao*, upon hearing *Shi Chi's* interpretation, had reformed and improved his administration, following *Kao Tsung's* example, he would, after all, not have succeeded in breaking the spell, because the portent of the queer saying concerning the *mainah* had already appeared, and the calamity of the duke's flight was already completed, for this portent of the *mainah* had

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<sup>1</sup> Which is fixed beforehand.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 3, Note 1.

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become manifest during the time of Duke *Wên* and *Ch'êng*. If a branch has leaves, why should it not blossom ? And if a spring pours out its water, why should it not grow ? <sup>1</sup>

p2.163 But this event is of comparatively recent date and may not suffice to bear out our thesis. When the downfall of the *Hsia* dynasty was imminent, two dragons fought together in the court. They spat their saliva and vanished. The king of *Hsia* preserved it in a casket. The *Hsia* were destroyed and succeeded by the *Yin*, and the *Yin* were destroyed and succeeded by the *Chou*. They all did not open the casket, until under king *Yu* <sup>2</sup> it was opened and inspected. The saliva oozed out in the court and was transformed into a black lizard, which slipped into the seraglio, where it had commerce with a woman. This, later on, resulted in the birth of *Pao Sse* <sup>3</sup>.

When *Pao Sse* was introduced into the palace of *Chou*, King *Li* <sup>4</sup> became stultified by her, and the State went to rack and ruin. The time from the age of Kings *Yu* and *Li* to the *Hsia* epoch was more than a thousand years <sup>5</sup> ; when the two dragons struggled, *Yu*, *Li*, and *Pao Sse* were not yet born. The presage of the destruction of the *Chou* dynasty already appeared long before it came to pass.

When a bad augury comes forth, the calamity cannot but be completed, and when a lucky sign appears, felicity is sure to arrive. If the two dragons, at the time of their contest, said that they were two princes of *Pao* <sup>6</sup>, this was a proof of the future birth of *Pao Sse*. The dragons bearing the name of *Pao*, *Pao Sse* could not help being born, and she being born, King *Li* could not help being depraved, and he being depraved, the State could not avoid being ruined. The signs were there, and even if the Five Sages <sup>7</sup> and the Ten

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<sup>1</sup> The queer ditty portending the duke's disaster had developed, so to speak, and become realised as naturally as leaves blossom, and water flowing from a spring swells and grows.

<sup>2</sup> This seems to be a mistake. The *Shi-chi* writes king *Li* ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 282](#)). He reigned from 878-828 B. C., king *Yu* from 781-771.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 1.321.

<sup>4</sup> This must be king *Yu*, whose favourite *Pao Sse* became.

<sup>5</sup> That is not quite correct. The *Hsia* dynasty came to a close in B. C. 1766.

<sup>6</sup> See p. 1.230, Note 5.

<sup>7</sup> The Five Sages are : *Yao*, *Shun*, *Yü*, *T'ang*, and *Wên Wang*.

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Worthies <sup>1</sup> had interceded to remove them, all their endeavours to blot them out would have been in vain.

Good and evil are similar so far. When good omens come forth, a State is sure to flourish, and when evil ones become visible, a dynasty must needs perish. To say that evil portents can be removed by good actions, is like affirming that good auspices can be wiped away by bad government.

p2.164 The *Yellow River* springs from the *K'un-lun*, and then branches off into nine channels. Should *Yao* and *Yü* have attempted to turn the waters back by their excellent administration, they would have been utterly powerless to make them revert, for such is the nature of water, that human force cannot stop it. The springs of the *Yellow River* could not be stopped, and the two dragons not be removed. Accordingly, it was impossible to prevent the mulberry and the paper-mulberry trees from growing.

A king's life about to prosper is like the breath of spring becoming summer, and his death like the autumnal air becoming winter. Beholding the leaflets of spring, one knows that in summer there will be stalked leaves, and viewing the dropping fruit in autumn, one foresees the dried branches of winter. *A propos* of the growth of the mulberry and the paper-mulberry, it is also quite plain that they must be like the vernal leaves and the autumnal fruit. How could they be removed by a thorough overhauling of the government and personal reforms ?

Now, the presage of the down-fall of the *Chou* dynasty appeared already in the *Hsia* epoch ; how do we know but that the growth of the two trees was denoting the fall of King *Chou* <sup>2</sup> ? Perhaps *Tsu Chi* believed in the explanation of wild plants which he gave, but did not estimate the distance of time correctly. *Kao Tsung*, having questioned *Tsu Chi*, took to doing good, his body bent down, and accidentally the princes of the six States arrived at his court. *Kao Tsung's* life was naturally long and not yet near its close ; then people said that, after the inquiry concerning the two trees, he changed his government, reformed his own conduct, and enjoyed a hundred years of

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<sup>1</sup> Ten Worthies are mentioned in Chinese literature but for more recent times, and we do not know whom *Wang Ch'ung* had in view.

<sup>2</sup> The last ruler of the *Hsia* dynasty.



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happiness.

The mulberry and paper-mulberry grew most likely for *Chou's* sake, or perhaps they were lucky and not inauspicious, wherefore the *Yin* dynasty did not decline, and *Kao Tsung's* life lasted long. *Tsu Chi*, however, trusting in his interpretation that they were wild plants, declared them to be signs of an impending catastrophe.

At the time of the *Han* emperor, *Hsiao Wu Ti*, a white unicorn was caught. It had two horns, but they touched. The gentleman-usher *Chung Chün* was called upon to give his opinion.

— It is a wild animal, he said, its horns joined together as the land under heaven unites and forms one whole <sup>1</sup>.

p2.165 The unicorn is a wild animal, and the mulberry and paper-mulberry trees are wild plants. Both being wild, what difference is there between the animal and the plants? *Chung Chün* pronounced the animal to be auspicious, but *Tsu Chi* held the wild plants to be inauspicious.

When *Kao Tsung* was sacrificing in the temple of *Ch'êng T'ang*, a pheasant came flying along, alighted on the tripod, and screamed. *Tsu Chi* saw in it the announcement of the arrival of men from distant lands <sup>2</sup>. The commentators of the *Shuking*, on the other hand, regard pheasants as inauspicious. Both views are conflicting. According to *Tsu Chi's* statement the arrival of pheasants is propitious.

Pheasants hide amidst wild plants, which screen the bodies of wild birds. If people live in a straw hut, can they be said to be auspicious, but their cottage to be inauspicious? When such people go into the capital, they are not held to be inauspicious <sup>3</sup>. Why then cannot wild plants growing in a court be propitious? Pheasants must, in this respect, be treated like men <sup>4</sup>.

If living creatures with blood in their veins are held to be auspicious, then

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. chap. 51.

<sup>2</sup> See chap. 51.

<sup>3</sup> Pheasants cannot be looked upon as inauspicious because they hide among wild plants, as men do not become so, by living in a cottage and in the country.

<sup>4</sup> They are not to be taken for bad omens.

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the arrival of a tall *Ti* <sup>1</sup> would be so as well, why then call it unlucky ? Should all that comes from the *I* and the *Ti* <sup>2</sup> not be auspicious, the visit of *Ko Lu* of *Chieh* <sup>3</sup> at court must have been unlucky. If, however, plants and trees are believed to be unpropitious, then the appearance of the 'vermilion grass' and of the 'monthly plant' were not auspicious.

The vermilion grass and the monthly plant are both herbaceous ; they should grow in the country and, if they grow in court, it is not auspicious. Why then are they looked upon as lucky omens ? According as a wild growing thing comes or goes, it is treated either as lucky or unlucky. If the vermilion grass and the monthly plant are believed to be auspicious, owing to their excellence, then the presage depends on goodness or badness, and their quality is not influenced by the site of their growth, whether it be in the capital or in the country.

p2.166 During the *Chou* period, universal peace reigned throughout the empire. The *Yüeh-ch'ang* <sup>4</sup> presented the Duke of *Chou* with pheasants. *Kao Tsung* likewise obtained one, which he regarded as lucky. A pheasant is also a creature living in the grass and in the country, for what reason is it considered to be a good omen ? If it is on account of a portion of the character *chih* (pheasant) bearing a resemblance to *shih* (a scholar), then there is also a likeness between a deer, *chün*, and a superior man, *chün*.

*Kung-Sun Shu* <sup>5</sup> got a white stag ; wherefore did he explain it as an unlucky augury ? Ergo we come to the conclusion that it is impossible to know whether a pheasant be propitious or not, nor can we prove whether the meaning of a mulberry and a paper-mulberry be good or bad.

Perhaps they were something good, intimating that scholars from afar would walk into the temple of *Kao Tsung*, therefore the latter obtained luck and happiness, which he enjoyed ever so long.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.486, Note 3.

<sup>2</sup> Wild tribes in the West and the North.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 2.122, Note 2. The homage of this chieftain to the Duke of *Lu* was, on the contrary, believed to be a good augury.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 1.505, Note 2, where this people is called [a][b] instead of [a][c]

<sup>5</sup> A *Han* general of the 1st cent. B. C. who conquered *Ssechuan* and proclaimed himself emperor of *Shu*, and took white as his imperial colour.

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Those arguing on calamitous prodigies stand convinced that Heaven makes use of calamitous phenomena for the purpose of rebuking the emperor. When the emperor has faults, prodigies appear in the State. If he does not change, calamities become visible on plants and trees, if he does not change then, they manifest themselves on the Five Grains, and should he not reform even then, they attain his own person <sup>1</sup>.

The 'Spring and Autumn' of *Tso Ch'iu Ming* says that there are few States which have not five harvests, when they are going to perish. Calamities become visible on the Five Grains ; how then can they grow ripe ? Their not ripening is a sign of impending ruin, for ruin is likewise a feature of calamity, to which the not ripening of the Five Grains corresponds. When Heaven does not <sup>p2.167</sup> mature them, this may be a calamity or a blessing <sup>2</sup>, happiness and misfortune are therefore difficult to distinguish, and what is said about the mulberry and the paper-mulberry cannot be correct.

The theorists all write in their books and their notes that, when Heaven rains grain, this is an ill omen, and in various books and chronicles we read that, [when *Tsang Hsieh* invented writing, Heaven rained grain, and the ghosts cried during the night.] <sup>3</sup> This must be accounted a lugubrious prodigy ; why did Heaven use something so harmonious to produce it ? The production of grain is a kind gift from Heaven, very harmonious and also looked upon as something excellent. And the grain produced came down following upon rain ? If we thoroughly go into the matter, for what reason must it be an ill omen ? When the *Yin* and the *Yang* harmonise, the harvest grows, otherwise it is spoiled by calamities and disasters. The harmony of *Yin* and *Yang* resulting in the production of grain, how can it be called inauspicious ?

Raw silk is wrought into pongees, and of hempen threads cloth is made.

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<sup>1</sup> This theory is explained and combatted in the chapter 'On Reprimands' in p. 1.119 seq.

<sup>2</sup> Five harvests being foreboding the ruin of a State, the not ripening of cereals ought to be a lucky augury ; conversely, an impending calamity affects the grain, so that it does not ripen. Then its not ripening is a bad augury as well. Such contradictions should have shown *Wang Ch'ung* the futility of such researches.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 1.244, Note 3. The passage is quoted from [Huai Nan Tse VIII, 5r.](#)

## Lun-hêng

To present a man with silk and hemp is already conferring a valuable gift upon him, but how much more precious would be silken fabrics and woven cloth ? Silk and hemp correspond to the *Yin* and the *Yang*, pongees and cloth are like the ripe grain. A present of pongees cannot be called bad, why then should grain, this heavenly gift, be considered unlucky ? Since the good or bad presage of raining grain cannot be made out, the statement about the mulberry and the paper-mulberry must also remain doubtful.

If 'fragrant grass' grew in the *Chou* epoch, at times of universal peace people would have brought presents of this grass with them. It also grows in the open country exactly like the mulberry and the paper-mulberry. If the *I* and the *Ti* had presented it, it would have been lucky, but should it have grown in the court of *Chou*, would it also have been deemed good ?

Fragrant grass can be used for the distillation of spirits, its perfume being very intensive. By pouring out this perfumed wine at sacrifices, the spirits are called down. Provided that this grass had spontaneously grown in the court of *Chou*, it would not have p2.168 been different from auspicious grain, vermilion grass, or the monthly plant <sup>1</sup>.

Furthermore, mulberry trees feed the silk-worms, which make silk. This silk is worked into pongees, and these pongees, into dresses. Clad in these robes, people enter the ancestral temple, using them as court-dresses. The evolution is similar to that of the fragrant grass, why then are those trees held to be a bad augury ?

When the heir-son of Duke *Hsien* of *Wei* <sup>2</sup> arrived at the *Spirit Tower*, a snake wriggled round the left wheel of his chariot. The charioteer said to him,

— Prince descend and pay your respects. I have heard say that, when a snake curls round the left cartwheel of the son of the chief of a State, he will soon be seated on the throne.

But the Prince did not descend and returned to his residence.

The charioteer called upon him, and the prince said,

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<sup>1</sup> All these plants pass for suspicious portents.

<sup>2</sup> 576-559 B. C.

## Lun-hêng

— I have heard say that a man's son lives in perfect accord with his master. He does not cherish selfish desires and receives his commands with reverence and awe. He does nothing which might impair the health of the sovereign. If I now come into possession of the State, the sovereign must lose his health. To see only the lustre of the crown and forget the welfare of the ruler is not what a son ought to do. That I prostrate myself, in order to come to the dukedom, would hardly be according to the sovereign's wishes. He who disobeys the duties of a son, is undutiful, and he who acts contrary to the wishes of his sovereign, is not loyal. And yet you desire me to do it ? The dangers of my wishing to assume the reins of government are evident enough.

Then he tried to commit suicide by jumping down from the palace. His charioteer attempted to stop him, but in vain. He threw himself into his sword and gave up his ghost <sup>1</sup>.

If the curling of a snake round the left wheel really implied the speedy accession of the prince, he ought not to have died, and Duke *Hsien* should have expired at once. Now the duke did not die, but the crown-prince fell into his sword. Therefore the explanation of the charioteer was the idle talk of common people.

Perhaps the snake foreshadowed the imminent death of the prince, and the charioteer, placing confidence in the popular p<sub>2.169</sub> interpretation, failed to grasp the real meaning of the portent. The growth of the mulberry and paper-mulberry resembles the snake curling round the left wheel. As a matter of fact, its arrival was unlucky, but the charioteer fancied it to be lucky, and so the two trees were in fact auspicious, but *Tsu Chi* thought them of ill omen.

[When *Yü*, on his journey south, crossed the *Yangtse*, a yellow dragon carried his boat on its back. The men in the boat turned pale as ashes, but *Yü* was amused and said laughing,

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<sup>1</sup> This story is referred to in the *Hsin-hsü* of *Liu Hsiang* (*T'ai-P'ing-yü-lan*).

## Lun-hêng

— I have received the decree of Heaven and harrass myself to succour the thousands of people. My life lasts awhile, and death is a return. It being but a return, how can it upset my serenity ? I look upon a dragon as a lizard.

Then the dragon disappeared.] <sup>1</sup>

In ancient and modern times the arrival of a dragon is commonly regarded as something very lucky, *Yü* alone declared a yellow dragon to be a bad presage, and when they saw it lifting the boat, the men in the boat took fright.

The mulberry and the paper-mulberry may be compared with the dragon, for, though their auguries be reversed, there is still a similarity. Wild plants growing in court are held to be unlucky, but, there being an extraordinary case like the yellow dragon carrying the boat, they became lucky, and the *Yin* dynasty did not perish.

Duke *Wên* of *Chili* was going to try issues with King *Ch'êng* of *Ch'u* at *Ch'êng-p'u* <sup>2</sup>, when a 'broom star' <sup>3</sup> proceeded from *Ch'u*, which held its stick <sup>4</sup>. The matter was referred to *Chiu Fan* <sup>5</sup>, who replied,

— In fighting with brooms he who turns them round wins.

Duke *Wên* dreamt that he was wrestling with King *Ch'êng*, who gained the upper hand, and sucked his brains. *Chiu Fan* being p2.170 questioned, rejoined,

— Your Highness could look up to Heaven, while *Ch'u* was bending down under the weight of its guilt. The battle will prove a great victory <sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from [Huai Nan Tse VII, 8v](#). See also p. 1.352, Note 1. *Huai Nan Tse* has the following conclusion : 'He did not change countenance. Then the dragon dropped its ears, wagged its tail, and fled'.

<sup>2</sup> The site is not certain. It was either in the prefecture of *K'ai-fêng-fu* (*Honan*) or in *Ts'ao-chou-fu* (*Shantung*). The battle took place in B. C. 632. Cf. *Ch'un-ch'iu*, Duke *Hsi* 28th year [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>3</sup> A comet.

<sup>4</sup> *I. e.*, the stick or the tail of the comet was turned towards the kingdom of *Ch'u*.

<sup>5</sup> An officer of Chin.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. p. 1.189, Note 6.

## Lun-hêng

The duke followed his advice and completely defeated the army of *Ch'u*. Had Duke *Wên* consulted an ordinary officer previously, he would certainly have denied the possibility of a victory, for a broom star is inauspicious, and the upper hand in wrangling not an adverse prognostic.

The mulberry and the paper-mulberry were pronounced ill-omened, as the fact of *Chin* being opposite to the besom and the duke's succumbing in the struggle, were deemed bad auguries. These trees were significant of luck all the same, like the curious phenomena of being over against the broom star and looking up to Heaven, whence *Kao Tsung's* long reign and the salvation of the *Yin* dynasty.

If Duke *Wên* had not asked *Chiu Fan*, if the latter had not been aware of the lucky augury, and if then a great victory had been won, the people would have urged that, by virtue of his extreme wisdom, Duke *Wên* had worsted iniquitous *Ch'u*, and that, in spite of the prodigy appearing in the sky and of the horrible dream, the adverse presage and the unfavourable portent were wiped out and dispersed, and happiness secured. The *Yin* could not boast of a man with *Chiu Fan's* extraordinary knowledge, having only their *Tsu Chi*, who shared the common prejudices. Accordingly the narrative of the two trees has been handed down without ceasing, and up to the present day the notion that misfortune can be transmuted into happiness has not yet been rectified.

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## 19. Book V, Chap. II

### *Kan-hsü.* Fictitious Influences

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p2.171 In the books of the Literati which have come down to us they say that at the time of *Yao* ten suns rose simultaneously, so that everything was scorched up. *Yao* shot at the ten suns on high, whereupon nine out of them were removed, and a single one began to rise regularly <sup>1</sup>. This is a myth.

When a man is shooting with arrows, at a distance of no more than a hundred steps, the arrows lose their force. As regards the course of the sun, it moves upon heaven like a star. The interstice between heaven and man measures several ten thousand Li <sup>2</sup>, and if *Yao* had shot at it, how could he have hit the sun ? Provided that, at *Yao*'s time, the distance from heaven to earth had not been upwards of a hundred steps, then the arrows of *Yao* might have just reached the sun, but they could not go farther than a hundred steps. Under the supposition of the short distance of heaven and earth at the time of *Yao*, his shots might have touched the suns, but without damaging them, and why should the suns have disappeared, if they had been damaged ?

The sun is fire. If fire on earth is employed to kindle a torch, and if the bystanders shot at it, would they extinguish it, even if they hit it ? Earthly fire is not to be extinguished by arrow-shots, how could heavenly fire be put out in this manner ?

This is meant to imply that *Yao* shot at the suns with his spiritual essence <sup>3</sup>. Whatever is touched by it, even metal and stones, crumbles to pieces, for it knows no hardness nor distance. Now, water and fire have a similar nature. If fire could be extinguished with arrows, it ought to be possible to remove water by shooting at it likewise.

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 1.272, Note 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* reckons the distance at 60 000 Li. p. 1.275.

<sup>3</sup> We are not told how this is possible.



## Lun-hêng

At the time of the Great Flood, China was inundated by the waters causing great damage to the people. Why did *Yao* not put forth his spiritual essence then, removing the waters by shooting ? p2.172 He was able to shoot at the suns, preventing their fire from doing injury, but he could not shoot at the Yellow River, to hinder the ravages of its floods. Since the water could not be removed by shooting, we know that the story about shooting at the suns is an invention and unreliable.

Some hold that the sun is a fluid and that, although an arrow may not reach it, the spiritual essence can extinguish it. Now Heaven is also far off ; in case it is a fluid, it must be similar to the sun and the moon, and should it be corporeal <sup>1</sup>, it would be on a level with metals and stones. If the essence of *Yao* extinguished the suns and destroyed metals and stones, could he also perforate Heaven, while sending his arrows ?

As an example of the perversity of *Chieh* and *Chou* people relate that they shot at Heaven and lashed Earth, and in praise of *Kao Tsung* they narrate that, by his virtuous government, he did away with the mulberry and the paper-mulberry <sup>2</sup>. Now if *Yao*, incapable of extinguishing the ten suns by his virtue, shot at them nevertheless, his virtue did not equal that of *Kao Tsung*, and his depravity could match that of *Chieh* and *Chou*. How could he have obtained a response from Heaven by his essence ?

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It is on record that [when *Wu Wang*, on his expedition against *Chou*, crossed the *Mêng* ford <sup>3</sup>, the waves of *Yang-hou* <sup>4</sup> rushed against him. A storm was raging, and there was such a darkness, that men and horses became invisible. Upon this, King *Wu*, grasping the yellow halberd with his left and holding the white standard in his right, with flashing eyes waved it and exclaimed,

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<sup>1</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* conceives heaven as something solid, a firmament. P. 1.257 and 1.509.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. chap. 18.

<sup>3</sup> In *Honan*, west of *Huai-ch'ing-fu*.

<sup>4</sup> The commentary to *Huai Nan Tse* says that *Yang-hou* means the marquis of *Yang viz. of Ling-yang*, whose territory was contiguous to the river and whose spirit could cause big waves, the marquis having been drowned in the river.

## Lun-hêng

— While I am in the empire, who dares thwart my plans ?,  
whereupon the storm abated, and the waves subsided.] This narrative is  
preposterous <sup>1</sup>.

When *Wu Wang* was crossing the *Mêng* ford, the hosts of his army were cheerful and merry, singing in front and gamboling in the rear. There being a certain sympathy between Heaven and p2.173 man, it would not have been the proper thing for Heaven to grumble, when man was pleased, but it is not sure whether there was really singing in front and dancing in the rear, and the stopping of the storm by waving a flag likewise looks like an invention.

Wind is air, and some speculative minds see in it the commanding voice of Heaven and Earth. Now, provided that the punishment of *Chou* by *Wu Wang* was right, then Heaven should have kept quiet and rewarded him ; if, however, his destruction was not right, then the storm was expressive of Heaven's anger.

Had *Wu Wang* not received the command of Heaven and not inquired into his own guilt, then, by saying, with flashing eyes. 'While I am in the empire, who ventures to thwart me ? he could not but double Heaven's anger and increase his own depravity ; how would the wind have stopped therefore ? When parents are angry with their son for not mending his faults, would they be willing to pardon him, if, with flashing eyes, he talked big ?

In case wind is the fluid of misfortune produced by Heaven, it must be spontaneous as well as unconscious, and angry looks or waving flags would not cause it to stop. Wind is like rain. If *Wu Wang* with flashing eyes had waved his standard to the rain, would it have ceased ? Since *Wu Wang* could not stop the rain, he could not stop the wind either. Perhaps just at the moment, when he waved his flag, accidentally the wind stopped of itself, and the people, extolling his excellence, then contended that *Wu Wang* could stop the wind.

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There is a report that, [when Duke *Hsiang* of *Lu* was at war with *Han*, and

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<sup>1</sup> It is derived from *Huai Nan Tse* VI, 1v.

## Lun-hêng

the battle was hottest, the sun went down. The duke, swinging his spear, beckoned to it, when the sun came back for him, passing through three solar mansions] <sup>1</sup>. This is an invention.

Whoever can affect Heaven through his spiritual essence, must be single-minded and engrossed with one idea. Discharging all other affairs from his thoughts and concentrating his mind, he may communicate with Heaven by means of his spiritual essence, and Heaven may then exhibit some extraordinary phenomenon, though I do not admit even this. Duke *Hsiang's* interest was entirely absorbed by the battle, when the sun sank, and he beckoned to it. How could he induce it to revert ? If a sage would beckon to the <sup>p2.174</sup> sun, it would not return by any means ; who was Duke *Hsiang*, that he could cause it to come back ?

The *Hung-fan* <sup>2</sup> has it that [some stars are fond of wind and others of rain. The course of the sun and moon brings about winter and summer, and when the moon follows the stars, there is wind and rain] <sup>3</sup>. Now the stars are of the same stuff as the sun and the moon. When the latter follow the stars, these change again <sup>4</sup>, and it is evident that, as long as the two luminaries keep their regular course, they do not yield to the likes and dislikes of the stars. How then should it be possible that the desire of Duke *Hsiang* was fulfilled ?

The stars on Heaven are the mansions of the sun and the moon, as on earth the postal stations serve as residences of the higher officials. These 28 solar mansions <sup>5</sup> are divided into degrees, one mansion measuring 10 degrees, more or less. The allegation that the sun returned through three mansions would therefore denote 30 degrees. The sun proceeds one degree every day, at the moment of beckoning it would therefore have gone back the same distance which it had made during 30 days. If we regard a *shê* (station)

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<sup>1</sup> Quotation from *Huai Nan Tse* VI, 1v. See also p. 1.089, Note 6.

<sup>2</sup> A chapter of the *Shuking* [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 1.277, Note 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Viz.* their *penchant* for wind or rain, which only manifests itself when the moon approaches them.

<sup>5</sup> See p. 1.257.

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as one degree <sup>1</sup>, then three degrees would be a three days course, and at the moment, when the spear was waved, the sun would have been made to revert three days.

When Duke *Ching* of *Sung* exhibited his sincerity and uttered three excellent maxims, the planet *Mars* passed through three solar mansions, a story which sober-minded critics still call an invention <sup>2</sup>. Duke *Hsiang*, during the fighting, was displeased with the sun's setting, accordingly he waved his spear, but he had no earnest purpose <sup>3</sup>, nor did he say any excellent words <sup>4</sup>. That the sun should revert for his sake, was most likely not his idea.

Moreover, the sun is fire. A sage giving a signal to fire would in no wise be able to make it return, and Duke *Hsiang* should have caused the sun to revert by his signal ?

p2.175 While the battle was going on, the sun was in the middle of *mao* <sup>5</sup>, and, bewildered by the fighting, the duke fancied that the sun was setting <sup>6</sup>. Waving his flag, he turned round to the left, describing a curve, and was under the impression that the sun was reverting. People naturally fond of the marvellous then spoke of the sun's reverting, which cannot be upheld in earnest.

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It is related in historical works that, when, at the instance of the heir-prince of *Yen*, *Ching K'o* attempted to murder the king of *Ch'in*, a white halo encircled the sun, and that, [while the master from *Wei* was devising the plan of the *Ch'ang-p'ing* affair for *Ch'in*, *Venus* eclipsed the *Pleiades*] <sup>7</sup>. This means to say that the spiritual essence affected Heaven, so that it produced those phenomena. To say that a white halo surrounded the sun, and that *Venus* eclipsed the *Pleiades* is allowable, but the assertion that the design of *Ching*

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<sup>1</sup> Taking the character [ ] in the acceptance of degree, not of solar mansion.

<sup>2</sup> See above p. 2.152 seq.

<sup>3</sup> Which according to the view of many scholars may work wonders.

<sup>4</sup> Like Duke *Ching* of *Sung* who is believed to have caused *Mars* to pass through three solar mansions.

<sup>5</sup> The east point.

<sup>6</sup> Whereas in fact it was rising. This conjecture is not very plausible.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Shi-chi* chap. 83, p. 9v. and p. 1.117.

## Lun-hêng

*K'o* and the plan of the master from *Wei* exercised such an influence upon august Heaven, that a white halo encircled the sun and *Venus* eclipsed the *Pleiades*, is erroneous.

Striking a bell with chopsticks and beating a drum with counting-slips, one cannot bring them to sound, because the sticks used to beat them are too small. Now, the human body does not measure more than seven feet, and with the spirit within these seven feet one hopes to bring about something. The energy may be concentrated ever so much, it is still like striking a bell with chopsticks or beating a drum with counting-slips ; how can it move Heaven ? The mind may be quite in earnest, but the implements employed to cause a motion are insufficient.

The intention to injure being directed against men, these are not affected by it, and Heaven should be ? Man's evil designs should be able to operate on Heaven ? No, that is impossible.

When *Yü Jang* was about to kill the viscount *Hsiang* of *Chao*, *Hsiang's* heart palpitated, and when *Kuan Kao* was planning his rebellion against *Han Kao Tsu*, the heart of the latter felt an emotion likewise <sup>1</sup>. The two men thus harbouring their designs, the two lords became agitated.

I reply that, when a calamitous change is at hand, strange signs spontaneously appear about the persons threatened, and are <sup>p2.176</sup> not their own work. My reason is this : Sometimes we meet lunatics on the road who with a weapon hurt themselves, without having the intention to injure their own bodies, but, before this, their bodies have already been conspicuous by miraculous signs. From this I infer that miracles are symptoms of calamitous changes and spontaneous disasters, and not the result of suicidal designs.

Furthermore an unlucky man divining by shells, will receive a bad omen, and appealing to straws, he will fall in with an unpropitious diagram. Going out, he sees inauspicious things. His forecasts point to dangers, and he beholds a calamitous fluid, which shows itself in the face, as the white halo and *Venus* appear in heaven. Phenomenal changes appear in heaven, whereas prognostics become visible in man. Above and below are in accord

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<sup>1</sup> P. 1.117, Notes 5 and 6.

## Lun-hêng

and spontaneously respond to one another.

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It has been chronicled that, when *Tan*, the heir-prince of *Yen*, paid a call at the court of *Ch'in*, he was not allowed to go home again. He asked of the king of *Ch'in* permission to return, but the king detained him and said with an oath,

— In case the sun reverts to the meridian, Heaven rains grain, crows get white heads and horses horns, and the wooden elephants on the kitchen door get legs of flesh, then you may return.

At that time Heaven and Earth conferred upon him their special favour : the sun returned to the meridian, Heaven rained grain, the crows got white crowns and the horses horns, and the legs of the wooden elephants on the kitchen door grew fleshy. The king of *Ch'in* took him for a Sage and let him off <sup>1</sup>. — This narrative is fictitious.

Who was this prince of *Yen*, *Tan*, that he could thus influence Heaven ? Sages imprisoned have not been able to move Heaven. Prince *Tan* was but a worthy, how could he have carried this out ? If Heaven favoured him and produced all those wonders with a view to his deliverance, it might as well have appeased the feelings of the king of *Ch'in*, in order to remove all the prince's hardships. His captivity was one matter only and easy to deal with, whereas the miracles were five rather difficult things. Why did Heaven omit the easy matter and do the five difficult things ? Did it not fear the trouble ?

*T'ang* was confined in *Hsia-t'ai* and *Wên Wang* in *Yu-li* <sup>2</sup>, and *Confucius* was in great straits between *Ch'ên* and *T'sai*. During the <sub>p2.177</sub> captivity of the three Sages, Heaven could not help them, causing their tormentors to see the blessings sent down upon them, understand their sagehood, and dismiss them with high honours.

Some one may object that those three Sages bear no relation to the three

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<sup>1</sup> The *Pei-wên-yün-fu* cites this passage. See also p. 1.115, Note 4.

<sup>2</sup> P. 1.142, Notes 1 and 2.

## Lun-hêng

oaths. Their hearts were desireless, consequently there was no reason for the manifestation of omens of celestial protection. Heaven helps man, as one lends a utensil to somebody : unless he asks for it, one does not give it.

I reply that, when the heir-prince was desiring that Heaven might send an omen, no words were spoken, it being merely the wish of his heart. When *T'ang* was imprisoned in *Hsia-t'ai*, and *Wên Wang* detained in *Yu-li*, their hearts were likewise yearning for a release, and *Confucius*, distressed between *Ch'ên* and *T'sai*, was craving after food. Wherefore did Heaven not let the locks of the gates in *Hsia-t'ai* and *Yu-li* be spoiled, that *T'ang* and *Wên Wang* could make their escape, or rain grain in *Ch'ên* and *T'sai* for *Confucius*, to appease his appetite ?

The Grand Annalist remarks,

People say of prince *Tan* that he induced Heaven to rain grain and make the horses grow horns. All this is most likely idle talk <sup>1</sup>.

The Grand Annalist is a man who writes the truth about the *Han* time. His expression 'idle talk' is all but synonymous with untrue.

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We learn from historical books that the wife of *Ch'i Liang* cried, turned towards the city wall, which collapsed in consequence. This intimates that on *Ch'i Liang* not returning from a military expedition, his wife, in her despair, cried in the direction of the city-wall, and so heart-felt were her sorrow and her laments, that her feeling affected the wall, which tumbled down in consequence <sup>2</sup>. That the woman cried, turned towards the wall, may be true, but the subsequent collapse of the city-wall is an invention.

There has never been a man whose tears and cries were more pathetic than those of *Yung Mên Tse*. When he cried in the presence <sup>p2.178</sup> of *Mêng Ch'ang Chün* <sup>3</sup>, the latter choked with emotion <sup>1</sup>. By the sincerity of grief

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<sup>1</sup> *Sse-Ma Ch'ien* makes this remark at the end of *Shi-chi* chap. 86, but in our text he does not say [] but simply [] 'it is a great exaggeration'. In *Shi-chi* chap. 34, p. 9r. we read that Prince *Tan* was kept a hostage in *Ch'in*, but in B. C. 232 contrived to escape to *Yen* [*Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. IV, p. 149*].

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 1.116 and 1.117.

<sup>3</sup> A general of *Ch'i* of the 3rd cent. B. C. See p. 1.161, Note 1.

## Lun-hêng

those present are moved to sympathy. Now, *Yung Mên Tse* could touch the heart of *Mêng Ch'ang Chün*, but not affect his dress, for garments are insensible of pity and proof against human feelings. The city-wall is of earth, and earth, like cloth. Being devoid of a heart and intestines, how could it be moved by sobs and tears and fall down ? Should the sounds of genuine grief be apt to affect the earth of a wall, then complaints uttered among the trees of a forest, would tear the plants and break the trunks.

If somebody should weep, when turned towards a water or a fire, would the water boil up, or the fire go out ? Plants, trees, water, and fire do not differ from earth, it is plain therefore that the wife of *Ch'i Liang* could not be answerable for the *délabrement* of the wall.

Perhaps the wall was just going to tumble down of itself, when the wife of *Ch'i Liang* happened to cry below. The world is partial to fictions and does not investigate the true cause of things, consequently this story of the down-fall of the city-wall has, up till now, not faded from memory.

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The histories record that *Tsou Yen* was confined in *Yen*, though he was innocent. In the fifth month of summer he looked up to Heaven, heaving a sigh, whereupon Heaven sent down a shower of hoar-frost <sup>2</sup>. This is on a level with the wife of *Ch'i Liang's* subverting a city-wall by her wails. The statement that he was kept in jail without any guilt, and that in summer he sighed, looking up to Heaven, is true, but the assertion as to Heaven raining frost, a mere invention.

Ten thousand persons raising their voices and emitting their moans and sighs simultaneously still fail to touch Heaven, how then could *Tsou Yen*, one single individual, by his passionate sighs over his ill-treatment call the hoar-frost down ? His wrongs were not worse than those of *Tsêng Tse* and *Po Ch'i*. *Tsêng Tse* being suspected, hummed <sup>3</sup>, and *Po Ch'i*, on being banished, sang.

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<sup>1</sup> [] which seems to stand for [], the two words used by *Huai Nan Tse* VI, 2r. where he speaks of *Yung Mên Tse*. The commentator remarks that this man was famous as a guitar-player and for his weeping, by which he touched the hearts of others. He wished to obtain something from *Mêng Ch'ang Chün*.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 1.281, Note 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Tsêng Tse* having been all but killed by his wicked father for some small



## Lun-hêng

Suspicion p2.179 and imprisonment are alike <sup>1</sup>, and humming and singing are similar to sighing. *Tsêng Tse* and *Po Ch'i* were unable to attract cold ; who was *Tsou Yen*, that he alone could make the frost fall ?

Banishment is perhaps not yet sufficiently painful to be taken into consideration, but *Shên Shêng* <sup>2</sup> fell upon his sword, and *Wu Tse Hsü* had to cut his own throat <sup>3</sup>. The one being exceedingly dutiful to his father, was doomed to die, and the other, the most loyal subject, had to suffer capital punishment. When they were near their end, they doubtless made complaints, and these complaints are nothing else than the sighs of *Tsou Yen* towards Heaven. If Heaven felt no sympathy for these two men, being moved only by *Tsou Yen*, his captivity must have given it great pain, whereas it did not commiserate the blood-shed. The innocent suffering of *Po Ch'i* was of the same sort, but it had not the same effect on Heaven.

Provided you light a candle and try to heat a cauldron full of water with it, then, after a whole day, it will not yet be hot. Or take a lump of ice, a foot thick, and place it into the kitchen : after a whole night the room will not yet have become cooled. The reason is that small and tiny things cannot affect big and huge ones. Now the sighs of *Tsou Yen* were but like a candle or a lump of ice, and the grandeur of majestic Heaven is not merely on a par with that of a water kettle or a kitchen.

How easy is it to move Heaven, and how easily does hoar-frost descend, if a sigh towards Heaven suffices to cause a fall of frost ! Pain is to be compared with pleasure, and joy is the counterpart of anger. Provided that, by the expression of his sorrow, *Tsou Yen* prompted Heaven to send frost down, would he be able to make Heaven warm in winter time, if, on receiving an unexpected kindness, he laughed to it ?

The phenomenalists contend that, when a ruler rewards in autumn, the

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inadvertence, played the guitar and sang when he had recovered consciousness.

<sup>1</sup> Few will be willing to admit this.

<sup>2</sup> Heir-apparent of *Chin* who committed suicide, having been deposed and calumniated by the intrigues of the wife of duke *Hsien*. He was not put to death as stated in p. 1.247, Note 4.

<sup>3</sup> A faithful minister of *Wu* who in 485 B. C. received a sword from his sovereign to kill himself. Cf. p. 1.140, Note 2.

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weather becomes warm, and, when he punishes in summer, it turns cold. But unless coldness is joined with the proper season, frost does not descend, and unless warmth comes together with the proper days, ice does not melt. How easy would be the change of temperature and how facile a revolution of the p2.180 seasons, if, upon one man in his distress giving one sigh, Heaven did at once send frost. Heat and cold have their natural periods, which does not agree with the view of the phenomenologists.

If we argue on their lines, perhaps the king of *Yen* enjoyed inflicting punishments, consequently cold weather had to set in. Then *Tsou Yen* sighed in jail, and at that very moment hoar-frost chanced to come down of itself. But the people remarking that frost just happened to fall, when he sighed, took it for the effect of *Tsou Yen's* sighing.

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Historical works report that, when the music-master *K'uang* played the air 'White snow', wonderful creatures descended, and a storm with rain broke loose. Duke *P'ing* began to pine away henceforward, and the *Chin* State became parched up and barren. Another version is that, when *K'uang* first played a tune in *A major*, clouds rose in the north-west. When he played again, a tempest came, accompanied by torrents of rain. The tents were rent to pieces, the plates and dishes smashed, and the tiles of the verandah hurled down. The guests fled in all directions, and Duke *P'ing* was so frightened, that he fell down under the porches. The *Chin* State was then visited with a great drought. For three years the soil was scorched up. The duke's body began to pine away thereafter <sup>1</sup>.

'White snow' and *A major* are perhaps only different names for the same melody, for the misfortune and havoc wrought was in both cases identical. The chroniclers have recorded it as genuine, and ordinary people reading it, have reposed confidence in this narrative. But he who tests its authenticity, must become aware that it is illusive.

What manner of a tune is *A major* to bring about such a result? *A major* is the sound of 'wood', accordingly it causes wind, and if wood makes wind,

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 1.222.

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rain comes along with it <sup>1</sup>. How does a piece of wood three feet long <sup>2</sup> and the sound of some chords possess the wonderful faculty of affecting Heaven and Earth ? p2.181 That would be like the *délabrement* of the city wall by tears, or the fall of frost through a sigh.

The ability of the music-master *K'uang* to thrum *A major* must have been acquired and cannot have been an innate faculty. When he first studied it, he practised night and day and not only once or twice. Provided that what the chronicles relate be true, then, when the music-master was studying *A major*, wind and rain ought to have set in.

Some books narrate that, while *Hu Pa* <sup>3</sup> was playing the lute, the fish in the ponds came out to listen <sup>4</sup>, and when the music-master *K'uang* was touching the guitar, the six kinds of horses looked up from their fodder <sup>5</sup>. According to another version about *K'uang's* performing in *A major*, when he played the first part, two times eight black cranes came from the south, and alighted on the top of the exterior gate. When he played again, they formed themselves into rows, and when he played the third part, they began crowing, stretching their necks and dancing, flapping their wings. The notes *F* and *G* were struck with the greatest precision, and their sound rose to heaven. Duke *P'ing* was enraptured, and all the guests were enchanted <sup>6</sup>.

The *Shuking* says,

[I smite the music-stone, I strike the stone, and the various animals begin dancing together.] <sup>7</sup>

This we can believe in spite of its strangeness, for birds and beasts are partial to sentimental music, and their ears are like the human. Seeing man

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<sup>1</sup> According to the old Chinese symbolism the note *A* corresponds to wood, which again is supposed to cause wind, a confusion of cause and effect, for the branches of trees are agitated by wind, but do not produce it.

<sup>2</sup> The guitar.

<sup>3</sup> A famous lute-player of primitive times.

<sup>4</sup> A quotation from *Hsün Tse*. *Lieh Tse* observes 'While *Hu Pa* was playing the guitar, the birds danced and the fish jumped'. *Huai Nan Tse* XVI, 1v. writes [...], ascribing to *Po Ya* what our author says of *K'uang*.

<sup>5</sup> P. 1.379, Note 2.

<sup>6</sup> P. 1.379, Note 2.

<sup>7</sup> *Shuking* Part II, Bk. I, 24 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 49](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

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desirous of eating something, they likewise wish to have it, and why should they not be jubilant, on hearing him rejoicing ? That the fish listened, the horses looked up, the black cranes stretched their necks, and the various animals began dancing, are facts therefore, but that wind and rain set in, and that the *Chin* State was visited with a great drought, that its soil was scorched up for three years, and Duke *P'ing* pined away, is most likely fictitious.

p2.182 Perchance, when *A major* was struck, it happened to blow and to rain, and, after this shower, the *Chin* State met with a drought. Duke *P'ing* being too fond of music and immoderately indulging in fun and frolic, accidentally was afflicted with *marasmus*. Consequently the writers put faith in the story, and the people witnessing all these circumstances, believed in it. Yet, as a matter of fact, the musical sounds cannot be productive of such a result, which we prove as follows : When wind and rain set in with great vehemence, there is a confusion of the *Yin* and the *Yang*. If music can confound them, it must also be able to set them in order. For what reason, then, do the rulers rectify their persons, improve their conduct, and far and wide exhibit their righteous administration ? Provided it suffices to play a song adjusting the *Yin* and the *Yang*, then harmony comes of itself, and universal peace of its own accord.

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It is being reported that, after *T'ang* had been afflicted with a drought for seven years, he prayed personally in a mulberry grove, impeaching himself with the Six Crimes, when Heaven sent down rain. Some speak of five years. The prayer was couched in these terms :

— If I alone am guilty, may my guilt not affect the ten thousand people, and if the guilt be theirs, may it fall on me alone.

Since, because of one man's folly, Heaven employed God and the spirits <sup>1</sup> to injure people's lives, *T'ang* cut his hair and bound his hands, offering himself as a victim. In such a way he begged happiness of God, who was so pleased,

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<sup>1</sup> A remarkable statement. Heaven here is treated as a being superior to God = *Shang-ti*, who has to obey its commands.

## Lun-hêng

that rain fell at once <sup>1</sup>. — That *T'ang* personally prayed in the mulberry grove, and his self-indictment was as mentioned, that he cut his hair and bound his hands, thus offering himself as a victim, and that he implored God, all this is true, but the statement that the rainfall was owing to *T'ang's* self-impeachment and personal supplication seems to be a fallacy.

[*Confucius* being very sick, *Tse Lu* asked leave to pray for him. He said,

— May such a thing be done ?

*Tse Lu* replied,

— It may. In the Eulogies it is said, 'Prayer has been made for thee to the spirits of the upper and lower worlds'.

The Master said,

— It is a long time, since I prayed.] <sup>2</sup>

p2.183 The Sage rectified himself and regulated his conduct, and the days when he used to pray were long gone. Heaven and Earth and the spirits knew him to be faultless, hence he could say that it was a long time since he prayed.

We read in the *Yiking*,

[ The great man equals Heaven and Earth in virtue, the sun and the moon in brightness, the four seasons in regularity, and the ghosts and spirits in happiness and misfortune.] <sup>3</sup>

That means to say that a sage displays his virtue in the same manner as Heaven and Earth or ghosts and spirits. Should prayer be required to secure happiness, this would not be the same. *T'ang* as well as *Confucius* were sages, and the time when they were wont to pray had long passed. *Confucius* would not have *Tse Lu* pray to cure his disease, — how then could *T'ang* obtain rain through prayer ? In spite of *Confucius's* regular prayers, he was taken seriously ill. *T'ang* would likewise pray, and yet years of great drought ensued.

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<sup>1</sup> See above p. 2.016.

<sup>2</sup> [Analects VII, 34 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>3</sup> Quotation from the *Yiking* : [...], ed. 1880, chap. I, p. 7v., not to be found in *Legge's* translation.

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Inundations and droughts of Heaven and Earth are like human maladies. A serious ailment cannot be expelled by self-indictment, and so it is plain that floods and droughts are not to be removed by prayers and penitence. Had *T'ang* caused the drought by his faults, he would not have equalled Heaven and Earth in virtue <sup>1</sup>, and unless he had caused the drought by his guilt, his self-accusation and craving for mercy was likewise of no use.

Man's bodily frame measures but seven feet, and within this frame there reside the Five Virtues and eventually consumption. Yet though fixing all the guilt upon one's self, one cannot cure it. Now fancy immense Heaven <sup>2</sup> ! If at the time of a natural calamity, like a flood or a drought, *T'ang* with his body of seven feet and his earnest purpose residing in it had impeached himself and prayed for mercy, how could he have obtained rain ?

When a man stands on the top of a high building of many stories, and another below prostrates himself and asks for something on the building, the one on the top hearing his words may, out of compassion, grant his request. In case, however, he does not understand what the other says, the latter never obtains his end <sup>p2.184</sup> in spite of the greatest sincerity of his feelings. Now the distance from Heaven to man is not only like the height of a storied building. How could Heaven, although *T'ang* took the responsibility upon himself, become aware of it and send him the rain ?

A drought is a phenomenon of heat, as an inundation is an exceptional state of the water. The Great Flood which *Yao* encountered may well be termed an inundation. Still *Yao* did not impeach himself or personally offer prayers. The flood was to be regulated by *Shun* and *Yü*, and he knew that such a state of water required regulation. An inundation is not removed by prayers, and a drought must be treated in the same way. Consequently the prayers of *T'ang* could not bring down the rain.

Perhaps the drought had been lasting for a long time, when rain fell of itself, and *T'ang* likewise just happened to lay the long duration of the drought to his charge. The people of that period, observing the fall of rain just

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<sup>1</sup> He would not have been the sage he was.

<sup>2</sup> We cannot cure the diseases within the small compass of our body ; how could immense Heaven do it, Heaven taken as the empyrean ?

## Lun-hêng

consequent upon *T'ang's* self-indictment, then considered that *T'ang* had obtained the rain by his invocations.

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Some books relate that, [when *T'sang Hsieh* invented the art of writing, Heaven rained grain, and the ghosts cried during the night] <sup>1</sup>. This signifies that, when writing was invented, by degrees disorder broke out, whence the supernatural apparitions : Heaven raining grain, and the ghosts crying. What they say about Heaven raining grain and the ghosts crying during the night is true, but the affirmation that this was in response to *T'sang Hsieh's* invention of writing, is wrong.

The Plan put forth by the *Yellow River* and the Scroll emerging from the *Lo* <sup>2</sup> were lucky auguries for sage emperors and enlightened kings. There is no difference between the signs of the Plan and the Scroll and those characters, which were invented by *T'sang Hsieh*. Heaven and Earth produced the Plan and the Scroll, while *T'sang Hsieh* invented the written characters. His proceeding was like that of Heaven and Earth, and his idea agreeing with that of ghosts and spirits. What wrong was there and what evil to cause such prodigies as the raining of grain and the weeping of ghosts ? If Heaven and Earth and the spirits resented that man had written books, then their production of the Plan and the Scroll was p2.185 unjustifiable, if, on the other hand, Heaven did not grudge mankind the possession of writing, what wrong was there in its invention to lead to such monstrosities ?

Perhaps *Ts'ang Hsieh* just happened to make his invention, when Heaven rained grain, and the ghosts chanced to weep during the night. The raining of grain as well as the laments of the spirits had their cause, but people seeing them take place as if in response to the invention, imagined that the writing had produced these revolutionary signs, and that they were occasioned by the event. *A propos* of the raining of grain the critics claim that it fell down from Heaven as the product of an extraordinary phenomenon, but, if our discussion starts from clouds and rain, this phenomenon cannot be deemed supernatural

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<sup>1</sup> See above p. 2.167. Quotation from [Huai Nan Tse VIII, 5r.](#)

<sup>2</sup> P. 1.294, Note 1, and p. 1.295, Note 1.

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for the following reason :

The rain from clouds originates on hills and mountains. Descending and spreading, these clouds become rain. Beholding it falling down from above, people are under the impression that it is Heaven which rains water. On a summer day, rain is water, whereas in winter, when Heaven is cold, it freezes and turns into snow. Under all circumstances, it comes from cloudy vapours on hills and mountains, and it is evident that it cannot descend and gather on earth from heaven above <sup>1</sup>.

When it rains grain, the clouds likewise scatter it, and it also rises from the earth. Having been carried away by a strong wind and blown up to heaven, it falls down again to the earth. Noticing its descent from heaven, people then speak of Heaven raining grain.

In the 31st year of *Chien-wu* <sup>2</sup>, it rained grain at *Ch'ên-liu* <sup>3</sup>, and the grain descending covered the ground. Upon examining the shape of the grain, they found it to be like tribulus, but black, and it bore resemblance to the grains of panic grass. Perhaps this grain had grown in the country of the *I* and *Ti*. These tribes not eating corn, this grain had grown in the country and, when ripe, had perhaps fallen upon the ground. Meeting with a strong gale, it had been hurriedly carried off, blown away and flying along with the wind, until, the wind subsiding, it had alighted and descended in China. The Chinese becoming aware of it, then spoke of the raining of grain. My reasons are the following :

p2.186 When a wild-fire burns the hills and marshes, the leaves of plants and trees in them are all reduced to ashes, which, carried away by a gale, are blown aloft as high as heaven, but, when the wind relaxes, these leaves come down upon the roads. Now the grain from heaven is like the burned leaves of plants and trees, which fly about and fall down, but people regard it as rain, and the authors look upon it as a wonderful prodigy.

Heaven confines itself to emitting its fluid, whereas Earth governs the

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.277.

<sup>2</sup> In the year 55 A. D.

<sup>3</sup> In the province of *Honan*.



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growing of things. All plants with leaves and eatable fruit are a produce of Earth, and not made by Heaven. Now, grain is not produced by the fluid and requires earth for its development. Although they call it a miracle, miracles are bound to certain species. Provided that things growing from the earth could conversely descend from heaven, could celestial things likewise issue from the earth ? The productions of Earth are like the stars of Heaven. The stars do not change their nature and grow from Earth, why then should grain alone grow from Heaven ?

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Some books contain a notice that, [when *Po Yi* <sup>1</sup> made a well, a dragon mounted a black cloud, and the spirits alighted on the *K'un-lun*] <sup>2</sup>. This means to say that the dragon was injured by the well, which was the reason of the phenomenon of the dragon and the spirits.

The allegation that the dragon mounted a black cloud is trustworthy, but the remark concerning the spirits alighting on Mount *K'un-lun*, and ascribing the rise of the dragon and the flight of the spirits to the building of a well, is unreliable.

Wells are made for the purpose of drinking, and fields are planted for the sake of food, which amounts to the same. If *Po Yi*, by making a well, caused such extraordinary events, why do such phenomena not appear, when the soil is first tilled ?

*Shên Nung* <sup>3</sup> shaped a crooked stick into a plough, and taught people how to till. Then they first began eating grain, and grain was first sown. The tilled ground becomes a field, and a dug out hole, a well. From the well comes water to slake the thirst, and on the field grows grain to appease the hunger. Heaven and Earth, p2.187 ghosts and spirits are all agreed on this. Wherefore then does the dragon rise on a black cloud, and the spirits alight on the *K'un-lun* ? The mounting of a dragon on a black cloud has happened in olden as well as modern times, and it did not only commence to do so when *Po Yi* dug

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<sup>1</sup> Baron *Yi*, the forester of *Shun* and assistant of *Yü*. See p. 1.253.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from [Huai Nan Tse VIII, 5r.](#)

<sup>3</sup> The tutelary deity of agriculture, a legendary emperor.

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his well.

At present, in midsummer, when thunder and rain appear simultaneously, dragons frequently rise on clouds. There being a certain relation between clouds and dragons, the dragon rides on clouds and rain <sup>1</sup>. Things of the same class attract one another, but there is no purpose in this.

In Yao's time a man of fifty was beating clods of earth on the road. An observer remarked,

— Grand indeed is the virtue of Yao !

The man who was playing with earth, replied,

— At sunrise I begin my work, and at sunset I take my rest. I dig a well to drink, and labour my field to eat. What sort of energy does Yao display ? <sup>2</sup>

Accordingly, in Yao's time, wells must have been known.

Under the reign of Yao and Shun, dragons were reared and domesticated and always kept at court. When towards the end of the Hsia dynasty, the government degenerated, the dragons concealed themselves <sup>3</sup>, and it was not only when Po Yi had dug his well, that they rose on clouds.

And who are those spirits that are mentioned ? It must be the hundred spirits <sup>4</sup>. For what reason should these hundred spirits resent so much that men made wells ? If the spirits are similar to men, they must also have a desire to drink, and, with such a craving, to detest wells and run away would be self-contradictory. Even if Po Yi had not dug the well, the dragon would not have mounted a cloud on account of the digging of some well, nor would the spirits have alighted on the K'un-lun for that reason. This is a misconception of some writers and of their invention.

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<sup>1</sup> Vide pp. 1.353 and 1.357.

<sup>2</sup> The *Pei-wên-yün-fu* quotes a similar passage from the *Ti-wang shi-chi*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 1.355.

<sup>4</sup> The various kinds of existing spirits.

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There is a report that Mount *Liang* <sup>1</sup> collapsed and blocked a river, which for three days did not flow. The prince of *Chin* was very much distressed, *Po Tsung* <sup>2</sup>, following the counsel of a p2.188 carriage-driver, bade Duke *Ching* dress in plain white silk and bewail the extraordinary case. Upon this the water of the river came back <sup>3</sup>.

This is preposterous. A mountain tumbling down and blocking a river is like a tumor caused by an abscess, which prevents the circulation of the blood. Could such a tumor be cured by putting on white clothes and crying ?

In *Yao's* time the Great Flood was surging up to the sky, encircling mountains and overtopping hills <sup>4</sup>. The emperor *Yao* sighed and was anxious to find some clever helpmate. The waters were worse than the blocking of a river, and *Yao's* sorrow deeper than that of Duke *Ching*, but we have not heard that, by dressing in white silk and giving vent to his grief, he could overcome the water. Had *Yao* no device of some able man like the carriage-driver ?

It is impossible to remove a cataclysm like the Great Flood by such means as sounds and dresses. White silk and tears are tantamount to repentance and self-indictment. *Yao* and *Yü* regulating the waters did it by means of personal labour, and not by self-reproaches.

Mount *Liang* was a mountain in *Yao's* time <sup>5</sup>, and the river that was blocked was a river of the same period. Both catastrophes, the falling mountain blocking the river as well as the rain from heaven and the rise of the water, were not different, but *Yao* and *Yü* regulated the water by personal work, whereas the carriage-driver had recourse to self-accusation, to put the blocked river in order. The catastrophes were similar, but the measures taken, different ; the people were alike, but their methods inconsistent.

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<sup>1</sup> A mountain in the province of *Shensi*, 90 Li north-east of *Han-ch'êng-hsien*.

<sup>2</sup> An officer of *Chin*.

<sup>3</sup> The *Shi-chi* chap. 39, p. 31r ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. IV, p. 322](#)) informs us that this mountain collapsed in B. C. 586. *Po Tsung* was of opinion that this was not to be looked upon as a prodigy.

<sup>4</sup> A reminiscence of *Shuking* (*Yao-tien*) Part I, 11 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 24](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>5</sup> It existed already at that early period.

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The true system of the wise and the phenomenologists is otherwise, I should say. According to their principles, such categories must be called into play as can affect one another, e. g. if there be cold, the former state may be restored by warmth, and warmth may again be dispelled by cold. Thus with dragons they attract rain, and by punishments expel heat <sup>1</sup>. In all these instances the p<sub>2.189</sub> fluids of the Five Elements are set in motion, which either affect or overcome each other <sup>2</sup>. What have white silk and crying over a blocked river to do with these principles ?

Perhaps, when the river was dammed and the mountain collapsed, first the earth was heaped up, and the water was not strong enough to break through. Three days later, the water had increased, so that the earth was dispersed, and the obstruction destroyed. After the removal of the obstruction, the current set in again and began flowing eastwards. At the suggestion of *Po Tsung* who listened to the carriage-driver, the duke dressed in white silk and cried, whereupon the water commenced running again. Upon this they contended that the extraordinary deviation of the river was adjusted by these measures. As a matter of fact this is wrong, but how can we know ?

If the collapse of the mountain was something natural, white silk and tears were of no advantage, and if it was a divine calamity in response to some acts, then the government and the administration ought to have been changed. Were silk and tears in any way connected with a change of government, that they might remove a divine calamity ?

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In some books we find the following narrative : The filial piety of *Tsêng Tse* was such, that a peculiar sympathy existed between him and his mother. Once, when *Tsêng Tse* had gone out to gather fuel in the country, a guest arrived and wanted to leave again. *Tsêng Tse's* mother told him to remain, since her son would soon be back, and with her right hand she squeezed her left arm <sup>3</sup>. *Tsêng Tse* at once felt a pain in his left arm, and forthwith he came

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 1.280.

<sup>2</sup> A similar category is believed to attract a similar and to repel a dissimilar one.

<sup>3</sup> The common version is that *Tsêng Tse's* mother bit her finger, whereupon he felt a pain in his finger too. Cf. *Mayers' Manual* No. 739 and *Giles, Bibl. Dict.* No. 2022, also

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back to his mother, and asked of her the reason why his arm had pained him. His mother replied,

— To-day a guest arrived and wanted to go away. I squeezed my arm, in order to call you <sup>1</sup>.

For extreme piety leads to a spiritual communication with father and mother, and a sickness of the body directly affects the spirit.

This is a mistake, I dare say. Since great filial piety and brotherly love evidently make an impression upon the spirits, one <sup>p2.190</sup> says that the effects of virtue extend to Heaven and Earth. From this common people infer that extreme piety and love move the soul. If the pain in the arm of *Tsêng Tse's* mother was likewise felt in his arm, was *Tsêng Tse* also sick, when his mother was taken ill, or did he die at once, when his mother expired ? We learn from history that, when *Tsêng Tse's* mother died first, he did not follow her. This shows that the spirit may be moved in a minor degree, but that it cannot be affected to any great extent.

People say that, during the night, *Shên Hsi* <sup>2</sup> heard his mother sing. His heart being touched, he opened the door to inquire who was the singer, and it appeared that it was his mother. Hearing his mother's voice, the sound affected him. His heart was agitated, and his mind roused, so that he opened the door to inquire. That may be true. Now the mother of *Tsêng Tse* was in the house, while her son was in the country and could not hear her calls. How could a little pinching of the arm on the part of his mother affect the son ? Methinks people have embellished the facts. Hearing that as a dutiful son *Tsêng Tse* had not his peer on earth, they invented the story of his mother squeezing her arm.

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the *Shang-yu-lu*.

<sup>1</sup> *Kanghi's* Dictionary quotes this passage.

<sup>2</sup> The dictionaries do not know such a man, but *Huai Nan Tse* XVI, 1v. refers to the story here related, saying [...]. Consequently *Shên Hsi* cannot have lived later than the 2nd cent. B. C. The commentary adds that *Shên Hsi* was a native of *Ch'u*. In his youth, he had lost his mother. Once he heard a begging woman sing in the street. The voice impressed him so much, that he went out and recognised his mother.

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People say that *Cho*<sup>1</sup> of *Nan-yang*<sup>2</sup> following *Hou's* counsel, the locusts did not enter his territory. Owing to his extraordinary wisdom, the calamitous insects did not infest his country<sup>3</sup>. This also is a fallacy. Great wisdom may make itself felt upon creatures of a similar kind, which are able to understand the character of one of their kindred, and afterwards feel a certain respect for him. Locusts belong to the class of mosquitoes and p2.191 gadflies<sup>4</sup>. What do they hear, and what do they know to become aware of *Cho's* proceedings? Provided that a wise man lived in the country, far away in the interior, would mosquitoes and gadflies not enter his cottage? They would not shun the hut of a sage, wherefore then should the locusts keep aloof from *Cho's* territory?

If they say that the calamity of locusts has nothing in common with mosquitoes and gadflies, they will admit at least that heat and cold can also prove calamities. Now, in case cold prevails throughout a circuit, and that in one of its districts there lives a wise man, could the area of this one district alone remain warm? Heat and cold do not recoil from the district of a wise man, why then should the locusts not enter the territory of *Cho*?

Consequently it was merely by chance that the locusts did not ravage his country. The fame of *Cho's* wisdom being in every mouth, people conceived the idea that he could avert locusts.

When locusts appear in the country, they cannot go everywhere nor completely cover the ground. At their gatherings they are more numerous in some places, and in others less. If their swarms are concentrated upon one place, it is not necessary that robber *Chê* should dwell there, nor is the country which they spare inhabited by *Po Yi*<sup>5</sup>. They alight or pass in greater or smaller numbers, and do not completely cover everything. As in falling

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<sup>1</sup> *Cho Mao*, a distinguished scholar and excellent official who by *Kuang Wu Ti* was ennobled as Marquis and died in 28 A. D. See *Giles, Bibl. Dict.* No. 411.

<sup>2</sup> A place in *Honan*.

<sup>3</sup> Under the reign of *P'ing Ti*, 1-5 A. D., twenty districts of *Honan* province were infested by locusts, and only *Mi-hsien* where *Cho* was magistrate was spared.

<sup>4</sup> [][]. The first character must here mean an insect, a meaning not found in the dictionaries. [] stands for [] 'mosquito' ... The combination 'mosquitoes and gadflies' is common. Cf. *Chalmers, Structure of Chinese Characters* p. 93, the *Chêng-tse t'ung* and *Giles, Dict.* No. 7788.

<sup>5</sup> A paragon of integrity.

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down upon a place, they are many or few, so in passing a district, they either remain or leave again. From their number no conclusion can be drawn as to goodness or badness ; how then should their appearance or non-appearance be a criterion of a man's wisdom ? Hence it is plain that, when locusts pass of their own accord, we have no right to say that they do not come into the territory of a wise man.

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## 20. Book VI, Chap. I

### *Fu-hsü. Wrong Notions about Happiness*

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p1.156 People universally believe that he who does good, meets with happiness, and that the evil-doers are visited with misfortune. That Heaven sends down happiness or misfortune in response to man's doings. That the rewards graciously given by the sovereigns to the virtuous, are visible, whereas the requital of Heaven and Earth is not always apparent. There is nobody, high or low, clever or imbecile, who would disagree with this view. Only because people see such deeds recorded in books, and witness that sometimes the good really become happy, they come to believe this, and take it as self-evident. Sometimes also sages and wise men, with a view to inducing people to do good, do not hesitate to assert that it must be so, thus showing that virtue gets its reward. Or those who hold this view, have themselves experienced that felicity arrived at a certain juncture. A thorough investigation, however, will convince us that happiness is not given by Heaven as a favour.

King *Hui* of *Ch'u* <sup>1</sup>, when eating salad, found a leech upon his plate, and forthwith swallowed it. He thereupon felt a pain in his stomach, and could eat nothing. On his premier asking him, how he had got this disease, he replied :

— Eating salad, I found a leech. I thought that, if I scolded those responsible for it, but did not punish them, I would disregard the law, and not keep up my dignity. Therefore, I could not allow my subjects to get wind of the matter. Had I, on the other hand, reproved and chastised the defaulters, strict law would have required the death of all the cooks and butlers. To that I could not make up my mind. Fearing, lest my attendants should perceive the leech, I promptly swallowed it.

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<sup>1</sup> 487-430 B. C.



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The premier rose from his seat, bowed twice, and congratulated the king, saying,

— I have been told that Heaven is impartial, and that virtue alone is of any avail. You have benevolence and virtue, for which Heaven will reward you. Your sickness will do you no great harm.

p1.157 The same evening, when the king withdrew, the leech came out, and an ailment of the heart and stomach of which he had been suffering for a long while, was cured at the same time. Could not this be considered an evidence of Heaven's partiality for virtue ? — No. This is idle talk.

If King *Hui* swallowed the leech, he was far from being what a sovereign should be, and for unbecoming deeds Heaven does not give marks of its favour. King *Hui* could not bear to reproach the guilty with the leech for fear, lest his cooks and butlers should all have to suffer death according to law. A ruler of a State can mete out rewards and punishments at pleasure, and pardoning is a prerogative of his. Had King *Hui* reprimanded all for the leech found in his salad, the cooks and butlers would have had to submit to law, but afterwards the king was at liberty not to allow that the lives of men were taken merely for a culinary offence. Thus to forgive, and to remit the penalty, would have been an act of great mercy. If the cooks had received their punishment, but were not put to death, they would have completely changed for the future. The king condoning a small offence, and sparing the lives of the poor devils, would have felt all right, and not been sick. But he did nothing of that sort. He ate perforce something obnoxious to his health. Allowing his butlers to remain ignorant of their fault, he lost his royal dignity, because he did not repress their bad conduct. This was objectionable in the first place.

If cooks and butlers in preparing a dish do not make it sweet or sour enough, or if an atom of dust no bigger than a louse, hardly perceptible or visible to the eye, falls into the salad, if in such a case a sovereign in fixing a penalty takes into consideration the mind of the offender, and therefore abstains from divulging his fault, one may well speak of clemency. Now, a leech is an inch or more long and 1/10 of an inch or more broad. In a salad a one-eyed man must see it. The servants of the king showed an utter want of

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respect, taking no care to cleanse the salad. Theirs was a most serious offence. For King *Hui* not to reprimand them was a second mistake.

In a salad there must be no leech. If so, one does not eat it, but throws it to the ground. Provided one is anxious, lest the attendants should discover it, he may hide it in his bosom. Thus the leech can escape observation. Why must one eat it *coûte-que-coûte* ? If something uneatable is by inadvertence in a salad so, that it can be concealed, to eat it by force is a third mistake.

p1.158 If Heaven had rewarded an unbecoming act, an unworthy person would have been the recipient of Heaven's grace. The inability to reprove for the sake of a leech is, in the eyes of the world, something very excellent. Now, there is many an excellent man, whose deeds are similar to the swallowing of a leech. If for swallowing a leech Heaven grants liberation from sickness, excellent men must always be without ailings. The virtue of this kind of men is, however, small only and not to be compared with the perfect character of the true sages and their guileless demeanour. There are many sages who would push their kindness of heart so far as to put up with human faults. Yet the Emperor *Wu Wang* was of a weak health, and *Confucius* seriously ill. Why has Heaven been so inconsistent in the distribution of its favour ?

It may be that after King *Hui* had swallowed the leech, it came out again in a natural way of itself. Whenever anybody eats a living thing, it will inevitably die. The stomach is hot inside. When the leech is gulped down, it does not die instantaneously, but owing to the high temperature of the stomach it begins to move. Hence the pain in the stomach. After a short while, the leech dies, and the pain in the stomach ceases also.

It is in the nature of leeches to suck blood. King *Hui's* heart and bowel complaint was probably nothing but a constipation of blood. Therefore this constipation was cured along with the death of the blood-sucking animal, just as a man suffering from the skin disease known as 'rat' can be cured by eating a cat, because it is natural to cats to eat rats. The various things overcome one another. Remedies and antidotes are given on the same principal. Therefore it cannot be a matter for surprise that by eating a leech a disease should be removed. Living things, when eaten, will die. Dead, they

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invariably come out in a natural way. Consequently, the re-appearance of the leech cannot be an act of special grace.

The premier seeing the kind-heartedness of King *Hui* and knowing that the leech after entering the stomach must come forth again, when dead, therefore bowed twice, and congratulated the king upon his not being injured by his disease. He thereby showed his power of forethought, and pleased his sovereign. His utterance is in the same style as that of *Tse Wei* <sup>1</sup>, who said that a star <sub>p1.159</sub> would shift its place <sup>2</sup>, and of the 'Great Diviner' <sup>3</sup>, who asserted that the earth was going to move.

A family in *Sung* had for three generations never swerved from the path of virtue. Without any apparent reason a black cow belonging to this family dropped a white calf. *Confucius* was asked, and said that it was a lucky omen, and that the calf ought to be sacrificed to the spirits, which was done accordingly. After one year, the father of the family became blind without a reason. The cow then produced a white calf a second time. The father sent his son to ask *Confucius*, who replied that it was a propitious portent, and that the animal must be immolated, which was done again. After a year, the son lost his eye-sight, nobody knew why. Subsequently, *Ch'u* attacked *Sung*, and besieged its capital. At that time the besieged were in such a distress, that they exchanged their sons, and ate them, breaking their bones, which they used as firewood <sup>4</sup>. It was but for their blindness that father and son were not called upon to mount guard on the city wall. When the enemy's army raised the siege, father and son could see again. This is believed to be a proof of how the spirits requited great deserts, but it is idle talk :

If father and son of that family in *Sung* did so much good, that the spirits rewarded them, why must they first make them blind, and afterwards restore

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<sup>1</sup> Astrologer at the court of Duke *Ching* of *Sung* (515-451 B. C.) who venerated him like a god.

<sup>2</sup> The planet Mars (cf. p. 127).

<sup>3</sup> The 'Great Diviner' of *Ch'i*, on whom *vid.* p. 1.112.

<sup>4</sup> This fact is mentioned in the *Shi-chi* chap. 38, p. 14v [*Chavannes, Mém. Hist.* Vol. IV, p. 243]. The siege took place from 595-594 B. C. The whole story seems to be a quotation from *Lieh Tse* VIII, 6v. [*Wieger*] or from *Huai Nan Tse* XVIII, 6 who narrate it with almost the same words.

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their sight ? Could they not protect them, if they had not been blind and always seeing ? Being unable to help men, if not blind, the spirits would also be powerless to protect the blind.

Had the two commanders of *Sung* and *Ch'u* made such a furious onslaught, that the weapons were blunted, the dead bodies covered with blood, the warriors captivated, or killed never to come back, then blindness might have afforded an excuse for not going to the front, and that might have been construed as a divine protection. But before the armies of *Sung* and *Ch'u* came to blows, *Hua Yuan* and *Tse Fan* <sup>1</sup> made a covenant, and went back. The two forces returned home unscathed, and the blades of the swords, and the points of the arrows were not blunted by use. The duty p1.160 of mounting the city wall did not entail death, consequently the two good men could not have obtained the divine protection, while this duty was being performed. In case they had not been blind at that time, they would not have died either. The blind and the not blind all got off. What benefit did those good men derive then from their blindness, for which the spirits were responsible ? <sup>2</sup>

Were the families of the blind alone well off, when the State of *Sung* was short of provisions ? All had to exchange their sons with the families which mounted guard on the wall, and they split their bones. If in such straits such good people alone were still blind and unable to see, the spirits in giving their aid have failed to discriminate justly between the good and the wicked.

Father and son had probably been blinded by exposure to cold wind, a mere chance. When the siege was over, they owed their cure to chance also. The world knowing that they had done good works, that they had offered two white calves in sacrifice, that during the war between *Sung* and *Ch'u* they alone had not mounted the wall, and that after the siege they regained their sight, thought this to be the recompense of virtue, and the protection granted

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<sup>1</sup> *Hua Yuan* was the general of *Sung*, *Tse Fan* that of *Ch'u*. Both armies being equally exhausted by famine, the siege was raised.

<sup>2</sup> According to *Lieh Tse* and *Huai Nan Tse* the two blind men were, in fact, saved from death by their blindness. *Lieh Tse loc. cit.* [[Wieger](#)] adds that over half of the defenders of the city wall were killed, and *Huai Nan Tse* says that all except the two blind men were massacred by the besiegers. *Wang Ch'ung* follows the *Shi-chi* in his narrative of the salvation of the city.

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by the spirits.

When the minister of *Ch'u*, *Sun Shu Ao* <sup>1</sup> was a boy, he beheld a two-headed snake, which he killed and buried. He then went home, and cried before his mother. She asked him, what was the matter. He replied :

— I have heard say that he who sees a two-headed snake must die. Now, when I went out, I saw a two-headed snake. I am afraid that I must leave you and die, hence my tears.

Upon his mother inquiring, where the snake was now, he rejoined :

— For fear lest others should see it later, I have killed it outright, and buried it.

The mother said :

— I have heard that Heaven will recompense hidden virtue. You are certainly not going to die, for Heaven must reward you.

And, in fact, *Sun Shu Ao* did not die, but, later on, became prime minister of *Ch'u*. For interring one snake he received two favours. This makes it clear that Heaven rewards good actions.

<sup>p1.161</sup> No, it is idle talk. That he who sees a two-headed snake, must die, is a common superstition, and that Heaven gives happiness as a reward for hidden virtue, a common prejudice. *Sun Shu Ao*, convinced of the superstition, buried the snake, and his mother, addicted to the prejudice, firmly relied on the heavenly retaliation. This would amount to nothing else than that life and death were not depending on fate, but on the death of a snake.

*T'ien Wên* <sup>2</sup> of *Ch'i*, Prince of *Mêng Ch'ang*, was born on the 5th day of the 5th moon <sup>3</sup>. His father *T'ien Ying* expostulated with his mother saying,

— Why do you rear him ?

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<sup>1</sup> 6th cent. B. C.

<sup>2</sup> Died 279 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> This day is still now regarded as very unlucky in many respects, although it be the Great Summer Festival or the Dragon Boat Festival. On the reasons cf. [De Groot, Les Fêtes annuelles à Émoui. Vol. I, p. 320.](#)

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She replied :

— Why do you not wish to rear a fifth month child ?

*T'ien Ying* said :

— A fifth month son will become as high as a door, and kill both his father and mother.

She rejoined :

— Does the human fate depend on Heaven or on doors ? If on Heaven, you have nothing to complain of, if on a door, he must become as high as a door. Who ever attained to that ? <sup>1</sup>

Later on, *T'ien Wên* grew as high as a door, but *T'ien Ying* did not die. Thus the apprehension to rear a child in the fifth month proved unfounded. The disgust at the sight of a two-headed snake is like the repugnance to rear a child of the fifth month. Since the father of such a child did not die, it follows that a two-headed snake cannot bring misfortune either.

From this point of view, he who sees a two-headed snake, does not die, as a matter of course, but not on account of having buried a snake. If for interring one snake one receives two favours, how many must one obtain for ten snakes ? *Sun Shu Ao* by burying a snake, lest other persons should look at it, showed an excellent character. The works of excellent men do not merely consist in burying snakes. *Sun Shu Ao* may have accomplished many other meritorious acts, before he buried the snake. Endowed with a good nature by Heaven, people do good under all circumstances. Such well deserving persons ought to see propitious things, instead of that he unexpectedly falls in with a snake that kills man. Was perhaps *Sun Shu Ao* a wicked man, before he beheld the snake, and did Heaven intend to kill him, but condoned his guilt, and spared his life upon seeing him burying the snake ?

p1.162 A stone is hard from the time of its formation, a flagrant flower has its perfume from the time, when it came out. If it be said that *Sun Shu Ao*'s virtue became manifest, when he buried the snake, then he would not have

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<sup>1</sup> A quotation from the *Shi-chi*, chap. 75, p. 2v.

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received it from Heaven at his birth.

The Confucianist *Tung Wu Hsin* and the Mèhist *Ch'an Tse* <sup>1</sup> met, and spoke about *Tao*. *Ch'an Tse* extolled the Mèhist theory of the help of the spirits <sup>2</sup>, and as an instance adduced duke *Mu* of *Ch'in*. His excellent qualities were so brilliant that God granted him an age of ninety years <sup>3</sup>.

*Ch'an Tse* gets into trouble with *Yao* and *Shun*, who were not favoured with a long life, and *Chieh* and *Chou*, who did not die young. *Yao*, *Shun*, *Chieh*, and *Chou* belong to remote antiquity, but in modern times likewise duke *Mu* of *Ch'in* <sup>4</sup> and duke *Wên* of *Chin* <sup>5</sup> are difficult to account for.

The posthumous name expresses man's actions. What he has done during his life-time, appears in his posthumous title. *Mu* is an expression for error and disorder <sup>6</sup>, *Wên* means virtue and goodness. Did Heaven reward error and disorder with long years, and take the life of him who practised virtue and benevolence ?

The reign of Duke *Mu* did not surpass that of Duke *Wên* of *Chin*, and the latter's posthumous title was better than that of Duke *Mu*. But Heaven did not extend *Wên* of *Chin*'s life, he only granted longer years to Duke *Mu* <sup>7</sup>. Thus the retribution <sup>p1.163</sup> of Heaven would appear as capricious and perverse as Duke *Mu* himself was.

Under heaven the good men are few, and the bad ones many. The good

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<sup>1</sup> A scholar of the *Han* time.

<sup>2</sup> Demons and spirits who reward the virtuous, and punish the perverse, play an important part in the doctrine of *Mê Ti*. (Cf. *Faber, Micius*, Elberfeld 1877, p.91.)

<sup>3</sup> The parallel passage in chap. 7 speaks of nineteen extra years, with which the Duke was rewarded.

<sup>4</sup> 658-619 B. C.

<sup>5</sup> 634-626 B. C.

<sup>6</sup> The *Mu* in the Duke of *Ch'in*'s name =[a] does not mean 'error and disorder', it signifies 'majestic, grand, admirable'. But this *Mu* is often replaced by the character [a], which has the bad meaning given by *Wang Ch'ung*. I presume that in the original text of the *Lun-hêng* the latter character was used, whereas we now read the other. In the parallel passage chap. 7 [a][ ] is actually written, and so it is in the *Shi-chi* chap. 5, p. 9v. et seq.

<sup>7</sup> The *Shi-chi* knows nothing of such a miracle. Duke *Mu* was a great warrior as was Duke *Wên*, but the latter's rule is described by *Sse Ma Ch'ien* as very enlightened and beneficial. (Cf. on Duke *Mu* : [Chavannes, Mém. Historiques. Vol. II, p. 25-43](#), and on Duke *Wên*. [Vol. IV, p. 291-308](#).)

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follow right principles, the bad infringe Heaven's commands. Yet the lives of bad men are not short therefore, nor the years of the good ones prolonged. How is it that Heaven does not arrange that the virtuous always enjoy a life of a hundred years, and that the wicked die young, or through their guilt ?

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## 21. Book VI, Chap. II

### *Huo-hsü. Wrong Notions on Unhappiness*

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p1.164 Since what the world calls happiness and divine grace is believed to be the outcome of moral conduct, it is also a common belief that the victims of misfortune and disgrace are thus visited because of their wickedness. Those sunk in sin, and steeped in iniquity Heaven and Earth punish, and the spirits retaliate upon them. These penalties, whether heavy or light, will be enforced, and the retributions of the spirits reach far and near.

*Tse Hsia*<sup>1</sup> is related to have lost his sight, while mourning for his son. *Tsêng Tse*<sup>2</sup> by way of condolence wept. *Tse Hsia* thereupon exclaimed

— O Heaven, I was not guilty !

*Tsêng Tse* grew excited, and said

— In what way are you innocent, *Shang* ?<sup>3</sup> I served our master with you between the *Chu*<sup>4</sup> and the *Sse*, but you retired to the region above the West River<sup>5</sup>, where you lived, until you grew old. You misled the people of the West River into the belief that you were equal to the master. That was your first fault. When mourning for your parents, you did nothing extraordinary, that people would talk about. That was your second fault. But in your grief over your son, you lost your eye-sight. That was your third fault. How dare you say that you are not guilty ?

*Tse Hsia* threw away his staff, went down on his knees and said,

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<sup>1</sup> A disciple of *Confucius*.

<sup>2</sup> One of the most famous disciples of *Confucius*, whose name has been connected with the authorship of the Great Learning.

<sup>3</sup> *Pu Shang* was the name of *Tse Hsia*. *Tse Hsia* is his style.

<sup>4</sup> A small river in the province of *Shantung*, flowing into the *Sse*.

<sup>5</sup> Presumably the western course of the Yellow River.

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— I have failed, I have failed ! I have left human society, and also led a solitary life for ever so long <sup>1</sup>.

Thus *Tse Hsia* having lost his sight, *Tsêng Tse* reproved him for his faults. *Tse Hsia* threw away his stick, and bowed to *Tsêng Tse*'s words. Because, as they say, Heaven really punishes the guilty, therefore evidently his eyes lost their sight. Having thus humbly <sup>p1.165</sup> acknowledged his guilt, he is reported to have regained his sight by degrees. Everybody says so, nevertheless a thorough investigation will show us that this belief is illusory.

Loss of sight is like loss of hearing. Loss of sight is blindness, and loss of hearing, deafness. He who suffers from deafness, is not believed to have faults, therefore it would be erroneous to speak of guilt, if a man becomes blind. Now the diseases of the ear and the eye are similar to those of the heart and the stomach. In case the ear and the eye lose their faculties, one speaks of guilt perhaps, but can any fault be inferred, when the heart or the stomach are sick ?

*Po Niu* was ill. *Confucius* grasped his hand through the window saying

— It will kill him, such is his fate ! Such a man to get such a disease ! <sup>2</sup>

Originally *Confucius* spoke of *Po Niu*'s bad luck, and therefore pitied him. Had *Po Niu*'s guilt been the cause of his sickness, then Heaven would have punished him for his wickedness, and he would have been on a level with *Tse Hsia*. In that case *Confucius* ought to have exposed his guilt, as *Tsêng Tse* did with *Tse Hsia*. But instead he spoke of fate. Fate is no fault.

Heaven inflicts its punishments on man, as a sovereign does on his subjects. If a man thus chastised, submits to the punishment, the ruler will often pardon him. *Tse Hsia* admitted his guilt, humiliated himself, and repented. Therefore Heaven in its extreme kindness ought to have cured his blindness, or, if *Tse Hsia*'s loss of sight was not a retribution from Heaven, *Tse Hsia* cannot have been thrice guilty.

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the *Li-ki*, *T'an Kung* I (cf. [Legge's translation, Sacred Books of the East Vol. XXVII, p. 135](#)).

<sup>2</sup> Quotation of [Analects VI, 8](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

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Is not leprosy much worse than blindness ? If he who lost his sight, had three faults, was then the leper <sup>1</sup> ten times guilty ?

*Yen Yuan* <sup>2</sup> died young and *Tse Lu* came to a premature end, being chopped into minced meat <sup>3</sup>. Thus to be butchered is the most horrid disaster. Judging from *Tse Hsia's* blindness, both *Yen Yuan* and *Tse Lu* must have been guilty of a hundred crimes. From this it becomes evident that the statement of *Tsêng Tse* was preposterous.

p1.166 *Tse Hsia* lost his sight, while bewailing his son. The feelings for one's children are common to mankind, whereas thankfulness to one's parents is sometimes forced. When *Tse Hsia* was mourning for his father and mother, people did not notice it, but, when bewailing his son, he lost his sight. This shows that his devotion to his parents was rather weak, but that he passionately loved his son. Consequently he shed innumerable tears. Thus ceaselessly weeping, he exposed himself to the wind, and became blind.

*Tsêng Tse* following the common prejudice invented three faults for *Tse Hsia*. The latter likewise stuck to the popular belief. Because he had lost his sight, he humbly acknowledged his guilt. Neither *Tsêng Tse* nor *Tse Hsia* could get rid of these popular ideas. Therefore in arguing, they did not rank very high among *Confucius* followers.

King *Hsiang* of *Ch'in* <sup>4</sup> sent a sword to *Po Ch'i* <sup>5</sup>, who thereupon was going to commit suicide, falling on the sword.

— How have I offended Heaven ?, quoth he.

After a long while he rejoined :

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<sup>1</sup> *Po Niu*, who was suffering from leprosy.

<sup>2</sup> The favourite disciple of *Confucius*, whose name was *Yen Hui*.

<sup>3</sup> The *Tso-chuan*, Book XII Duke *Ai* 15th year [[Couvreur](#)], relates that *Tse Lu* was killed in a revolution in *Wei*, struck with spears, no mention being made of his having been hacked to pieces (cf. *Legge*, *Ch'un Ch'iu* Pt. II, p. 842). This is related, however, in the *Li-ki*, *T'an-kung* I ([Legge Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 123](#)) and by [Huai Nan Tse VII, 13v](#).

<sup>4</sup> King *Chao Hsiang* of *Ch'in* 305-249 B. C.

<sup>5</sup> A famous general of the *Ch'in* State who by treachery annihilated the army of *Chao*. *Vid.* p. 1.136.

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— At all events I must die. At the battle of *Ch'ang p'ing* <sup>1</sup> the army of *Chao*, several hundred thousand men, surrendered, but I deceived them, and caused them to be buried alive. Therefore I deserve to die.

Afterwards he made away with himself <sup>2</sup>.

*Po Ch'i* was well aware of his former crime, and acquiesced in the punishment consequent upon it. He knew, how he himself had failed, but not, why the soldiers of *Chao* were buried alive. If Heaven really had punished the guilty, what offence against Heaven had the soldiers of *Chao* committed, who surrendered? Had they been wounded and killed on the battle-field by the random blows of weapons, many out of the four hundred thousand would certainly have survived. Why were these also buried in spite of their goodness and innocence? Those soldiers being unable to obtain Heaven's protection through their virtue, why did *Po Ch'i* alone suffer the condign punishment for his crime from Heaven? We see from this that *Po Ch'i* was mistaken in what he said.

p1.167 The *Ch'in* emperor *Erh Shih Huang Ti* <sup>3</sup> sent an envoy to *Mêng T'ien* <sup>4</sup>, and commanded him to commit suicide. *Mêng T'ien* heaving a deep sigh said

— How have I failed against Heaven? I die innocent.

After a long while, he slowly began,

— Yet I am guilty, therefore I am doomed to die. When I was constructing the Great Wall connecting *Liao-tung* <sup>5</sup> with *Lin-t'ao* <sup>6</sup>, ten thousand Li in a straight line, I could not avoid cutting the veins of the earth. That was my guilt.

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<sup>1</sup> In *Shansi*.

<sup>2</sup> *Po Ch'i* had fallen into disfavour with his liege upon refusing to lead another campaign against *Chao*.

<sup>3</sup> 209-207 B. C.

<sup>4</sup> A general of *Erh Shih Huang Ti's* father, *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti*, who fought successfully against the *Hsiung-nu*, and constructed the Great Wall as a rampart of defence against their incursions.

<sup>5</sup> The Manchurian province of *Fêng-t'ien*.

<sup>6</sup> A city in *Kansu* at the western extremity of the Great Wall.

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Upon this he swallowed a drug, and expired <sup>1</sup>.

The Grand Annalist *Sse Ma Ch'ien* finds fault with him.

When the *Ch'in* dynasty, he said, had exterminated the feudal princes, and peace was not yet restored to the empire, nor the wounds healed, *Mêng T'ien*, a famous general at that time, did not care to strongly remonstrate with the emperor, or help people in their distress, feeding the old, befriending the orphans, or bringing about a general concord. He flattered those in power, and instigated them to great exploits. That was the fault of men of his type, who well deserved to be put to death. Why did he make the veins of the earth responsible ? <sup>2</sup>

If what *Mêng T'ien* said was wrong, the strictures of the Grand Annalist are not to the point either. How so ? *Mêng T'ien* being guilty of having cut the veins of the earth, deserved death for this great crime. How did the earth, which nourishes all beings, wrong man ? *Mêng T'ien*, who cut its veins, knew very well that by doing so he had committed a crime, but he did not know, why by lacerating the veins of the earth he had made himself guilty <sup>3</sup>. Therefore it is of no consequence, whether *Mêng T'ien* thus impeached himself, or not. The Grand Annalist blames *Mêng T'ien* for not having strongly protested, when he was a famous general, p1.168 that therefore he met with this disaster, for those that do not speak, when they ought to remonstrate, will have to suffer a violent death.

*Sse Ma Ch'ien* himself had to suffer for *Li Ling* in the warm room <sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the *Shi-chi* chap. 88, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Remarks of *Sse Ma Ch'ien* to *Shi-chi* chap. 88, p. 5v.

<sup>3</sup> The earth is here treated like an animated being, and its wounding by digging out ditches for the earth-works requisite for the Great Wall, and by piercing mountains, is considered a crime. But provided that *Mêng T'ien* suffered the punishment of his guilt, then another difficulty arises. Why did Heaven allow Earth to be thus maltreated, why did it punish innocent Earth ? *Wang Ch'ung's* solution is very simple. Heaven neither rewards nor punishes. Its working is spontaneous, unpremeditated, and purposeless. *Mêng T'ien's* death is nothing but an unfelicitous accident.

<sup>4</sup> For his intercession in favour of the defeated general *Li Ling* the emperor *Wu Ti* condemned *Sse Ma Ch'ien* to castration, which penalty was inflicted upon him in a warm room serving for that purpose. (Cf. [Chavannes, Mém. Historiques Vol. I, p. XL.](#))

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According to the Grand Annalist's own view the misfortune suffered tells against a person. Consequently capital punishment takes place by Heaven's decree. If *Sse Ma Ch'ien* censures *Mêng T'ien* for not having strongly remonstrated with his sovereign, wherefore he incurred his disaster, then there must have been something wrong about himself likewise, since he was put into the warm room. If he was not wrong, then his criticisms on *Mêng T'ien* are not just.

In his memoir on *Po Yi* <sup>1</sup> the Grand Annalist, giving examples of good and bad actions says,

Out of his seventy disciples *Confucius* only recommended *Yen Yuan* for his ardent love of learning. Yet *Yen Yuan* was often destitute. He lived on bran, of which he could not even eat his fill, and suddenly died in his prime. Does Heaven reward good men thus ?

Robber *Chê* assassinated innocent people day after day, and ate their flesh. By his savageness and imposing haughtiness he attracted several thousand followers, with whom he scourged the empire. Yet he attained a very great age after all. Why was he so specially favoured ?

*Yen Yuan* ought not to have died so prematurely, and robber *Chê* should not have been kept alive so long. Not to wonder at *Yen Yuan's* premature death, but to say that *Mêng T'ien* deserved to die, is inconsistent.

The *Han* general *Li Kuang* <sup>2</sup> said in a conversation which he had with the diviner *Wang Shê*,

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<sup>1</sup> *Shi-chi* chap. 61, p. 3v. *Po Yi* (12th cent. B. C.) and his elder brother *Shu Ch'i* were sons of the Prince of *Ku-chu* in modern *Chili*. Their father wished to make the younger brother *Shu Ch'i* his heir, but he refused to deprive his elder brother of his birth-right, who, on his part, would not ascend the throne against his father's will. Both left their country to wander about in the mountains, where at last they died of cold and hunger. They are regarded as models of virtue.

<sup>2</sup> Died 125 B. C.

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— Ever since the *Han* <sup>1</sup> have fought the *Hsiung-nu* <sup>2</sup>, I was there. But several tens of officers of a lower <sup>p1.169</sup> rank than commander of a city gate, with scarcely moderate abilities, have won laurels in the campaigns against the *Hu* <sup>3</sup> and marquisates withal. I do not yield the palm to these nobles, but how is it that I have not even acquired a square foot of land as a reward of my services, and much less been enfeoffed with a city ? Are my looks not those of a marquis ? Surely it is my fate.

*Wang Shê* asked him to think, whether there was anything which always gave him pangs of conscience. *Li Kuang* replied,

— When I was magistrate of *Lung-hsi* <sup>4</sup>, the *Ch'iang* <sup>5</sup> continuously rebelled. I induced over eight hundred to submission, and, by a stratagem, had them all killed on the same day. This is the only thing for which I feel sorry up to now.

*Wang Shê* rejoined :

— There can be no greater crime than to murder those that have surrendered. That is the reason, why you, general, did not get a marquisate <sup>6</sup>.

*Li Kuang* agreed with him, and others who heard of it, believed this view to be true. Now, not to become a marquis is like not becoming an emperor. Must he who is not made a marquis, have anything to rue, and he who does not become emperor, have committed any wrong ? *Confucius* was not made an emperor, but nobody will say of him that he had done any wrong, whereas, because *Li Kuang* did not become a marquis, *Wang Shê* said that he had something to repent of. But his reasoning is wrong.

Those who go into these questions, mostly hold that, whether a man will

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<sup>1</sup> The *Han* dynasty. The Former *Han* dynasty reigned from 206 B. C.-25 A. D. the Later *Han* dynasty from 25-220 A. D.

<sup>2</sup> A Turkish tribe.

<sup>3</sup> A general term for non-Chinese tribes in the north.

<sup>4</sup> District in *Kansu*.

<sup>5</sup> Tribes in the West of China.

<sup>6</sup> A quotation from *Shi-chi* chap. 109, p. 6, the biography of General *Li Kuang*.

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be invested with a marquisate or not, is predestinated by Heaven, and that marks of Heaven's fate appear in his body. When the great general *Wei Ch'ing*<sup>1</sup> was in the *Chien-chang* palace, a deported criminal with an iron collar predicted his fate to the effect that he was so distinguished, that he would even be made a marquis. Later on, he in fact became a marquis over ten thousand families, owing to his great services. Before *Wei Ch'ing* had performed his great achievements, the deported criminal saw those signs pointing to his future rank. Consequently, to be raised to the rank of a marquis depends on fate, and man cannot attain to it by his works. What the criminal said turned out true, as shown by the result, whereas *Wang Shê's* assertion is untenable and without proof. Very often people are perverse and selfish without becoming unhappy by it, and others who always follow the path of virtue, may lose their happiness. *Wang Shê's* opinion is of the same kind as the self-reproach of *Po Ch'i*, and the self-impeachment of *Mêng T'ien*.

In this flurried, bustling world it constantly happens that people rob and murder each other in their greed for wealth. Two merchants having travelled together in the same cart or the same boat a thousand Li, one kills the other, when they arrive at a far-off place, and takes away all his property. The dead body is left on the spot, uncared for, and the bones bleach in the sun unburied. In the water, the corpse is eaten up by fish and turtles, on land, ants and vermin feed upon it. The lazy fellows won't exert their strength in agriculture, but resort to commerce, and even that reluctantly, in order to amass grain and goods. When then in a year of scarcity they have not enough to still the hunger of their bellies, they knock down their fellow-citizens like beasts, cut them to pieces, and eat their flesh. No difference is made between good and bad men, they are all equally devoured. It is not generally known, and the officials do not hear of it. In communities of over a thousand men up to ten thousand only one man out of a hundred remains alive, and nine out of ten die<sup>2</sup>. This is the height of lawlessness and atrocity, yet all the murderers

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<sup>1</sup> A favourite and a general of *Han Wu Ti*, died 106 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> A Chinese does not take exception to the incongruity of the equation : 100 : 1 = 10 : 1. The meaning is plain : a small percentage of survivors, and a great many dying.



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walk publicly about, become wealthy men, and lead a gay and pleasant life, without Heaven punishing them for their utter want of sympathy and benevolence.

They kill one another, when they meet on the roads, not because they are so poor, that they cannot undertake anything, but only because they are passing through hard times, they feed on human flesh, thus bringing endless misery on their fellow-creatures, and compassing their premature deaths. How is it possible that they can make their guilt public, openly showing to the whole world the indelible proofs thereof? *Wang Shê's* opinion can certainly not be right.

The historians tell us that *Li Sse* <sup>1</sup>, envious that *Han Fei Tse* <sup>2</sup> equalled him in talent, had him assassinated in jail <sup>3</sup> in *Ch'in*, but p1.171 that, afterwards, he was torn to pieces by carts <sup>4</sup>, furthermore that *Shang Yang* <sup>5</sup>, under pretence of his old friendship, captured *Ang*, prince of *Wei*, but that, subsequently, he had to suffer death. They wish to imply that those men had to endure these misfortunes as a punishment for their having destroyed a wise man, or broken an old friendship. For what cause had *Han Fei Tse* given, to be incarcerated by *Li Sse*, or what fault had prince *Ang* committed, to be taken prisoner by *Shang Yang*? How did the murder of a scholar, who died in prison, and the breaking of an old friendship resulting in the arrest of the prince, bring about the violent death of the culprit, torn to pieces by carts <sup>6</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> Prime Minister of *Ch'in* *Shih Huang Ti* and a great scholar. He studied together with *Han Fei Tse* under the philosopher *Hsün Tse*.

<sup>2</sup> A Taoist philosopher, son of a duke of the *Han* State.

<sup>3</sup> By his intrigues *Li Sse* had induced the king of *Ch'in* to imprison *Han Fei Tse*. He then sent him poison, with which *Han Fei Tse* committed suicide. *Vid. Shi-chi* chap. 63, p. 11v., Biography of *Han Fei Tse*.

<sup>4</sup> *Li Sse* fell a victim to the intrigues of the powerful eunuch *Chao Kao*. The *Shi-chi* chap. 87, p. 20v., Biography of *Li Sse*, relates that he was cut asunder at the waist on the market place. At all events he was executed in an atrocious way. The tearing to pieces by carts driven in opposite directions is a punishment several times mentioned in the *Ch'un-ch'iu*.

<sup>5</sup> *Shang Yang* is *Wei Yang*, Prince of *Shang*, died 338 B. C. In the service of the *Ch'in* State he defeated an army of *Wei*, commanded by Prince *Ang*, whom he treacherously seized, and assassinated at a meeting, to which he had invited him as an old friend. According to the *Shi-chi*, chap. 68, p. 9, Biography of Prince *Shang*, he lost his life in battle against his former master, and his corpse was torn to pieces by carts like *Li Sse*.

<sup>6</sup> The culprit being bound to the carts, which then were driven in different directions.

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or the decapitation ? If *Han Fei Tse* or prince *Ang* were wicked, and Heaven had placed retribution in the hands of *Li Sse* and *Shang Yang*, then the latter would have acted by Heaven's order, and be deserving of his reward, not of misfortune. Were *Han Fei Tse* and prince *Ang* blameless, and not punished by Heaven, then *Li Sse* and *Shang Yang* ought not to have imprisoned and captured them.

It will be argued that *Han Fei Tse* and Prince *Ang* had concealed their crimes, and hidden their faults so, that nobody heard about them, but Heaven alone knew, and therefore they suffered death and mishap. The guilt of men consists, either in outrages on the wise, or in attacks on the well-minded. If they commit outrages on the wise, what wrong have the victims of these outrages done ? And if they attack the well-minded, what fault have the people thus attacked committed ? <sup>1</sup>

When misery or prosperity, fortune or mishap are falling to man's share with greater intensity, it is fate, when less so, it is <sub>p1.172</sub> time. *T'ai Kung* <sup>2</sup> was in great distress, when he happened to be enfeoffed with a territory by the *Chou* king *Wên Wang*. *Ning Ch'i* <sup>3</sup> was living in obscurity and difficulties, when Duke *Huan* of *Ch'i* gave him an appointment. It cannot be said that these two men, when they were poor and miserable, had done wrong, but had reformed, when they obtained their investment or appointment. Calamity and prosperity have their time, and good or bad luck depend on fate.

*T'ai Kung* and *Ning Ch'i* were worthies, but they may have had their faults. Sages, however, possess perfect virtue. Nevertheless *Shun* was several times almost done to death by the foul play of his father and brother <sup>4</sup>. When he met with *Yao*, the latter yielded the throne to him, and raised him to the imperial dignity. It is evident that, when *Shun* had to endure these insidious attacks, he was not to blame, and that he did not behave well, when he was

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<sup>1</sup> Why does Heaven punish the innocent through the guilty ? If *Han Fei Tse* and *Ang* had sinned in secret, Heaven would have been unjust towards those they had wronged, and so on.

<sup>2</sup> A high officer, who had gone into exile to avoid the tyrannous rule of *Chou Hsin* 1122 B. C., and subsequently joined *Wên Wang*.

<sup>3</sup> *Ning Ch'i* lived in the 7th cent. B. C.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 1.173.

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made emperor. First, his time had not yet come, afterwards, his fate was fulfilled, and his time came.

When princes and ministers in olden days were first distressed, and afterwards crowned with success, it was not, because they had at first been bad, and Heaven sent them calamities, or that subsequently they suddenly improved, and then were helped and protected by the spirits. The actions and doings of one individual from his youth to his death bear the same character from first to last. Yet one succeeds, the other fails, one gets on, the other falls off, one is penniless, the other well-to-do, one thriving, the other ruined. All this is the result of chance and luck, and the upshot of fate and time.

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## 22. Book VI, Chap. III

### *Lung-hsü. On Dragons*

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p1.351 When in midsummer during a thunder-storm lightning strikes a tree or demolishes a house, it is a common saying that Heaven fetches the dragon, which is believed to hide in the tree, or to be concealed in the house. The lightning striking the tree, or demolishing the house, the dragon appears outside. On its appearance, it is seized upon by the thunder, and carried up to Heaven. The unintelligent and the learned, the virtuous and the wicked are all agreed upon this, but trying to get at the truth, we find that it is idle talk.

Why should Heaven fetch the dragon? Provided that the dragon be a spirit and Heaven's envoy, as a virtuous minister is the deputy of his sovereign, then it ought to report itself at a fixed time, and would not have to be fetched. If, on the other hand, the dragon sneaks away, and does not come back, it does not behave like a spirit, and would be of no use to Heaven.

According to the dragon's nature its real abode is Heaven. Being there it certainly must have offspring. There would be no reason, why it should be on earth again. If there are rising and descending dragons, the latter class might bear its offspring on earth, and Heaven fetch it, when grown up. People call a tempest an expression of Heaven's anger, but in fetching the scion of a dragon it cannot be angry.

Further the dragon generally lives in ponds, not in trees or houses. Whence do we know that? *Shu Hsiang's* <sup>1</sup> mother said :

— In the depths of mountains and in vast marshes dragons and snakes really grow <sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> A minister in *Chin*, 6th cent. B. C.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from the *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Hsiang* 21st year (*Legge, Classics Vol. V, Pt. II, p. 491*). The mother of *Shu Hsiang* spoke these words in a figurative sense, with reference to *Shu Hsiang's* half-brother, and his beautiful mother, a concubine of her

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And in books we read,

Where the mountains are highest, the rain clouds rise, and where the water is deepest, the different species of dragons are born <sup>1</sup>.

The annals p<sub>1.352</sub> go on to say that, when *Yü* crossed the *Yangtse*, a yellow dragon carried his boat on its back <sup>2</sup>, and that, when *Ching Tse Fei* went over the *Huai*, two dragons swam round his slip. Near the eastern Sea <sup>3</sup> there lived *Lu Chiu Hsin*, a bold and strong man. When he once passed the Spirit Pool, he ordered his charioteer to give his horse to drink there, but when it drank, it sank down. *Lu Chiu Hsin* got angry, drew his sword, and went into the pool in pursuit of his horse. He then beheld two dragons just in the act of devouring his horse. Sword in hand, he slew the two dragons <sup>4</sup>. Hence it is evident that the dragons called '*chiao*' and the others always live in the water of pools, and not on trees or in houses.

Living in deep water dragons belong to the same category as fish and reptiles. Why should fish and reptiles ascend to Heaven, and what could Heaven use the dragon for, if it fetched it up? If the Spirit of Heaven should ride on the dragon, a spirit is something diffuse and incorporeal. Entering and departing, it needs no aperture, neither would it require a dragon to ride upon. Should the genii mount the dragon, then Heaven would fetch it for their sake. But the genii are imbued with the fluid of Heaven, and their bodies are so light, that they can fly up like wild geese. Therefore, why should they ride upon dragons?

People in general say that *Huang Ti* ascended to Heaven on a dragon. This statement is as inane as the other, made now-a-days, that Heaven fetches the dragon. If the dragon is said to rise to Heaven, it implies a dragon spirit, because only a spirit can soar on high, this being in fact a characteristic feature of spirits. Among the creatures produced by Heaven and Earth man

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husband. [[Couvreur](#), p. 369-370]. Cf. p. 1.302.

<sup>1</sup> A parallel passage, worded a little differently, occurs in *Hsün Tse*.

<sup>2</sup> This fact is recorded in the *Lü Shih ch'un-ch'iu* and in [Huai Nan Tse VII, 8v](#). Vid. also *Lun-hêng* Bk. V, p. 4 (*Yi-hsü*[chap. 18]).

<sup>3</sup> The Yellow Sea, east of China.

<sup>4</sup> This story is narrated in the *Han-shih-wai-chuan* 150 B. C. and the *Po-wu-chih*, where the hero is called *Tsai Chiu Hsin* however.

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being the noblest, the dragon must be inferior. If the noblest are not spirits, can the inferior be so ? Let us suppose that the nature of dragons be such, that some of them are spirits, the others not, and that the spirits rise to Heaven, while those that are not spirits, cannot : are turtles and snakes likewise partly spirits and partly not, and can the turtle spirits and the snake spirits ascend to Heaven ?

Moreover, what essence is the dragon endowed with, that it should alone be a spirit ? Heaven has the four constellations of the Blue Dragon, the White Tiger, the Scarlet Bird, and the Black <sup>p1.353</sup> Tortoise. Earth also has dragons, tigers, scarlet birds, and turtles. The essence of the four constellations pouring down, produces those four animals. The tiger, the scarlet bird, and the turtle not being spirits, wherefore should the dragon alone be a spirit ?

Man ranks first among the naked creatures, as the dragon is the foremost of the scaly animals. Both take the first place among their kindred. If the dragon is believed to ascend to Heaven, does man rise to Heaven likewise ? If under the above respect the dragon is on the same level with man, but alone credited with the faculty of ascending to Heaven, the dragon must be supposed to be a spirit.

The world also says that the sages being spirits, have the gift of prophecy, as they say that the dragon spirits are able to soar to Heaven. The divination of the sages thus being accounted for, it is but natural that the special talent of the dragon should be found in its power to rise to Heaven.

That which amidst Heaven and Earth is vague and unsubstantial as the vapours of cold and heat, wind and rain, has the nature of a spirit. Now the dragon has a body, having a body, it moves about, moving about, it eats, and eating, it has the nature of other creatures. According to the organisation of Heaven and Earth whatever possesses a body, moves about, and eats, cannot be a spirit. How so ?

The dragon has a body. One finds in books the statement, that out of the three hundred scaly animals the dragon is the first. Being the first of the scaly animals, how can it be without a body ?

*Confucius* said that the dragon fed in limpid places, and lived there, that

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the tortoise fed in limpid places, and lived in the mud, and that the fish fed in the mud, and lived in clear water. He did not attain to the dragon himself, but was neither equal to the fish, he was only to be compared to the tortoise, which takes the middle rank.

The *Shan-hai-king* <sup>1</sup> relates that beyond the four seas there are men riding on dragon snakes. As a rule, dragons are pictorially represented with a horse's head and a snake's tail. Hence they must be hybrids between the horse and the snake.

*Shên Tse* <sup>2</sup> informs us that the flying dragons mount the clouds, and that the soaring serpents ramble through the fog. When the clouds disperse, and the rain ceases, they are like earth-worms and ants.

p1.354 *Han Fei Tse* <sup>3</sup> teaches that the dragon is a reptile, which obeys a call, and allows itself to be patted and mounted. But under its throat it has a protruding scale over a foot long. If a man knocks against it, the dragon always kills him.

In short, the dragon is compared with earth-worms and ants, and it is further said to be a reptile, which can be patted and mounted. It must therefore have something in common with snakes and horses.

It is reported that when *Chou* <sup>4</sup> used ivory chopsticks <sup>5</sup>, *Chi Tse* <sup>6</sup> burst into tears. He wept, commiserating his excesses. There being ivory chopsticks, there must have been jade cups also. There jade cups and ivory chopsticks were certainly used to hold and to seize dragon liver and unborn leopard <sup>7</sup>. Dragon liver was eatable, but a dragon hard to be found. This being the case, the emperor would frown upon his subordinates. That would

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<sup>1</sup> The 'Mountain and Sea Classic', the oldest geographical work of the 4th or the 3rd cent. B. C.

<sup>2</sup> The Taoist philosopher *Shên Tao* of the 5th cent. B. C., of whose works only fragments are left.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 1.170.

<sup>4</sup> *Chou Hsin*, the last emperor of the *Shang* dynasty.

<sup>5</sup> Ivory chopsticks are very common in China now, and no luxury.

<sup>6</sup> Viscount *Chi*, one of the foremost nobles under *Chou Hsin*, 12th cent. B. C.

<sup>7</sup> Dragon liver and unborn leopard would seem to have been considered great delicacies.

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bring them into distress, therefore *Chi Tse's* sympathy.

If the dragon were a spirit, its body could not be killed, and its liver not be eaten. The livers and the unborn young of birds and animals are not the same. Dragon liver and unborn leopard being specially mentioned, man must have eaten them, and thereby learned to appreciate their excellent taste.

During the epoch of Spring and Autumn <sup>1</sup>, a dragon appeared in the outskirts of *Chiang* <sup>2</sup>. Viscount *Hsien* of *Wei* <sup>3</sup> interrogated *T'sai Mê* <sup>4</sup> saying,

— I heard say that of all creatures none is as intelligent as the dragon, which therefore cannot be caught alive. Is it true what they say about its cleverness ?

The other replied,

— Those that say so, really do not know. As a fact, the dragon is not intelligent. Of old, dragons were domesticated, therefore the empire had its families of Dragon Keeper (*Huan Lung*) and its Master of the Dragons (*Yü Lung*) <sup>5</sup>.

p1.355 Viscount *Hsien* observed that of these two he had heard also, but did not know their origin, and why they were called so. *T'sai Mê* said,

— In olden time there was *Shu Sung* <sup>6</sup> of *Liao* <sup>7</sup>. One of his distant descendants, *Tung Fu* was very fond of dragons. He could find out their tastes and likings, so as to be able to supply them with food and drink. Many dragons came to him, and were thus bred by him. With them he waited upon *Shun*, who bestowed upon him the family name of *Tung*, and the clan-name of Dragon Keeper (*Huan*

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<sup>1</sup> The historical period comprised by the *Ch'un-ch'iu* (Spring and Autumn) between 722 and 481 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> A principality in *Shansi*.

<sup>3</sup> A feudal lord under Duke *Ch'ou* of *Chin* in *Shansi*, 530-524 B. C., whose successors became marquises, and at last kings of *Wei*.

<sup>4</sup> The grand historiographer.

<sup>5</sup> The family names *Huan Lung* and *Yü Lung*, which literally mean Dragon Keeper and Master of the Dragons, have probably given rise to this queer story.

<sup>6</sup> The *Lun-hêng* calls the man *Shu Sung*. In the *Tso-chuan* his name is *Shu An*.

<sup>7</sup> A small State.



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*Lung*), and invested him with *Tsung-ch'uan*. The *Tsung-J* family were his descendants. Thus dragons were reared at the time of the emperor *Shun*.

During the *Hsia* time *K'ung Chia*<sup>1</sup> was obedient to God, who presented him with a team of dragons from the *Yellow River* and the *Han*, there being a male and a female from each. *K'ung Chia* was at a loss how to feed them, for no member of the *Huan Lung* family was to be found. But among the remains of the *T'ao T'ang*<sup>2</sup> family, which had perished, was one *Liu Lei*, who had learned the art of rearing dragons from the *Huan Lung* family. With that he served *K'ung Chia*, and was able to give food and water to the dragons. The *Hsia* ruler was so pleased with him, that he conferred upon him the clan-name of Master of the Dragons (*Yü Lung*). He took the place of the descendants of *Shih Wei*<sup>3</sup>.

When one female dragon died, he secretly had it chopped up, and offered the meat to the ruling emperor of the house of *Hsia* as food. The emperor had it cooked, and asked for more. Then *Liu Lei* became frightened, because he could not procure it, and emigrated to *Lu-hsien*<sup>4</sup>. The *Fan* family were his descendants'.

Viscount *Hsien* asked, why there were no dragons to-day. *T'sai Mê* replied,

— Such animals have their officials, who know their treatment, and think of them day and night. When they suddenly lose their post, the dragons die. The cashiered functionaries do not feed them any more. As long as the competent officials do their duty, there are always animals coming to them, but, when p1.356 they are neglected, they lie down listless, and their production is stopped<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The emperor *K'ung Chia* 1879-1848 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> *T'ao T'ang* was the principedom of the emperor *Yao* in *Shansi*, whose descendants took their clan name therefrom.

<sup>3</sup> A noble who flourished under the *Shang* dynasty.

<sup>4</sup> The modern *Lu-shan-hsien* in *Honan*.

<sup>5</sup> This conversation between Viscount *Hsien* and *T'sai Mê* on the rearing of dragons in ancient times is literally culled from the *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Chao* 29th year. Cf. *Legge*, *Ch'un-ch'iu* Pt. II, p. 731 [[Couvreur](#)].

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Thus we may say that dragons can be reared and eaten. What can be eaten, is certainly not a spirit. When the proper officials are not at hand, nor men like *Tung Fu* and *Liu Lei*, the dragons abscond, and hide themselves, and appear but rarely. When they once come out, they also ride on the clouds, a course, man can never take, and are then regarded as spirits. As long as there are the proper officials, or the proper men, the dragon is like an ox. Why should they be spirits ?

Taking into consideration what the *Shan-hai-king* says, the evidence of *Shên Tse* and *Han Fei Tse*, the usual pictorial representations, the despair of *Chi Tse*, and the information given by *T'sai Mê*, we see that the dragon cannot be a spirit, nor rise to Heaven, and it is evident that Heaven does not fetch it with thunder and lightning.

The common belief that the dragon is a spirit, and rises to Heaven, is preposterous. But there is a reason for it. In light literature we meet with the statement that without a tree one foot high the dragon cannot ascend to Heaven. They speak of ascending to Heaven, and of a tree one foot high, implying that the dragon rises to Heaven from within the tree. The authors of this sort of literature are uncultured people. They have observed that at the same time, when the thunder rolls and the lightning flashes up, the dragon rises, and when thunder and lightning strike a tree, the dragon happens to be close to the tree, just like thunder and lightning. When they are gone, the dragon rises on high likewise. Therefore they pretend that it ascends to Heaven from within the tree. As a matter of fact, the thunder and the dragon are of the same kind, and mutually attract one another, when set in motion by the forces of nature.

The *Yiking* says that the clouds follow the dragon, and the wind the tiger. It is further stated that, when the tiger howls, the wind passes through the valley, and that the variegated clouds rise, when the dragon gambols <sup>1</sup>. There is a certain manner of sympathy between the dragon and the clouds, and a mutual attraction between the tiger and the wind. Therefore, when p1.357 *Tung Chung Shu* <sup>2</sup> offered the rain sacrifice, he put up an earthen dragon

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<sup>1</sup> [Yiking Book I, Ch'ien hexagram](#) (No. 1). See also p. 1.279 Note 2.

<sup>2</sup> A scholar of the 2nd cent. B. C. See [Forke](#), p. 39.

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with a view to attract the rain.

When the summer is at its height, the sun reigns supreme, but the clouds and the rain oppose it. The sun is fire, clouds and rain being water. At the collision with water, fire explodes, and gives a sound, which is the thunder. Upon hearing the sound of thunder, the dragon rises, when it rises, the clouds appear, and when they are there, the dragon mounts them. The clouds and the rain are affected by the dragon, and the dragon also rides on the clouds to Heaven. Heaven stretches to the farthest distance, and the thunder is very high. Upon the clouds dispersing, the dragon alights again. Men seeing it riding on the clouds, believe it to ascend to Heaven, and beholding Heaven sending forth thunder and lightning, they imagine that Heaven fetches the dragon.

The scholars of to-day reading the *Yiking* and the historical records, all know that the dragon belongs to the same class as the clouds. They adhere to the common gossip without knowing, what it means. Besides they look upon the light literature as an authority. Thus they say that Heaven fetches the dragon.

Heaven does not do that, nor does the dragon rise to Heaven. When *Lu Chiu Hsin* slew the two serpents, he dragged them out with his hands by the tail, but the moment they were out of the pool, a thunder-bolt fell. Serpents are a species similar to dragons. When serpents or dragons make their appearance, clouds and rain arrive, upon their arrival there is thunder and lightning. If Heaven really fetched the dragon for its own use, what benefit would it have from dead serpents ?

Fish, though living in the water, yet follow the clouds and the rain flying, and riding on them ascend to Heaven. The dragon belongs to the class of fish, it rides on thunder and lightning in the same way as the fish fly. For following the clouds and the rain, fish are not considered to be spirits, the dragons alone are called spirits because of their riding on thunder and lightning. This common belief is contrary to truth.

All the creatures in the world have their peculiar vehicles : The water serpents ride on the fog, the dragons on the clouds, and birds on the wind. To call the dragon alone a spirit, because it is seen riding on the clouds, would

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not be in accordance with its real nature, and would only detract from its skill.

But the reason why the dragon is looked upon as a spirit is, because it can expand and contract its body, and make itself visible <sup>p1.358</sup> or invisible. Yet the expansion and contraction of the body and its visibility and invisibility do not constitute a spirit.

*Yü Jang* <sup>1</sup> swallowed charcoal and varnished his body, so that he got ulcers, and nobody recognised him. *Tse Kung* <sup>2</sup> burned off his beard, and took the semblance of a woman, so that nobody knew him. When the dragon transforms itself and absconds, men are also unable to perceive it, such is its skill in metamorphosing and hiding itself.

Much in the nature of creatures is spontaneous : The rhinopithecus <sup>3</sup> knows the past <sup>4</sup>, magpies foresee the future <sup>5</sup>, and parrots can talk. These three peculiarities may be compared to the transformations, which are in the nature of dragons. If by astuteness one could become a spirit, *Yü Jang* and *Tse Kung* would be spirits.

*Confucius* said,

— The roving animals can be ensnared, the flying birds be shot with an arrow. As regards the dragon, I do not know, whether it can ride on the wind and the clouds, and thus rise on high. To-day I saw *Lao Tse*. Should he perhaps be like a dragon <sup>6</sup> ?

Provided that the dragon rises, mounted on a cloud, and, when the cloud disperses, comes down again, then the class of creatures, to which it belongs, might be ascertained, and all about its celestial and terrestrial state known. Yet they say that *Confucius* did not know. A sage like *Confucius* ignored the

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<sup>1</sup> A native of the *Chin* State, 5th and 6th cent. B. C. He twice made an attempt upon the life of Viscount *Hsiang* of *Chao* to avenge the death of his master, the Earl of *Chih*, whom *Hsiang* had slain. Both attempts failed. The second time he disguised himself in the way described here.

<sup>2</sup> A disciple of *Confucius*.

<sup>3</sup> A kind of monkey in western China.

<sup>4</sup> This probably means that monkeys have an excellent memory.

<sup>5</sup> Magpies are believed to know, whether the next year will be very stormy, for in that case they build their nests near the ground. Moreover, they announce future joy, hence their popular name 'birds of joy'.

<sup>6</sup> A quotation from the Biography of *Lao Tse* in the *Shi-chi* chap. 63, p. 2v.

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nature of dragons. How much less can common people know, whose learning is deficient, who are biased in favour of the marvellous, and whose minds are unable to decide, what is possible and what not. That they should call the dragon a spirit, which rises to Heaven can therefore be no matter for surprise.

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## 23. Book VI, Chap. IV

### *Lei-hsü. On Thunder and Lightning*

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p1.285 In midsummer thunder and lightning rapidly following each other, split trees, demolish houses, and occasionally kill men. Common people are of opinion that, when the lightning strikes a tree, or demolishes a house, Heaven fetches a dragon, whereas, when a man is killed, they say that it is for his hidden faults. If in eating and drinking people use impure things, Heaven becomes angry, and strikes them dead. The deep rolling sound is the expression of Heaven's anger like the breathing and gasping of angry men. Every one, no matter whether intelligent or stupid, says so. But if we look into the matter, taking human nature as a basis, we find that all this is nonsense.

By a thunder-stroke one fluid is set in motion, and one sound produced <sup>1</sup>. A tree is hit, and a dwelling damaged, and at the same time a man may be killed. When a man is slain, a tree may be struck, and a house damaged also. But they assert that, when a tree is struck, and a house damaged, Heaven fetches a dragon, whereas, when it kills a man, it punishes him for his hidden guilt. In that case something inauspicious would clash with the auspicious fetching of the dragon <sup>2</sup>. That both things should happen at the same moment, and with the same sound, would not be proper.

It has been argued that the rolling is the sound of Heaven's growling. That would be appropriate for the punishment of the guilty, but out of place for fetching dragons. In meting out punishment, Heaven may be angry, but, when it fetches a dragon, what fault has it, that it should be irritated like that? Provided that the dragon be a spirit, then Heaven in fetching it, ought not to be angry. If, however, a dragon has faults, which are to be atoned for like those of man, Heaven would kill it, but why must it still fetch it? While destroying a man, Heaven may be in wrath, but, when it fetches a dragon,

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<sup>1</sup> The same force destroys the tree, the house, and the man.

<sup>2</sup> The dragon is accounted a sacred animal.

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what wrong has the dragon done, that Heaven should be so enraged at it ? Having smitten a man, Heaven does not fetch him. If under the same circumstances it <sup>p1.286</sup> does so with a dragon, what difference is there between human guilt and that of dragons ? If both are put to death, where does a difference come in ? We can no more accept the assertion that Heaven fetches dragons, than approve of the idea that the guilty meet with their dues for the following reasons :

When the thunder instantaneously follows upon the lightning, and a man falls to the ground dead, the rolling sound is close above his head, which brings about his death. But is the rolling really Heaven's anger ? If so, in its wrath, it would kill a man by the angry breath of its mouth. But how can the angry breath of a mouth kill a man ? On examining the body of a man, who has been struck by a thunderbolt, one discovers traces of burning. Provided that Heaven used its mouth in its anger, could its angry breath become fiery then ?

Moreover, the mouth is connected with the body, and its movements must be the same as those of the body. When lightning strikes, the sound is on the earth, and, when the work of destruction is done, it is again in the sky. Now, the moment, when the sound is on the earth, the mouth must approach it, and the body do the same. But, if at a thunder-clap we look up to Heaven, we do not see it descending. Since we do not see it come down, the rolling sound cannot be the expression of Heaven's anger.

Heaven's anger cannot be different from that of man. When an angry person comes near anybody, his voice sounds loud, when he is far off, his voice seems low. Now, Heaven's voice is near, but its body far away. Therefore, anger is out of the question.

When the peals of thunder rapidly succeed one another, the sound may be in the east, the west, the north or the south. Provided that Heaven be angry and move its body, then, if its mouth is in an eastern, western, northern, or southern direction, looking up we ought to see Heaven in one of these directions likewise.

Some one might object that Heaven really was in one of these directions, but could not be seen by man owing to the obscurity, caused by the clouds

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and the rain. Yet over a distance of a thousand Li there are not the same winds, and within a hundred Li there is not the same tempest. As the *Yiking* has it :

A hundred Li are frightened by the concussion <sup>1</sup>.

The region where the thunderstorm is raging, is darkened by the thunderclouds and the rain, but beyond a hundred Li, where no rain is falling, one ought to <sup>p1.287</sup> see Heaven moving eastward, westward, north- or southward. The mouth being joined to Heaven, Heaven must follow it. Whenever the mouth moves, the entire Heaven must shift its place also, and it is not only where the tempest rages, that Heaven follows the movements of its mouth.

And who is it, whom we believe to be angry ? The Spirit of Heaven or the dark blue sky ? If we say, the Spirit of Heaven, an angry spirit can give no sound, and, if we say, the dark blue sky, its body cannot become angry, for anger requires a mouth.

Heaven and Earth are like husband and wife, they are father and mother of mankind. Now, let a son have committed a fault, and his father in a fit of passion beat him to death, would not his mother weep for him ? When Heaven in its wrath slays a man, Earth ought also to cry over him, but one only hears of Heaven's anger, and never of Earth's crying. If Earth cannot shed tears, Heaven cannot be angry either.

Furthermore, anger must have its counterpart in joy. Men have hidden faults, but they have also latent virtues. Hidden faults in a man call forth Heaven's anger, which prompts it to kill him, but in case of latent virtues Heaven ought also to requite him with good. If the rolling sound is regarded as an expression of Heaven's anger, Heaven, when pleased, ought to give a hearty laugh.

Men are pleased or angry, therefore the same is said of Heaven. We try to get a conception of Heaven by ascribing human qualities to it. The source of this knowledge of Heaven is man. If man would feel no anger, there is no reason either, why Heaven should. Since our knowledge of Heaven is derived

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<sup>1</sup> [Yiking Book V, Chên Hexagram](#) (No. 51).



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from that of man, human nature in its entirety must be taken as basis. A man, when angry, breathes heavily, when pleased, he sings and laughs. We much less often hear of Heaven's joy, than of its anger, and much more seldom see it reward, than punish. Is Heaven always irritated and never content ? Does it mete out punishment pretty freely, but is rather sparing of its rewards ? How does its anger and vindictiveness become manifest, whereas there are no instances of its joy and liberality ?

When lightning strikes, it hits a tree, damages a house, and eventually kills a man. This is looked upon as Heaven's anger. But not unfrequently a thunder-clap is without effect, causing no damage, and destroying no human life. Does Heaven in such a case indulge in useless anger ? A sovereign's joy and anger are not in vain. Being pleased or angry, he will certainly reward or punish. Useless anger without punishment would be unbecoming in Heaven. Doing <sup>p1.288</sup> something unseemingly, it would lose its dignity thereby. That is not Heaven's way.

The writers on government hold that cold and heat coincide with joy and anger. When the sovereign is pleased, the weather is mild, when he is angry, it is cold. Then on the day of a thunderstorm the temperature ought to be cold.

Before *Han Kao Tsu* was born, Dame *Liu* <sup>1</sup> while sleeping on the banks of a big pond had intercourse with a spirit in her dream. At that time there was thunder and lightning, and a great darkness. Heaven was just then emitting its fluid, and ought to have been pleased <sup>2</sup>, why was it irritated and thundering ?

If striking and breaking is construed as a sign of Heaven's anger, and not striking or breaking as a sign of Heaven's joy, the rolling noise would not be appropriate in both cases <sup>3</sup>. Man expresses joy and anger by different sounds, if Heaven used the same sound for two different purposes, there would be a fundamental difference between him and man. From what circumstance then could we infer Heaven's anger ?

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<sup>1</sup> The mother of the emperor *Kao Tsu*. Cf. p. 1.177.

<sup>2</sup> Heaven as a spirit was just then engendering *Han Kao Tsu*, the Son of Heaven.

<sup>3</sup> In the case of joy as well as of anger.

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To give other persons impure things to eat is a small offence. For Heaven to chastise such small offenders in person with its own most precious body, would be derogatory to its majesty. Exalted persons do not punish personally, therefore does the emperor not execute the criminals with his own hand. Heaven is more exalted than the emperor. If it punished small misdemeanours itself, its virtue would be inferior to that of the emperor.

Heaven's sentiments must be similar to man's feelings. When a prince punishes the wicked, he upon first hearing of their crime, becomes furious and condemns them, but when it comes to taking their lives, he commiserates and pities them. Therefore the *Analects* say

When you have found out the truth, be grieved and pity them, and do not feel joy <sup>1</sup>.

*Chou* was utterly depraved, yet, when *Wu Wang* was going to put him to death, he deplored and pitied him. Thus in the *Shuking* he says :

— I commanded the wild tribes, but I am sorry for you <sup>2</sup>.

A sovereign puts the bad to death, p<sub>1.289</sub> but with a feeling of commiseration, whereas Heaven in punishing misdemeanours, strikes people dead in its rage. Thus Heaven would be less merciful than man.

Rain is believed to be a fluid emitted by Heaven. Put forth by Heaven, it becomes moistened, and gives the rain. When the rain saturates everything, one speaks of timely showers. Unless he be in good humour, man does not show kindness, and unless it be pleased, Heaven does not pour down rain. If thunder be taken for an expression of Heaven's anger, then rain must be a sign of its joy. When there is thunder, it is always accompanied by rain. One must suppose, therefore, that Heaven is at the same time grumbling and laughing. A sovereign does not mete out rewards and punishments on the same day. Should Heaven's anger and joy coincide in time, Heaven and man would not be in harmony, and their ways of rewarding and punishing quite

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects XIX, 19 \[Couvreur\]](#). The criminal judge *Yang Fu* having consulted the philosopher *Tsêng Tse* on the duties of his office, the latter advised him to pity the offenders, whose misdeeds were perhaps a consequence of bad administration.

<sup>2</sup> This passage is not to be found in our text of the *Shuking*.

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different. Moreover, anger and joy are both fitful. To fly into a fit of passion out of disgust at man's conduct, to punish him for his offence, and, in doing so, to be guided by passion, would be unworthy of Heaven.

Regarding a thunderstorm in winter, people assert that the *Yang* fluid has lost its force. When it thunders in spring, they say, it comes out, but when there is a tempest in summer, instead of owning that then the fluid has its greatest force, they speak of Heaven's anger. Of course that is nothing but idle talk.

Man is a creature between Heaven and Earth. Other creatures are likewise creatures. What other creatures eat and drink, Heaven does not know, and it should be aware of what man eats and drinks ? All beings are to Heaven like children. The kindness and love of father and mother to all their children are the same. Why then does Heaven watch the nobler and more intelligent being so closely, but takes no heed of the humbler and less gifted ones ? Why does it pry into all that man does, but ignores other creatures ?

Dogs and pigs eat human excrements, yet Heaven does not kill them for that. Provided that Heaven restricts only man on account of his superiority, then, if rats contaminate his drink or food, and man unwittingly eat it by mistake, Heaven does not destroy the rats. If Heaven can pardon the rats, it can do the same for man. Man may by mistake give others impure things to eat, and those unaware of it, may eat them. But they will never offer rotten things on purpose. Should they do so, the others would not take them.

p1.290 The Empress *Lü Hou* <sup>1</sup> cut off Lady *Ch'i*'s hands, tore out her eyes, and placed her in a privy as a human swine. Then she called people, and showed them her victim. All felt sick at heart. When the emperor *Hui Ti* saw

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<sup>1</sup> The first wife of *Han Kao Tsu*, who usurped the imperial power, and reigned under her own name against all custom from 187-179 B. C. Her son, the Emperor *Hui Ti*, whose nominal reign lasted from 194-187 B. C., was nothing but a puppet in her hands. *Lü Hou* was a fiend in human shape, who had always some poison ready for her enemies. One of her first acts, after she came to power, was to wreak her vengeance on her rival, Lady *Ch'i*, a concubine of *Han Kao Tsu*, who had attempted to have her own son made heir-apparent in place of *Hui Ti*, the son of *Lü Hou*. *Hui Ti*, a very kind-hearted, but weak sovereign did all in his power to shield his half-brother from the wrath of his mother, who poisoned him all the same.

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her, he fell sick, and did not rise again <sup>1</sup>. *Lü Hou* acted on purpose, but Heaven did not punish her. If on the other hand Heaven strikes people dead for a mere inadvertence without mercy or regard for the faults, its government is tyrannical.

When men eat something impure, they do not discover it by the taste. If they feel it, after having swallowed it, they call it a pollution of their bowels. When Lady *Ch'i* was put into the cess-pool, her whole body was disgracefully soiled, which is nothing else than impurity, for the body does not differ from the bowels. To care for the intestines, but disregard the body, to resent impurity, but not to feel the afore-mentioned horrible disgrace, would not be like Heaven.

The news that anybody has eaten something unclean does not disturb people's minds, whereas all that saw Lady *Ch'i* felt sick at heart. Man being hurt, Heaven must feel pity too. Commiserating Lady *Ch'i*, it must hate *Lü Hou*. Notwithstanding, when *Lü Hou* died, she was not struck by a thunderbolt.

The Taoist *Liu Ch'un* made a fool of the king of *Ch'u*, *Ying*, and caused him to eat some dirty stuff. *Liu Ch'un* died later on, but it needed no lightning to make him die.

In the 6th month of summer of the year 79 A. D. *Chin Chuan* of *Kuei-chi* <sup>2</sup> was killed by lightning. Of the sheep which he used for his daily meals, five died together with him. What hidden faults had these animals, that the lightning killed them ?

Boatmen sometimes pollute a stream up-river, while other people drink its water down-river. Yet the boatmen do not die by lightning.

The Spirit of Heaven dwells in heaven just as a king in his residence. A king lives behind many gates, therefore the Spirit of <sup>p1.291</sup> Heaven must stay in some secluded place likewise. As the king has his palaces and halls, Heaven also has the *T'ai-wei*, *Tse-kung*, *Hsüan-yuan* and *Wên-ch'ang*

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<sup>1</sup> This story is abridged from the *Shi-chi* chap. 9, p. 3 [[Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 409](#)].

<sup>2</sup> A city in *Chekiang*.

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mansions <sup>1</sup>.

A king being far away from men does not know their occult crimes. How could the Spirit of Heaven in his four palaces see the secret misdeeds of men ? If a king hears of the faults of his subjects, he learns it through others. If Heaven becomes cognizant of the crimes of men, it must have it from its angels. In case the spirits are Heaven's informants as to crimes, it must also entrust the spirits with retributive justice. Such being the case, the so-called anger of Heaven is not that of Heaven, but of the spirits.

A king inflicts capital punishment in autumn <sup>2</sup>, Heaven kills in summer. Thus the king in meting out justice, does not observe the time of Heaven. As Heaven's anointed he should in executions also imitate the example of majestic Heaven. Heaven chooses summer for killing, whereas the king executes in autumn. Heaven and man are thus at variance, which would never do for Heaven's deputy.

Some people will argue that giving impure things to eat or drink is a great crime before Heaven, which in killing the culprit does not pay attention to time <sup>3</sup>. Great crimes in the eyes of kings are high-treason, rebellion, and lawlessness, whereas Heaven considers the offering of unclean things to others as food or drink as a serious offense. The crimes condemned by Heaven are of different gravity. Were the light and the serious ones all equally dealt with, the king would have to imitate Heaven's government, and put to death every one, who had given others unclean things to eat or drink. When the holy emperors were ruling, they had not such a penalty. That would mean that the holy emperors were remiss, and had forgotten this punishment <sup>4</sup>.

It may be said that the ghosts have power over what is secret, and that a king's sway extends over what is public only. Secret faults are wrapt in darkness and invisible to man, therefore spirits must be employed to watch

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<sup>1</sup> Names of constellations.

<sup>2</sup> In China the regular executions take place in autumn.

<sup>3</sup> It destroys the guilty on the spot, and does not delay judgment until autumn.

<sup>4</sup> A *deductio ad absurdum* from a Chinese point of view, for the holy emperors, Yao, Shun, and the like, were perfect, and could not have omitted to punish serious misdeeds.

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over them. I reply, there being <sup>p1.292</sup> not only one secret fault, why are not all the offenders put to death ? To fix upon one single offence would not be a just retribution for hidden sins.

Heaven vents its anger, before the sun returns, and an outburst of human ire takes less than the time one needs to turn round upon one's heels <sup>1</sup>. However, secret crimes of men often become manifest in winter and not exclusively in summer. If he who misconducts himself in winter, is not struck by thunder forthwith, but must wait till summer, Heaven's wrath cannot be quicker than a revolution of the sun.

When painters represent the thunder, it is like so many joined drums, heaped together. They also paint a man having the semblance of an athlete and call him 'the Thunderer' (*Lei Kung*). With his left hand they give him joined drums to pull, in his right hand he brandishes a hammer, as though he were going to strike. It means that the rolling sound of thunder is produced by the knocking together of the united drums, and that the sudden crashing noise is the blow of the hammer. When a man is killed, he is struck with the drums and the hammer at the same time.

People also believe in this, and nobody objects. But if we get at the bottom of it, we find that these pictures are pure fictions. Thunder is either a sound or a fluid. How can a sound or a fluid brandish a hammer, or pull drums, and have the shape of joined drums ? If the thunder can really swing or pull these things, it must be a creature. That which, when knocked together, produces sounds, can be either a drum or a bell. Should the rolling sound be produced by drums or bells ? In that case, bells and drums could not hang free in the air, they would require a frame with vertical and cross-beams. Suspended between, they could be sounded. Now, the bells and drums have nothing to hang upon, and the feet of the Thunderer nothing to walk upon, how then should the thunder be produced ?

Somebody might object that for this very reason there must be a spirit, for, if in order to produce thunder a frame were required, or a support for the feet, it would be quite human, and by no means spirit-like.

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<sup>1</sup> This seems to be an old adage.

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I hold that spirits are diffuse and incorporeal. Departing or coming in they need no aperture, nor have they any hold above or below. Therefore one calls them spirits. Now the Thunderer has a body, and for the thunder there are instruments, how can he be <sup>p1.293</sup> deemed a spirit? If the Thunderer were incorporeal, his semblance could not be drawn, and, if he possesses a body, he does not deserve the name of a spirit.

People talk of the dragon spirit rising to heaven. But whoever thoroughly examines the question, discredits this idea. Men sometimes see the shape of a dragon, and owing to this circumstance they paint the shape of a dragon rising to heaven. The best proof that, as a fact, there is no spirit is, that it can be pictorially represented.

My opponents will argue :

— Men also see apparitions of ghosts. Are they not spirits ?'

I say :

— If men see ghosts sometimes, has anybody already seen the Thunderer? Ghosts are called spirits, but they walk about on earth like men. The Thunderer, however, does not rest his head in heaven, nor walk on earth with his feet. How can he, therefore, be a thunderer?

All flying creatures have wings. Those who can fly without wings are styled genii. In representing the forms of genii men give them wings. Provided the Thunderer is like the genii, he ought to have wings equally. If, in case the Thunderer does not fly, the painters pretend that he can fly, they are wrong, and if he really could fly, but had no wings, it would be wrong likewise. Thus the pictures of the Thunderer's outward appearance, made by painters, are merely fancy work.

Those who argue about thunder aver that it is Heaven's angry snorting, whereas those who sketch it, contend that the Thunderer in his anger pulls the joined drums. If it is really as the critics say, the painters are wrong, and if they are right, the critics must be in error. The two classes are antagonistic. If both their views were taken as genuine, there would be no difference of right and wrong, and in default of that, no real right and wrong. Doubts would

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not be settled, and fallacies would triumph.

The *Liki* speaks of a goblet with the thunder carved upon it <sup>1</sup>. One thunder rushes forth, the other reverts, one is coiled up, the other stretched forth. Their friction would give a sound. They look as if they were colliding, piled up in a grotesque and phantastic way. This form represents the thunder. When through friction the air breaks, there is a rolling sound, the sound of friction. p1.294 A sudden crash is the sound of the shooting forth of the air. When this shooting air hits a man, he dies.

In fact thunder is nothing else than the exploding solar fluid. How do we know ? — In the first month the *Yang* fluid begins to be roused, consequently we have the first thunder during the first moon. In the fifth month *Yang* is at its cynosure, therefore at that time thunder rapidly follows upon thunder. In autumn and winter *Yang* declines, therefore thunder ceases during these seasons. In the midst of summer the sun reigns supreme, but the *Yin* fluid endeavours to get the upperhand. In this dispute of the *Yang* and the *Yin* fluids it comes to frictions, and these frictions lead to explosions and shooting, which are destructive. A man struck by these forces is killed, a tree split, and a house demolished. A person under a tree or in a house may also by chance be hit and killed.

To test the justness of this statement take a basin full of water, and throw it on a fire, used for melting purposes. The vapour will explode with a puff like the sound of thunder. Should any one be too near, his body will be burned. Heaven and earth are like a great furnace, the *Yang* fluid is an immense fire, clouds and rain are huge masses of water. When they struggle, explode and shoot, the effects must be most violent, and a man hit and injured cannot but die.

When founders melt iron, they make a mould of earth, into which the liquid iron runs down. Else it bursts out, flows over, and spurts. Hitting a man's body, it burns his skin. The fiery *Yang* fluid is not only as hot as liquid

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<sup>1</sup> Neither the *Liki* nor the *Chou-li* contains such a passage, as far as I could make out. On the old sacrificial bronze vases, called *tsun* = goblets, clouds and thunders *i. e.* coiled up clouds were represented. The thunder ornament is the Chinese Meander. Specimens of these goblets can be seen in the *Po-ku-t'u-lu* chap. 7.



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iron, the exploding *Yin* fluid has not merely the wetness of earth and clay, and when the *Yang* fluid hits a man, it does not simply cause the pain of burning.

Thunder is fire. A man burned by this fluid must show traces of it. If those traces of burning look like written characters, people seeing them use to say that Heaven has written the man's guilt to make it known to the whole world. This is also unreasonable.

If Heaven destroys men with its thunder, after they have perpetrated their misdeeds, it ought to make their wickedness quite public, with a view to frightening for the future, and write the characters clearly, but not quite indistinctly, as it does. When the 'Plan' came out of the Yellow River <sup>1</sup>, and the 'Scroll' emerged from <sup>p1.295</sup> the *Lo* <sup>2</sup>, Heaven and Earth produced them for men to read and take note of. The writing on people killed by thunder is also Heaven's work. Why is it so difficult to understand ?

Let us assume that the human skin is not fit to be written upon. The wife of Duke *Hui* of *Lu* <sup>3</sup>, *Chung Tse* was daughter to Duke *Wu* of *Sung* <sup>4</sup>. When she was born, she had a writing on her palm to the effect that she was to be duchess of *Lu*. The writing was distinct and intelligible. Therefore *Chung Tse* was married to *Lu*. The thunder's handwriting not being clear, it cannot serve as a deterrent for the future. Ergo the burnt spots are not characters engraved by Heaven.

Sometimes people exaggerate things that really exist, sometimes they invent things that have no real basis at all. Imposed upon by fallacies, they indulge in fabricating wonders and miracles as the following arguments will prove :

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<sup>1</sup> The 'Plan' appeared to the Emperor *Huang Ti* in the Yellow River. A big fish carried it on its back. *Huang Ti* received the Plan, which consisted of a combination of symbolical lines and diagrams like the *Pa-kua*.

<sup>2</sup> The 'Scroll' was carried by a dragon-horse, which rose from the waters of the *Lo*, a tributary of the Yellow River, at *Fu Hsi's* time. From the mystic signs on this 'Scroll' the emperor is reported to have derived the Eight Diagrams and the first system of written characters, which took the place of the knotted cords, *quipos*, then in use.

<sup>3</sup> 767-721 B. C.

<sup>4</sup> 764-746 B. C.

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1. Thunder is fire. When a man dies struck by thunder, one discovers upon examining his body, if the head be bit, that the hair is singed, and if the body be struck, that the skin is charred. Coming near the body, one scents the smell of burning. 2. Taoist experimentalists hold that a stone heated by a thunder-clap, becomes red. If it be thrown into a well, the stone being burning hot, the well cool, an explosion ensues with a loud detonation like thunder. 3. When somebody takes cold, the cold fluid enters his stomach. The stomach being as a rule warm within, the warmth and the cold struggle together, and the exploding air gives a thunder-like sound. 4. In a thunder-storm brilliant lightnings appear every now and then like the glares of big fires. 5. When the lightning strikes, it often burns man's houses and buildings, or grass and trees.

Those who declare thunder to be fire have these five arguments, those who pretend that thunder is Heaven's anger, not a single one. Therefore this latter assertion is without any foundation.

However, it might be objected that there is a passage in the *Analects* to the effect that, when thunder followed thunder, and the storm raged, *Confucius* used to be deeply impressed <sup>1</sup>. The *Liki* says, p1.296

when a strong wind blows, and the thunder-claps quickly follow each other, and rain falls in torrents, a superior man will be deeply moved. Though it be night, he will rise, don his clothes and cap, and sit up <sup>2</sup>

in awe of Heaven's anger, fearing lest its punishment should reach him. If thunder were not the expression of Heaven's anger, nor its striking a punishment of the guilty, why should a good man be frightened by thunder, put on his official robe, and sit straight ?

The Master <sup>3</sup> means that the relation of Heaven to man is similar to that of father and son. The father being moved, the son cannot remain indifferent. Therefore, when Heaven is moved, man must be likewise. Being in harmony

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from [Analects X, 15 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from the *Liki* Book VI *Yü-tSao* ([Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVIII, p. 5](#)) [Couvreur].

<sup>3</sup> *Confucius* in the passage quoted from the *Analects*.

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with Heaven, he proves that he does not act in opposition to it.

Man suddenly hearing a dog bark outside the house, will be startled, and with trembling limbs harken to find out, what it means. How much more so, when he hears Heaven assuming an extraordinary voice like the noise made by the quick rolling of heavy carts !

The remark in the *Analects* and the observation of the *Liki* both refer to the wise man. The wise man displays the utmost care in all his doings and knows that he has no guilt, just like sun and moon, which, when eclipsed, have not clandestinely given impure food to men. Examining his heart, he feels no fear, wherefore should he be afraid of thunder ? If he is not afraid, his excitement can be no proof of Heaven's anger, because he fears nothing for himself. Should he really be afraid of thunder, even that would not suffice to prove the punishment of hidden crimes, for people struck by lightning are mostly quite innocent. The wise man apprehends that he might be hit by chance. Therefore he is anxious and alarmed. But this alarm of the wise man cannot be put forward to demonstrate that thunder is Heaven's anger. It shows, on the contrary, that thunder strikes at random. Because it hits at random, and does not punish the guilty, people are afraid. If thunder actually punished the guilty, the wicked ought to stand in awe, and the wise had no cause for apprehensions.

The king of *Sung* asked *T'ang Yang* saying

— I have killed a great number of people, yet all the officials are still quite fearless. What is the reason ?

*T'ang Yang* replied :

— Those that Your Highness has punished were exclusively bad characters. If the bad are called to account, <sup>p1.297</sup> why should the good be frightened ? If Your Highness wishes the officials to be in awe, the best way is to make no distinction between good and bad, and chastise them all occasionally. Then all the officialdom will be afraid <sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from *Hsün Tse*.

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The king followed his advice, and all the functionaries became frightened, whereupon the king of *Sung* turned very angry. Owing to the indiscriminate punishments of the king of *Sung*, the whole people of *Sung* got greatly alarmed. Because thunder and lightning strike indiscriminately, a wise man becomes agitated. His alarm is like the great fright of the kingdom of *Sung*.

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## 24. Book VII, Chap. I

*Tao-hsü. Taoist Untruths*

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p1.332 In the books of the Literati it is stated that <sup>1</sup> *Huang Ti* exploited the copper mines of Mount *Shou* <sup>2</sup>, and out of the ore cast tripods at the foot of the *Ching* Mountain <sup>3</sup>. When the tripods were completed, a dragon with a long beard came down, and went to meet *Huang Ti*. *Huang Ti* mounted the dragon. His whole suite including the harem, over seventy persons in all, mounted together with him, whereupon the dragon ascended. The remaining smaller officials, who could not find a seat on the dragon, all got hold of the dragon's beard, which they pulled out. *Huang Ti's* bow fell down. The people gazed after him, until he disappeared in the sky. Then they hugged his bow, and the dragon's beard, and moaned. Therefore later ages named the place *Ting-hu* (Tripod Lake) <sup>4</sup> and the bow of the emperor *Wu-hao* (Raven's Cry) <sup>5</sup>.

The Grand Annalist in his eulogy on the Five Emperors <sup>6</sup> also says that having performed the hill-sacrifice *Huang Ti* disappeared as a genius, and that his followers paid their respect to his garments and cap, and afterwards buried them <sup>7</sup>. I say that this is not true.

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<sup>1</sup> The following story is taken from the *Shi-chi*, chap. 28, p. 28 v., where an official relates it to *Han Wu Ti*. Cf. [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. III, p. 488](#).

<sup>2</sup> In *Shansi* Province, near *P'u-Chou-fu*.

<sup>3</sup> This mountain lies in *Shensi*, near *Hsi-an-fu*.

<sup>4</sup> The context requires 鼎胡 'Tripod beard', but we read 湖 instead of 胡. A place, called 鼎湖 'Tripod lake' actually exists in *Honan* (Playfair Cities and Towns No. 7329). This name has perhaps been the origin of the legend, as *Wang Ch'ung* suggests (cf. above p. 1.322). In ancient times only the phonetic part of a character was often written, and the radical left out. Thus 胡 could stand for 鬚 'beard' as well as for 湖 'lake'. Our text has 烏號 the 'beard'.

<sup>5</sup> Some commentators hold that the name *Wu-hao* = Raven's Cry refers to the lament of the people, others that it was the name of a tree well fit for the fabrication of bows.

<sup>6</sup> *Huang Ti, Chuan Hsü, K'u, Pao, and Shun*. According to other writers the Five Emperors are : *T'ai Hao, Yen Ti, Huang Ti, Shao Hao, and Chuan Hsü*.

<sup>7</sup> *Shi-chi* chap. 28, p. 30v [[Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. III, p. 496](#)]. When *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* had sacrificed on the tomb of *Huang Ti* upon Mount *Chiao*, he asked, how

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p1.333 What does *Huang Ti* really mean? Is it an appellative or a posthumous title? Being a posthumous title it must be some praise bestowed upon him by his subjects, for this kind of title is a glorification of what the deceased has done during his life-time. *Huang Ti* was a votary of *Tao*<sup>1</sup>, and subsequently, as they say, rose to Heaven. If his subjects wanted to honour Win, they ought not to have styled him *Huang*, but ought to have given him a title implying his ascension as an immortal.

According to the rules for honorary titles the pacification of the people would be called *Huang*, which means that he who is styled so kept the people at peace<sup>2</sup>, but the word does not denote the acquisition of *Tao*. Among the many emperors those given to arts and literature were called *Wên i. e.* Scholarly, those fond of War *Wu i. e.* Warriors. Both designations had their real basis. They served to exhort others to do the like.

If at the time of *Huang Ti* posthumous titles were not yet given according to qualities, of what generation were those who first called him *Huang Ti*? *Huang Ti's* own subjects must have known their prince, and later generations could trace his doings. Although our doubts about the existence of appellatives and posthumous titles at *Huang Ti's* time may not be set at rest, at all events it is evident that *Huang* cannot mean an Immortal who rose to Heaven.

A dragon does not rise to Heaven. If *Huang Ti* rode on a dragon, it is clear that he could not have ascended to Heaven either. When a dragon rises, clouds and rain appear simultaneously and carry it along. As soon as the clouds disperse, and the rain stops, the dragon comes down again, and re-enters its pond. Should *Huang Ti* really have ridden on a dragon, he would afterwards have been drowned with the dragon in the pond.

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*Huang Ti* could be an immortal, and yet be buried there. Than somebody replied that *Huang Ti* had ascended to heaven as a genius, and that only his garments and cap were left and interred.

<sup>1</sup> The fundamental principle of Taoism. The Taoists have always claimed *Huang Ti* as one of theirs. Hence the legend of his ascension to heaven.

<sup>2</sup> This seems to me a fancy etymology. *Huang* is 'yellow', but never means 'to pacify'. The 'Yellow Emperor' was called yellow from the colour of the earth, over which he ruled. Thus the name is generally explained, whether correctly is doubtful.

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*Huang Ti* was interred in the *Chiao* Mountain <sup>1</sup>, and still they say that his officials buried his garments and cap. If he actually went up to Heaven on a dragon, his garments and cap cannot have separated from his body, and if he became a genius after the hill sacrifice and vanished, he cannot have left his garments and cap p1.334 behind either. Did *Huang Ti* really become a genius, who could not die, but rose to Heaven, his officers and people must have seen it with their own eyes. Having thus witnessed his ascension to Heaven, they decidedly knew that he did not die. Now, to bury the garments and cap of somebody, who did not die, would have been, as if he had died. Such a thing would not have been in accordance with the feelings of the officials, who were aware of the real state of affairs, and could distinguish between life and death.

It is on record that the seventy-two sovereigns who ascended Mount *T'ai* <sup>2</sup>, had troubled and toiled, worrying themselves over the state of the empire. Subsequently their efforts were crowned with success, and things settled, so that universal peace reigned throughout the land. When there was universal peace, the whole empire enjoyed harmony and tranquillity. Then they ascended the *T'ai-shan*, and performed the hill-sacrifices. Now, the pursuit of *Tao* and the struggle for immortality are different from the vexations of official life and business. He whose thoughts all centre in *Tao*, forgets worldly affairs, because to trouble about them would injure his nature <sup>3</sup>. They say that *Yao* looked dried up and *Shun* withered. Their hearts were sorrowful, and their bodies feeble and care-worn. If *Huang Ti* brought about universal peace, his appearance must have been similar to that of *Yao* and *Shun*. Since *Yao* and *Shun* did not attain to *Tao*, it cannot be true that *Huang Ti* rose to Heaven <sup>4</sup>. If *Huang Ti* in his pursuit of *Tao* neglected all worldly affairs, his mind would have been equanimous, and his body fat and strong. Then he would have been quite different from *Yao* and *Shun*, and

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<sup>1</sup> Some say that this mountain is situated in the province of *Kansu*, others more eastward in the province of *Shensi*. Vid. *Shi-chi* chap. 1, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> China's most sacred mountain in *Shantung*.

<sup>3</sup> Taoism inculcates contemplation and quietism, and abhors an active life.

<sup>4</sup> Only he who possesses *Tao*, becomes immortal, and can ascend to heaven. If the model emperors *Yao* and *Shun* did not attain to *Tao*, why should *Huang Ti*, provided that he worked as hard as *Yao* and *Shun*.

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consequently his achievements could not have been the same. In that case the universe would not have enjoyed universal peace. Without the universal peace his sacrifice on the mountain would not have taken place <sup>1</sup>.

The Five Emperors and Three Rulers were all remarkable for their wisdom and virtue, *Huang Ti* not more than the others. If all the sages became genii, *Huang Ti* would not be one alone, and if the sages did not become genii, why should *Huang Ti* alone be <sup>p1.335</sup> a genius? People seeing that *Huang Ti* was very partial to magical arts, which are practised by genii, surmised that he was a genius.

Moreover, on finding the Dame of 'Ting-hu' 'Tripod beard' <sup>2</sup> they said that *Huang Ti* exploited the copper of Mount *Shou*, and cast it into tripods, and that a dragon with a floating beard came to meet him. This explanation would be on the same line with that of the *Kuei-chi* Mountain <sup>3</sup>. The purport of the name of this mountain is said to be that the emperor *Yü* of the *Hsia* dynasty on a tour of inspection held a meeting (會) and a review (稽) on this mountain, whence its name *Kuei-chi* <sup>4</sup>. *Yü* went to *Kuei-chi* for the purpose of regulating the water courses, but not on a tour of inspection, just as *Huang Ti* was addicted to magic, but did not ascend to heaven. There was no such thing like a meeting or a review, as there was no casting of tripods, nor a dragon with a long beard. There is a village called *Shêng-mu* 'Vanquish mother'. Does that mean that there was really a son who vanquished his mother? A city is called *Chao-ko* 'Morning song'. Are we to infer that the inhabitants of that city used to sing, when they rose in the morning?

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The books of the Literati relate that the Prince of *Huai-nan* <sup>5</sup> in his study

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<sup>1</sup> The hill-sacrifice was not performed, unless the empire enjoyed peace, and peace could not be secured without hard work. Hard work precluded a Taoist life, and without *Tao*, *Huang Ti* could not ascend on high.

<sup>2</sup> The text says 'Tripod lake'. Cf. above p. 1.332.

<sup>3</sup> In the province of *Chekiang*.

<sup>4</sup> This etymology is given by *Sse Ma Ch'ien*, *Shi-chi* chap. 2, p. 26.

<sup>5</sup> *Liu An*, Prince of *Huai-nan*, commonly known as *Huai Nan Tse*, a Taoist philosopher and alchemist of the 2nd cent. B. C. He was a prince of the imperial family of the *Han* emperors. His principality was situated in *Anhui*.



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of Taoism assembled all the Taoists of the empire, and humbled the grandeur of a principedom before the expositors of Taoist lore. Consequently, Taoist scholars flocked to *Huai-nan* and vied with each other in exhibiting strange tricks and all kinds of miracles. Then the prince attained to *Tao* and rose to heaven with his whole household. His domestic animals became genii too. His dogs barked up in the sky, and the cocks crowed in the clouds. That means that there was such plenty of the drug of immortality, that dogs and cocks could eat of it, and follow the prince to Heaven. All who have a fad for Taoism and would learn the art of immortality believe in this story, but it is not true.

Man is a creature. His rank may be ever so high, even princely or royal, his nature cannot be different from that of other creatures. There is no creature but dies. How could man become an <sup>p1.336</sup> immortal ? Birds having feathers and plumes can fly, but they cannot rise to Heaven. How should man without feathers and plumes be able to fly and rise ? Were he feathered and winged, he would only be equal to birds, but he is not ; how then should he ascend to heaven ?

Creatures capable of flying and rising, are provided with feathers and wings, others fast at running, have hoofs and strong feet. Swift runners cannot fly, and flyers not run. Their bodies are differently organised according to the fluid they are endowed with. Now man is a swift runner by nature, therefore he does not grow feathers or plumes. From the time he is full-grown up till his old age he never gets them by any miracle. If amongst the believers in Taoism and the students of the art of immortality some became feathered and winged, they might eventually fly and rise after all.

In case the nature of creatures could be changed, it ought to be possible that metal, wood, water, and fire were also altered <sup>1</sup>. Frogs can be changed into quails, and sparrows dive into the water and become clams <sup>2</sup>. It is the upshot of their spontaneous, original nature, and cannot be attained by the study of *Tao*. Lest the Taoists should be put on a level with the aforesaid

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<sup>1</sup> The elements of which the bodies of all creatures are composed cannot be transformed, therefore those creatures cannot change their nature.

<sup>2</sup> These metamorphoses are mentioned in ancient works, and believed by the Chinese up to the present day. Cf. p. 1.326.

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animals, I say that, if men could have all the necessary feathers and plumage, they might ascend to heaven.

Now, the growth and development of creatures is not abrupt, and its changes are not violent, but gradually brought about. If the Taoists and students of immortality could first grow feathers and plumes several inches long, so that they could skim over the earth, and rise to the terraces of high buildings, one might believe that they can ascend to heaven. But they do not show that they are able to fly even a small distance. How can they suddenly acquire the faculty of flying such a long way through the study of their miraculous arts without any gradual progress ? That such a great result might be really effected by means of feathers and wings cannot be ascertained.

The human hair and beard, and the different colours of things, when young and old, afford another cue. When a plant comes out, it has a green colour, when it ripens, it looks yellow. As long as man is young, his hair is black, when he grows old, it turns white. <sup>p1.337</sup> Yellow is the sign of maturity, white of old age. After a plant has become yellow, it may be watered and tended ever so much, it does not become green again. When the hair has turned white, no eating of drugs nor any care bestowed upon one's nature can make it black again. Black and green do not come back, how could age and decrepitude be laid aside ?

Yellow and white are like the frying of raw meat, and the cooking of fresh fish. What has been fried, cannot be caused to become raw again, and what has been cooked, to become fresh. Fresh and raw correspond to young and strong, fried and cooked, to weak and old. Heaven in developing things can keep them vigorous up till autumn, but not further on till next spring. By swallowing drugs and nourishing one's nature one may get rid of sickness, but one cannot prolong one's life, and become an immortal. Immortals have a light body and strong vital energy, and yet they cannot rise to heaven. Light and strong though they be, they are not provided with feathers and wings, and therefore not able to ascend to heaven.

Heaven and earth are both bodies. As one cannot descend into the earth, one cannot ascend into heaven. Such being the case, where would be a road leading up to heaven ? Man is not strong enough to enter and pass through

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heaven's body. If the gate of heaven is in the North-west, all people rising to heaven must pass by the *K'un-lun* Mountain. The State of *Huai Nan Tse* being situated in the South-east of the earth, he must, if he really ascended to heaven, first have gone to *K'un-lun* with all his household, where he would have found an ascent. Provided the Prince of *Huai-nan* flew straight across the land to the north-western corner, flapping his wings, then he must have had feathers and wings. But since no mention is made of his passing by the *K'un-lun*, nor of feathers and wings growing out of his body, the mere assertion of his ascension cannot be but wrong and untrue. *Liu An*, prince of *Huai-nan*, lived contemporaneously with the emperor *Hsiao Wu Ti* <sup>1</sup>. His father *Liu Chang* was banished to *Yen-tao* <sup>2</sup> in *Shu* <sup>3</sup> for some offence, but died on the road, when he arrived at *Yung-chou* <sup>4</sup>. *Liu An*, who succeeded him in his principedom, bore a grudge against the emperor for having caused his father's <sup>p1.338</sup> death in exile, and thought of making rebellion. He attracted all sorts of schemers, and intended great things. Men like *Wu Pei* filled his palaces, busy in writing books on the Taoist arts, and publishing essays on the most miraculous subjects. They were bustling about and putting their heads together.

In the '*Memoir of the Eight Companions*' <sup>5</sup> they wished to prove supernatural forces, as if they had attained to *Tao*. But they never reached it, and had no success. Then *Huai Nan Tse* plotted a rebellion together with *Wu Pei*. The scheme was discovered, and he committed suicide or, as some say, was done to death. Whether this be the case, or whether he committed suicide is about the same. But people finding his writings very deep, abstruse, and mysterious, and believing that the predictions of the '*Pa-kung-chuan*' had been fulfilled, divulged the story that he had become a genius, and went up to heaven, which is not in accordance with truth.

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<sup>1</sup> 140-86 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> The modern *Ya-chou-fu*.

<sup>3</sup> An old kingdom in *Ssechuan*.

<sup>4</sup> One of the Nine Provinces, into which *Yü* divided the Empire, comprising *Shensi* and *Kansu*.

<sup>5</sup> The eight principal Taoist associates of *Huai Nan Tse*, one of which was *Wei Pu*.

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It is chronicled in the books of the Literati <sup>1</sup> that *Lu Ao* <sup>2</sup>, when wandering near the 'Northern Sea' <sup>3</sup>, passed the 'Great North', and through the 'Dark Gate' <sup>4</sup> entered upon the Mongolean <sup>5</sup> plateau. There he beheld an individual with deep eyes, a black nose and the neck of a wild goose. Lifting his shoulders, he soared up, and rapidly came down again, gamboling and disporting all the time against the wind. When he caught sight of *Lu Ao*, he suddenly took down his arms, and sought refuge under a rock. *Lu Ao* saw him there resting on the back of a tortoise and eating an oyster.

*Lu Ao* accosted him saying,

— Sir, I believe that, because I have given up what the world desires, separating from my kindred and leaving my home, in order to explore what is outside of the six cardinal points <sup>6</sup>, you will condemn me. I began travelling in my youth. When I had grown up, I did not care for the ordinary p1.339 duties of man, but managed to travel about. Of the four poles the 'Great North' is the only one which I have not yet seen. Now unexpectedly I find you here, Sir. Shall we not become friends ?

The stranger burst out laughing and said,

— Why, you are a Chinaman. You ought not to come as far as this. Yet sun and moon are still shining here. There are all the stars, the four seasons alternate, and the *Yin* and the *Yang* are still at work. Compared to the 'Nameless Region' this is only like a small hill. I travel south over the 'Weary Waste', and halt north in the 'Hidden Village'. I proceed west to the 'Obscure Hamlet', and pass east through the 'Place of Dimness'. There is no earth beneath, and no

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<sup>1</sup> The following story is taken from *Huai Nan Tse*.

<sup>2</sup> A traveller of the 3rd cent. B. C.

<sup>3</sup> This expression can mean the *Gobi*.

<sup>4</sup> The 'Great north' and the 'Park Gate' are Taoist fancy names.

<sup>5</sup> It is interesting to note the name *Mongol* 蒙穀 here....The last character is written 古 now. The Mongols were already known to the Chinese under their actual name in the second century B. C., when they were living in the north of China.

<sup>6</sup> To wit the four quarters, above and below.

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heaven above. Listening one does not hear, and to the looker-on the objects flit away from sight. Beyond that region there is still shape. Where that ends, one advances ten million Li by making one step. I could not yet get there. You, Sir, reached only this place in your travels, but speak of exploring. Is not that an exaggeration ? But, please, remain. I have to meet *Han Man* <sup>1</sup> on the ninth heaven <sup>2</sup>, and cannot stay longer.

The stranger then raised his arms, gave his body a jerk, and off he went into the clouds.

*Lu Ao* stared after him, until he became invisible. His heart was full of endless joy, and at the same time he was grieved, as though he had lost somebody.

— Compared with you, my master, said he, I am nothing more than an earth-worm is to a wild goose. Crawling the whole day, I do not advance more than some feet but myself consider it far. It is pitiable indeed.

Such as *Lu Ao* held that dragons alone have no wings, and when they rise, ride on the clouds. Had *Lu Ao* said that the stranger had wings, his words might be credible. But he did not speak of wings, how could the other then ascend to the clouds ?

Those creatures which with agility rise into the clouds, do not take human food or human drink. The dragon's food is different from that of snakes, hence its movements are not the same as those of snakes. One hears that the Taoists drink an elixir made of gold and gems and eat the flowers of the purple boletus. These extremely fine stuffs make their bodies light, so that they become spirits and genii. The stranger ate the flesh of an oyster. Such is the food of ordinary people, by no means fine, or rendering the <sup>p1.340</sup> body light. How could he then have given himself a jerk and ascended to heaven ?

I have heard that those who feed on air do not take solid food, and that

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<sup>1</sup> This is probably the name of a genius.

<sup>2</sup> According to the belief of the Taoists there are nine superposed stages or spheres of the heavens.

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the latter do not eat air. The above mentioned stranger ate something substantial. Since he did not live on air, he could not be so light, that he might have risen on high.

May be that *Lu Ao* studying *Tao* and trying hard to become an immortal, travelled to the northern Sea. Having left human society, and gone far away, he felt that he did not succeed in acquiring *Tao*. He was ashamed and afraid, lest his fellow-countrymen should criticize him. Knowing that things would certainly turn out so, that every body would reproach him, he invented the extravagant stories. He said that he met with a stranger. The meaning of the whole story is that his efforts to become immortal were not successful, and that time had not yet come.

In the case of *Liu An*, Prince of *Huai-nan*, who suffered death as a punishment of rebellion, all people heard of it, and at that time saw it, and yet the books of the Literati say that he obtained *Tao*, and disappeared as a genius, and that his cocks and dogs went up to heaven also. We cannot be surprised then that *Lu Ao*, who done went to a far-off country, leaving no trace, should speak obscure and mysterious words. His case is similar to that of *Hsiang Man Tu* <sup>1</sup> of *P'u fan* <sup>2</sup> in *Ho-tung* <sup>3</sup>.

*Hsiang Man Tu* was a follower of *Tao* and a student of spiritism. He abandoned his family, and went away. When after three years absence he came back, his people asked him, what had happened to him. *Hsiang Man Tu* replied

— I have no clear recollection of my departure, but I suddenly found myself as if lying down. Several genii appeared, who took me up to heaven, until we were at some few Li's distance from the moon. I saw that above and beneath the moon all was dark, so that I could not distinguish east and west. Where we stopped near the moon, it was bitter cold. I felt hungry, and wished to eat, when a genius gave me a cupful of morning-red to drink. After having taken one cup, one does not feel hunger for several months. I do

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<sup>1</sup> In the 'Water Classic' *Hsiang Mun Tu* is called *Hsiang Ning Tu*.

<sup>2</sup> The modern *P'u-chou-fu* in *Shansi*.

<sup>3</sup> A circuit comprising the southern part of *Shansi*.

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not know, how many years or months I stayed there, nor what fault I committed, for suddenly I found myself asleep again, and brought down to this place.

p1.341 The *Ho-tung* people gave him the surname of 'Fallen Angel'. But dealing thoroughly with the subject, we find that this story is impossible. If *Hsiang Man Tu* could rise to heaven, he must have become a genius. How could he return after three years' time? If a man leaves his kindred, and ascends to heaven, his vital fluid and his body must have undergone a change. Now, all creatures that have been metamorphosed, do not return to their previous state. When a chrysalis has changed into a cricket, and received its wings, it cannot be transmuted into a chrysalis again. All creatures that fly up, have wings. When they fly up, and come down again, their wings are still there as before. Had *Hsiang Man Tu's* body had wings, his tale might be reliable, but since it had not, his talk is futile and not more trustworthy than *Lu Ao's*.

Perhaps it was known at his time that *Hsiang Man Tu* was a fervent believer in *Tao*, who stealthily left his home, and wandered about in distant lands. At last, when he achieved nothing, and felt his strength exhausted, and his hope gone, he stealthily returned home, but being ashamed, if he had nothing to say, he told the story of his ascension to heaven, intimating thereby that *Tao* could be learned, and that there really were genii, and that he himself was degraded for some fault, after having reached the goal, first rising to heaven, and then coming down again.

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The books of the Literati contain the statement that the king of *Ch'i* being dangerously ill, a messenger was sent to *Sung* to fetch *Wên Chih* <sup>1</sup>. When he arrived and saw the king's sickness he said to the heir-apparent :

— The king's illness can certainly be cured, but when it has been, the king is sure to kill me.

The heir-apparent inquired what for, *Wên Chih* replied,

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<sup>1</sup> A famous doctor, who cannot have lived later than the 4th cent. B. C., for mentioned in *Lieh Tse* [[Wieger](#)].

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— Without anger the king's illness cannot be cured, but when the king gets angry, my death is certain.

The heir-apparent bowed his head, and entreated him saying,

— Should you cure the king's sickness, myself and my mother are going to forcibly restrain the king at the cost of our lives. The king will certainly please my mother. We are wishing that you, master, shall have no trouble.

*Wên Chih* gave his consent and said that he was prepared to die. The king with his eldest son fixed a time. Thrice the <sup>p1.342</sup> physician was expected, but did not come so, that the king of *Ch'i* was already very angry. When he came at last, he did not put off his shoes, but walked upon the bed and tread upon the sheets. He asked the king about his sickness, but the king was so furious, that he did not speak with him. Then he said something which but aggravated the king's wrath. The king abused him, and rose up, and his disease was gone. He was so enraged and so little pleased, that he wished to boil *Wên Chih* alive <sup>1</sup>. The heir-apparent and the queen forthwith interfered, but could obtain nothing. *Wên Chih* was actually boiled alive in a cauldron : After three days' and three night's cooking, his appearance had not yet changed. *Wên Chih* said,

— If one really is anxious to kill me, why does one not put on the lid to intercept the *Yin* and the *Yang* fluids.

The king had the lid put on, whereupon *Wên Chih* died. *Wên Chih* was a Taoist, in water he was not drowned, and in fire he did not burn <sup>2</sup>. Hence he could remain three days and three nights in the kettle without changing colour.

This is idle talk. *Wên Chih* was boiled three days and nights without changing colour. If then only in consequence of the lid being put on he was choked and died, this proves that he was not in possession of *Tao*. All living and breathing creatures die, when deprived of air. When they are dead and

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<sup>1</sup> A parallel passage of this story occurs in the *Lü-shih-Ch'un-Ch'iu*.

<sup>2</sup> That is what the *Taoists* say of themselves.



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boiled, they become soft. If living and breathing creatures are placed in vessels with a lid on, having all their fissures carefully filled, so that the air cannot circulate, and their breath cannot pass, they die instantaneously. Thrown into a kettle with boiling water, they are also cooked soft. Why? Because they all have the same kind of body, the same breath, are endowed by heaven with a similar nature, and all belong to one class. If *Wên Chih* did not breathe, he would have been like a piece of metal or stone, and even in boiling water not be cooked soft. Now he was breathing, therefore, when cooked, he could not but die.

If *Wên Chih* could speak, he must have given sounds, which require breathing. Breathing is closely connected with the vital force, which resides in bones and flesh. Beings of bones and flesh being cooked, die. To deny that is the first untruth.

Provided that *Wên Chih* could be cooked without dying, he was a perfect Taoist, similar to metal or stone. To metal or stone it makes no difference, whether a lid be put on, or not. <sup>p1.343</sup> Therefore, to say that *Wên Chih* died, when the lid was put on, second untruth.

Put a man into cold water, which is not hot like boiling water, and he will die for want of breath after a short interval, his nose and mouth being shut out from the outer air. Submerged in cold water, a man cannot remain alive, how much less in bubbling, boiling water, in the midst of a violent fire? To say that *Wên Chih* survived in the boiling water is a third untruth.

When a man is submerged in water, so that his mouth is not visible outside, the sound of what he says is inaudible. When *Wên Chih* was cooked, his body was certainly submerged in the kettle, and his mouth invisible. Under those circumstances one could not hear, what he said. That *Wên Chih* should have spoken is the fourth untruth.

Had a man who after three days' and three nights' cooking died, not changed colour, even ignorant people would have been amazed. If the king of *Ch'i* was not surprised, the heir-apparent and his ministers should have noticed this wonderful fact. In their astonishment at *Wên Chih* they would have prayed that he be taken out, granted high honours, and be venerated as a master, from whom one might learn more about *Tao*. Now three days and

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three nights are mentioned, but nothing is said about the officials asking for his release. That is the fifth untruth.

At that time it was perhaps known that *Wên Chih* was actually cooked ; and that his death was caused by it. People noticing that he was a Taoist, invented the story that he lived a subtle life, and did not die, just as *Huang Ti* really died, whereas the reports say that he rose to heaven, and as the prince of *Huai-nan* suffered the punishment of rebellion, whilst the books say that he entered a new life. There are those who like to spread false reports. Hence the story of *Wên Chih* has been propagated until now.

There are no instances of any one having obtained *Tao*, but there have been very long-lived persons. People remarking that those persons, while studying *Tao* and the art of immortality, become over a hundred years old without dying, call them immortals, as the following example will show.

At the time of *Han Wu Ti* <sup>1</sup> there lived a certain *Li Shao Chün*, who pretended that by sacrificing to the 'Hearth' and abstaining from eating grain he could ward off old age. He saw the emperor, who conferred high honours upon him. *Li Shao Chün* kept his age, p1.344 and the place where he was born and had grown up secret, always saying that he was seventy old, and could effect that things did not grow old. On his journeys he visited all the princes around, and was not married. On hearing that he could manage that things did not age, people presented him with much richer gifts than they would otherwise have done. He had always money, gold, dresses, and food in abundance. As people believed that he did not do any business, and was yet richly provided with everything, and as nobody knew, what sort of a man he really was, there was a general competition in offering him services.

*Li Shao Chün* knew some clever manoeuvres and some fine tricks, which did not fail to produce a wonderful effect. He used to feast with the Marquis of *Wu-an* <sup>2</sup>. In the hall there was a man of over 90 years. *Li Shao Chün* indicated to him the places which his grand-father frequented, when shooting. The old man knew them, having visited them as a child with his father. The

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<sup>1</sup> 140-85 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> A district in *Honan*. The name of the Marquis was *T'ien Fên*.

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whole audience was bewildered.

When *Li Shao Chün* saw the emperor, the emperor had an old bronze vase, about which he asked him. *Li Shao Chün* replied that in the 15th year <sup>1</sup> of the reign of Duke *Huan* of *Ch'i* <sup>2</sup> it was placed in the *Po-ch'in* hall. The inscription was examined, and it was found out that it was indeed a vessel of Duke *Huan* of *Ch'i*. The whole Court was startled, and thought that *Li Shao Chün* was several hundred years old <sup>3</sup>. After a long time he died of sickness.

Those who now-a-days are credited with the possession of *Tao* are men like *Li Shao Chün*. He died amongst men. His body was seen, and one knew, therefore, that his nature had been longevous. Had he dwelt in mountain-forests or gone into deserts, leaving no trace behind him, he would have died a solitary death of sickness amidst high rocks. His corpse would have been food for tigers, wolves, and foxes, but the world would again have believed him to have disappeared as a real immortal.

The ordinary students of *Tao* have not *Li Shao Chün's* age. Before reaching a hundred years they die like all the others. Yet uncultured and ignorant people still hold that they are separated from their bodies, and vanish, and that, as a matter of fact, they do not die.

p1.345 What is understood by separation from the body ? Does it mean that the body dies, and the spirit disappears ? Or that the body does not die, but drops its coil ? If one says that the body dies, and the spirit is lost, there is no difference from death, and every one is a genius. And if one believes that the body does not die, but throws off its coil, one must admit that the bones and the flesh of all the deceased Taoists are intact and in no wise different from the corpses of ordinary mortals.

When the cricket leaves its chrysalis, the tortoise drops its shell, the snake its skin, and the stag its horns, in short, when the horned and skinned animals lose their outward cover, retaining only their flesh and bones, one

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<sup>1</sup> The *Shih-chi* says the tenth year.

<sup>2</sup> Duke *Huan* of *Ch'i* reigned from 683-641 B. C. The 15th year of his reign was 669.

<sup>3</sup> This story of *Li Shao Chün* is quoted from the *Shi-chi* chap. 28, p. 21 [[Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. III, p. 464](#)].

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might speak of the separation from the body. But even if the body of a dead Taoist were similar to a chrysalis, one could not use this expression, because, when the cricket leaves the chrysalis, it cannot be considered as a spirit with regard to the chrysalis. Now to call it a separation from the body, when there is not even a similarity with the chrysalis, would again be an unfounded assertion missing the truth.

The Grand Annalist was a contemporary of *Li Shao Chün*. Although he was not amongst those who came near to *Li Shao Chün's* body, when he had expired, he was in a position to learn the truth. If he really did not die, but only parted with his body, the Grand Annalist ought to have put it on record, and would not have given the place of his death.

The reference to the youth of the nonagenarian in the court would prove *Li Shao Chün's* age. Perhaps he was fourteen or fifteen years old, when the old man accompanied his grandfather as a boy. Why should *Li Shao Chün* not know this, if he lived 200 years <sup>1</sup> ?

*Wu Ti's* time is very far from Duke *Huan*, when the bronze vase was cast <sup>2</sup>, and *Li Shao Chün* cannot have seen it. Perhaps he heard once that in the palace there was an old vessel, or he examined the inscription beforehand to speak upon it, so that he was well-informed, when he saw it again. When our amateurs of to-day see an old sword or an antique crooked blade, they generally know where to place it. Does that imply that they saw, how it was wrought ?

p1.346 *Tung Fang So* is said to have also been possessed of *Tao*. His name was Chin, his style *Man Ch'ien*, but he changed his names and for a time took office with the *Han* dynasty. Outwardly he was considered an official, but inwardly he passed to another existence.

This is wrong too. *Tung Fang So* lived together with *Li Shao Chün* under the reign of *Wu Ti*, and must have been known to the Grand Annalist. *Li Shao Chün* taught *Tao* and a method to keep off old age by means of sacrificing to

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<sup>1</sup> Why 200 years ? *Li Shao Chün* would have known the nonagenarian's grandfather, if he was about ninety years old himself.

<sup>2</sup> The interval is upwards of 500 years.

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the 'Hearth'. He determined the period of a tripod cast under Duke *Huan* of *Ch'i*, and knew the places frequented, when hunting, by the grandfather of a nonagenarian, and yet he did not really attain to *Tao*. He was only a long-lived man, who died late. Moreover, *Tung Fang So* was not as successful as *Li Shao Chün* in magical arts, wherefore then was he credited with the possession of *Tao* ? Under *Wu Ti* there were the Taoists *Wên Ch'êng* and *Wu Li* and others of the same type, who went on sea in search of the genii and to find the physic of immortality. Because they evidently knew the Taoist arts, they were trusted by the Emperor. *Tung Fang So* undertook no mission on sea, nor did he do anything miraculous. If he had done, he would only have been a man like *Li Shao Chün* or on a level with *Wên Ch'êng* and *Wu Li*. Nevertheless he had the chance to be credited with the possession of *Tao*. He again resembled *Li Shao Chün*, insomuch as he made a secret of his birth place, and the courtiers did not know his origin. He exaggerated his age. People finding that he looked rather strong and young and was of phlegmatic temper, that he did not care much for his office, but was well versed in divination, guessing, and other interesting plays, called him therefore a man possessed of *Tao*.

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There is a belief that by the doctrine of *Lao Tse* one can transcend into another existence. Through quietism and dispassionateness one nourishes the vital force, and cherishes the spirit. The length of life is based on the animal spirits. As long as they are unimpaired, life goes on, and there is no death. *Lao Tse* acted upon this principle. Having done so for over a hundred years, he passed into another existence, and became a true Taoist sage.

Who can be more quiet and have less desires than birds and animals ? But birds and animals likewise age and die. However, we will not speak of birds and animals, the passions of which are <sup>p1.347</sup> similar to the human. But which are the passions of plants and shrubs, that they are born in spring, and die in autumn ? They are dispassionate, and their lives do not extend further than one year. Men are full of passions and desires, and yet they can become a hundred years old. Thus the dispassionate die prematurely, and the passionate live long. Hence *Lao Tse's* theory to prolong life and enter a new

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existence by means of quietism and absence of desires is wrong.

*Lao Tse* was like *Li Shao Chün*. He practised his theory of quietism, and his life happened to be long of itself. But people seeing this, and hearing of his quietism, thought that by his art he passed into another existence.

The idea prevails that those who abstain from eating grain, are men well versed in the art of *Tao*. They say e. g. that *Wang Tse Ch'iao*<sup>1</sup> and the like, because they did not touch grain, and lived on different food than ordinary people, had not the same length of life as ordinary people, in so far as having passed a hundred years, they transcended into another state of being, and became immortals.

That is another mistake. Eating and drinking are natural impulses, with which we are endowed at birth. Hence the upper part of the body has a mouth and teeth, the inferior part orifices. With the mouth and teeth one chews and eats, the orifices are for the discharge. Keeping in accord with one's nature, one follows the law of heaven, going against it, one violates one's natural propensities, and neglects one's natural spirit before heaven. How can one obtain long life in this way ?

If *Wang Tse Ch'iao* had got no mouth, teeth, or orifices at birth, his nature would have been different from that of others. Even then one could hardly speak of long life. Now, the body is the same, only the deeds being different. To say that in this way one can transcend into another existence is not warranted by human nature.

For a man not to eat is like net clothing the body. Clothes keep the skin warm, and food fills the stomach. With a warm epidermis and a well-filled belly the animal spirits are bright and exalted. If one is hungry, and has nothing to eat, or feels cold, and has nothing to warm one's self, one may freeze or starve to death. How can frozen and starved people live longer than others ?

p1.348 Moreover, during his life man draws his vital force from food, just as plants and trees do from earth. Pull out the roots of a plant or a tree, and

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<sup>1</sup> A magician of the 6th cent. B. C., son of King *Ling* of the *Chou* dynasty. He is reported to have been seen riding on a white crane through the air as an immortal.

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separate them from the soil, and the plant will wither, and soon die. Shut a man's mouth, so that he cannot eat, and he will starve, but not be long-lived.

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The Taoists exalting each other's power assert that the 'pure man' eats the fluid, that the fluid is his food. Wherefore the books say that the fluid-eaters live long, and do not die, that, although they do not feed on cereals, they become fat and strong by the fluid.

This too is erroneous. What kind of fluid is understood by fluid? If the fluid of the *Yin* and the *Yang* be meant, this fluid cannot satiate people. They may inhale this fluid, so that it fills their belly and bowels, yet they cannot feel satiated. If the fluid inherent in medicine be meant, man may use and eat a case full of dry drugs, or swallow some ten pills. But the effects of medicine are very strong. They cause great pain in the chest, but cannot feed a man. The meaning must certainly be that the fluid-eaters breathe, inhaling and exhaling, emitting the old air and taking in the new. Of old, *P'êng Tsu* <sup>1</sup> used to practise this. Nevertheless he could not live indefinitely, but died of sickness.

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Many Taoists hold that by regulating one's breath one can nourish one's nature, pass into another state of being, and become immortal. Their idea is that, if the blood vessels in the body be not always in motion, expanding and contracting, an obstruction ensues. There being no free passage, constipation is the consequence, which causes sickness and death.

This is likewise without any foundation. Man's body is like that of plants and trees. Plants and trees growing on the summits of high mountains, where they are exposed to the squalls of wind, are moved day and night, but do they surpass those that are hidden in mountain valleys and sheltered from wind?

p1.349 When plants and trees, while growing, are violently shaken, they

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<sup>1</sup> The Chinese Methuselah, who is believed to have lived over 800 years, and to have been a great grandson of the legendary Emperor *Chuan Hsü* 2514 B. C.

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are injured, and pine away. Why then should man by drawing his breath and moving his body gain a long life and not die ? The blood arteries traverse the body, as streams and rivers flow through the land. While thus flowing, the latter lose their limpidity, and become turbid. When the blood is moved, it becomes agitated also, which causes uneasiness. Uneasiness is like the hardships man has to endure without remedy. How can that be conducive to a long life ?

The Taoists sometimes use medicines with a view to rendering their bodies more supple and their vital force stronger, hoping thus to prolong their years and to enter a new existence.

This is a deception likewise. There are many examples that by the use of medicines the body grew more supple and the vital force stronger, but the world affords no instance of the prolongation of life and a new existence following.

The different physics cure all sorts of diseases. When they have been cured, the vital force is restored, and then the body becomes supple again. According to man's original nature his body is supple of itself, and his vital force lasts long of its own accord. But by exposure to wind and wetness he falls a victim to hundreds of diseases, whence his body becomes heavy and stiff, and his force is weakened. By taking an efficacious remedy he restores his body and the vital force. This force is not small at the outset, or the body heavy, and it is not by medicine that the force lasts long, or the body grows supple and light. When first received <sup>1</sup>, they already possess those qualities spontaneously. Therefore, when by medicines the various diseases are dispelled, the body made supple, and the vital force prolonged, they merely return to their original state, but it is impossible to add to the number of years, let alone the transition into another existence.

Of all the beings with blood in their veins there are none but are born, and of those endowed with life there are none but die. From the fact that they were born, one knows that they must die. Heaven and Earth were not born, therefore they do not die. The *Yin* and the *Yang* were not born, therefore they

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<sup>1</sup> Viz. received by man at his birth, when Heaven endows him with a body and the vital fluid.



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do not die. Death is the correlate of birth, and birth the counterpart of death. That which has a beginning, must have an end, and that which has an end, must necessarily have had a <sup>p1.350</sup> beginning. Only what is without beginning or end, lives for ever and never dies <sup>1</sup>.

Human life is like water. Water frozen gives ice, and the vital force concentrated forms the human being. Ice lasts one winter, then it melts, man lives a hundred years, than he dies. Bid a man not to die, can you bid ice not to melt ? All those who study the art of immortality and trust that there are means, by which one does not die, must fail as sure, as one cannot cause ice never to melt.

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<sup>1</sup> This the Taoists say of their fundamental principle. 'Tao is without beginning, without end', says *Chuang Tse* chap. 17, p. 13, and thus the Taoists which have become one with *Tao*, are immortal.

## 25. Book VII, Chap. II

### Yü-tsêng. Exaggerations

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p1.481 The Records say that Sages toil and trouble for the world, devoting to it all their thoughts and energies, that this harasses their spirits, and affects their bodies. Consequently *Yao* is reported to have been like shrivelled flesh, and *Shun* like dried food, whereas *Chieh* and *Chou* had an *embonpoint* over a foot thick. One may well say that the bodies of Sages working hard for the world, and straining their minds for mankind, are weakened, and that they do not become stout or fat, but to say that *Yao* and *Shun* were like dried flesh or food, and that the *embonpoint* of *Chieh* and *Chou* measured over a foot is exaggerating.

Duke *Huan* of *Ch'i* said :

— Before I had got hold of *Kuan Chung*, I had the greatest difficulties, after I had got him, everything was easy.

Duke *Huan* did not equal *Yao* and *Shun*, nor was *Kuan Chung* on a par with *Yü* and *Hsieh* <sup>1</sup>. If Duke *Huan* found things easy, how could they have been difficult to *Yao* and *Shun* ? From the fact that Duke *Huan*, having obtained the assistance of *Kuan Chung*, went on easily, we may infer that *Yao* and *Shun* after having secured the services of *Yü* and *Hsieh* cannot have been in difficulties. A man at ease has not many sorrows. Without sorrows he has no troubles, and if he is not troubled, his body does not wither.

*Shun* found perfect peace brought about by *Yao*, both carried on the virtues of the preceding generation and continued the pacification of the border tribes. *Yao* had still some trouble, but *Shun* could live at ease and unmolested. The *Book of History* says that the Supreme Ruler gave repose <sup>2</sup>, which refers to *Shun*, for *Shun* found peace everywhere, he continued the

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<sup>1</sup> *Yü* and *Hsieh* were both ministers of *Yao* and *Shun*. *Yü* became emperor afterwards.

<sup>2</sup> *Shuking* Part V, Bk. XIV, 5 (*Legge, Classics* Vol. III, Pt. II, p. 455). The passage has been variously explained.

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government, appointed intelligent officers, employed able men, and enjoyed a dignified repose, while the Empire was well administrated. Therefore <sup>p1.482</sup> *Confucius* exclaims :

— Grand were *Shun* and *Yü* who, possessing the Empire, did not much care for it <sup>1</sup>.

In spite of this *Shun* is said to have been dried up like preserved meat, as though he had been lacking in virtue, and had taken over a state in decay like *Confucius*, who restlessly wandered about seeking employment, having no place to rest in, no way to walk, halting and tumbling down on the roads, his bones protruding.

*Chou* passed the whole night drinking. Sediments lay about in mounds, and there was a lake of wine. *Chou* was swimming in wine, stopping neither by day nor by night. The result must have been sickness. Being sick, he could not enjoy eating and drinking, and if he did not enjoy eating and drinking, his fatness could not attain one foot in thickness.

The *Book of History* remarks that debauchery was what they <sup>2</sup> liked, and that they could not reach a great age <sup>3</sup>. Prince *Wu Chi* of *Wei* <sup>4</sup> passed his nights feasting, but these excesses proved such a poison to him, that he died. If *Chou* did not die, his extravagance ought at least to have shattered his system. *Chieh* and *Chou* doing the same, ought to have contracted the same sickness. To say that their *embonpoint* was over a foot thick is not only an exaggeration, but an untruth.

Of *Chou* there is further a record that his strength was such, that he could twist iron, and straighten out a hook, pull out a beam, and replace it by a pillar. This is meant to be illustrative of his great strength <sup>5</sup>. Men like *Fei Lien*

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects VIII, 18 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> The last emperors of the *Hsia* dynasty.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from the *Shuking* Part V, Bk. XV, 7 (*Legge, Classics* Vol. III, Pt. II, p. 468).

<sup>4</sup> Died 244 B. C. *Wu Chi* was a famous general of the *Wei* State, who inflicted some crushing defeats upon the armies of *Ch'in*. For some time he succeeded in checking the encroachments of *Ch'in*. It was not, until his later years, that he retired from public life, and gave himself up to debauchery.

<sup>5</sup> The *Shi-chi* chap. 3, p. 10 likewise ascribes superhuman forces and extraordinary natural endowments to the last ruler of the *Hsia* dynasty [[Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 199](#)].

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and *O Lai* <sup>1</sup> were much liked by him, and stood high in his favour, which is tantamount to saying that he was a sovereign very fond of cunning and strength, and attracted people possessing those qualities.

Now there are those who say that, when *Wu Wang* defeated *Chou*, the blades of his weapons were not stained with blood. When a man with such strength, that he could twist iron and p<sub>1.483</sub> straighten out hooks, with such supporters as *Fei Lien* and *O Lai* tried issues with the army of *Chou* <sup>2</sup>, *Wu Wang*, however virtuous he may have been, could not have deprived him of his natural abilities, and *Chou*, wicked though he was, would not have lost the sympathy of his associates. Although he was captured by *Wu Wang*, some ten or hundred people must have been killed or wounded at that time. If the blades were not stained with blood, it would contradict the report of *Chou's* great strength and the support he received from *Fei Lien* and *O Lai* <sup>3</sup>.

The auspicious portents of *Wu Wang* did not surpass those of *Kao Tsu*. *Wu Wang* saw a lucky augury in a white fish and a red crow <sup>4</sup>, *Kao Tsu* in the fact that, when he cut a big snake in two, an old woman cried on the road <sup>5</sup>. *Wu Wang* had the succour of eight hundred barons, *Kao Tsu* was supported by all the patriotic soldiers of the Empire, *Wu Wang's* features were like those of a staring sheep <sup>6</sup>. *Kao Tsu* had a dragon face, a high nose, a red neck, a beautiful beard and 72 black spots on his body <sup>7</sup>. When *Kao Tsu* fled, and *Lü Hou* <sup>8</sup> was in the marshes, she saw a haze over his head <sup>9</sup>. It is not known that *Wu Wang* had such an omen. In short, his features bore more auspicious

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<sup>1</sup> *Fei Lien* and *O Lai* were two clever, but wicked counsellors of King *Chou*. In the *Shi-chi* chap. 3, p. 11v. *Fei Lien* is called *Fei Chung* [[Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 203](#)].

<sup>2</sup> The *Chou* dynasty which overthrew the *Shang* or *Yin* dynasty. The name of King *Chou Hsin* of the *Shang* dynasty has the same sound, but is quite a different character.

<sup>3</sup> According to the *Shi-chi* and the *Shuking* King *Chou* fled, when his troops had been routed by *Wu Wang*, and burned himself, dressed in his royal robes, in the palace. He was not caught by *Wu Wang*.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 1.130.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. p. 1.178.

<sup>6</sup> *Wu Wang* had large, staring sheep's eyes.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. p. 1.305.

<sup>8</sup> The wife of *Han Kao Tsu*.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. p. 1.178.

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signs than *Wu Wang's* look, and the portents were clearer than the fish and the crow. The patriotic soldiers of the Empire assembled to help the *Han* <sup>1</sup>, and were more powerful than all the barons.

*Wu Wang* succeeded King *Chou*, and *Kao Tsu* took over the inheritance of *Erh Shih Huang Ti* of the house of *Ch'in*, which was much worse than that of King *Chou*. The whole empire rebelled against *Ch'in*, with much more violence than under the *Yin* dynasty. When *Kao Tsu* had defeated the *Ch'in*, he had still to destroy *Hsiang Yi*. The battle field was soaked with blood, and many thousands of dead bodies lay strewn about. The losses of the <sup>p1.484</sup> defeated army were enormous. People had, as it were, to die again and again, before the Empire was won. The insurgents were exterminated by force of arms with the utmost severity. Therefore it cannot be true that the troops of *Chou* <sup>2</sup> did not even stain their swords with blood. One may say that the conquest was easy, but to say that the blades were not stained with blood, is an exaggeration.

When the *Chou* dynasty conquered the empire of the *Yin*, it was written in the strategical book of *T'ai Kung* <sup>3</sup> that a young boy brought up [in the camp] *Tan Chiao* had said :

— The troops which are to destroy *Yin* have arrived in the plain of *Mu* <sup>4</sup>. At dawn they carry lamps with fat.

According to the '*Completion of the War*' <sup>5</sup> the battle in the plain of *Mu* was so sanguinary, that the pestles <sup>6</sup> were swimming in the blood, and over a thousand Li the earth was red. After this account the overthrow of the *Yin* by the *Chou* must have been very much like the war between the *Han* and *Ch'in* dynasties. The statement that the conquest of the *Yin* territory was so easy, that the swords were not stained with blood is meant as a compliment to the

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<sup>1</sup> The *Han* dynasty.

<sup>2</sup> The *Chou* dynasty.

<sup>3</sup> *T'ai Kung Wang*, the counsellor of *Wu Wang*, laid the plans of the campaign against the *Yin* dynasty.

<sup>4</sup> This plain was situated in *Honan*.

<sup>5</sup> This is the title of the 3d Book of the 5th Part of the *Shuking*. (Cf. [Legge, Classics Vol. III, Pt. II, p. 315.](#))

<sup>6</sup> With which the soldiers were pounding their rice.

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virtue of *Wu Wang*, but it exaggerates the truth. All things of this world must be neither over- nor under-estimated. If we examine, how the facts follow one another, all the evidence comes forth, and on this evidence the truth or the untruth can be established.

People glorify *Chou's* force by saying that he could twist iron, and at the same time praise *Wu Wang*, because the weapons, with which he destroyed his opponent, were not blood-stained. Now, if anybody opposed his enemies with a strength that could twist iron and straighten out a hook, he must have been a match for *Mêng Pên* and *Hsia Yü* <sup>1</sup>, and he who managed to defeat his adversary through his virtue without staining his swords with blood, must have belonged to the *Three Rulers* or to the *Five Emperors* <sup>2</sup>. Endowed with sufficient strength to twist iron, the one could not be compelled to submission, whereas the other, possessing such <sup>p1.485</sup> virtue that his weapons were not reddened with blood, ought not to have lost one soldier. If we praise *Chou's* strength, *Wu Wang's* virtue is disparaged, and, if we extol *Wu Wang*, *Chou's* strength dwindles away. The twisting of iron and the fact that the blades were not covered with blood are inconsistent, and the praise bestowed simultaneously on the *Yin* and the *Chou* mutually clashes. From this incompatibility it follows that one proposition must be wrong.

*Confucius* <sup>3</sup> said :

— *Chou's* wickedness was not so very great. Therefore the superior man hates to consort with base persons, for the faults of the whole world are laid to their charge <sup>4</sup>.

*Mencius* said :

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<sup>1</sup> *Mêng Pen* and *Hsia Yü* are both famous for their gigantic strength. The one could tear off the horns, the other the tail from a living ox. Both lived in the *Chou* epoch.

<sup>2</sup> The legendary rulers accomplished everything by their virtues.

<sup>3</sup> [Analects XIX, 20 \[Couvreur\]](#). In our text of the *Lun-yü* these words are not spoken by *Confucius* himself, but by his disciple *Tse Kung*.

<sup>4</sup> A good man avoids the society of disreputable people, for every wickedness is put to their account, even if they be innocent. Thus King *Chou* has been better than his name, which has become a by-word for every crime. Cf. p. 1.478.

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— From the '*Completion of the War*' I accept but two or three paragraphs. If the most humane defeated the inhumane, how could so much blood be spilt, that clubs swam in it ? <sup>1</sup>

The utterance of *Confucius* would seem to uphold the swimming of clubs, whereas the words of *Mencius* are very much akin to the assertion that the weapons were not stained with blood. The first overshoots the mark, the second falls short of it. Thus a Sage and a Worthy <sup>2</sup> pass a judgment on *Chou*, but both use a different weight, and one gives him credit for more than the other.

*Chou* was not as depraved as *Wang Mang* <sup>3</sup>. *Chou* killed *Pi Kan* <sup>4</sup>, but *Wang Mang* poisoned the emperor *P'ing Ti* <sup>5</sup>. *Chou* became emperor by succession, *Wang Mang* usurped the throne of the *Han*. To assassinate one's sovereign is infinitely worse than the execution of a minister, and succession to the throne is quite different from usurpation. Deeds against which the whole people rose up, must have been worse than those of *Chou*. When the *Han* destroyed *Wang Mang*, their troops were exhausted at *K'un-yang* <sup>6</sup>, the deaths numbering ten thousand and more. When the forces reached the <sup>p1.486</sup> *Chien* terrace <sup>7</sup>, the blood made all the foot-prints and ruts invisible. Consequently it cannot be true that, when the *Chou* conquered the Empire, the weapons were not even stained with blood.

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It is on record that *Wên Wang* could drink a thousand bumpers of wine and *Confucius* a hundred gallons. We are to infer from this, how great the virtue of these Sages was, which enabled them to master the wine. If at one sitting they could drink a thousand bumpers or a hundred gallons, they must

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<sup>1</sup> *Mencius* Book VII, Pt. II, chap. 3 [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)]. The most humane was *Wu Wang*.

<sup>2</sup> In the estimation of the Confucianists *Mencius* is only a Worthy, not a Sage like *Confucius*.

<sup>3</sup> *Wang Mang* the usurper reigned from 9 to 23 A. D.

<sup>4</sup> *Pi Kan* was a relative of *Chou*. When he remonstrated with him upon his excesses, *Chou* caused him to lie disembowelled.

<sup>5</sup> 1-6 A. D.

<sup>6</sup> A city in southern *Honan*.

<sup>7</sup> A terrace near *Chang-an-fu*, where *Wang Mang* made his last stand.

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have been drunkards, and not sages.

In drinking wine there is a certain method, and the chests and stomachs of the Sages must have been of nearly the same size as those of others. Taking food together with wine, they would have eaten a hundred oxen, while drinking one thousand bumpers, and ten sheep would correspond to a hundred gallons. If they did justice to a thousand bumpers and a hundred oxen, or to a hundred gallons and ten sheep, *Wên Wang* must have been as gigantic as the Prince of *Fang-fêng* <sup>1</sup> and *Confucius* like a *Great Ti* <sup>2</sup>. *Wên Wang* and *Confucius* did not equal the Prince of *Fang-fêng* or the *Great Ti* in length. Eating and drinking such enormous quantities with small bodies would be derogatory to the grandeur of *Wên Wang*, and undignified in *Confucius*. According to the Chapter 'Chiu Kao' <sup>3</sup>, *Wên Wang* would say morning and evening : 'pour out this wine in libation' <sup>4</sup>. This shows how careful *Wên Wang* was about wine. Because he was so careful morning and evening, the people were converted thereby. Had his advice to be careful only been for outside, while he himself emptied a thousand bumpers at home, the efforts to educate the people and his subjects would have been in vain. And how would he have distinguished himself from the depravity of *Chou*, whose successor he was ?

Moreover, at what time should the thousand bumpers and the hundred gallons have been drunk ? When *Wên Wang* and <sup>p1.487</sup> *Confucius* offered wine in sacrifice ? Then the sacrificial meat would not have sufficed to satiate them. At the shooting-feast ? At the shooting-feast there were certain recognised rules for drinking wine <sup>5</sup>. If at a private banquet they gave their guests wine to drink, they must have given to all their inferiors equally. The

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<sup>1</sup> A feudal prince of gigantic size said to have lived under the Emperor *Yü*, who put him to death. Cf. *Han Fei Tse* chap. 19, p. 11v.

<sup>2</sup> *Ti* is a general name for northern barbarians. The *Shuking*, *Hung-fan*, speaks of a *Ti* measuring over 50 feet, *Ku Liang* of three *Ti* brothers, of which one was so enormous, that his body covered 9 *Mou*.

<sup>3</sup> I. e. 'Announcement about wine'.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 1.121.

<sup>5</sup> The shooting-feasts referred to are the competitions of archery, held in ancient times at the royal court, at the feudal courts, and at the meetings in the country. A banquet was connected with these festivities. Cf. *Legge, The Li ki (Sacred Books of the east Vol. XXVII, p.57)*.



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emperor would first take three cups, and then retire. Drinking more than three, he would have become intoxicated, and misbehaved himself. But *Wên Wang* and *Confucius* were men to whom propriety was everything. If they had given so much to their attendants, that they became drunk and disorderly, they themselves taking a thousand bumpers of wine or a hundred gallons, they would have been like *Chieh* and *Chou* or, to say the least, drunkards. How could they then have manifested their virtues and improved others, how acquired a name still venerated by posterity ?

There is a saying that the virtuous do not become intoxicated. Seeing that the Sages possess the highest virtue, one has wrongly credited *Wên Wang* with a thousand bumpers and foolishly given a hundred gallons to *Confucius*.

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*Chou* is reported to have been an incorrigible tippler. The sediments lay about in mounds. He had a lake full of wine <sup>1</sup>, and filled three thousand persons with liquor like cattle. Carousing he made night day, and even forgot the date.

*Chou* may have been addicted to drink, but he sought pleasure. Had his wine-lake been in the court-yard, then one could not say that in carousing he made night day. This expression would only be correct, if he shut himself up in his rooms behind closed windows, using candle-light. If he was sitting in his rooms, he must have risen and gone to the court-yard each time he wished to drink, and then returned to his seat, an endless trouble, which would have deprived him of all enjoyment. Had the wine-lake been in the inner apartments, then the three thousand people must have been placed close to the lake. Their amusement would have consisted in bowing down to drink wine from the lake, and in rising to taste the dainty dishes, singing and music being in front <sup>p1.488</sup> of them. If they were really sitting quite close to the lake, their drinking in front would have interfered with their dining, and the concert could not have been in front. Provided that at the banquet they had thus unmannerly sucked wine from the lake like oxen, they would not have

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<sup>1</sup> This wine-lake is mentioned in the *Shi-chi* chap. 3, p. 10v [[Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 200](#)].

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required any cups during the dinner, and would also have gulped down and devoured the food like tigers. From this we see that the wine-lake and the drinking like cattle are mere stories.

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There is another tradition that *Chou* had made a forest by hanging up meat, and that he caused naked males and females to chase each other in this forest <sup>1</sup>, which would be drunken folly, and unrestrained debauchery. Meat is to be put into the mouth. What the mouth eats, must be clean, not soiled. Now, if, as they say, naked males and females chased each other among the meat, how could it remain clean ? If they were drunk, and did not care, whether it was clean or not, they must have bathed together in wine, and then run naked one after the other among the meat. Why should they not have done this ? Since nothing is said about their bathing in wine, we may be sure that neither did they chase each other naked among the meat.

There is another version to the effect that wine was being carried about in carts and roast-meat on horseback, and that one hundred and twenty days were reckoned one night. However, if the account about the wine-lake is correct, it cannot be true that the wine was transported in carts, and if the meat was suspended so, as to form a forest, the statement that roast-meat was carried about on horseback must be wrong.

It may have happened that, when *Chou* was flushed with drink, he overturned the wine, which spread over the floor, whence the story of the wine-lake. When the wine was distilled, the sediments were heaped up, therefore the tale that the sediments lay in mounds. Meat was hung up in trees, thence the report that a forest was made of meat. The shade and darkness of this forest may sometimes have been visited by people with the intention of doing things shunning the light of day, which led to the belief that they chased each other naked. Perhaps wine was transported once on a deer-carriage <sup>2</sup>, which would account for the story that wine was being p1.489 carried about in carts, and roast-meat on horseback. The revelry may have

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the *Shi-chi* chap. 3, p. 11 [[Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 200](#)].

<sup>2</sup> A royal carriage ornamented with deers.

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extended once over ten nights, hence the hundred and twenty days. Perhaps *Chou* was intoxicated and out of his mind, when he inquired, what day it was. Then people said that he had forgotten dates altogether.

When *Chou Kung* <sup>1</sup> invested *K'ang Shu* <sup>2</sup> he spoke to him about *Chou's* wine drinking <sup>3</sup>, wishing that he should know all about it, and take a warning, but he did not mention the mounds of sediments, or the wine-lake, or the forest made of meat, or the revelries lasting far into the morning, or the forgetting of dates. What the Sages do not mention, is most likely unfounded.

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As an instance of *Chou's* perversity it is recorded that he sucked wine from the wine-lake like an ox, together with three thousand people. The *Hsia* dynasty had a hundred (metropolitan) officials, the *Yin* two hundred, the *Chou* three hundred. The companions of *Chou's* Bacchanals were assuredly not common people, but officials, and not minor officials, but high ones. Their number never could reach three thousand. The authors of this report wished to disparage *Chou*, therefore they said three thousand, which is a gross exaggeration.

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There is a report that the Duke of *Chou* <sup>4</sup> was so condescending that with presents he called on simple scholars, living in poor houses, and inquired after their health. As one of the three chief ministers, a prop to the imperial tripod <sup>5</sup>, he was the mainstay of the emperor. Those scholars were persons of no consequence in their hamlets. That a prime minister should have flung away his dignity as supporter of the dynasty in order to do homage to common scholars, cannot be true. May be, that he treated scholars with courtesy and condescension, and was not haughty towards p1.490 poor people, hence the report that he waited upon them. He may have raised a scholar of

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<sup>1</sup> *Tan*, Duke of *Chou*, a younger brother of *Wu Wang*.

<sup>2</sup> *K'ang Shu* was the first prince of the *Wei* State (*Honan*), which he governed until 1077 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. [Shuking Part V, Book X](#), 11 (*Legge, loc. cit.* p. 408).

<sup>4</sup> *Chou Kung*.

<sup>5</sup> The sacrificial tripod is the emblem of royalty. The three chief ministers are likened to its three feet.

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humble origin, and received him with his badge in hand. People then said that he came with presents and waited upon his family.

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We have a tradition that *Yao* and *Shun* were so thrifty, that they had their thatched roofs untrimmed, and their painted rafters unhewn. Thatched roofs and painted rafters there may have been, but that they were untrimmed or unhewn, is an exaggeration. The Classic says, 'I <sup>1</sup> assisted in completing the Five Robes' <sup>2</sup>. Five Robes means the five-coloured robes. If they put on five-coloured robes, and at the same time had thatched roofs and painted rafters, there would have been a great discrepancy between the palace buildings and the dresses. On the five-coloured robes were painted the sun, the moon and the stars. Consequently thatched roofs and painted rafters are out of the question.

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It is on record that *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* burned the Books of Poetry and History <sup>3</sup>, and buried the Literati alive. This means that by burning the Books of Poetry and History he eradicated the Five Classics and other literary works. The Literati thus thrown into pits were those, they say, who had concealed the Classics and other works. When the books were burned, and the men thrown into pits, Poetry and History were extinguished. The burning of the Books of Poetry and History and the assassination of the Literati are indisputable. But the allegation that, for the purpose of destroying those books, the men were put to death, is not correct, and an exaggeration.

In the 34th year of his reign <sup>4</sup> *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* gave a banquet on the terrace of *Hsien yang* <sup>5</sup>. Seventy Literati came to wish him long life. The *Pu-*

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<sup>1</sup> The Emperor Yü.

<sup>2</sup> Quotation from the *Shuking, Yi Chi Pt. II, Bk. IV, 8* [p. 59] (*Legge* Vol. III, Pt. I, p. 85) [*Couvreur*]. Modern commentators and *Legge* explain [] as 'five land tenures', *Wang Ch'ung* as the Five State Robes worn by the Emperor and the officials, which are mentioned a few paragraphs before our passage (*Legge, loc. cit.* p. 80).

<sup>3</sup> The *Shiking* and the *Shuking*.

<sup>4</sup> 213 B. C.

<sup>5</sup> Near *Hsi-an-fu* in Shensi.

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yeh, <sup>1</sup> *Chou Ch'ing Ch'ên*, delivered a p<sub>1.491</sub> speech, enlogising the emperor's excellence, whereupon *Shun Yü Yüeh* of *Ch'i* stepped forward, and reproached *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* for not having invested his kinsmen and meritorious officials, to use them as his assistants <sup>2</sup>. He accused *Chou Ch'ing Ch'ên* of open flattery. *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* directed the *premier Li Sse* to report on the matter. *Li Sse* blamed *Shun Yi Yüeh*, saying that the scholars did not care to learn the exigencies of modern times, but were studying antiquity with a view to condemn everything new, and to excite the masses. *Li Sse* proposed that the Historiographers be authorized to burn all the books except the Annals of *Ch'in*, and also to make an exception in favour of the officials in charge of the Imperial College. All the books on poetry, history, philosophy <sup>3</sup>, and jurisprudence, which people had dared to conceal, were to be brought to the governors and burned together. Those who perchance should dare to discourse on poetry and history, would be executed and publicly exposed. Should anybody hold up antiquity and decry the present time, he was to be destroyed together with his clan. Officials who saw or knew of such cases without interfering, were to suffer the same penalty. *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* approved of it.

The next year, which was the 35th of the emperor's reign, the scholars in *Hsien-yang* spread all kinds of false rumours. *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* had them tried by the censors. Those who gave information about their accomplices, and denounced others, got free themselves. 467 delinquents were all thrown into pits <sup>4</sup>.

The burning of the Books of Poetry and History was the consequence of *Shun Yü Yüeh's* recriminations. The deaths of the literati were due to the rumours divulged by the scholars. Seeing 467 men perish in pits the

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<sup>1</sup> An official title.

<sup>2</sup> The abolition of feudalism was much disliked by the Literati.

<sup>3</sup> The text says, the 'discussions of the hundred authors', which means the writers on philosophy and science.

<sup>4</sup> Various translations of this last passage have been proposed. Cf. [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 181 Note 2](#).

The foregoing narration is abridged from *Shi-chi* chap. 6, p. 21v et seq. Our text speaks of 467 scholars, whereas the *Shi-chi* mentions but 460 odd, and it uses the word 'to throw into a pit' instead of the vaguer term []. So perhaps *Wang Ch'ung* has not culled from the *Shi-chi*, but both have used the same older source.

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chronicler went a step farther, stating that the literati were murdered for the purpose of doing away with poetry and history, and even saying that they were all thrown into pits. That is no true report but also a highly coloured one.

p1.492 There is a tradition to the effect that 'field by field were treated as *Ching K'o's* hamlet'. They say that at the instigation of Prince *Tan of Yen* <sup>1</sup>, *Ching K'o* made an attempt on the life of the King of *Ch'in* <sup>2</sup>. The latter afterwards caused the nine relations <sup>3</sup> of *Ching K'o* to be put to death. But his vindictive wrath was not yet appeased thereby, and he subsequently had all the inhabitants of *Ching K'o's* village killed, so that the whole village was exterminated. Therefore the expression 'field by field'. This is an exaggeration.

Although *Ch'in* was lawless, the king had no reason to exterminate the entire village of *Ching K'o*. *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* once visited his palace on the *Liang-shan* <sup>4</sup>. From its height he perceived that the carriages and the horsemen of his prime-minister *Li Sse* were very gorgeous. This made him angry, and he gave utterance to his disapproval. The attendants informed *Li Sse*, who forthwith diminished his carriages and men. *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* thus became aware that his words had leaked out through the servants, but did not know who the culprit was. Thereupon he had all the persons near him arrested, and put to death <sup>5</sup>. Later on, a meteor fell down in *Tung-chün* <sup>6</sup>, and when it touched the earth, became a stone. Some one engraved upon the stone the inscription : 'When *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti's* dies, the territory will be divided'. When the Emperor heard about it, he ordered the censors to ask the people one by one, but nobody confessed. Then all persons found near the

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<sup>1</sup> A State in *Chili*.

<sup>2</sup> In 227 B. C. *Ching K'o* made an unsuccessful attempt on *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti's* life, who at that time was still king of *Ch'in*. It was not before 221 that, having vanquished all the rival States, he assumed the imperial title.

<sup>3</sup> All the ascendants and descendants from the great-great-grandfather to the great-great-grandson.

<sup>4</sup> A mountain in the province of *Shensi*.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted from *Shi-chi* chap. 6, p.24.

<sup>6</sup> A circuit or province comprising the south of *Chili*.

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stone were seized and executed <sup>1</sup>.

If the Emperor executed his attendants in the Palace on the *Liang* Mountain and all the persons near the stone, he destroyed them all, because he wished to find those who had divulged his words, or engraved the stone, but could not discover them. But what had the village of *Ching K'o* done to *Ch'in* to be exterminated ? If the King of *Ch'in* had been stabbed in the village, and the assailant was unknown, there might have been a wholesale p1.493 execution. But *Ching K'o* was already dead, the would-be-assassin found, why then should all the villagers suffer for him ?

During the 20th year of *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti's* reign *Ching K'o*, the envoy of *Yen*, attempted to assassinate him, but the King of *Ch'in* got wind of it, and caused *Ching K'o* to be torn to pieces as a warning. There is no mention of the entire destruction of his village <sup>2</sup>. Perhaps he gave orders to behead the nine relations of *Ching K'o*. If these were many, and living together in one hamlet, this hamlet may have been wiped out by their execution. People fond of exaggerations then said : 'field by field'.

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<sup>1</sup> A quotation from *Shi-chi* chap. 6, p. 23v. Cf. p. 1.231.

<sup>2</sup> The *Shi-chi* does not mention it.

## 26. Book VIII, Chap. I

### *Ju-tsêng*. Exaggerations of the Literati

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p1.494 In the books of the Literati we find the statement that the virtue of *Yao* and *Shun* was so great and wonderful, that perfect peace reigned on earth, and not a single person was punished ; and further that, since *Wên Wang* and *Wu Wang* bequeathed their greatness to *Ch'êng* and *K'ang* <sup>1</sup>, the instruments of punishment were laid aside, and not used for over forty years <sup>2</sup>. The idea is to praise *Yao* and *Shun*, and to extol *Wên Wang* and *Wu Wang*. Without high-flown words one deems to be unable to applaud greatness, as it deserves, and without some figures of speech, to do justice to what has been achieved. But however excellent *Yao* and *Shun* have been, they could not manage that nobody was punished, and with all their superiority *Wên Wang* and *Wu Wang* could not do without punishments. That there were few offences committed, and punishments seldom, may be true. But that nobody was punished, and that the instruments of punishment were not used, is an exaggeration.

If it could be contrived, that nobody was punished, it could be brought about also, that no State was attacked. If the instruments of punishment were put aside and not used, arms also could be laid down, and would not be required. However, *Yao* attacked *Tan-shui* <sup>3</sup>, and *Shun* fought against the *Yu Miao* <sup>4</sup>. Four nobles had to submit <sup>5</sup>, and instruments of punishment as well as weapons were resorted to. At the time of *Ch'êng Wang* four States rebelled : the *Huai*, *I*, *Hsü*, and *Jung* <sup>6</sup> all brought misfortune upon

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<sup>1</sup> *Ch'êng* was the successor of King *Wu Wang*. He reigned from 1115-1078 B. C., and was succeeded by *K'ang* 1078-1052.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Shi-chi* chap. 4, p. 17 [[Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 250](#)].

<sup>3</sup> A place in *Honan*.

<sup>4</sup> The aboriginal *Miao* tribes which exist still to-day.

<sup>5</sup> *Shun* banished *Kung Kung*, *Huan Tou*, the prince of the *San Miao* and *K'un*. Cf. *Mencius* V, Pt. II, 3 [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)] and *Shuking* Pt. II, I, 12.

<sup>6</sup> The *Huai*, *I*, and *Jung* were non-Chinese tribes ; *Hsü* is the name of one of the Nine



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themselves. To punish a man, one uses a sword, to exterminate <sup>p1.495</sup> him, arms. The punishment is a matter of criminal law, the extermination of fighting. Fighting and criminal law do not differ, weapons and swords are the same. Even an able dialectician could not discover a difference. Against depravity arms are used, against lawlessness instruments of punishment. These latter bear the same relation to weapons as feet do to wings. Walking, one uses one's feet, flying, one's wings. Though different in shape, both of them equally move the body; in the same manner instruments of punishment and weapons combined serve to check the evil. Their effect is the same.

The allegation that no arms were used implies the idea, that no penalties were meted out. Should a man with defective ears, but intact eyes be said to be in possession of a perfect body, we would not admit that, and if some one being an excellent tiger-hunter, but afraid of striking a man, were called brave by reason of this tiger-hunting alone, we would not agree to it. Only in case of the body having no defects and the courage facing whomsoever, there is perfection. Now, they say that nobody was punished, but not that no weapon was used. Much fuss is made about the fact, that instruments of punishment were put aside, and not used, but no mention made, that nobody rebelled. Therefore, we cannot speak of wonderful virtue or greatness.

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The books of the Literati tell us that *Yang Yu Chi* <sup>1</sup> of *Ch'u* was very remarkable at archery. Shooting at an aspen leaf, with a hundred shots he hit it a hundred times. This is of course said in praise of his brilliant shooting. That, whenever he aimed at an aspen leaf, he hit it, may be so, but to say, that out of a hundred shots a hundred hit the mark, is an exaggeration.

An aspen leaf hit by an arrow over and over again, would soon be so perforated, that it could no more serve as a target. If *Yang Yu Chi* had shot at an aspen leaf, as it was hanging on the tree, he would always have hit one, though not that which he wanted, there being such a multitude of them.

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Provinces of *Yü*, in modern *Shantung*.

<sup>1</sup> A minister of the *Ch'u* State in the *Chou* epoch.

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Consequently he would be obliged to take the leaves down, and place them one by one on the earth to shoot at them. After several ten shots, his dexterity would have been seen. The spectators would all have become aware of his skill at archery, and would not have required a hundred shots. p1.496

Narrators are fond of adorning dexterity and other accomplishments. If any one hit thirty and more times, they say a hundred. A hundred and a thousand are big numbers. Wishing really to say ten, they say a hundred, and in lieu of a hundred, a thousand. The meaning is the same as, when the *Shuking* speaks of the 'harmony of the ten thousand countries' or the *Shiking* of the 'thousand and hundred thousand descendants'.

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We learn from the writings of the Literati that there was a loyal official in *Wei* : *Hung Yen*, who was sent abroad as envoy of Duke *Ai* of *Wei* <sup>1</sup>. Before he returned, the *Ti* <sup>2</sup> had attacked, and killed the duke, and eaten his flesh, leaving only the liver. When *Hung Yen* returned from his mission, he reported himself to the liver. Out of sorrow, that Duke *Ai* had died, and was eaten up, so that his liver had no resting-place, he took a knife, ripped up his stomach, took all its contents out, put the liver of Duke *Ai* in, and expired. Those telling this story intend to praise his loyalty. It is possible that he ripped himself open, put Duke *Ai*'s liver in, and died. To say that he took out all the contents of the stomach, and put in the liver of Duke *Ai*, is an exaggeration.

If people stab one another with knives, and hit the Five Intestines, they die. Why ? Because the Five Intestines regulate the Vital Fluid, just as the head is the centre of all the arteries. When the head has been cut off, the hands cannot take another man's head, and put it on the neck. How then should *Hung Yen* be capable of first emptying his own stomach, and then putting in the liver of Duke *Ai* ? When the contents of the stomach have been taken out, death ensues. Then the hands can no more grasp. If he first put in the liver of Duke *Ai*, and then took out the contents of the stomach, then it ought to be said, that he put in the liver of Duke *Ai*, and emptied his stomach.

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<sup>1</sup> This must be a misprint, for no Duke of this name is known. The *Lü shih ch'un ch'iu*, which mentions the story, speaks of Duke *I* of *Wei*, 667-659 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> The northern barbarians.

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But now it is first mentioned that the contents of the stomach were completely taken out, and that the liver of Duke *Ai* was put in, which is a gross exaggeration of truth.

p1.497 We read in the books of Literati, that, when *Hsiung Ch'ü Tse* <sup>1</sup> of *Ch'u* once went out, he saw a stone lying on the ground, which he took for a crouching tiger. He grasped his bow, and shot at it. The arrow disappeared up to the feathers <sup>2</sup>. Others relate that *Yang Yu Chi* <sup>3</sup> saw a stone stretched like a rhinoceros. He shot at it, and the arrow was absorbed with the plumes. Some hold that *Hsiung Ch'ü Tse* is *Li Kuang* <sup>4</sup>. *Yang Yu Chi* and *Li Huang* must give their names, and one does not discover, that the story is not true.

Some speak of a tiger, some of a rhinoceros. Both being fierce animals, it amounts to the same. Some say, that the feathers disappeared, some, that the plumes were absorbed. Plumes are feathers, only the wording is a little different. The chief idea is that a stone resembled a tiger or a rhinoceros, and that out of fright the arrow was shot with such force, that it entered deep. One may say, that a stone resembled a tiger, and that, when shot at, the arrow entered deep. But to maintain that it disappeared up to the feathers is going too far. Seeing something like a tiger, one regards it as such, draws the bow, and shoots at it with the utmost force and energy. The aspect of a real tiger would have quite the same effect. Upon shooting a stone resembling a tiger the arrow should enter so completely, that nothing of the feathers could be seen. Would then, when hitting a real tiger, the arrow pass straight through its body ? It is difficult to pierce a stone, whereas with flesh it is very easy. If the feathers vanished in a substance difficult to be pierced, there could be no doubt that an arrow must traverse a stuff affording no obstacle.

A good marksman can shoot at great distances, and hit the smallest object, not missing one line. But how could he give greater force to the bow or the cross-bow ? *Yang Yu Chi* shot at the Marquis of *Chin* in a battle, and hit

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<sup>1</sup> *Hsiung Ch'ü Tse* lived during the *Chou* dynasty.

<sup>2</sup> This story is told in the *Hsin-hsü* of *Liu Hsiang*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. above p. 1.495.

<sup>4</sup> A general of *Han Wu Ti*, cf. p. 1.168.

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him in the eye <sup>1</sup>. A commoner aiming at a ruler of ten thousand chariots would certainly strain his nerves to the utmost, and double his forces, not less <sup>p1.498</sup> than, when shooting at the stone. Could then the arrow hitting the eye of the Marquis pass through to the neck ? If it had done, the Marquis of *Chin* would have died on his chariot.

I presume that an arrow projected from a ten stones ballista <sup>2</sup>, would not enter one inch into a stone, and split into three pieces. Now, should a weak bow be drawn with human force, how could the feathers disappear in the stone, though the bowman used all his strength ?

Human energy is a fluid, and this fluid a force. When in distress of fire or water people are very fluttered and frightened, and carry away their belongings, their energies reach their maximum. If, at ordinary times, they could carry one picul, they then carry two. Now, provided that, when shooting at the stretched out stone, the energy is doubled, the arrow nevertheless could not enter deeper than one inch. The disappearance of the feathers is out of the question.

Let us suppose that a good swordsman beholds a stone lying on the ground, gets frightened, and strikes it. Could he cut it asunder ? Or let a brave man, who would tackle a tiger with his unarmed fist, unexpectedly catch sight of such a stone, and hammer down on it with his hand. Would he leave any trace on the stone ?

The strength of clever people is equal to that of the stupid, the earnestness of purpose of the ancients like that of the moderns. If now-a-days an archer shoots animals and birds in the country, he spares no force to get them. Yet, when he hits an animal, the blow enters only some inches. If it

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<sup>1</sup> The *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Ch'êng* 16th year (*Legge, Classics Vol. V, Pt. I, p. 397*) [[Couvreur](#)] informs us that in a battle fought by the Marquis of *Chin* against King *Kung* of *Ch'u* in 574 B. C. *I* of *Lü*, an archer of *Chin*, shot at King *Kung* of *Ch'u* and hit him in the eye. The king thereupon ordered his own archer, *Yang Yu Chi*, to revenge him, handing him two arrows. With the first arrow *Yang Yu Chi* killed *I*. According to this account it was not the Marquis of *Chin*, who was hit in the eye, but the King of *Ch'u*, and not *Yang Yu Chi* shot the arrow, but *I* of *Lü*.

<sup>2</sup> The force of a bow, a cross-bow, or a ballista is measured by the weight required to draw them.  
One stone or one picul in ancient times amounted to 120 pounds.

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slips and hits a stone, the sharp point does not enter, and the arrow breaks to pieces. Accordingly the statements in the books of the Literati to the effect that *Hsiung Ch'ü Tse* of *Ch'u*, *Yang Yu Chi*, and *Li Kuang* shot at a stone lying on the ground, and that the arrow disappeared up to the feathers, or was engulfed together with the plumes, are all exaggerations.

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The writings of the Literati give the following examples of the inventive spirit of *Lu Pan* <sup>1</sup> and *Mê Tse* <sup>2</sup>. From wood he carved a kite, which <sup>p1.499</sup> could fly three days without coming down. It may be, that he made a kite of wood, which he flew. But that it did not alight for three days, is an exaggeration. If he carved it from wood, he gave it the shape of a bird. How then could it fly without resting? If it could soar up, why did it do so just three days? Provided there was a mechanism, by which, once set in motion, it continued flying, it could not have come down again. Then people ought to say that it flew continually, and not three days.

There is a report that *Lu Pan* by his skill lost his mother. That is to say, the clever artisan had constructed a wooden carriage and horses with a wooden charioteer for his mother. When the mechanism was complete, he put his mother in the carriage, which drove off to return no more. And thus he lost his mother. Provided the mechanism in the wooden kite was in order, it must have been like that of the wooden carriage and horses. Then it would have continued flying without rest. On the other hand, a mechanism works but for a short while, therefore the kite could not have continued flying much longer than three days. Then the same holds good with regard to the wooden carriage, it also ought to have stopped after three days on the road, and could not go straight on, so that the mother was lost. Both stories are apparently untrustworthy.

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<sup>1</sup> A celebrated mechanic of the *Lu* State, who lived contemporaneously with *Confucius*. *Lu Pan* is his sobriquet, his proper name being *Kung Shu Tse*. He has become the tutelary god of artisans.

<sup>2</sup> The philosopher *Mê Ti* has been credited with mechanical skill, erroneously I presume.

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In some books the statement is made that *Confucius* had no resting-place in this world. Wandering about he visited over seventy States, where he attempted to gain influence, but nowhere he found repose. One may well say, that he wandered about, and found nothing, but to say, that he came to seventy States, is going too far. According to the *Analects* and the works of other philosophers he returned from *Wei* <sup>1</sup> to *Lu*. In *Ch'ên* <sup>2</sup> his supplies were exhausted, in *Wei* his traces were obliterated <sup>3</sup>. He forgot the taste of food in *Ch'i* <sup>4</sup>, a tree was felled over him in *Sung* <sup>5</sup>, and besides there are <sup>p1.500</sup> *Pi* <sup>6</sup>, *Tun* <sup>7</sup>, and *Mou* <sup>8</sup>. These States, which he visited, do not even amount to ten. The statement about seventy States is therefore unreliable. Perhaps he went to more than ten States. Then the report about seventy States was spread in books, and people now talk of seventy States.

We read in the *Analects* <sup>9</sup> that *Confucius* asked *Kung Ming Chia* about *Kung Shu Wên Tse* <sup>10</sup> saying,

— Is it true that your master does not speak, nor laugh, nor take anything ?

*Kung Ming Chia* replied,

— That is a misrepresentation. The Master speaks, when it is time, and people do not dislike his words. He laughs, when he is merry, and people are not displeased with his laugh. He takes things, when he has a right to do so, and people are not dissatisfied.

*Confucius* exclaimed,

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<sup>1</sup> A State in northern *Honan*.

<sup>2</sup> A State comprising the southern part of *Honan*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 1.155.

<sup>4</sup> When the Master was in *Ch'i*, he heard the *Shao* music, and for three months he did not know the taste of flesh', so engrossed was he with this music, that he did not taste what he ate (*Legge, Analects* p. 199 ; [Analects VII, 13 \[Couvreur\]](#)).

<sup>5</sup> The emissaries of a high officer of *Sung* tried to kill *Confucius* by pulling down the tree under which he was practising ceremonies. Cf. *Legge, Analects* p. 202 Note 22.

<sup>6</sup> A city in southern *Shantung*.

<sup>7</sup> A territory in *Ch'ên*.

<sup>8</sup> A principedom in *Shantung*.

<sup>9</sup> [Analects XIV, 14 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>10</sup> *Kung Shu Wên Tse* was a high officer in the State of *Wei*, and *Kung Ming Chia* would seem to have been his disciple.

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— How is it possible ! How is it possible !

In fact *Kung Shu Wên Tse* spoke at the proper time, laughed when pleased, and took what he was entitled to. Out of this fact, which became known, people made the story that *Kung Shu Wên Tse* did neither speak, nor laugh, nor take anything. When common people tell a thing, they always like to overdo it.

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We read in some books that when Duke *Mu* of *Ch'in* <sup>1</sup> invested *Chêng*, he passed through *Chin* without borrowing a passage. Duke *Hsiang* of *Chin* <sup>2</sup> therefore intended to strike a blow at him with the help of the *Chiang Jung* <sup>3</sup> in the *Yao* passes <sup>4</sup>. When no horses nor carriages came back, *Ch'in* sent out three high officers : *Mêng Ming Shih*, *Hsi Ch'i Shu*, and *Po Yi Ping*, who all returned. Since they came back, the horses and carriages must have come back likewise. The report to the contrary is an exaggeration <sup>5</sup>.

p1.501 We are told in several books that the Princes of *Mêng Ch'ang* in *Ch'i* <sup>6</sup>, *Hsin Ling* in *Wei*, *P'ing Yuan* in *Chao*, and *Ch'un Shên* in *Ch'u* <sup>7</sup> treated their retainers with great kindness, and attracted them from everywhere, each 3000 men. This is meant to illustrate their kindness and the great conflux. That the number of retainers was very great, is possible, but that they amounted to 3000, an exaggeration. For, although the four princes had a partiality for retainers, and though the latter assembled in great numbers, yet each one could not have more than about a thousand. Then the books made it three thousand. For a great many, people will say a thousand, and in case of a small number, not a single one. That is the common practice, and

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<sup>1</sup> 658-619 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> 626-619 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> Western barbarians.

<sup>4</sup> A dangerous defile in the district of *Yung-ning*, *Honan*.

<sup>5</sup> According to the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, Duke *Hsi* 33d year, the army of *Ch'in* was defeated at *Yao* in 626 B. C. The *Tso-chuan* narrates the campaign in detail [[Couvreur](#)], and relates that the three officers were first taken prisoners, but afterwards released by the intercession of the mother of the Duke of *Chin*, who was a princess of the ducal house of *Ch'in*.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. p. 1.161.

<sup>7</sup> These four princes are known as the 'Four Heroes', living at the end of the *Chou* epoch, during the time of the 'Contending States', the 3rd century B. C.

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thus misstatements originate.

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There is a tradition, that *Kao Tse Kao* <sup>1</sup> mourning his father, shed bloody tears, and that for three years he did not show his teeth. To an honest man this would seem to be rather difficult <sup>2</sup> ; for it is not easily done. He would not consider it untrue, but only difficult, and therein he is mistaken.

That *Kao Tse* shed bloody tears, is probably true. *Ho of Ching* <sup>3</sup> offered a precious stone to the Prince of *Ch'u*, who cut off his foot. Distressed that his jewel did not find favour, and that his feelings were not appreciated he wept, until his tears were dried up, when he continued weeping with tears of blood. Now *Kao Tse* bewailed the death of his father. His grief was extreme. It must be true that, when his tears ceased, blood came out, but the saying that for three years he did not show his teeth, is an exaggeration.

These words mean that *Kao Tse* did not speak nor laugh. That a filial son, while mourning his parents, should not laugh, is only natural, but how can he avoid speaking, and when speaking, avoid showing his teeth ?

*Confucius* said :

— What he said, was not elegant, and at times he did not speak at all.

Then it was reported, that he did not show his teeth, or even, that for three years he did not show his <sup>p1.502</sup> teeth. *Kao Tsung* <sup>4</sup> while in the mourning shed did not speak for three years <sup>5</sup>. He enjoyed imperial majesty. That he did not speak means to say, that he did not use elegant expressions, and even that seems doubtful, and is perhaps an exaggeration. On the other hand *Kao Tse Kao* held a very humble position, yet he is believed not to have shown his teeth, which is certainly still more exaggerated.

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<sup>1</sup> *Kao Ch'ai* or *Kao Tse Kao*, was a disciple of *Confucius*, noted for his filial piety.

<sup>2</sup> Quotation from the *Li-ki*, *T'an Kung* Sect. I, II, 14.

<sup>3</sup> *Ho of Ching* i. e. of *Ch'u*, known as *Pien Ho* viz. *Ho* of the *Pien* district. Cf. p. 1.113.

<sup>4</sup> Posthumous title of the *Shang* emperor *Wu Ting*. See p. 1.328.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted from the [Shuking, Wu Yi Pt. V, Bk. XV](#), 5 (*Legge* Vol. III, Pt. II p. 466) [[Couvreur](#)].



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The Literati write in their books that *Ch'in Hsi* recommended *Po Li Hsi* to Duke *Mu* <sup>1</sup> who, however, did not pay attention to it. Then *Ch'in Hsi* went out of the front door, bowed down his head, and knocked it on the ground, so that it broke to pieces, and died. This affected Duke *Mu* so deeply, that he took *Po Li Hsi* into his service. The meaning of this story is that a worthy in recommending a good man did not spare his own life, knocking his head on the ground, that it broke, and died, all with the object to further his friend.

With this story scholars use to exhort one another, and it is handed down in their books. Nobody discredits it. That somebody kotows, while recommending a good man, has happened of old, as it happens now. It is true that *Ch'in Hsi* knocked his head, but the allegation that he broke it, and expired is an exaggeration.

When a man kotows, that his head aches, and the blood comes out, he cannot fracture his skull, however angry and agitated he may be. I do not maintain, that the skull cannot be broken, but man has not sufficient strength to do it alone. With a knife one may cut one's throat, or with a blade pierce one's bosom. By means of the knife or the blade the hand acquires the necessary strength. If *Ch'in Hsi* had taken a hammer, and smashed his skull, there would be nothing wonderful in it. To fall down, and smash his skull *Ch'in Hsi* would not have had the necessary strength. There have been people who died while prostrating themselves, but none who broke their heads or smashed their skulls. Perhaps *Ch'in Hsi* performed the kotow, while recommending *Po Li Hsi*, which gave rise to the story of his death, or he really died, while kotowing, hence the idle talk of people that he broke his head.

p1.503 The books of the Literati tell us that for the prince of *Yen*, *Ching K'o* attempted to assassinate the King of *Ch'in*. He struck him with a stiletto, but did not hit. The King of *Ch'in* then drew his sword and struck him. When *Ching K'o* assaulted the King of *Ch'in* with a stiletto, he did not hit his adversary, but a copper pillar, into which the dagger entered a foot deep.

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<sup>1</sup> Duke *Mu* of *Ch'in*, 658-619 B. C.

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With these words one wishes to emphasize the sharpness of the stiletto.

*Ching K'o* was a powerful man. He thrust the sharp blade, so that it penetrated into the hard pillar. In order to exalt *Ching K'o's* courage people have coloured the real facts. It is true that the stiletto went into the copper pillar, but the assertion that it entered a foot deep, is an exaggeration, for, although copper does not possess the hardness of a dagger, the latter cannot penetrate deeper than some inches, but not one foot.

Let us consider the question, in case he had hit the King of *Ch'in*, would he have run the dagger through him ? Pulling a ten stones ballista with a windlass and shooting at a wooden target in a wall, one would not perforate it to the extent of one foot. With force of hand *Ching K'o* thrust a small stiletto. While he himself was struck by the *Lung-yuan* sword <sup>1</sup>, the dagger entered into the hard copper pillar <sup>2</sup>. Then *Ching K'o's* force was stronger than that p1.504 of the ten stones ballista, and the copper pillar softer than the wooden target. The courage of *Ching K'o* is made much of, but there is no mention

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<sup>1</sup> A famous sword forged by *Ou Yeh* and *Kan Chang*, in later times a term for a good blade in general. Cf. p. 1.377.

<sup>2</sup> The *Shi-chi* chap. 86, p. 16v. gives us a graphic description of the assault of *Ching K'o* on *Shih Huang Ti*. When at a reception the envoy of *Yen* presented a map to the king, the latter caught sight of the dagger, which *Ching K'o* had concealed. Then *Ching K'o* 'with his left hand grasped the sleeve of the King of *Ch'in*, and with his right hand the dagger, and was going to strike the king, but, before he touched his body, the king frightened, retreated, and rose, tearing off his sleeve. He tried to draw his sword, but the sword was very long, and while engaged with the scabbard, he was so excited, and the sword was so hard, that he could not draw it out at the moment. *Ching K'o* chased the king, who ran round a pillar. The assembled officers were thunderstruck. They all rose in a body, but were so much taken by surprise, that they completely lost their heads. By the rules of *Ch'in* the officers, waiting upon the king in the palace hall, were not allowed to carry the smallest weapon with them. The armed guards were all stationed below the hall, but, without a special order, they were not permitted to walk up. At the critical moment there was no time to summon the soldiers below. This is the reason, why *Ching K'o* could pursue the king, and that his attendants, though startled, did not strike the assailant. They all seized him with their hands, however, and the royal physician *Hsia Wu Chü* flung his medicine bag, which he was presenting, against him. While the King of *Ch'in* was thus fleeing round the pillar, all were alarmed, but did not know what to do. The attendants only shouted, 'Push your sword backwards, King ! Push your sword backwards ! The king then drew his sword, and hit *Ching K'o*, cutting his left leg. *Ching K'o* maimed then lifted his dagger and thrust it at the king, but missed him, and instead hit the copper pillar. Then the King of *Ch'in* dealt him another blow, and thus *Ching K'o* received eight wounds. Seeing that his scheme had failed, he leant against the pillar. Weeping, he squatted down, and said .... At that moment the attendants came forward, and killed *Ching K'o*.

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that he possessed great strength. Of strong men there is none like *Mêng Pên*. Would *Mêng Pên*, if he had struck a copper pillar, have cut it one foot deep ? Perhaps the stiletto was as sharp as the famous swords *Kan-chiang* and *Mo-ya* <sup>1</sup>, whose thrusts and blows nothing could withstand, and that therefore it really penetrated one foot deep. Unfortunately the praise bestowed on *Kan-chiang* and *Mo-ya* also overshoot the mark, and are much akin to the foot deep cutting of the copper pillar.

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We learn from the works of the Literati that *Tung Chung Shu* <sup>2</sup> while reading the *Ch'un-ch'iu* was so absorbed in his study, that he did not think of anything else, and for three years did not cast a look at the greens in the garden. That he did not look at the greens in the garden may be true, but the three years are an exaggeration. Although *Tung Chung Shu* was very industrious, yet he must have relaxed from time to time, and at such moments he also would have sauntered about his court-yard. Strolling out into the court-yard, why should he have disdained to gaze at the greens in the garden ?

I have heard that persons engrossed in some idea, and studying some question, do not appear in public, and that for a principle some have lost their lives, but I never heard, that they did not go into the court-yard, and were sitting rapt in thoughts for three years, without ever looking at the garden. In the *Wu-yi* Chapter of the *Shuking* it is said that the good man does not find repose, because he foresees the troubles of the harvest <sup>3</sup>. If he reposes nevertheless, it is because his nerves and bones are not of wood or stone, and must be unstrung from time to time. Hence *Wên Wang* never strained his nerves without slackening them again, nor did p1.505 he slacken without subsequent straining. An interchange of activity and passivity was in his eyes the right thing. If even the brilliant mental faculties of the Sages had to relax

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<sup>1</sup> Two swords wrought by the noted sword-cutler *Kan Chiang* for *Ho Lü*, king of *Wu* 513-494 B. C. *Mo-ya* was the name of his wife. The *Kan-chiang* sword was regarded as the male, the *Mo-ya* as the female sword.

<sup>2</sup> An author of the 2nd century B. C.

<sup>3</sup> Quotation from the [Shuking, Wu-yi Pt. V, Bk. XV, 1](#) (*Legge* Vol. III, Pt. II, p. 464) [[Couvreur](#)].

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after an effort, *Tung Chung Shu*, whose strength was much less than that of those men, could not well concentrate his thoughts for three years without repose.

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The books of the Literati contain a statement to the effect that at the time when the *Hsia* Dynasty had reached its prime, distant countries sent pictures of their products, and the nine provinces metal as tribute. From this tripods were cast, on which all kinds of objects were represented. The consequence was, that, when people went into forests or to lakes, they did not meet spectres, and they could thereby ward off the influences of evil spirits. The Emperor and his subjects being in harmony, heaven gave its protection <sup>1</sup>.

Metal is by nature a thing. The tribute metal from distant places was thought very beautiful, and therefore cast into tripods, on which all sorts of curious objects were depicted. How could this have the effect that people in forests or by lakes did not meet with spectres, and could ward off the evil influences of spirits ? During the *Chou* time there was universal peace. The *Yüeh-shang* <sup>2</sup> offered white pheasants to the court, the *Japanese* <sup>3</sup> odoriferous plants. Since by eating these white pheasants or odoriferous plants one cannot keep free from evil influences, why should vessels like bronze tripods have such a power ?

The appearance of the Nine Tripods was an auspicious sign of high virtue <sup>4</sup>. Yet the wearing of a felicitous object does not attract happiness. Boys use to wear jade-stones, girls pearls, yet neither pearls nor jewels can guard mankind against evil. Precious and rare things are used as excellent charms and amulets, and they are regarded by some as very useful. The same is maintained in regard to the Nine Tripods. They cannot ward off evil influences, the report to the contrary is an exaggerated statement in the afore-mentioned books.

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<sup>1</sup> Abridged from the *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Hsüan* 3rd year. — From the *Hsia* dynasty these tripods came down to the *Shang* and the *Chou* dynasties, and in 605 B. C. were still in existence [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> A people in the southern part of *Kuang-tung* province, near the *Annamese* frontier.

<sup>3</sup> The *Wo*, an old name for the Japanese, which Chinese authors have explained to mean 'Pygmies'.

<sup>4</sup> The virtue of the Emperor *Yü*.

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There is a popular tradition that the tripods of *Chou* boiled of themselves without fire, and that things could be taken out of them, which had not been put in. That is a popular exaggeration. According to the exaggerated statement in the books of the Literati the Nine Tripods, having nothing peculiar, would possess supernatural powers without any reason.

What proof would there be for this assertion? The metal of the *Chou* tripods came from afar as tribute. *Yü* obtained it and caused it to be wrought into tripods. On the tripods a great many things were represented. If as a tribute from distant lands they were spiritual, why should things from distant countries be spiritual? If they were so, because *Yü* cast them, *Yü* himself, though a Sage, could not be a spirit, how then should cast vessels be? If they were, because they were made of metal, metal is like stone, but stone cannot be spiritual, why then should metal be? If they were spirits, because they were covered with pictures of all kinds of things, these pictures are like the lightning of the Thunder Goblet <sup>1</sup>. On this goblet were carved clouds and thunder. They are in the sky and much more spiritual than ordinary things. Since the representations of clouds and lightning are not spirits, the pictures of various things cannot be either.

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It is on record that, when *Ch'in* extinguished *Chou*, the Nine Tripods of *Chou* fell into the power of *Ch'in*. In fact, during the reign of King *Nan* <sup>2</sup>, King *Chao* of *Ch'in* <sup>3</sup> sent his general *Chiu* to attack *Nan Wang*. The latter terrified, hastened to *Ch'in*, prostrated himself, confessed his guilt, and ceded all his cities, 36 with 30,000 soul. *Ch'in* accepted the gift, and allowed King *Nan* to go home. At his death the king of *Ch'in* seized the Nine Tripods and other precious utensils <sup>4</sup>. Thus the tripods came to be in *Ch'in* <sup>5</sup>. In the 28th year of his reign *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* travelled <sup>p1.507</sup> north-ward to *Lang-yeh* <sup>6</sup>. On

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<sup>1</sup> A sacrificial vessel used during the *Hsia* dynasty.

<sup>2</sup> 314-255 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> 305-249 B. C. The full name of this king is *Chao Hsiang*.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the parallel passage in *Shi-chi* chap. 4, p. 39 [[Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 317](#)] where, however, not *Nan Wang*, but the Prince of the eastern *Chou* submits to *Ch'in* and cedes his territory.

<sup>5</sup> In 255 B. C. *Vid. Shi-chi* chap. 28, p. 8 [[Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. III, p. 429](#)].

<sup>6</sup> The eastern part of *Shantung* under the *Ch'in* dynasty.

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his return he passed *P'êng-ch'êng* <sup>1</sup>, and by feasting prepared himself for a sacrifice. Wishing to get the Tripods of *Chou* out, he sent a thousand men to plunge into the *Sse River* <sup>2</sup>, but all searching was in vain <sup>3</sup>.

*Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* came three generations after King *Chao*. At that time there was neither disorder nor rebellion in *Ch'in*, and the tripods ought not to have disappeared. That they might have done perhaps during the *Chou* time. The report says that King *Nan* hurried to *Ch'in*, and that *Ch'in* seized the Nine Tripods. Perhaps there is a mistake in time.

There is another tradition that when the *T'ai-ch'iu* <sup>4</sup> altar to the spirits of the land disappeared in *Sung*, the tripods went down in the river below the city of *P'êng-ch'êng* <sup>5</sup>. Twenty-nine years later *Ch'in* united the Empire <sup>6</sup>. Such being the case, the tripods would not have come into the possession of *Ch'in*, and must have been lost from the *Chou* already.

They were not spirits. During the 'Spring and Autumn' period, five stones fell down in *Sung*. These five stones were stars. The separation of stars from heaven is like the disappearance of the tripods from earth. The stars falling down from heaven did not thereby become spirits, why then should the tripods vanishing from earth, acquire spiritual powers? In the 'Spring and Autumn' time, three mountains vanished in the same manner as the *T'ai-ch'iu* altar disappeared. Five stars descended from heaven in *Sung*, three mountains vanished, five stones fell down, and the *T'ai-ch'iu* altar disappeared. All these events were brought about by causes residing in these things. The loss of the tripods was also the effect of some cause. One must not regard them as spirits merely on account of their disappearance. If the tripods resembled the three mountains of *Ch'in*, their disappearance is no sufficient reason, why they should be spirits. If they really possessed knowledge, and wished to avoid the disastrous revolution, the reigns of *Chieh* and *Chou* would have been the proper time for that.

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<sup>1</sup> A city in *Kiangsu*, the modern *Hsü-Chou-fu*.

<sup>2</sup> A river in *Shantung*.

<sup>3</sup> Quotation from the *Shi-chi* chap. 6, p. 18 [[Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 154](#)].

<sup>4</sup> *T'ai-Ch'iu* was a place in the *Yung-Ch'êng* district, *Honan*.

<sup>5</sup> *P'êng-ch'êng* does not lie on the *Sse River*, but on another small river.

<sup>6</sup> In 221 B. C. Then the tripods would have been lost in 250 B. C.

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The disorganisation and lawlessness were never worse than under *Chieh* and *Chou*, but at that time the tripods did not <sup>p1.508</sup> disappear. The decadence of the kings of *Chou* was far from that of *Chieh* and *Chou*. Yet the tripods remained with the dissolute *Chieh* and *Chou*, and left the declining *Chou* <sup>1</sup>. They did not stay nor leave at the proper time, and gave no sign of being spirits, endowed with knowledge.

It is possible that, at the collapse of the *Chou*, the men of General *Chiu*, who were in great number, saw the tripods, and stole them, and that some miscreants melted them, and made them into other objects, so that, when *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* searched for them, he could not find them. Subsequently they were called spirits, which gave rise to the story that they were sunk in the *Sse* River.

[Under the reign of the Emperor *Hsiao Wên Ti* <sup>2</sup> a man of *Chao*, *Hsin Yuan P'ing* addressed a memorial to the throne saying,

The *Chou* tripods are lost in the midst of the *Sse* River. Now the *Huang-ho* overflows, and communicates with the *Sse*. In a northeasterly direction near *Fên-yin* I perceive a metallic fluid. I presume it to be an augury of the *Chou* tripods' return. But unless fetched, they will not come out.

Thereupon *Hsiao Wên Ti* sent a special envoy to superintend a temple south of *Fên-yin* <sup>3</sup> near the River, in the hope that a spirit would bring the *Chou* tripods. Others denounced *Hsin Yuan P'ing*, showing that, what he had said about the supernatural vessels, was an imposture. Then *Hsin Yuan P'ing* was delivered to a tribunal, which sentenced him to death <sup>4</sup>.] The statement that the tripods are in the *Sse* is like the imposture of *Hsin Yuan P'ing* that he saw the spiritual fluid of the tripods.

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<sup>1</sup> Viz. the *Chou* dynasty.

<sup>2</sup> 179-156 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> A place in *Shansi*, in the present *Wan ch'üan hsien*.

<sup>4</sup> Quotation from the *Shi-chi* ch. 28, p. 20. [[Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. III, p. 460](#)].

## 27. Book VIII, Chap. II

### *Yi-tsêng*. Literary Exaggerations

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p2.262 It is a common weakness of human nature to exaggerate the truth, while relating something. In compositions and speeches truth is drowned in a flood of words. Praising some goodness, they over-estimate its excellence, and referring to some wickedness, they over-colour the guilt. This is due to the bias of ordinary people for the marvellous, for they do not care for any but strange stories. Consequently, unless in belauding somebody you magnify his merits, the hearers are not pleased, and unless in running him down you aggravate his crimes, the audience is not satisfied. Hearing one thing, by exaggeration they make ten of it, and seeing a hundred, they increase them to a thousand. A plain and simple object is cut into ten pieces and split into a hundred particles, and a true statement is turned round and round again a thousand or ten thousand times <sup>1</sup>.

*Mê Tse* wept over boiled silk, and *Yang Tse* over by-roads <sup>2</sup>, for they were sorry that people should lose their original nature, and regretted their departing from truth. Flying rumours and numerous traditions emanate from the mouths of uncultured people, and are current in lanes and alleys. They are such exaggerations. The words of the philosophers however, the lucubrations of their pens, the writings of wise men, and the collections of fine thoughts, should all agree with truth, and yet even here we find exaggerations.

As regards the classical literature, in point of truthfulness, there are no utterances more reliable than those of the Sages <sup>3</sup>. The classical literature

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<sup>1</sup> Here *Wang Ch'ung* himself commits the fault which he lays at other people's door. All Orientals like big numbers, which have become quite a special feature of the Chinese language, in which a hundred, a thousand, or ten thousand merely serve to express many.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 1.374, Notes 3 and 4.

<sup>3</sup> We foreigners cannot admit this.



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continues immutable through all the ages <sup>1</sup>, and yet it is not quite devoid of hyperboles over-charging the truth. But these coloured reports are all based on some facts and not <sup>p2.263</sup> maliciously made to misguide people, small things having been exaggerated. Those who seriously study this question, maintain that there is a difference between the exaggerations of classical literature and common sayings and traditions. These classical exaggerations are of various kinds. Usually something conspicuous is put forward with a view to captivating those who still harbour some doubts. It goes to their hearts and enters their heads, thus opening their understanding and awakening their intelligence.

The remark of the *Shuking* that [harmony was established among ten thousand countries] <sup>2</sup> is intended to extol *Yao's* virtue, which leads to universal peace, the effects of which were not only felt in China proper, but also among the *I* and *Ti* tribes. The affirmation that harmony prevailed in the border lands is correct, but the ten thousand countries are an exaggeration.

Under *Yao* and during the *Chou* period, the entire domain did not embrace more than five thousand Li. In the *Chou* time, there were one thousand seven hundred and ninety-three feudal States. Adding the wild dependencies, those of the *Jung*, and the guarded ones, together with the people without the Four Seas <sup>3</sup> which do not live on grain, such as the tribes with covered breasts, with hanging ears, the *Pigmies*, and the *Po-chung* <sup>4</sup>, we obtain an aggregate sum of less than three thousand. All countries which Heaven covers and Earth

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<sup>1</sup> This statement is open to criticism : all the classical texts have undergone some alterations in course of time.

<sup>2</sup> *Shuking* Part I, chap. I, 2, *Yao-tien* ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 17](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>3</sup> The utmost limits of the habitable land.

<sup>4</sup> All these semi-fabulous tribes are in the *T'ai-p'ing-yü-lan* ranked among the southern barbarians. The *Ch'uan-hsiung* seem to have received their name from a peculiar sacklike costume merely covering their breasts. The *Tan-êrh* were in the habit of disforming their ears, that they hang down upon their shoulders. The *Chiao-chiao* = *Pigmies* are often mentioned in Chinese literature. *Lieh Tse* gives them a height of 1 foot 5 inches, in the *Chia-yü Confucius* describes them as 3 feet high. According to the *Hou Han-shu* they live in the surroundings of *Yung-ch'ang-fu* in *Yünnan* and measure 3 feet. About 110 A. D. three thousand of them submitted to the *Han* and sent as tribute ivory and zebus. They live in caverns and are dreaded by birds and beasts. For *Po-chung*, who are nowhere else mentioned, we had better read *Ch'i-chung*, a tribe said to walk on tiptoe.

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sustains, are within the number of three thousand. The ten thousand people mentioned by the *Shuking* must therefore be held to be an exaggeration overshooting the mark, meant as a homage to Yao, implying his excellence and that great multitudes fell under its influence. All China as well as the p2.264 savages were in perfect accord, whence the term ten thousand countries, which comes near the thousands and hundred thousands of descendants mentioned in the *Shiking* <sup>1</sup>.

This is a tribute paid to the virtue of King Hsüan of Chou <sup>2</sup>. In recognition of his diligence in serving Heaven and Earth, these latter blessed him with so many descendants, that they amounted to thousands and hundreds of thousands. One may well say that his progeny was extremely numerous, but to speak of thousands and hundreds of thousands is straining the point, for however numerous they were, it could not be thousands or hundreds of thousands. From a desire to praise, the poets of the *Shiking* have gone beyond the truth.

From the time, when Hou Chi <sup>3</sup> was invested with T'ai <sup>4</sup>, down to King Hsüan <sup>5</sup>, he with all his nearer and farther blood-relations could not be thousands and hundreds of thousands <sup>6</sup>. A thousand and ten thousand are names of big numbers : ten thousand denotes a great many. Therefore the *Shuking* speaks of ten thousand countries, and the *Shiking* of thousands and hundreds of thousands.

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The *Shiking* says that [the crane cried amidst the nine pools of the marches, and that its cry was heard in the sky.] <sup>7</sup> The meaning is that the

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<sup>1</sup> *Shiking* Part III, Book II, Ode V, 2 ([Legge, Classics Vol. IV, Part II, p. 482](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> *Legge loc. cit.* p. 481, Note says that there is no evidence to whom the Ode is addressed. Some hold that it is King Ch'êng.

<sup>3</sup> The ancestor of the Chou dynasty and Lord of Agriculture.

<sup>4</sup> The original fief of the Chou in *Shensi*, with which they were invested by Shun 2255-2206 B. C.

<sup>5</sup> 827-782 B. C.

<sup>6</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* is mistaken here ; calculating is not his strong point. One couple after about 42 generations may well have tens of thousands of descendants.

<sup>7</sup> *Shiking* Part II, Book III, Ode X, 2 ([Legge, Classics Vol. IV, Part II, p. 297](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

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crane cried in the marshes, which were divided into nine pools, and that its sound was still heard in the sky, an illustration of the cultivation of virtue by the superior man, whose name reaches the court in spite of his humble position. I agree that the sound may be heard at a great altitude, but to say that it was heard in the sky, is hyperbolic.

They urge that the sound was heard in the sky. Beholding a crane crying in the clouds, they hear it from the earth, and conjecture that, since this sound is heard on the earth, it must also be possible to hear it in the sky. For, when a crane cries in the clouds, man hears its voice, and looking up, his eyes decry p2.265 its shape. The ear and the eye possess the same power. When the ear hears its voice, the eye perceives its form. But hearing and vision do not extend beyond ten Li. A cry in the empyrean is inaudible for us. Why ? Because the distance between the sky and man measures several ten thousand Li <sup>1</sup>. Consequently the eye cannot see, and the ear cannot hear so far. If we hear a crane crying from below, it is because it is near us, but the inference that, on account of its voice being audible from below, its cry ought to be heard in the sky, when it is uttered on the earth, is erroneous.

When a crane cries in the clouds, man hears it from below, but when it cries in the nine marshes, man is not up in the sky ; what means has he to know that it is perceptible there ? He does not know it, but makes this inference by analogy. Perhaps the poet was not aware of this and earnestly believed what he said, or he knew the fact, but wished to use it by way of illustration, and therefore stretched the point.

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The *Shiking* says that among the black-haired people of *Chou* not a single one was left out <sup>2</sup>. This signifies that, in the time of King *Hsüan* of *Chou*, the empire was afflicted with a great drought. Aggrieved by the severity of this drought, under which the people had to suffer, the poet said that not a single person was left but shared in the general distress. The drought may have

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<sup>1</sup> More than 60 000 Li. P. 1.275.

<sup>2</sup> *Shiking* Part III, Book III, Ode IV, 3 ([Legge, Classics Vol. IV, Part II, p. 530](#)) [[Couvreur](#)]. *Mencius* remarked that this passage must not be taken literally ([Legge, Classics Vol. II, p. 353](#)).

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been very severe, but to maintain that not a single individual was left out is an exaggeration.

The people of *Chou* are like the people of to-day. When the latter are visited with a great drought, the poor and the destitute who have not stored up provisions, beat their breasts and yearn for rain, whereas the rich who have a sufficient supply of grain and food, and whose granaries and storehouses are not empty, do not feel the pangs of hunger in their mouths and bellies. Wherefore should they be grieved then ?

When Heaven sends down a drought, mountain and forest tracts are not dried up, and, when Earth has an inundation, the tops of hills and mounds are not submerged. Mountain and forest <sup>p2.266</sup> tracts are the rich and noble, who are sure to escape. The allegation that not a single person was spared, is merely a figure of speech designed to describe the intensity of the drought.

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In the *Yiking* there is the following passage :

[ It shows its subject with his house made large, but only serving as a screen to his household. When he looks at his door, it is still, and there is nobody about it.] <sup>1</sup>

There is not nobody, but no wise men. The *Shuking* says,

Do not leave the various offices vacant <sup>2</sup>.

Vacant is empty, and various, many : Let not all the offices be empty. To leave, for want of men, is equivalent with letting empty, whence this expression.

Now all short-witted people are imbued with the Five Virtues, but their gifts are scanty and inadequate, so that they cannot become fully wise. They are not wilfully obtuse and doltish, but their innate wisdom is incomplete. Virtue may be great or small, and talents of a higher or a lower order. Those

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<sup>1</sup> [Diagram Fêng No. 55](#). Legge, *Yiking, Sacred Books* Vol. XVI, p. 186.

<sup>2</sup> *Shuking* Part II, Book III, 5 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 73](#)) [[Couvreur](#)]. Legge gives a different interpretation of the passage : 'Let him not have the various officers cumberers of their places', which does not agree with *Wang Ch'ung's* explanation.

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who are in office and fill a post, all strive to do their best in the service, the officers of the *Shuking* and the inmates of the *Yiking*, therefore, can still be of use ; why then speak of emptiness and nobody ? The *Shiking* says,

[ How numerous were the scholars ? *Wên Wang* was blessed with them.] <sup>1</sup>

That means to say that *Wên Wang* found many more wise men than imbeciles. Now the *Yiking* ought to say, 'it is still, and there are but few persons', and the *Shuking* should say, 'Let not be there too few officers for all the offices'. 'Few' is the proper word, 'empty' and 'nobody' are likewise exaggerations.

The Five Grains are such that they all, when eaten, appease hunger. The taste of rice and millet is sweet and savoury, beans and barley are coarse, it is true, yet they satiate as well. Those eating beans and barley are all agreed that they are coarse and not sweet, but they do not pretend that, having eaten them, their stomachs remain empty, as if they had eaten nothing. Bamboo and wooden sticks both can support a sick man, but the strength of a bamboo stick is weak and does not equal wood. If somebody takes a bamboo stick, he says that it is not strong, but not that his p2.267 hand is empty and holds nothing in its grasp. Weak-minded officials are like beans, barley, and bamboo sticks.

For the *Yiking* to say that there is nobody, whereas all the officials are kept in the houses, is really too disdainful. In all the officials of the *Shuking* those of minor talents are also included, the remark that the offices must not be left vacant is too cutting therefore.

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We read in the *Analects*,

[ Great indeed was *Yao* as a sovereign ! How grand was he ! The people could find no name for it.] <sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, there is a record that a man of fifty was beating clods of earth

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<sup>1</sup> *Shiking* Part III, Book I, Ode 1 ([Legge, Classics Vol. IV, Part II, p. 429](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> [Analects VIII, 19](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

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on the road. An observer remarked,

— Grand indeed is the virtue of *Yao* !

The man who was playing with earth, replied,

— At sunrise, I begin my work, and at sunset, I take my rest. I dig a well to drink, and labour my field to eat. What sort of energy does *Yao* display ? <sup>1</sup>

These words are supposed to corroborate his grandeur, which no language could express. The term grandeur may well be used, but the assertion that the people could find no name for it is a stretch of fancy.

That, throughout the land within the Four Seas and amongst thousands of people, nobody could find a name for *Yao's* virtue must be impossible. Now the utterance of the man beating the earth 'What sort of virtue does *Yao* display' implies that the people could not find an expression for it <sup>2</sup>. But the observer had said, 'Grand indeed is the virtue of *Yao*', ergo the people still knew of what sort it was. If something is possible, but those who know deny it, they exaggerate.

The works of the Literati also narrate that the people of *Yao* and *Shun* might have been called to office house by house. That means to say that in every family they behaved like superior men, so that all might have been made officials. It is admissible to say that they might be called to office, but the remark 'house by house' is an exaggeration.

A man of fifty is a father of a family. If such a father does not know his sovereign, how can he instruct his son ?

p2.268 During an age of universal peace, every family consists of superior men, every one observes propriety and righteousness, the father does not infringe the laws of decorum, and the son does not neglect his duty. Those who do their duty possess knowledge, and nobody knows the sovereign better than the officials. Officers as well as wise men know their sovereign, and

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<sup>1</sup> *Vid.* p. 2.187.

<sup>2</sup> The meaning of this question would rather seem to be that the peasant scorned the idea of *Yao's* excellence and therefore disdainfully asked about it. Cf. p. 2.222, Note 3.

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knowing him, can govern the people. Now, how could those who were ignorant of *Yao*, be appointed to official posts ?

The man of fifty playing with earth, on the road, was in this respect a playfellow of small boys not yet grown up, but how could he be accounted a wise man ?

When [*Tse Lu* got *Tse Kao* appointed governor of *Hou*] <sup>1</sup>, *Confucius* took exception on the ground that he had not yet studied, nor acquired knowledge. The man with the earth was an ignoramus ; how could he be called to office ? Praising *Yao's* grandeur, one cannot say that house by house the people might have been appointed <sup>2</sup>, and contending that house by house there were wise men fit to be appointed, one cannot propose simpletons and ignorant fellows <sup>3</sup>. Keeping in view the man playing with earth, it is difficult to say 'house by house', and taking this second alternative <sup>4</sup>, it is awkward to insist upon *Yao's* grandeur. The dilemma owes its origin to an exaggeration overcolouring *Yao's* excellence.

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The *Shuking* tells us that *Tsu Yi* <sup>5</sup>, remonstrating with *Chou*, said,  
[ Among our people to-day there is none but desires the king's death.] <sup>6</sup>

None means nobody : The people of the whole empire all wish the king dead. One may say that they wished the king dead, but to pretend that all had this wish is going too far. Although *Chou* was depraved, yet many of his subjects and officers had received his favours. But *Tsu Yi* would use high flying words, with the object of frightening the king. Therefore I say that, unless the words be highly coloured, the heart does not take alarm, p2.269 and, without alarm, the mode of action is not altered. Exaggerations are used, in order to frighten

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects XI, 24 \[Couvreur\]](#), where, however, the place is called *Pi* and not *Hou*. Cf. the quotations in p. 1.407 and 1.449 with the reading *Pi*.

<sup>2</sup> Which is an exaggeration ; men like the ignoramus would have to be excluded.

<sup>3</sup> Like the husbandman referred to.

<sup>4</sup> That there were people like the man playing with earth ignoring *Yao's* virtue.

<sup>5</sup> A minister to the emperor *Chou*. Cf. p. 1.185, Note 2.

<sup>6</sup> *Shuking* Part IV, Book X, 4 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 271](#)) [[Couvreur](#), § 4].

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and to stir up.

*Su Ch'in*<sup>1</sup> told the king of *Ch'i* that [in *Lin-tse*<sup>2</sup> the naves of the chariot-wheels were knocking together, and the men thronging shoulder to shoulder. Lifting their sleeves they formed tents, and the fronts of their coats joined together were the curtains. Their perspiration wiped off fell down like rain.]<sup>3</sup> In spite of all its splendour, *Ch'i* could not come up to that. *Su Ch'in* employed such high-flown language, for the purpose of rousing the king of *Ch'i*. *Tsu Yi's* admonitions of *Chou* are like the remonstrances addressed to the king of *Ch'i* by *Su Ch'in*.

In the fanciful reports of the wise and the sages, the events thus described have not always a true basis. From the chapter 'Completion of the War'<sup>4</sup> we learn that, when *Wu Wang* overthrew *Chou*, so much blood was spilled, that the pestles swam in it<sup>5</sup>. So numerous were the combatants standing up for *Wu Wang*, that their blood flowed like that, all wishing the annihilation of *Chou*. But would they have been willing to fight in such a wholesale destruction? The remark of *Tsu Yi* that everybody wished the death of *Chou* is like *Su Ch'in's* exaggeration and the reference in the chapter 'Completion of the War' to the pestles floating in streams of blood, which is likewise overshooting the mark.

The blood of the slain is shed, of course, but how could pestles swim in it? When *Wu Wang* smote *Chou* in the plain of *Mu*, the country north of the river was elevated, and the soil no doubt scorched up and dry. The weapons being blunted, and the blood flowing forth, it must at once have entered the hot soil; how could pestles have floated in it then? The warriors of *Chou* and *Yin* all carried their provisions with them, and perhaps had prepared dried preserves, therefore they needed no pestles or mortars; where then did these pestles come from?

This statement about the pestles swimming in blood is meant to imply

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<sup>1</sup> Famous politician of the 4th cent. B. C. See p. 1.304, Note 8.

<sup>2</sup> Capital of *Ch'i*, the present *Ch'ing-chou-fu* in *Shantung*.

<sup>3</sup> Quotation from the Biography of *Su Ch'in* in the *Shi-chi* chap. 69, p. 12v.

<sup>4</sup> Chapter of the *Shuking*, cf. p. 1.484, Note 4.

<sup>5</sup> *Eod.* Note 5.



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that, when *Chou* was destroyed, the weapons were blunted, and the soldiers wounded, and that, in consequence, the pestles floated in the blood.

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p2.270 'During the 'Spring and Autumn' period, on the *hsin-mao* day, in the fourth month of summer, in the seventh year of Duke Chuang, at midnight, the common stars were invisible, and stars fell down like rain'. *Kung Yang* in his commentary asks :

[ What does 'like rain' mean ? It is not rain ; then, why use this expression ? 'The unrevised *Ch'un-ch'iu*' says, 'Like rain. The stars, previous to approaching to within a foot of the earth, departed again'. The Sage corrected this, and said, 'The stars fell down like rain'.]

'The unrevised *Ch'un-ch'iu*' refers to the time, when the *Ch'un-ch'iu* was not yet revised. At that time the Chronicle of *Lu* had the following entry : 'It rained stars, and before they came near the earth, at a distance of over a foot, they seemed to depart again'. The Sage denotes *Confucius*. *Confucius* revised it, and said 'The stars fell like rain'<sup>1</sup>. Like rain means like rain in appearance.

The vapours of mountains become clouds. Above, they do not reach up to the sky, and below, they form clouds. When it rains stars, the stars falling revert to the sky, before they have touched the earth. Whence the expression 'like rain'. *Confucius* has employed the proper words. Stars falling either reach the earth or not, but it is difficult to ascertain the number of feet, and the statement of the chronicle that the distance was of one foot is also a stretch of fancy. For there are towers and high buildings, hills and mountains on the earth ; how can they speak of one foot's distance ? *Confucius* said 'like rain', and that was correct. *Confucius* wrote the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, and then altered the text into 'like rain'. Had *Confucius* not written the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, the reading that the stars came near the earth within a foot's distance, would have been handed down to the present day.

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<sup>1</sup> Repeated almost literally from p. 1.274.

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Under the reign of the emperor *Kuang Wu Ti* <sup>1</sup>, a clerk of a ministry, *Pên Kuang* of *Ju-nan* <sup>2</sup> sent in a report containing the statement that the emperor *Hsiao Wen Ti* <sup>3</sup> lived in a palace of brilliant splendour, and that only three men were sentenced in the whole empire <sup>4</sup>. This was a compliment paid to the emperor *Wên Ti*, setting forth his achievements. But *Kuang Wu Ti* replied that, in *Hsiao Wên Ti*'s time, they did not live in a palace of brilliant splendour, and that there were not only three men sentenced.

p2.271 All accomplishments and virtues are put down to those who are famous, therefore the superior man loathes the company of low class people <sup>5</sup>. *Pên Kuang* presented his report to a *Han* emperor, the *Han* epoch is our age, yet he exaggerated their merits and excellent qualities, going beyond the truth. Now, fancy the rulers and sovereigns of times out of mind, which have long passed away. When wise men of later ages give glowing reports of them, it is of frequent occurrence that they miss the truth and deviate from the historical facts. Had *Pên Kuang* not met with *Kuang Wu Ti*, but made his report ages after, this narrative about *Hsiao Wên Ti* would have found its way into the classical literature, and nobody would have known that the splendour of the palace and the three sentenced men were exaggerations, and they would have been taken for undeniable facts.

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<sup>1</sup> 25-57 A. D.

<sup>2</sup> Place in *Honan*.

<sup>3</sup> 179-157 B. C.

<sup>4</sup> Punishments were unnecessary, all the people following the good example of their virtuous ruler.

<sup>5</sup> The latter half of this sentence is quoted from the [Analects XIX, 20 \[Couvreur\]](#).

## 28. Book IX, Chap. I

### *Wên K'ung. Criticisms on Confucius*

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p1.392 The students of Confucianism of the present day like to swear *in verba magistri*, and to believe in antiquity. The words of the Worthies and Sages are to them infallible, and they do their best to explain and practise them, but they are unable to criticize them. When the Worthies and Sages take the pencil, and commit their thoughts to writing, though they meditate, and thoroughly discuss their subject, one cannot say that they always hit the truth, and much less can their occasional utterances all be true. But although they cannot be all true, the scholars of to-day do not know, how to impugn them, and, in case they are true, but so abstruse that they are difficult to understand, those people do not know how to interpret their meaning. The words of the Sages on various occasions are often contradictory, and their writings at different times very often mutually clash. That however is, what the scholars of our time do not understand.

One always hears the remark that the talents of the Seventy Disciples of the school of *Confucius* surpassed those of the savants of our days. This statement is erroneous. They imagine that *Confucius* acting as teacher, a Sage propounding the doctrine, must have imparted it to exceptionally gifted men, whence the idea that they were quite unique. The talents of the ancients are the talents of the modern. What we call men of superior genius now-a-days, were regarded by the ancients as Sages and supernatural beings, hence the belief that the Seventy Sages could not appear in other generations.

If at present there could be a teacher like *Confucius*, the scholars of this age would all be like *Yen* and *Min* <sup>1</sup>, and without p1.393 *Confucius*, the Seventy Disciples would be only like the Literati of the present day. For though

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<sup>1</sup> *Yen Hui* and *Min Tse Ch'ien*, two prominent disciples of *Confucius*.

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learning from *Confucius*, they could not thoroughly inquire. The words of the Sage they did not completely understand, his doctrines and principles they were unable to explain. Therefore they ought to have asked to get a clearer conception, and not understanding thoroughly, they ought to have raised objections in order to come to a complete understanding.

The sentiments which *Kao Yao* <sup>1</sup> uttered before the Emperor *Shun* were shallow and superficial, and not to the point. *Yü* asked him to explain himself, when the shallow words became deeper, and the superficial hints more explicit <sup>2</sup>, for criticisms animate the discussion, and bring out the meaning, and opposition leads to greater clearness.

*Confucius* ridiculed the guitar-playing and singing of *Tse Yu* <sup>3</sup>, who, however, retorted by quoting what *Confucius* had said on a previous occasion. If we now take up the text of the *Analects*, we shall see that in the sayings of *Confucius* there is much like the strictures on the singing of *Tse Yu*. But there were few disciples able to raise a question like *Tse Yu*. In consequence the words of *Confucius* became stereotyped and inexplicable, because the Seventy could not make any objection, and the scholars of the present time are not in a position to judge of the truth of the doctrine.

Their scientific methods do not arise from a lack of ability, but the difficulty consists in opposing the teacher, scrutinizing his doctrine, investigating its meaning, and bringing evidence to ascertain right and wrong. Criticism is not solely permitted *vis-à-vis* to sages, as long as they are alive. The commentators of the present day do not require the instruction of a sage, before they dare to speak.

If questions be asked on things which seem inexplicable, and *Confucius* be pressed hard, how can this be deemed a violation of the moral laws, and if those who really are able to hand down the holy teachings, impugn the words of *Confucius*, why must their undertaking be considered unreasonable? I trust that, as regards <sup>p1.394</sup> those inquiries into the words of *Confucius* and

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<sup>1</sup> The minister of *Shun*.

<sup>2</sup> The discussions of the two wise men before *Shun* are to be found in the *Shuking*, *Kao Yao mo*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. [Analects XVII, 4](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

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those remarks on his unintelligible passages, men of genius of all ages, possessing the natural gift of answering questions and solving difficulties, will certainly appreciate the criticisms and investigations made in our time.

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*Mêng I Tse* <sup>1</sup> asked, what filial piety was.

The Master said,

— To show no disregard.

Soon after, as *Fan Chih* <sup>2</sup> was driving him, the Master told him saying, '*Mêng Sung* <sup>3</sup> asked me, what filial piety was, and I answered him, 'To show no disregard'.

*Fan Chih* said,

— What does that mean ?

The Master replied,

— That parents, while alive, should be served according to propriety ; that, when dead, they should be buried according to propriety ; and that they should be sacrificed to according to propriety <sup>4</sup>.

Now I ask, *Confucius* said that no disregard is to be shown *viz.* no disregard to propriety. But a good son also must anticipate his parents' thoughts, conform to their will, and *never disregard their wishes*. *Confucius* said 'to show no disregard', but did not speak of disregard for propriety. Could *Mêng I Tse*, hearing the words of *Confucius*, not imagine that he meant to say, 'no disregard for (the parents) wishes ?' When *Fan Chih* came, he asked, what it meant. Then *Confucius* said, 'That parents while alive should be served according to propriety ; that, when dead, they should be buried according to propriety ; and that they should be sacrificed to according to

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<sup>1</sup> *Mêng I Tse* was the chief of one of three powerful familiar in *Lu*.

<sup>2</sup> A disciple of *Confucius*.

<sup>3</sup> *I. e.* *Mêng I Tse*.

<sup>4</sup> [Analects II, 5 \[Couvreur\]](#). — The citations from the *Analects* are quoted from *Legge's* translation, but here and there modified so as to suit the text, for *Wang Ch'ung* often understands a passage quite differently from *Legge* and his authorities.

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propriety'. Had *Fan Chih* not inquired, what the words 'no disregard' meant, he would not have understood them.

*Mêng I Tse's* talents did not surpass those of *Fan Chih*, therefore there is no record of his sayings or doings in the chapters of the *Analects*. Since *Fan Chih* could not catch the meaning, would *Mêng I Tse* have done so ?

*Mêng Wu Po* asked what filial piety was. The Master replied

— If the only sorrow parents have, is that which they feel, when their children are sick <sup>1</sup>.

p1.395 *Mêng Wu Po* used to cause his parents much sorrow, therefore *Confucius* spoke the afore-mentioned words. *Mêng Wu Po* was a cause of sorrow to his parents, whereas *Mêng I Tse* disregarded propriety. If in reproving this fault *Confucius* replied to *Mêng Wu Po* 'If the only sorrow parents have is that which they feel, when their children are sick', he ought to have told *Mêng I Tse* that only in case of fire or inundation might propriety be neglected.

*Chou Kung* says that small talents require thorough instructions, whereas for great ones a hint is sufficient. *Tse Yu* possessed great talents, yet with him *Confucius* went into details. The talents of *Mêng I Tse* were comparatively small, but *Confucius* gave him a mere hint. Thus he did not fall in with *Chou Kung's* views. Reproving the shortcomings of *Mêng I Tse*, he lost the right principle. How was it that none of his disciples took exception ?

If he did not dare to speak too openly owing to the high position held by *Mêng I Tse*, he likewise ought to have said to *Mêng Wu Po* nothing more than 'not to cause sorrow (is filial piety)', for both were scions of the *Mêng* family, and of equal dignity. There is no apparent reason, why he should have spoken to *Mêng Wu Po* in clear terms and to *Mêng I Tse* thus vaguely. Had *Confucius* freely told *Mêng I Tse* not to disregard propriety, what harm would there have been ?

No other family was more powerful in *Lu* than the *Chi* family, yet

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects II, 6 \[Couvreur\]](#).

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*Confucius* blamed them for having eight rows of pantomimes in their court <sup>1</sup>, and objected to their performing a sacrifice on Mount *T'ai* <sup>2</sup>. He was not afraid of the evil consequences, which this lack of reserve in regard to the usurpation of territorial rights by the *Chi* family might have for him, but anticipated bad results from a straightforward answer given to *Mêng I Tse* ? Moreover, he was questioned about filial piety more than once, and he had always his charioteer at hand <sup>3</sup>. When he spoke to *Mêng I Tse*, he was not merely in a submissive mood <sup>4</sup>, therefore he informed *Fan Chih*.

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*Confucius* said <sup>5</sup>

Riches and honour are what men desire. If they cannot be obtained in the proper way, they should not be p1.396 held. Poverty and meanness are what men dislike. If they cannot be obtained in the proper way, they should not be avoided <sup>6</sup>.

The meaning is that men must acquire riches in a just and proper way, and not take them indiscriminately, that they must keep within their bounds, patiently endure poverty, and not recklessly throw it off. To say that riches and honour must not be held, unless they are obtained in the proper way, is all right, but what is poverty and meanness not obtained in a proper way ? Wealth and honour can, of course, be abandoned, but what is the result of giving up poverty and meanness ? By giving up poverty and meanness one obtains wealth and honour. As long as one does not obtain wealth and honour, one does not get rid of poverty and meanness. If we say that, unless wealth and honour can be obtained in a proper way, poverty and meanness should not be shunned, then that which is obtained is wealth and honour, not

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects III, 1 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> [Analects III, 6 \[Couvreur\]](#). This sacrifice was a privilege of the sovereign.

<sup>3</sup> So that he might have used him as his mouth-piece as in the case of *Mêng I Tse*.

<sup>4</sup> He was not afraid of *Mêng I Tse*.

<sup>5</sup> [Analects IV, 5 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>6</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* thus interprets the passage, which gives no sense. I should say that he misunderstood *Confucius*, for every difficulty is removed, if we take the words to mean what *Legge* translates : 'if it cannot be obtained' viz. 'if it is not possible to act in the aforesaid manner' instead of 'if they cannot be obtained'.

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poverty and meanness. How can the word 'obtaining' be used with reference to poverty and meanness ? Therefore the passage ought to read as follows :

'Poverty and meanness are what people dislike. If they cannot be avoided in the proper way, they should not be avoided'.

Avoiding is the proper word, not obtaining. Obtaining is used of obtaining. Now there is avoiding, how can it be called obtaining ? Only in regard to riches and honour we can speak of obtaining. How so ? By obtaining riches and honour one avoids poverty and meanness. Then how can poverty and meanness be avoided in the proper way ? — By purifying themselves and keeping in the proper way officials acquire rank and emoluments, wealth and honour, and by obtaining these they avoid poverty and meanness.

How are poverty and meanness avoided not in the proper way ? — If anybody feels so vexed and annoyed with poverty and meanness, that he has recourse to brigandage and robbery for the purpose of amassing money and valuables, and usurps official emoluments, then he does not keep in the proper way.

Since the Seventy Disciples did not ask any question regarding the passage under discussion, the literati of to-day are likewise incapable of raising any objection.

If the meaning of this utterance is not explained, nor the words made clear, we would have to say that *Confucius* could not <sup>p1.397</sup> speak properly. As long as the meaning continues unravelled, and the words unexplained, the admonition of *Confucius* remains incomprehensible. Why did his disciples not ask, and people now say nothing ?

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'*Confucius* said of *Kung Yeh Ch'ang* that he might be wived and that, although he was put in bonds, he was not guilty. Accordingly he gave him his daughter to wife' <sup>1</sup>.

I ask what was the idea of *Confucius*, when he gave a wife to *Kung Yeh Chang*. Did he think him fit to marry, because he was thirty years old, or on

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects V, 1 \[Couvreur\]](#).



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account of his excellent conduct ? If he had his thirty years in view, he should not have spoken of his being in fetters, and if he looked upon his conduct, there was no occasion either for mentioning his imprisonment. Why ? Because all who joined the school of *Confucius* were well-behaved. Therefore they were called accomplished followers. If among these followers one or the other was unmarried, he might have been married, but it need not be mentioned. If among the disciples many unmarried ones existed and *Kung Yeh Ch'ang* was the most virtuous of them, and should therefore *Confucius* have given him a wife alone, then in praising him *Confucius* ought to have enumerated his deeds instead of speaking of his imprisonment. There are not a few persons in the world, who suffer violence without being guilty, but they are not perfect sages therefore. Of ordinary people who are wronged, there are a great many, not only one. If *Confucius* made an innocent man his son-in-law, he selected not a virtuous man, but one who had suffered injustice. The only praise *Confucius* had for *Kung Yeh Ch'ang* was his innocence ; of his doings or his qualities he said not a word. If in fact he was not virtuous, and *Confucius* made him his son-in-law, he did wrong, and if he was virtuous indeed, but *Confucius* in praising him did not mention it, he was wrong likewise. It was like his giving a wife to *Nan Yung* <sup>1</sup>, of whom he said that 'if the country were well-governed, he would not be out of office, and if it were ill-governed, he would escape punishment and disgrace' <sup>2</sup>, a praise which left nothing to be desired <sup>3</sup>.

p1.398 The Master said to *Tse Kung*,

— Which of you two, yourself or *Hui* is superior ?

*Tse Kung* replied,

— How dare I compare myself with *Hui* ? If *Hui* hears one point, he knows therefrom ten others. If I hear one, I know but two.

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<sup>1</sup> *Confucius* gave *Nan Yung* the daughter of his elder brother to wife.

<sup>2</sup> [Analects V, 1 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>3</sup> *Wang Ch'ung's* objections are again far-fetched and groundless. The words of *Confucius* imply that *Kung Yeh Ch'ang's* character was so excellent and above suspicion, that *Confucius* would not doubt him, even if he were condemned by the world and treated like a criminal, and therefore he made him his son-in-law.

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The Master said

— Not equal to him. I and you together cannot compare with him <sup>1</sup>.

Thus with a view to setting forth the excellence of *Yen Hui* this question was put to *Tse Kung*. This calls for the following remark :

That which *Confucius* propounded was propriety and modesty. *Tse Lu* would govern a State with propriety, but his words were not modest, therefore *Confucius* criticized him <sup>2</sup>. Had *Tse Kung* really been superior to *Hui*, he would, on being asked by *Confucius*, have replied nevertheless that he was not equal to him, and had he been inferior in fact, he would likewise have owned to his inferiority. In the first case the answer would not have been wrong or a deception of the Master, for propriety and modesty require depreciatory and humble words.

What was the purport of this inquiry of *Confucius* ? If he was aware that *Yen Hui* surpassed *Tse Kung*, he did not need to ask the latter, and if he really did not know, and therefore asked *Tse Kung*, he would not have learned it in this way either, for *Tse Kung* was bound to give a modest and humble reply. If *Confucius* merely wanted to eulogise *Hui* and praise his virtue, there were many other disciples not enjoying the same fame, why must he just ask *Tse Kung* ?

The Master said,

— Admirable indeed was the virtue of *Hui* ! <sup>3</sup>

and further,

— I have talked with *Hui* for a whole day, and he has not made any objection, as if he were stupid <sup>4</sup>

and,

— Such was *Hui*, that for three months there would be nothing in his mind contrary to perfect virtue <sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects V, 8 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> [Analects XI, 11 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>3</sup> [Analects VI, 9 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>4</sup> [Analects II, 9 \[Couvreur\]](#).

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In all these three chapters *Hui* is praised directly, but not at the cost of any other person, why then must *Tse Kung* in one chapter serve to him as a foil ?

Somebody might think that *Confucius* wanted to snub *Tse Kung*. At that time the fame of *Tse Kung* was greater than that of *Yen Hui*. *Confucius* apprehensive, lest *Tse Kung* should become too conceited and overbearing, wanted to humble him.

If his name ranked above that of *Hui*, it was a simple fact at that time, but not brought about by *Tse Kung's* endeavours to <sup>p1.399</sup> supersede his rival. How could the judgment of *Tse Kung* have affected the case ? Even supposing that, in case *Yen Hui's* talents were superior to his, he had submitted of his own accord, there was no necessity for any snubbing. If *Tse Kung* could not know it himself, he would, notwithstanding anything *Confucius* might have said, have been convinced that the latter only wanted to humble him, and in that case questioning or no questioning would have neither humbled nor related him.

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*Tsai Wo* being asleep during the day time, the Master said,

— Rotten wood cannot be carved ; a wall of dirty earth will not receive the trowel. But what is the use of my reproving *Tsai Wo* <sup>2</sup> !

For sleeping during the day *Tsai Wo* was reprimanded in this way.

Sleeping during day time is a small evil. Rotten wood and dirty earth are things in such a state of decay, that they cannot be repaired, and must be regarded as great evils. If a small evil is censured, as though it were a great one, the person in question would not submit to such a judgment. If *Tsai Wo's* character was as bad as rotten wood or dirty earth, he ought not to have been admitted to the school of *Confucius* nor rank in one of the four classes of disciples <sup>3</sup>. In case his character was good however, *Confucius*

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects VI, 5 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> [Analects V, 9 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>3</sup> The four classes into which the ten principal disciples of *Confucius* were divided according to their special abilities : virtue, eloquence, administrative talents, and literary acquirements. *Tsai Wo* belongs to the second class of the able speakers together with *Tse Kung*. Cf. [Analects XI, 2 \[Couvreur\]](#).

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dealt too harshly with him.

If a man is not virtuous, and you carry your dislike of him to extremes, he will recalcitrate <sup>1</sup>.

The dislike shown by *Confucius* for *Tsai Wo* has been, so to say, too strong. Provided that common and ignorant people had committed some smaller punishable offence, and the judge condemned them to capital punishment, would they suffer the wrong, and complain of the injustice, or would they quietly submit, and consider themselves guilty? Had *Tsai Wo* been an ignorant man, his feelings would have been the same with those people guilty of some offence; being a worthy, he must have understood a reproof of *Confucius*, and have reformed at the slightest remark. An open word was sufficient <sup>p1.400</sup> to enlighten him, whereas an exaggeration would have missed its mark. At the first allusion he would already have reformed. That however did not depend on the strength of the language used, but on *Tsai Wo's* ability to change.

The scheme of the '*Ch'un Ch'iu*' is to point out any small goodness, and to censure small wrongs <sup>2</sup>. But if *Confucius* praised small deserts in high terms, and censured trifling wrongs immoderately, would *Tsai Wo* having the scheme of the *Ch'un Ch'iu* in view agree with such criticism? If not, he would not accept it, and the words of *Confucius* would be lost.

The words of a Sage must tally with his writings. His words come from his mouth, and his writings are in his books, but both flow from the heart, and are the same in substance. When *Confucius* composed the '*Ch'un Ch'iu*' he did not censure small things, as if they were very important, but in reproving *Tsai Wo* he condemned a small offence in the same manner as an enormous crime. His words and his writings disagree. How should they convince a man?

The Master said,

— At first my way with men was to hear their words, and to give them credit for their conduct. Now my way is to hear their words,

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects VIII, 10 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> This is professedly the aim of the '*Ch'un-ch'iu*' or 'Spring and Autumn' Record, the only classical work, of which *Confucius* claims the authorship.

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and look at their conduct. It is from *Tsai Wo* that I have learnt to make this change <sup>1</sup>.

That is from the time, when *Tsai Wo* was asleep in the day time, he changed his method of studying men. But one may well ask, how can a man's sleeping during the day time spoil his character, and how can a man of bad conduct become good by not sleeping day or night? Is it possible to learn anything about people's goodness or badness from their sleeping during the day time?

Amongst the disciples of *Confucius* in the four classes *Tsai Wo* took precedence over *Tse Kung*. If he was so lazy, that nothing could be made out of his character, how could he advance so far? If *Tsai Wo* reached such a degree of perfection notwithstanding his sleeping during the day, his talents must have been far superior to those of ordinary people. Supposing that he had not yet reached the goal, but was under the impression that he had done enough, he did not know better himself. That was a lack of knowledge, but his conduct was not bad. He only wanted some enlightenment, but to change the method of studying men for that reason was superfluous.

p1.401 Let us assume that *Tsai Wo* was conscious of his deficiencies, but felt so exhausted, that he fell asleep during day time. That was a relaxation of his vital force. This exhaustion may increase to such a degree, that death ensues and not only sleep <sup>2</sup>.

As regards the method of judging human character by taking into consideration the actions, the words are disregarded, and by laying all stress on words, the conduct is left out of consideration. Now although *Tsai Wo* was not very energetic in his actions, his words were well worth hearing. There is a class of men who speak very well, but whose deeds are not quite satisfactory. From the time that *Tsai Wo* slept during the day, *Confucius* began to hear the words, and look at the conduct, and only in case they both corresponded, called a man virtuous. That means to say, he wanted a perfect man, but how does that agree with his principle that perfection must not be

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects V, 9 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> *Tsai Wo* could no more be made responsible for his bodily weakness, than for his death.

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expected from one man <sup>1</sup> ?

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*Tse Chang* asked saying,

— The minister *Tse Wên* <sup>2</sup> thrice took office, and manifested no joy in his countenance. Thrice he retired from office, and manifested no displeasure. He made it a point to inform the new minister of the way in which he had conducted the government ; — what do you say of him ?

The Master replied,

— He was loyal.

— Was he benevolent ?

— I do not know. How can he be pronounced benevolent <sup>3</sup> ? *Tse Wên* recommended *Tse Yü* of *Ch'u* as his successor. *Tse Yü* attacked *Sung* with a hundred war-chariots, but was defeated and lost most of his men <sup>4</sup>. If *Tse Wên* was ignorant like that, how could he be considered benevolent ?

My question is this. When *Tse Wên* recommended *Tse Yü*, he did not know him, but wisdom has nothing to do with virtue. Ignorance does not preclude benevolent deeds. There are the five virtues : benevolence, justice, propriety, intelligence, and truth, but these five are separate, and not necessarily combined. Thus there are intelligent men, benevolent men, there are the well-mannered, and the just. The truthful must not always be intelligent, or the intelligent, benevolent, the benevolent, well-mannered, or the well-mannered, just. *Tse Wên's* intelligence was obfuscated by *Tse Yü*, p1.402 but how did his benevolence suffer therefrom ? Consequently it is not right to say, 'How can he be pronounced benevolent ?'

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects XIII, 15 \[Couvreur\]](#) and [XVIII, 10 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> A minister of the *Ch'u* State.

<sup>3</sup> [Analects V, 18 \[Couvreur\]](#). The following words of *Confucius* are omitted in our *Analects*.

<sup>4</sup> This battle took place in 632 B. C. It is described in the *Tso-chuan* Book V, 27 (Duke *Hsi* 27th year) [[Couvreur](#), § 5].

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Moreover loyal means generous, and generosity is benevolence. *Confucius* said,

— By observing a man's faults it may be known that he is benevolent <sup>1</sup>.

*Tse Wên* possessed true benevolence. If *Confucius* says that loyalty is not benevolence, he might as well assert that father and mother are not the two parents, or that husband and wife are not a pair.

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The duke *Ai* <sup>2</sup> asked which of the disciples loved to learn. *Confucius* replied to him,

— There was *Yen Hui*. He did not vent his anger on others, nor did he twice commit the same fault. Alas ! his fate was short and he died ; and now there is none. I have not yet heard of any one who loves to learn <sup>3</sup>.

What was really the cause of *Yen Hui's* death ? It is, of course, attributed to his short fate, which would correspond to *Po Niu's* sickness <sup>4</sup>. All living men have received their fate, which is complete, and must be clean <sup>5</sup>. Now there being the evil disease of *Po Niu* <sup>6</sup>, one says that he had no fate <sup>7</sup>. Those who remain alive, must have been endowed with a long fate. If a person has obtained a short fate, we should likewise say that he has no fate. Provided that heaven's fate can be short or long, it also must be good or bad. Speaking of *Yen Hui's* short fate, one can speak likewise of *Po Niu's* bad fate. Saying that *Po Niu* had no fate, one must admit that *Yen Hui* had no fate either. One died, the other was diseased ; *Confucius* pitied them both, and called it fate. The thing which is derived from heaven is the same, but it is not given the

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects IV, 7 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> Duke *Ai* of *Lu*, 494-468 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> [Analects VI, 2 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>4</sup> [Analects VI, 8 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>5</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* understands by fate something material, not a decree. Cf. Chap. 12 and 6.

<sup>6</sup> Leprosy. Cf. p. 1.165.

<sup>7</sup> Fate is a pure substance pervading the body, which cannot excite a foul disease like leprosy.

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same name, for which I do not see any apparent reason <sup>1</sup>.

p1.403 Duke *Ai* asked *Confucius* who loved to learn. *Confucius* replied,

— There was *Yen Hui* who loved to learn, but now there is none. He did not vent his anger on others nor commit the same fault twice.

Why did *Confucius* say so ?

There are those who presume that *Confucius* wished to add a criticism on Duke *Ai*'s character, and that therefore he spoke of the venting of anger and committing faults twice. Sticking to the duke's inquiry, he gave him this reply, thereby at the same time censuring the duke's short-comings, but without committing himself.

However *K'ang Tse* <sup>2</sup> likewise asked about the love of learning, and *Confucius* in his answer also indicated *Yen Hui* <sup>3</sup>. *K'ang Tse* had his faults as well, why did *Confucius* not answer so as to reprove *K'ang Tse* too ? *K'ang Tse* was not a sage, his doings were not without fault. In fact *K'ang Tse* was distressed about the number of thieves. *Confucius* replied,

— If you, sir, were not covetous, although you should reward them to do it, they would not steal <sup>1</sup>.

This shows that *K'ang Tse*'s weak point was his covetousness. Why did not *Confucius* attack it ?

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*Confucius* having visited *Nan Tse*, *Tse Lu* was displeased, on which the Master said,

— If I have done a wicked thing, may Heaven fall down on me, may Heaven fall down on me ! <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The entire polemic is against the expression 'short fate' used by *Confucius*, who takes fate in the usual acceptance of decree, or appointment of heaven. *Wang Ch'ung* from his materialistic point of view argues, that fate is always complete and pure, and that there can be no long or short one. The premature death of *Yen Hui* and the disease of *Po Niu* are not fate at all.

<sup>2</sup> The head of the *Chi* family in *Lu*.

<sup>3</sup> [Analects XI, 6 \[Couvreur\]](#).



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*Nan Tse* was the wife of Duke *Ling* of *Wei* <sup>3</sup>. She had invited *Confucius*. *Tse Lu* was displeased and suspected *Confucius* of having had illicit intercourse with her. In order to exculpate himself *Confucius* said,

— If I have done any thing disgraceful, may Heaven crush me.

To prove his perfect sincerity he swore that he did not deceive *Tse Lu*.

I ask : by thus exonerating himself, does *Confucius* really clear himself ? If it had happened once that Heaven fell down, and killed people for having perpetrated any disgraceful act, *Confucius* might allude to, and swear by it. *Tse Lu* would most probably believe him then, and he would be whitewashed. Now, nobody has ever <sup>p1.404</sup> been crushed by Heaven. Would therefore *Tse Lu* believe in an oath to the effect that Heaven might fall down on him ?

It happens sometimes that a man is killed by lightning, drowned by water, burned by fire, or crushed by the tumbling wall of a house. Had *Confucius* said 'May the lightning strike me, the water drown me, the fire burn me, or a wall crush me', *Tse Lu* would undoubtedly have believed him, but instead of that he swore before *Tse Lu* by a disaster, which has never before happened. How could this dispel *Tse Lu's* doubts, and make him believe ?

Sometimes people are crushed while asleep, before they awake. Can we say that Heaven crushed them ? All those who are crushed in their sleep, before they awake, have not of necessity done some dishonest deed. Though not far advanced in philosophy, yet *Tse Lu* knew how to distinguish the truth of a thing. *Confucius* swearing by something unreal *Tse Lu* would assuredly not have got rid of his doubts.

*Confucius* asserted that life and death were fate, and that wealth and honour depended on Heaven <sup>4</sup>. Accordingly human life can be long or short, which has nothing to do with human actions, goodness or badness. In fact

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects XII, 18 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> [Analects VI, 26 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>3</sup> A most disreputable woman, guilty of incest with her half-brother, Prince *Chou* of *Sung*. The commentators take great pains to whitewash *Confucius*, who called upon this unworthy princess. What induced her to invite the Sage, and him to accept the invitation, is not known. Various conjectures have been put forward.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 1.136.

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*Yen Hui* died prematurely, and *Confucius* spoke of his short fate <sup>1</sup>. Are we entitled to conclude therefrom that people whose fate is short and who die young, must have done something wrong ?

Although *Tse Lu* was not yet very proficient in philosophy, yet from the words of *Confucius* he knew the real meaning of life and death. *Confucius* swore that, if he had done anything dishonest, Heaven might crush him instead of telling *Tse Lu* that he was only under the rule of fate, for how could Heaven fall down upon him and kill him, before the appointed time of his death had come ? Thus on taking his oath before *Tse Lu* that Heaven might crash him, he could not expect to find credence, and in that case the exculpation of *Confucius* would have been no exculpation.

The *Shuking* <sup>2</sup> says,

Be not as arrogant as *Tan Chu* <sup>3</sup>, who only liked to saunter idly about.

Thus the Emperor *Shun* admonished *Yü* not to treat an unworthy son like a son, and to pay attention to the commands of Heaven. He was alarmed, lest *Yü* should be partial to his son, therefore he adduced *Tan Chu* as an example calculated to deter him. But *Yü* replied <sup>4</sup> :

— I had my marriage p1.405 on the *hsing, jen, kwei, and chia* days. When the cries and whines of my son were first heard, I did not treat him like my son.

He related something that had happened, from the past forecasting the future, and deducting what could not be seen from that which was apparent. Thus he demonstrated that he would not venture to show partiality for an unworthy son. He did not say : 'May Heaven fall down on me', knowing very well that common people in swearing like to invoke Heaven.

When *Tse Lu* suspected the actions of *Confucius*, the latter did not refer to his conduct in the past to prove that he had done nothing reproachable, but

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.151.

<sup>2</sup> *Shuking, Yi-chi*, Pt. II, Bk. IV, 1 (*Legge* Vol. III, Pt. I, p. 84).

<sup>3</sup> *Yao's* son.

<sup>4</sup> *Shuking loc. cit.*

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said that Heaven might crush him. How does he differ from common people, who for the purpose of dispelling a doubt will solemnly protest by Heaven ?

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*Confucius* said :

— The phœnix does not come ; the River sends forth no Plan : it is all over with me <sup>1</sup> !

The Master felt distressed that he did not become emperor. As emperor he would have brought about perfect peace. At such a time the phœnix would have made its appearance, and the Plan would have emerged from the Yellow River <sup>2</sup>. Now he did not obtain imperial authority, therefore there were no auspicious portents either, and *Confucius* felt sick at heart and distressed. Hence his words : 'It is all over with me !'

My question is : Which after all are the necessary conditions preceding the appearance of the phœnix and the Plan of the River, which though fulfilled, did not bring about their arrival <sup>3</sup> ? If it be perfect peace, it may be urged that not all the emperors, under whose reign perfect peace prevailed, attracted the phœnix or the Plan of the River.

The Five Emperors and the Three Rulers <sup>4</sup> all brought about perfect peace, but comparing their omens, we find that they had not all the phœnix as an indispensable attribute. During the time of perfect peace the phœnix is not a necessary omen. That *Confucius*, a sage, should have longed so much for something that was not at all indispensable, and that he worried himself, is not right.

<sup>p1.406</sup> Somebody might object that *Confucius* did not sorrow, because he was not appointed emperor, but that, when he felt so sad, there was no wise ruler, and that therefore he did not find employment. The phœnix and the Plan of the River are omens of a wise ruler. As long as they are absent, there is no wise ruler, and without a wise ruler *Confucius* had no chance of finding

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects IX, 8 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> On the Plan of the Yellow River *vid.* p.294 Note 1.

<sup>3</sup> In the case of *Confucius*.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 1.138.

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employment.

How are these auguries called forth ? By appointing wise and able men the government is set right, and great success obtained. Then the omens appear. After they have made their appearance, there is no further need for a *Confucius*. Why has *Confucius* only the end in view <sup>1</sup> ? He does not think of the first steps <sup>2</sup>, and solely sees the end, does not assist a king as minister, but speaks of those portents <sup>3</sup>. The government not being in order, those things, of course, do not become visible.

To conclude from their arrival that there must be a wise ruler, would also be a mistake. The emperor *Hsiao Wên Ti* <sup>4</sup> deserved the name of a wise ruler, yet in his annals <sup>5</sup> we find nothing about a phœnix or the Plan of the River. Had *Confucius* lived under *Hsiao Wên Ti* he would likewise have complained : 'It is all over with me !'

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The Master was expressing a wish to live among the Nine Wild Tribes of the east. Some one said,

— They are brutish. How can you do such a thing ?

The Master said,

— If a superior man dwelt among them, what brutality would there be <sup>6</sup> ?

*Confucius* felt annoyed, because his doctrine did not find its way into China. This loss of his hopes roused his anger, and made him wish to emigrate to the Wild Tribes. Some one remonstrated, asking, how he could do such a thing, since the savages were brutish and unmannerly. To which

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<sup>1</sup> The time when the lucky omens become visible.

<sup>2</sup> The steps to secure a wise government and perfect peace, which must have been successful, ere the phœnix and the Plan will come forward.

<sup>3</sup> Wishing to behold those auspicious portents, *Confucius* ought first to have instituted an excellent administration, as minister of the reigning sovereign. He sees the result, but overlooks the causes.

<sup>4</sup> The *Han* emperor whose reign lasted from 179-156 B. C.

<sup>5</sup> In the *Shi-chi*.

<sup>6</sup> [Analects IX, 13 \[Couvreur\]](#).

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*Confucius* retorted by saying,

— If a superior man dwelt among them, what brutality would there be ?,

which means to say that, if a superior man were <sup>p1.407</sup> living among them and imparting his doctrine, there would be no more rudeness.

How did *Confucius* conceive the idea of going to the Nine Tribes ? — Because his doctrine did not spread in China, he wished to go there. But if China was no field for it, how could it have spread among the savages ?

The rude tribes of the east and north with their princes are still not equal to China without princes <sup>1</sup>.

That shows that things which are easily managed in China are very difficult among the savages. Can then something which has failed, where everything is easy, be carried through, where everything is difficult ?

Furthermore, *Confucius* said,

— If a superior man dwelt among them, how came one to speak of brutality.

Does that mean that the superior man keeps his culture for himself, or that he imparts it ? Should he keep it closed up in his bosom, he might do that in China as well, and need not go to the savages for that purpose. If, however, he should instruct the savages in it, how could they be taught ?

*Yü* visited the State of the Naked People. He was naked himself, while he stayed with them, and only when he left, he put on his clothes again. The habit of wearing clothes did not take root among the wild tribes. *Yü* was unable to teach the Naked People to wear clothes, how could *Confucius* make superior men of the Nine Tribes ?

Perhaps *Confucius*, as a matter of fact, did not wish to go to the wild tribes after all, but grieved that his doctrine was not accepted, he merely said so in angry mood. Or, when some one remonstrated, he knew pretty well that the wild tribes were barbarians, but nevertheless he said,

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects III, 5 \[Couvreur\]](#).

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— What brutality would there be ?,

insisting on having his own way and warding off the attack of his interlocutor. If he really did not want to go, but said so out of disgust, he did not tell the truth.

What the superior man requires, is just that in his words there may be nothing incorrect' <sup>1</sup>.

If *Confucius* knew that the wild tribes were uncivilized, but at all costs insisted on being right, this was like the discussion of *Tse Lu* with *Confucius* about *Tse Kao*.

*Tse Lu* got *Tse Kao* <sup>2</sup> appointed governor of *Pi* <sup>3</sup>. The Master said,

— You are injuring a man's son.

*Tse Lu* replied,

— There <sup>p1.408</sup> are the spirits of the land and grain, and there are the people. Why must one read books, before he can be considered to have learned ?

The Master said,

— It is on this account that I hate your glib-tongued people <sup>4</sup>.

*Tse Lu* knew that one must not give an inconsiderate answer in order to have one's own way. *Confucius* was displeased with him, and compared him with those glib-tongued people. He likewise knew the impropriety of such replies, but he and *Tse Lu* gave both glib-tongued answers.

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*Confucius* said,

— *Tse* <sup>5</sup> did not receive <sup>1</sup> Heaven's decree, but his goods are increased by him, and his calculations are generally correct <sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects XIII, 3 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> The disciple *Kao Tse Kao*.

<sup>3</sup> A city in *Shantung*.

<sup>4</sup> [Analects XI, 24 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>5</sup> *Tse Kung*.

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What does he mean by saying that *Tse* did not receive Heaven's decree ? One might suppose that he received the fate that he should become rich, and by his own method knew beforehand, what was going to happen, and in his calculation did not miss the right moment. Now, does wealth and honour depend on Heaven's appointment or on human knowledge ? In the first case nobody could obtain them by his own knowledge or cleverness, if, on the other hand, men were the chief agents, why does *Confucius* say that life and death are fate, and wealth and honour depend on heaven <sup>3</sup> ?

If we admit that wealth can be acquired by knowing the proper way without receiving Heaven's decree, then honour also can be won through personal energy without fate. But in this world there is nobody who has won honour quite by himself without a heavenly order to that effect. Hence we learn that we cannot acquire wealth by ourselves, unless we have received Heaven's order.

p1.409 In fact *Confucius* did not acquire wealth and honour. He wandered about, hoping that his services would be required. Having exhausted all his wisdom in remonstrating with the princes and being at his wits' end, he went home, and fixed the text of the *Shiking* and the *Shuking*. His hopes were gone, and expectations he had none. He said that it was all over with him <sup>4</sup>, for he was well aware that his destiny was not to be rich and honoured, and that all his travels could not supply this want. *Confucius* knew that he had not received the destiny of a man who will become exalted, and that searching for honour on his travels, he would never find it. Yet he maintained that *T'se* was not destined to be rich, but acquired wealth by his astuteness. The words and the actions of *Confucius* disagree, one does not know why.

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<sup>1</sup> We must translate here 'receive', and not 'acquiesce', as *Legge* does, relying on the commentators. 'Acquiesce' gives no sense here, as can be seen by comparing *Hutchinson's* translation, *China Review* Vol. VII, p. 169. Moreover, 'receive' is in accordance with *Wang Ch'ung's* system. Throughout his work he speaks of 'receiving the fate'. *Hutchinson* has felt, that 'receive' is the proper word here — *vid.* his note to p. 170 *loc. cit.* — but is overawed by *Legge* and the commentators. We must bear in mind that *Wang Ch'ung* very frequently puts another construction on the words of the Sage than other commentators.

<sup>2</sup> [Analects XI, 18](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 1.136.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. above p. 1.405.

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Some say that he wished to attack the faults of *Tse Kung*, who did not care much for the right doctrine or virtue, but only for the increase of his wealth. *Confucius* therefore reproved his fault, wishing to induce him to comply entirely, and to change his conduct. Combating *Tse Kung's* shortcomings he might say that he did not love the doctrine or virtue, but only his wealth, but why must he assert that he had not received the fate, which is in opposition to his former utterance that wealth and honour depend on Heaven ?

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When *Yen Yuan* died, the Master said :

— Alas ! Heaven is destroying me ! Heaven is destroying me <sup>1</sup> !

This means that, when a man is to rise, Heaven gives him a support, whereas, when his destruction is impending, he deprives him of his assistance. *Confucius* had four friends, by whom he hoped to rise <sup>2</sup>, but *Yen Yuan* died prematurely. Therefore his exclamation : 'Heaven is destroying me !'

One may ask : Did *Yen Yuan* die, because *Confucius* did not become an emperor, snatched away by Heaven, or did he die an untimely death of himself, his allotted span being so short ? — If he died prematurely, because his appointed time was short, he was bound to die, and even if *Confucius* had become an emperor, he would not have remained alive.

p1.410 The support of a man is like a stick, on which a sick person is leaning. A sick man requires a stick to walk. Now, let the stick be shortened by cutting off a piece, can we say then that Heaven compelled the sick man not to walk any more ? If he could rise still, could the short stick be lengthened again ? *Yen Yuan's* short life is like the shortness of the stick.

*Confucius* said that Heaven was destroying him, because *Yen Yuan* was a worthy <sup>3</sup>. But worthies in life must not necessarily act as supporters of

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects XI, 8 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> These four friends were : *Yen Yuan*, *Tse Kung*, *Tse Chang*, and *Tse Lu*, all his disciples.

<sup>3</sup> As a worthy, a degree of excellence next to sagehood, he would have assisted



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somebody, just as sages do not always receive Heaven's special appointment. Among the emperors there are many who are not sages, and their ministers are very often not worthies. Why ? Because fate and externals <sup>1</sup> are different from man's talents. On this principle it was by no means certain that *Yen Yuan*, had he been alive, would have become the supporter of *Confucius*, or that by his death he ruined *Confucius*. What proof had the latter then for his assertion that Heaven was destroying him ?

What was Heaven's idea after all that it did not make *Confucius* emperor ? Did it not appoint him, when he received his life and his fate, or was it going to appoint him, but repented afterwards ? If originally he was not appointed, what harm could be done by *Yen Yuan's* death ? If he was first chosen for the imperial dignity, and this scheme was abandoned later on, no externals came into question, and the decision rested solely with Heaven. And then which good acts of *Confucius* did Heaven see to make him emperor, and which bad ones did it hear subsequently, that it changed its mind, and did not invest him ? The Spirit of Heaven must have erred in his deliberations and not have made the necessary investigations.

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When *Confucius* went to *Wei*, the funeral rites of a former land-lord of his were just going on there. He stepped into the house and wept, and, when he came out, he ordered *Tse Kung* to unharness one outside horse, and give it as a present. *Tse Kung* remarked :

— At the death of your disciple, you did not unharness a horse, but do it now for an old land-lord. Is that not too much ?

p1.411 *Confucius* replied,

— When I just now went in, I wept, and overwhelmed with grief, went out, and cried. I cannot bear the idea that my tears should

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*Confucius* in his brilliant career.

<sup>1</sup> In externals *viz.* the osseous structure and the physiognomy of an individual his fate becomes manifest. Cf. Chap. 11. But fate by no means corresponds to talents and virtue.

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not be accompanied by something. Therefore, my son, do as I told you <sup>1</sup>.

*Confucius* unharnessed his horse, and gave it away for the old lodging-house keeper, because he could not bear the thought that his feelings should not be accompanied by some act of courtesy. Along with such feelings politeness must be shown. When his feelings are touched, a man is moved to kindness. Courtesy and emotion must correspond. A superior man at least will act in that way.

When *Yen Yuan* died, the Master bewailed him, and was deeply moved. His disciples said to him :

— Master, you are deeply moved.

He replied :

— If I were not deeply moved at this man's demise, at whose should I be <sup>2</sup> ?

Such deep emotion is the climax of grief. Bewailing *Yen Yuan* his emotion was different from that of all the other pupils. Grief is the greatest sorrow. — When *Yen Yuan* died, his coffin had no outer shell. *Yen Lu* <sup>3</sup> begged the carriage of the Master to sell and get an outer shell for the coffin, but *Confucius* did not give it, because a high officer could not walk afoot <sup>4</sup>. Mourning over the old lodging-house keeper, he unharnessed a horse to give it away as a present, because he did not like that his tears should not be accompanied by some gift. Bewailing *Yen Yuan* he was deeply moved, yet, when asked, he declined to give his carriage away, so that his emotion had no counterpart in his actions. What difference is there between tears and emotion, or between a horse and a carriage ? In one case politeness and sentiment were in harmony, in the other kindness and right feeling did not correspond. We do not see clearly what *Confucius'* ideas about politeness were.

*Confucius* said,

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<sup>1</sup> Quotation from the *Li-ki, T'an Kung* ([Legge's transl. Vol. I, p. 136](#)).

<sup>2</sup> [Analects XI, 9 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>3</sup> The father of *Yen Yuan*.

<sup>4</sup> [Analects XI, 7 \[Couvreur\]](#).

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— There was *Li* ; when he died, he had a coffin, but no outer shell.  
I would not walk on foot to get a shell for him <sup>1</sup>.

The love for *Li* must have been deeper than that for *Yen Yuan*. When *Li* died, he got no shell, because it was not becoming for a high officer to walk on foot. *Li* was the son of *Confucius*, *Yen Yuan* bore another surname. When the son died, he did not receive that present, how much less had a man of another name a right to it ?

p1.412 Then this would be a proof of the real kindness of *Confucius*. If he showed himself affectionate towards his old land-lord, whereas his kindness did not extend to his son, was it perhaps, because previously he was an inferior official, and afterwards a high officer ? When he was an inferior official first, as such he could ride in a carriage with two horses, as a high officer he would drive with three. A high officer could not do without his carriage and walk on foot, but why did he not sell two horses to get a shell, and drive with the remaining one ? When he was an official, he rode in a carriage with two horses, and parted with one for the sake of the old lodging-house keeper. Why did he not part with two now to show his kindness, only keeping one to avoid walking on foot ?

Had he not given away one horse as a present for the old lodging-house keeper, he would not have transgressed any statute, but by burying his son with a coffin, but without a shell he committed an offence against propriety, and showed a disregard for custom. *Confucius*' attached great importance to the present, which he was kind enough to make to the old man, and treated the funeral ceremonies for his son very lightly. Honour was shown to a stranger, but the rites were neglected in the case of his own son. Since *Confucius* did not sell his carriage to get a shell for *Li*, he cannot clear himself of the reproach of being an office-hunter, who was afraid of being without his carriage. And yet he has maintained himself that a superior man 'will even sacrifice his life to preserve his virtue complete' <sup>2</sup>. Could it then be so difficult to give up one's dignity in order to preserve propriety ?

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<sup>1</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> [Analects XV, 8 \[Couvreur\]](#).

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*Tse Kung* asked about government. The Master said,

— The requisites of government are that there be a sufficiency of food, a sufficiency of military equipment, and the confidence of the people in their ruler.

*Tse Kung* said,

— If it cannot be helped, and one of these must be dispensed with, which of the three should be foregone first ?

— The military equipment, said the Master.

*Tse Kung* again asked,

— If it cannot be helped, and one of the remaining two must be dispensed with, which of them should be foregone ?

The Master answered :

— Part with the food. From of old, death has been the lot of all men ; but if the people have no faith in their rulers, there is no standing for the State <sup>1</sup>.

Faith is the most important of all.

<sup>p1.413</sup> Now, if a State has no food, so that the people must starve, they care no more for propriety and righteousness. Those being neglected, how can confidence still be maintained ?

It has been said that, as long as the granaries are full, people observe the rules of propriety, and that, while they have sufficiency of clothing and food, they know what honour and shame is. Charity is the upshot of abundance, and mutual fighting the result of privation. Now, provided that there is nothing to live on, how could faith be preserved ?

During the *Ch'un-ch'iu* period the contending States were famine-stricken. People changed their sons in order to eat them, and broke their bones for fuel

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects XII, 7](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

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to cook with <sup>1</sup>. Starving and without food, they had no time to trouble about kindness or justice. The love between father and son is based on faith, yet in times of famine faith is thrown away, and the sons are used as food. How could *Confucius* tell *Tse Kung* that food might be foregone, but that faith ought to be preserved ? If there is no faith, but food, though unsought, faith will groom, whereas, if there is no food, but faith, it cannot be upheld, though we may strive for it.

When the Master went to *Wei*, *Jan Yu* <sup>2</sup> acted as driver of his carriage. The Master observed,

— How numerous are the people !

*Jan Yu* said :

— Since they are so numerous, what more could be done for them ?

— Enrich them, was the reply.

— And when they have been enriched, what more could be done ?

The Master said :

— Teach them <sup>3</sup>.

Speaking with *Jan Yu*, *Confucius* placed wealth first and instruction after, but he told *Tse Kung* that food might be dispensed with, provided there was faith. What difference is there between food and wealth, faith and instruction ? Both scholars received different answers. The object prized most was not the same in both cases. The opinions of *Confucius* about political economy cannot have been very well settled.

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*Chü Po Yü* <sup>4</sup> sent a messenger to *Confucius*, who questioned him what his

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.159.

<sup>2</sup> A disciple of *Confucius*.

<sup>3</sup> [Analects XIII, 9 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>4</sup> A disciple of *Confucius* in *Wei*, with whom he lodged. After *Confucius'* return to *Lu*, he sent the messenger to make friendly inquiries.

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master was doing. The messenger replied,

— My master is anxious to make his faults few, but cannot succeed.

p1.414 He then went out, and *Confucius* said,

— This messenger ! This messenger <sup>1</sup> !

This is a reproach. Those discussing the *Analects* hold that *Confucius* reproves him for his humility on behalf of another <sup>2</sup>.

*Confucius* inquired of the messenger what his master was doing, he asked about his business, not about his conduct. The messenger ought to have replied to this question of *Confucius* : 'My master does such and such a thing', or, 'is occupied with such and such a government affair', instead of saying : 'My master is anxious to make his faults few, but cannot succeed'. How do we know but that in his reply he missed the point of the question, and that it was to this that *Confucius* took exception ? What did *Confucius* really reproach the messenger for ? Because he spoke humbly on another's behalf, or because in his reply he missed the point ?

The blame referred to something definite, but *Confucius* did not make clear his fault merely saying : 'This messenger ! This messenger !' In later ages people began to have their doubts as to wherein the messenger had failed. *Han Fei Tse* says : 'If the style be too terse, it will prove a cause of dispute for the disciples'.

How concise is *Confucius*' remark : 'This messenger !'

Some say that the idea of the 'Spring and Autumn' <sup>3</sup> was to keep a respectful silence on the faults of worthies, that *Chü Po Yü* was such a worthy, and that therefore the same practice was observed with regard to his messenger.

If one wants to know a person one must look at his friends, and to know a

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects XIV, 26 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> This may have been the view of the old commentators at *Wang Ch'ung's* time. *Chu Hai*, on the contrary, holds that the reply of the messenger was admirable, and that the laconic utterance of *Confucius* contains a praise, not a reproach.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 1.400 Note 1.

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prince one must observe his messengers. *Chü Po Yü* was not a worthy, therefore his messenger had his faults. The idea of the 'Spring and Autumn' was to cover the faults of worthies, but also to censure smaller misdemeanours <sup>1</sup>. Now, if no reproach was made, but silence kept, where would the censuring of minor offences come in ? If *Confucius* was anxious to keep silence on *Chü Po Yü*, he ought to have kept quiet, but since he said with much pathos : 'This messenger ! This messenger !', all his contemporaries must have understood the blame. How could such utterances serve the purpose of a respectful silence.

p1.415 *Pi Hsi* <sup>2</sup> inviting him to visit him, the Master was inclined to go, *Tse Lu* was displeased, and said :

— Master, formerly I have heard you say, 'When a man in his own person is guilty of doing evil, a superior man will not associate with him'. *Pi Hsi* is in rebellion, holding possession of *Chung-mao* ; if you go to him, what shall be said ?

The Master said,

— So it is. But is it not said that, if a thing be really hard, it may be ground without being made thin ? Is it not said that, if a thing be really white, it may be steeped in a dark fluid without being made black ? — Am I a bitter gourd ? How could I be hung up and not eat <sup>3</sup> ?

*Tse Lu* quoted a former remark of *Confucius* to refute him. Formerly *Confucius* had spoken those words with the object of inducing his pupils to act accordingly. *Tse Lu* quoted it to censure *Confucius*. He was well aware of it, but did not say that his former words were a joke meaning nothing, which could be disregarded. He admitted that he had spoken those words, and that they must be carried out, but 'is it not said', he continued 'that, if a thing be really hard, it may be ground without being made thin, or if it be white, that it may be steeped in a dark fluid without being made black ?' Could he

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. above p. 1.400.

<sup>2</sup> A high officer in the service of the *Chao* family in the *Chin* State, who took possession of *Chung-mao*, a city in *Honan*, in the *Chang-tê* prefecture, for himself.

<sup>3</sup> [Analects XVII, 7](#) [Couvreur].

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invalidate *Tse Lu's* objections with these words ? 'When a man in his own person is guilty of doing evil, a superior man will not associate with him'. To invalidate this objection *Pi Hsi* ought not yet to have committed any evil, so that one might still associate with him. However *Confucius* said that what was hard, might be ground without becoming thin, and what was white, might be steeped in a dark fluid without turning black. According to this argument those whose conduct was, so to speak, perfectly hard or perfectly white, might consort with *Pi Hsi*, but why not those superior men, whose ways are soft and easily tainted by wickedness ?

*Confucius* would not drink the water from the 'Robber Spring', and *Tsêng Tse* declined to enter into a village called 'Mother's Defeat' <sup>1</sup>. They avoided the evil, and kept aloof from pollution, out of respect for the moral laws and out of shame at the disgraceful names. 'Robber Spring' and 'Mother's Defeat' were nothing but empty names, but nevertheless were shunned by *Confucius* and *Tsêng Tse*. *Pi Hsi* had done some real wrong, yet p1.416 *Confucius* intended visiting him. That he did not like the 'Robber Spring' was correct, but that he wished to open up relations with *Pi Hsi* was wrong.

Riches and honours acquired by unrighteousness are to me as a floating cloud <sup>2</sup>.

If *Confucius*, who said so, had taken the wrong way, and lived on the salary paid him by a rebel, his words about floating clouds would have been futile.

Perhaps he wanted to propagate his doctrine for a time only. If that was his aim, he could meet the objections of *Tse Lu* by speaking of the propagation of his doctrine, but not by speaking of food. There might be allowed some time for the propagation of his doctrine, but there would be none for his outlook for food.

In the words : 'Am I a bitter gourd ? How could I be hung up, and not eat' *Confucius* compares himself to a gourd, saying that being in office a man must live on his salary. 'I am no gourd that might be hung up, and would

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Huai Nan Tse* XVI, 13 who adds that *Mê Ti*, who condemned music, would not enter into a city named 'Morning Song'.

<sup>2</sup> [Analects VII, 15 \[Couvreur\]](#).



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require no food' <sup>1</sup>. This is a rebuff to *Tse Lu*, but this rejoinder of *Confucius* does not dispose of *Tse Lu's* objection, for in criticising the master *Tse Lu* does not assert that he ought not to take office. But he should choose a proper State to live in. By the above comparison *Confucius* showed that his only wish was to comfortably eat his bread. How undignified is such an utterance ! Why must he compare himself with an official who wants to eat ? A gentleman must not speak like that.

It would make little difference, whether one speaks of being hung up like a gourd without eating, or of being hung up out of employ. In reply to *Tse Lu* he might have retorted 'Am I a gourd to be hung up, and out of employ ?' Now speaking of food *Confucius* admits that he sought office not for the sake of his doctrine, but merely to find food. In taking office the motive of men is their thirst for money, but giving it a moral aspect they say that they do it to propagate their principles. Likewise in marrying the motive is lust, but morally speaking it is to serve the parents. If an official bluntly speaks of his food, would a bridegroom also own to his sensuality ?

The utterance of *Confucius* explains his feelings. The meaning is unmistakable, and not obscured by a well sounding moral name. It is very common, and unworthy of a superior man. The Literati <sup>p1.417</sup> say that *Confucius* travelled about to find employment, but did not succeed, and regretted that his doctrine did not spread. Methinks they misunderstand *Confucius'* character.

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*Kung Shan Fu Jao*, when he was holding *Pi* <sup>2</sup>, and in an attitude of rebellion <sup>3</sup>, invited the Master to visit him, who was rather inclined to go. *Tse Lu* said :

— Indeed you cannot go ! Why must you think of going to see *Kung Shan* !

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<sup>1</sup> Legge and some commentators take the words [] in a passive sense 'How could I be hung up and not be eaten ? 'i.e. 'not be employed'.

<sup>2</sup> A city in *Shantung*.

<sup>3</sup> *Kung Shan Fu Jao* and *Yang Huo* combined were holding their liege, Prince *Huan* of *Chi*, imprisoned, and trying to arrogate the supreme power of the State of *Lu*.

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The Master said,

— Can it be without some reason that he has invited me ? If any one employ me, may I not make an eastern *Chou* <sup>1</sup> ?

Making an eastern *Chou* means that he intended putting forth his doctrine <sup>2</sup>.

*Kung Shan Fu Jao* and *Pi Hsi* were both in rebellion. With the former he hoped to introduce his doctrine, whereas from the latter he expected food. So his utterances are wavering, and his actions are consequently inconsistent. Should this perhaps have been the reason of his migrations and his inability to find employment ?

*Yang Huo* wanted to see *Confucius*, but he did not see him <sup>3</sup>.

He offered him a post, but *Confucius* would not have it. That was disinterested indeed ! When *Kung Shan Fu Jao* and *Pi Hsi* invited him, he was inclined to go. That was very base ! *Kung Shan Fu Jao* and *Yang Huo* both rebelled, and kept *Chi Huan Tse* prisoner. They were equal in their wickedness, and both invited *Confucius* in the same polite way. However *Confucius* responded to *Kung Shan Fu Jao's* call and did not see *Yang Huo*. Was *Kung Shan Fu Jao* still a fit person to associate with, and *Yang Huo* not ? *Tse Lu* remonstrated against *Kung Shan Fu Jao's* invitation. *Confucius* ought to have removed this objection by showing that he was as good at least as *Pi Hsi*, and that his character was not so very bad.

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects XVII, 5 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> The eastern *Chou* dynasty 770-255 owes its name to its capital *Lo-yi*, where it had removed from *Hao-ching* in the west (*Shensi*). The commencement of the eastern *Chou*, prior to the civil wars, was felicitous.

<sup>3</sup> [Analects XVII, 1 \[Couvreur\]](#).

## 29. Book X, Chap. I

### *Fei Han. Strictures on Han Fei Tse*

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p1.433 *Han Fei Tse's* <sup>1</sup> system consists in propounding the law and making much of success. Worthies who do not benefit the State, he will not reward, and bad characters who do not interfere with the administration, he does not punish. He grants rewards as an incentive to extraordinary actions, and he relies so much on criminal law, that he makes use of capital punishment. When speaking of the Literati, he says that they eat, but do not sow, and likens them to voracious grubs <sup>2</sup>. Discussing the question of usefulness, he compares them with a deer and a horse. A horse resembling a deer fetches a thousand *chin* <sup>3</sup>. There are horses on earth worth so much, but no deer costing a thousand *chin*. Deer are useless, horses are useful. The Literati are like the deer, the active officials like the horse <sup>4</sup>.

*Han Fei Tse* knows very well how to make use of the parable of the deer and the horse, but not that of the cap and the shoe. Provided that *Han Fei Tse* presented himself at court only in his shoes and without a cap, I would listen to his words. But he will appear at court with his cap on his head. He uses a useless article of dress, and thereby increases the number of the useless scholars. His words do not agree with his dress, and there is a want of harmony between his theory and his practice. Therefore I condemn his words, and reject his method.

There is nothing more trying to the body of an individual and less profitable to it than kneeling and prostrating one's self. If *Han Fei Tse*, when meeting any one, does not make obeisance, and in the presence of his sovereign or his father does not show his respect, he does not do any harm to

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<sup>1</sup> On the Taoist philosopher *Han Fei Tse* see p. 1.170.

<sup>2</sup> In Chapt. 19, No.49, p. 1 of *Han Fei Tse's* work. The chapter is entitled the : 'Five kinds of voracious grubs'.

<sup>3</sup> An ancient coin or a monetary unit whose value is doubtful.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Han Fei Tse* XIII, 5v.

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his body, but these ceremonies must be gone through out of respect for one's parents. <sup>p1.434</sup> These rules of propriety are very important and cannot be neglected. While they are being observed by any one, his body does not become fat thereby, and when he disregards them, his body does not become weak nor decay.

If he speaks of utility, then propriety and righteousness are not like eating and drinking. Would *Han Fei Tse*, in case he was granted the privilege of eating in the presence of his sovereign or his father, dare to do so without first bowing ? Such a homage shown to a superior would be a manifestation of propriety and righteousness, but no benefit to the body. Yet after all *Han Fei Tse* would not do away with it, nor would he reject propriety and righteousness in view of a temporary profit. The Literati are propriety and righteousness, the agriculturists and warriors are eating and drinking. He who exalts agriculture and war, and despises the men of letters, would reject propriety and righteousness, and seek eating and drinking.

When propriety and righteousness are neglected, the moral laws lose their force, there is confusion in the higher and the lower spheres, and the *Yin* and the *Yang* principles become disorganised. The dry and the wet seasons do not come in proper time then, the grain does not grow, and the people die of starvation. The agriculturists have nothing to till, and the soldiers can do no fighting.

<sup>1</sup>[*Tse Kung* desired to abolish the sacrificial sheep announcing the new moon. *Confucius* said,

— Tse, you care for the sheep, I care for propriety.]

*Tse Kung* disliked to immolate the sheep, whereas *Confucius* apprehended a disregard of propriety.

If old dykes are removed as useless, an inundation will be the necessary consequence, and if the old ceremonies are abolished as good for nothing, one may be sure of a revolution. The Literati in this world are the old dykes of propriety and righteousness. When they are there, they are of no direct use,

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects III, 17](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

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but their absence is fatal.

From olden times schools have been erected, where the foundation is laid for power and honour. Officials have been appointed, and officers nominated. The officials cannot be suppressed, and the true doctrine cannot be rejected. The Literati are the officers in charge of the true principles. If they are considered to be useless and therefore suppressed, the true principles are lost simultaneously. These principles bring about no direct results, but man requires them for his achievements.

p1.435 When the foot walks on a path, this trodden path must not walk itself. The body has hands and feet ; to move they require what remains unmoved. Thus things are perhaps useless, but the useful ones require them, they themselves have no direct effect, yet to those which have they are indispensable. Peasants and soldiers stand in need of the Literati, how could they be rejected and not be retained ? *Han Fei Tse* denounces the scholars, saying that they are no use, and only do harm. He has in view the vulgar scholars, who do not exert themselves, nor in their dealings take account of propriety. They are scholars by name only, but by practice vulgar persons. They profess true science, but what they say is wrong, and they are hunting after official honours and titles. Consequently they cannot be held in esteem. Those who have a pure heart and whose conduct does not shun the light, do not strive for rank and emoluments. They would repudiate the position of a minister or a secretary of State, as if they were throwing away an old boot. Although they have not the same success as those who hold office and fill a post, their domain is propriety and righteousness. That which preserves a State, is propriety and righteousness. If the people do not practice these two virtues, they will overthrow the State and ruin their prince.

Now, the scholars do pay regard to propriety, and love justice. In so far as they become the leaders of those fellows who are devoid of propriety, and incite those lacking justice, people do good, and learn to love their sovereign. That is also an advantage.

Upon hearing of the fame of *Po Yi* <sup>1</sup> the greedy became disinterested, and

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 168 Note 2.

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the weak, resolute, and hearing of the renown of *Liu Hsia Hui*<sup>1</sup> the narrow-minded became generous, and the mean, liberal. The conversion was more extraordinary than had ever been witnessed by man before. *Tuan Kan Mu* closed his door and did not go out. Prince *Wên* of *Wei* used to bow, when passing his house, to show his respect. When the army of *Ch'in* heard of it, they suddenly did not invest *Wei*<sup>2</sup>. Had *Wei* not had *Tuan Kan Mu*, the soldiers of *Ch'in* would have invaded its territory and made a waste of it, for *Ch'in* was a powerful country, whose soldiers were ever victorious. Had they been let loose upon *Wei*,<sup>p1.436</sup> the kingdom of *Wei* would have gone to pieces. Its three armies would have been defeated, and the blood would have run over a thousand Li. Now a scholar closeted in his house and honoured by *Wên* of *Wei*, averted the troops of powerful *Ch'in* and saved the land of the *Wei* kingdom. His deserts in succouring the three armies could not have been greater, and nobody was worthier of a reward.

In *Ch'i* there were living two scholars of the highest standard, called *K'uang Chüeh* and *Hua Shih*, two brothers. In their stern justice they did not bend their will, and refused to serve him whom they did not regard as their master. When *T'ai Kung*<sup>3</sup> was invested with *Ch'i*, he had the two men executed at the same time for inveigling the masses in *Ch'i*, setting them the example of not taking service with their ruler. *Han Fei Tse* approves of this on the ground that the two scholars were of no use and doing mischief<sup>4</sup>. However, *K'uang Chüeh* and *Hua Shih* were of the same type as *Tuan Kan Mu*. When *T'ai Kung* put them to death, no disaster had yet happened which they might have averted. The marquis *Wên* of *Wei* honoured *Tuan Kan Mu*, and subsequently he warded off powerful *Ch'in* and rescued *Wei*, a deed unparalleled forsooth. If *Han Fei Tse* acknowledges the high standard of *Tuan Kan Mu*, who shut himself up, and also admits that *Wên* of *Wei* was justified

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<sup>1</sup> The posthumous designation of *Chan Huo*, 6th and 7th cent. B. C., who was magistrate of the *Liu-hsia* district in *Lu* and famous for his virtue.

<sup>2</sup> *Ch'in* desisted from its invasion of *Wei* in 399 B. C., because the *Wei* State was so flourishing under the Marquis *Wên*, who honoured the worthies and literati. *Vid. Shi-chi* chap. 44, p. 3v.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 1.172. *T'ai Kung* was the first duke of *Ch'i*.

<sup>4</sup> *Han Fei Tse* XIII, 5 speaks only of *K'uang Chüeh* being put to death by *T'ai Kung*, not of *Hua Shih*.

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in honouring him, he is all right. But the conduct of *K'uang Chüeh* and *Hua Shih* was as virtuous as that of *Tuan Kan Mu*. Therefore it is wrong to approve of the penalty inflicted by *T'ai Kung*. Now, if *Han Fei Tse* disapproves of the conduct of *Tuan Kan Mu*, and objects to the marquis of *Wei* honouring him, it must be born in mind that *Tuan Kan Mu* by his conduct was very useful, and that the marquis of *Wei* honoured him on account of his merit. Thus *Han Fei Tse* would not reward merit, nor give credit to the useful.

Some one might urge that the respect shown by the marquis to the dwelling place of *Tuan Kan Mu* and the subsequent non-arrival of the troops of *Ch'in* is not the result of administration, but of a single act, which cannot be always repeated and which, though instrumental in saving the State, does not deserve so much praise. But what is to be understood by administration? The maintenance of troops, the promulgation of the edicts concerning p1.437 rewards and punishments, a stern criminal law, a strict discipline, and measures to increase the national wealth and the military strength, all that is administration. Would *Ch'in* with her strength mind it? The Six <sup>1</sup> States were all wiped out by the troops of *Ch'in*. The soldiers of the Six States were courageous enough, and the onslaught of their armies not without vigour, yet not only did they not vanquish, but were utterly defeated at last, because they were not of equal force and inferior in numbers. Their administration might have been ever so evident, it was of no avail.

If boys annoyed *Mêng Pên* <sup>2</sup> and, when he was roused to anger, would fight with him, sword in hand, they would certainly court defeat, being no match for him. Had the boys upon *Mêng Pên* becoming angry, soothed him by great politeness and reverence, he would not have been capable of doing harm to them. *Ch'in's* position towards *Wei* is analogous to that of *Mêng Pên* and the boys. The administration of *Wei* would certainly not have frightened *Ch'in*, just as *Mêng Pên* would not run away from the boys when wielding their swords. The honour and the respect shown to scholars and to the homes of worthies would be more than the politeness and reverence of the boys.

The weak will have recourse to virtue, whereas those who have a strong

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 1.278 Note 1.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 1.380 Note 4.

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army, will use their power. Because *Ch'in* had such a strong army, nothing could withstand her power. If they held back their troops, and recalled their men, and did not infest *Wei*, it was out of respect for *Tuan Kan Mu* and as a mark of esteem for the marquis of *Wei*. The honouring of worthies is an administrative measure of weak States and a means to increase the might of the powerless. How can it be said that this is not the result of administration ?

*Han Kao Tsu* had the intention to depose the heir-apparent. The empress *Lü Hou* in her distress summoned *Chang Tse Fang* <sup>1</sup> to ask his advice. *Chang Tse Fang* suggested that the crown-prince should reverently meet the Four Grey Beards <sup>2</sup>, and present them with rich gifts. When *Kao Tsu* saw this, he changed his mind, and the prince was saved. Had *Han Fei Tse* advised *Lü Hou*, that the best offensive were strong remonstrances, and the best defensive, energy, and that in this manner the prince would be safe, he <sup>p1.438</sup> would, on the contrary, have brought about his own death, not to speak of his deposition. The deep reverence of the crown-prince towards the four old men changed *Han Kao Tse's* design. Just so the respect shown by the Marquis *Wên* of *Wei* to *Tuan Kan Mu's* home warded off the troops of powerful *Ch'in*.

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The government of a State requires the cultivation of two things, of virtue and of strength. Virtue is cultivated by maintaining famous men, whereby one shows one's ability to honour worthies. Strength is developed by keeping strong men, which shows that one knows how to use soldiers. Then we may say that all the civil and military measures are in operation, and that virtue and strength are sufficient. In the international intercourse, a State may win the other side by virtue, or repel it by force. If, in its foreign relations, it makes virtue its basis, and at the same time keeps a strong force, those who esteem virtue, will be on good terms with it without fighting, whereas those who do not care for virtue, will keep aloof for fear of military complications.

King *Yen* of *Hsü* <sup>3</sup> practised benevolence and justice, and thirty-two States

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<sup>1</sup> The same as *Chang Liang*, the helpmate of *Han Kao Tsu*. Cf. p. 1.235.

<sup>2</sup> Four recluses, who during the troubles attending the overthrow of the *Ch'in* dynasty had taken refuge into the mountains near *Hsi-an-fu*.

<sup>3</sup> From *Han Fei Tse* chap. 19, p. 2v. we learn that *Yen* was the sovereign of a small



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sent envoys to his court overland. When powerful *Ch'u* heard of this, it despatched its troops, and destroyed him. King *Yen* of *Hsü* possessed virtue, but had no strength in readiness. One cannot solely rely on virtue to govern a State, nor straightway resort to force to ward off an enemy. In *Han Fei Tse's* system there is no room for the cultivation of virtue, whereas King *Yen* of *Hsü* did not rely on strength. Both their views were one-sided and contradictory. King *Yen* came to grief, because he was powerless, and we may be sure that *Han Fei Tse* would have to suffer for want of virtue.

Human nature is pure or impure, selfish or disinterested, and people act accordingly. In the same manner plants and trees consist of different substances, which cannot change again. *K'uang Chüeh* and *Hua Shih* did not take office in *Ch'i*, as *Tuan Kan Mu* did not become an official in *Wei*. Their nature was pure and unselfish, they did not long for wealth or honour, criticised their times, and disliked this world. Their sense of justice prevented p1.439 them from taking office inconsiderately. Even if they had not been executed, they would not have had followers. *T'ai Kung* put them to death, and *Han Fei Tse* thinks him quite right. But that would be denying that men have their special natures, and plants and trees their special substances.

*T'ai Kung* beheaded the two scholars. Provided that there were people like them in *Ch'i*, they would certainly not have desisted from purifying their hearts, because the two were put to death, and if there were none, no training would have made them such. *Yao* did not execute *Hsü Yu* <sup>1</sup>, yet the people of *T'ang* <sup>2</sup> did not all live in nests. *Wu Wang* did not kill *Po Yi*, yet the people of *Chou* did not starve in solitude, and, when Marquis *Wên* of *Wei* had honoured *Tuan Kan Mu's* dwelling-place, the people of *Wei* did not all close their doors. Consequently, even if *T'ai Kung* had not executed the two men, the people of *Ch'i* would not all have disdained the official career, for people cannot assume integrity and disinterestedness at will. What people are unable to do, they cannot be induced to do, and all training and exhorting is in vain.

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State covering 500 square li in *Han-tung* (*Hupei*). King *Wên* of *Ch'u*, 688-675 B. C., fearing the growing power of the virtuous *Yen* — *Han Fei Tse* speaks of 36 States which were allied to him — destroyed the *Hsü* State. *Huai Nan Tse* XIII, 14v. also refers to *Yen* and mentions that 32 States were his allies.

<sup>1</sup> *Tuan Kan Mu*.

<sup>2</sup> *Yao's* principality.

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Conversely what they can do, they cannot be hindered from doing, even executions are no preventive. Therefore the execution of the two scholars by *T'ai Kung* was not calculated to bring about improvement, it was a useless murder of innocent persons.

*Han Fei Tse* would not approve of rewards without merit or of death without guilt. *T'ai Kung* killed innocent men, yet *Han Fei Tse* assents to it, ergo his theory admits the assassination of the innocent. Those who persist in not taking office, have not necessarily some real guilt, yet *T'ai Kung* put them to death. If people, who had become officials, had no merit, would *T'ai Kung* be willing to reward them ? Rewards must be given to merit, and punishment meted out to the guilty. If *T'ai Kung* did not reward officials without merit, then his execution of innocent men, who did not want to become officials, was unjust. *Han Fei Tse's* approval is a mistake.

Moreover, people who do not become officials generally have an unselfish character and few desires, whereas those who would like to take office, are greedy of profit. As long as desires and the thought of gain are not ingrafted in one's heart, one looks upon rank and salary as dung and dirt. The disinterested are <sup>p1.440</sup> extremely thrifty, the extravagance of the ambitious knows no bounds, and therefore their desires do not even recoil from their sovereign. Among the rebelling officials of ancient times those with pure and unselfish motives have been very few. The ambitious will make themselves conspicuous, and the haughty will risk their lives. For all the laurels won they aspire to a great reward, and in their immoderation covet princely dignity.

*T'ai Kung* left his system behind, and subsequently *Ch'i* was the scene of the violent murder perpetrated by the *Ch'ên* family <sup>1</sup>. *T'ai Kung's* system led to robbery and murder. *Han Fei Tse* praises it, which shows that his own theory is also very dangerous. When *Chou Kung* heard of the execution of the two men by *T'ai Kung*, he expressed his disapproval, and did not think him right <sup>2</sup>. Personally he took gifts and condescended to present them to

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<sup>1</sup> In 481 B. C. *Ch'ên Hêng* alias *T'ien Ch'êng Tse* murdered the sovereign of *Ch'i*, a descendant of *T'ai Kung*. The *Ch'ên* family had assumed the name *T'ien* in *Ch'i*. Cf. *Shi-chi* chap. 32, p. 24v. [[Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. IV, p. 82](#)] and chap. 36, p. 7 [[Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. IV, p. 182](#)].

<sup>2</sup> *Vid. Han Fei Tse XIII, 5.*

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scholars living in poor huts <sup>1</sup>. These scholars living in poor huts were like the two men. *Chou Kung* honoured them, and *T'ai Kung* put them to death. Whose action was the right one ?

In *Sung* there was a charioteer. A horse refused to go on. He thereupon drew his sword, cut its throat, and threw it into a ditch. He then tried another horse, which also would not go. Again he cut its throat, and threw it into a ditch. This he repeated thrice. It was a very strong measure to break the obstinacy of horses, but it was not the way of *Wang Liang*. When he stepped into a carriage, there was no horse stubborn or restive. During the reign of *Yao* and *Shun*, the people were not rebellious. *Wang Liang* knew how to touch the hearts of the horses, just as *Yao* and *Shun* influenced the popular feelings.

Men have the same nature, but there are different kinds of horses. *Wang Liang* could manage these different kinds, whereas *T'ai Kung* could not get along with scholars, who were all of the same nature. *Chou Kung's* kindness towards the poor scholars corresponds to *Wang Liang's* horse-breaking. *T'ai Kung's* execution of the two scholars is like the throat-cutting of the man of *Sung*.

If *Han Fei Tse* were called upon to decide between the methods of *Wang Liang* and the man of *Sung*, he would certainly be in favour of *Wang Liang* and against the man of *Sung*. *Wang Liang* preserved the horses, the man of *Sung* destroyed them. The <sup>p1.441</sup> destruction of horses is not as good as their preservation. Thus it is better that people should live than that they should die. Should *Han Fei Tse* be against *Wang Liang*, he would be on a level with the man of *Sung* by destroying good people. If he be against the man of *Sung*, it must be borne in mind that the latter's method is the same as that of *T'ai Kung*. By condemning the man of *Sung* and upholding *T'ai Kung*, *Han Fei Tse* would show that he cannot discriminate between right and wrong.

The government of a State is like governing an individual. If in governing an individual grace and virtue are seldom resorted to, but much bodily injury is inflicted, friends and partisans will make themselves scarce, lest disgrace

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.489.

## Lun-hêng

should befall them. If the principles of governing an individual are extended to the government of a State, this government must be based on virtue. *Han Fei Tse* solely relies on criminal law to govern the world. That would mean that he who governs an individual, must trust to the infliction of injuries. Does *Han Fei Tse* not know that to place reliance on virtue is the best way ?

He holds that the world is depraved, that things have changed for the worse, and that the general feelings are base and mean. Therefore in working out a system his only thought is penal law. However, the world is not deficient in virtue, as a year is not deprived of its spring. Would he who contends that owing to its depravity the world cannot be governed by virtue, assert also that a year full of troubles does not generate in spring ?

A wise ruler governs a country as Heaven and Earth create all things. In a year of troubles they do not omit spring, and a wise ruler does not discard virtue, because the world is degenerated. *Confucius* said <sup>1</sup>,

— Those people were the cause of the steady progress of the three dynasties ! <sup>2</sup>

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The time of King *Mu* of *Chou* <sup>3</sup> can be called one of decay. He attempted to govern with criminal law, but the result was confusion, and no glory was won. The Marquis of *Fu* remonstrated with him, and the king became attached to virtue, and enjoyed <sup>p1.442</sup> his kingdom for a long time. His deeds were handed down to posterity. King *Mu*'s administration first led to disorder, but at last to order, not because his mind was beclouded first, and his talents came forth later on, but because he at first relied on *Ch'ih Yu*'s <sup>4</sup> criminal law, and only subsequently followed the advice of the Marquis of *Fu*. In governing individuals, one cannot do without mercy, in governing a State one cannot

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects XV, 24 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> The depravity of the people cannot have been as great as *Han Fei Tse* presumed, for otherwise the progress made during the three dynasties : *Hsia*, *Chang*, and *Chou* could not have been accomplished.

<sup>3</sup> 1001- 946 B.C.

<sup>4</sup> A legendary person said to have lived at the time of the Emperor *Huang Ti*. He rebelled against the latter, and was defeated. Some say that he was a prince, who terrorised the people, others that he was a minister of *Huang Ti*.

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neglect virtue, and in creating things spring cannot be left out. Why does *Han Fei Tse* wish to rely on law and capital punishment alone ?

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<sup>1</sup>[Duke *Mu* of *Lu* <sup>2</sup> asked *Tse Sse* <sup>3</sup> saying,

— I have heard that *P'ang Hsien* is no filial son. How is his unfilial conduct ?

*Tse Sse* replied,

— A prince honours the virtuous to exalt virtue, and raises the good to admonish the people. As regards faults, only common people know about that, not I.

When *Tse Sse* had left, *Tse Fu Li Po* saw the prince, who questioned him about *P'ang Hsien's* filial conduct also. *Tse Fu Li Po* rejoined,

— Your Highness has not yet heard about all his misdeeds.

Afterwards the prince held *Tse Sse* in esteem and despised *Tse Fu Li Po*.]

When *Han Fei Tse* heard of it, he censured duke *Mu* on the ground that a wise ruler ought to search for scoundrels and punish them. *Tse Sse* would not speak about rascality, which *Tse Fu Li Po* did. Therefore, in *Han Fei Tse's* belief, the latter deserved honour, and the former contempt. Since Duke *Mu* esteemed *Tse Sse* and despised *Tse Fu Li Po*, he did not divide honour and contempt in the right way, hence *Han Fei Tse's* adverse criticism.

*Han Fei Tse* lays the greatest stress upon administration. If a man does good, the administration rewards him, if he does evil, it punishes him. Even if good and evil do not transpire, they fall under strict rules. Yet merely hearing of a bad deed, one cannot punish at once, as hearing of a good one, one cannot rashly reward it. It is therefore not in keeping with the theory of *Han*

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted with some slight alterations from *Huai Nan Tse* chap. 16, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> 408- 375 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> His full name is *K'ung Tse Sse* or *K'ung Chi*, the grandson of *Confucius*, to whom the *Chung-yang*, the 'Doctrine of the Mean' is ascribed.

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*Fei Tse* to blame a man for not having denounced wickedness. p1.443 Suppose *Han Fei Tse* heard of a good action, he would certainly make investigations first and, in case some merit were brought to light thus, he would grant a reward. Upon the mere news of some good deed, one does not reward indiscriminately, for not every remark is reliable. Therefore it makes no difference, whether we hear of good actions or not. Hearing of goodness, one does not rashly reward, and upon hearing of wickedness, one does not punish forthwith. Hearing of goodness, one must first investigate, and hearing of badness, one must make inquiries. Provided some merit is discovered, then a reward may be given, and, if there is evidence, a penalty may be determined. Rewards and punishments are not given upon mere hearsay or vague appearances, before the truth is found out, and as long as they are not given, goodness and badness are not determined. Therefore there must be a method to establish them, and it is not right to require that one must have heard the thing with one's own ears.

<sup>1</sup>[*Tse Ch'an* of *Chêng* <sup>2</sup> went out one morning, and passed the house of *Tung Chiang*, where he heard the cries of his wife. He grasped the hand of his attendant, and listened. After a while, he directed his officers to arrest the woman, and sue her for having murdered her husband with her own hand.

The next day his attendant asked him,

— Sir, how did you know all this ?

*Tse Ch'an* replied,

— Her voice was not moved. When people learn that those they love dearly are sick, they become depressed, when death approaches, they get alarmed, and, after death, give vent to their grief. This woman bewailed her dead husband, but in lieu of being grieved she was frightened. Thence I knew that she had committed a crime.]

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<sup>1</sup> *Han Fei Tse* chap. 16, p. 5. The text slightly differs.

<sup>2</sup> *Tse Ch'an* is the style of *Kung Sun Ch'iao*, a famous minister of the *Chêng* State, 581-521 B. C., who compiled a penal code.

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*Han Fei Tse* expressed his disapproval and said <sup>1</sup> [,

— Was not *Tse Ch'an* a busy body ?

If a crime could only be known, when we perceive it with our own eyes or ears, very few cases would be disclosed in *Chêng*. And would it not be a lack of method, if the city police could not be trusted to possess the necessary insight for examining the conduct of the smaller congregations of the community, and if one had to use all own's intelligence and mental power to discover such cases ?]

p1.444 *Han Fei Tse* is justified in blaming *Tse Ch'an*, but he is wrong in his adverse comments on Duke *Mu*. The lack of grief of the woman is like the unfilial conduct of *P'ang Hsien*. *Han Fei Tse* objects to *Tse Ch'an* relying merely on his eyes and ears to get information about crimes, but, on the other hand, wishes that Duke *Mu* should have made inquiries to determine the guilt of *P'ang Hsien*. *Tse Ch'an* had no recourse to the city police, and determined the truth from what he heard. Duke *Mu* did not place confidence in the police either, and attained the same result by his inquiries. Hearsay and inquiries are about the same thing. Neither trusted the police, or made investigations among the citizens. From *Tse Fu Li Po's* answer it is impossible to learn the truth, just as from the crying of the woman one cannot arrive at a cogent conclusion. If under such circumstances one orders the officers to arrest and try a person, one cannot find out the truth thereby. But how is it possible not to order the officers to make investigations and to charge a person with a crime without any inquiries merely upon the word of *Tse Fu Li Po* ?

*Han Fei Tse* says <sup>2</sup> [, *Tse Sse* did not mention faults, and Duke *Mu* honoured him. *Tse Fu Li Po* spoke of crimes, and Duke *Mu* despised him. Human nature is such, that all people like honour and are displeased with contempt.

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<sup>1</sup> *Loc. cit.* p. 5v.

<sup>2</sup> *Han Fei Tse* chap. 16, p. 1.

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When the *Chi* family <sup>1</sup> made trouble, it was not brought to the knowledge of the sovereign, and consequently the princes of *Lu* were robbed of their power.] Were they robbed, because they did not make a wise use of the laws and administration or, because they did not hear of the wicked designs in time? If the administration is wisely organised, wickedness has no field where it might grow, although it be not heard of, whereas in case the administration is not wise, the searching after criminals is like digging a well, and then trying to stop it with one hand.

If a chariot-driver without a bridle sees a horse, it will run away, and he has no coercive means. Should, however, *Wang Liang* <sup>2</sup> have come near with reins in his hand, no horse would have had the desire to bolt. He knew the method of driving horses. Now, nothing is said about the princes of *Lu* having no method, but it is mentioned that they did not hear of the p1.445 treasonable designs, nothing is said about their looking after the government, but it is emphasized that they did not understand the feelings of the people. *Han Fei Tse's* attack on Duke *Mu* does not tally with the tendency of his theory.

*Tse Sse* did not speak of *P'ang Hsien's* unfilial conduct, therefore Duke *Mu* honoured him. *Han Fei Tse* blames him, saying that 'a wise ruler looks out for the good to reward and for rascals to punish them' <sup>3</sup>. — Unfilial persons have a very limited intellect. For want of insight, they know no propriety, and follow their desires and propensities just like beasts and birds. One may call them bad, but to call them rascals is not correct. Rascals are good in outward appearance, but bad inwardly, or 'they show a stern exterior, and are inwardly weak' <sup>4</sup>, and in their doings imitate the good to get on in their career. They smile to their superiors — how could they be unfilial? — but they do wicked things, which make them worthy of capital punishment. *P'ang Hsien* can be said to have been unfilial, but not a rascal. If *Han Fei Tse* calls

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<sup>1</sup> During the 6th cent. B. C. the *Chi* family, a side branch of the ducal house of *Lu*, engrossed the power in *Lu* and almost superseded the reigning princes. *Confucius* openly condemned their usurpation. Cf. p. 1.395.

<sup>2</sup> See above p. 1.440.

<sup>3</sup> *Han Fei Tse loc. cit.*

<sup>4</sup> [Analects XVII, 12](#) [Couvreur].



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him so, he ignores the true meaning of this word.

*Han Fei Tse* says :

— <sup>1</sup>[If silk fabrics are so common, that ordinary people do not desire them, and if gold can be cast into a hundred coins without robber *Chê* snatching it away, then we can speak of a manifestation of law.]

People do not dare to infringe it. If the law is manifest in a State, robbers are afraid to break it, and do not venture to bring about unforeseen calamities. They hide their vicious thoughts in their hearts, and dare not transgress the penal law, being in awe of it. If the law is known and dreaded, there is no need for investigating rascality, or inquiring after wickedness among the citizens. If the law is imposing, people are not vicious, if it is not, they commit many a felony. Now *Han Fei Tse* does not speak of the severe penalties and the awe-inspiring law of a wise sovereign, but that he is on the look-out for miscreants to punish them. If he says that he looks out for miscreants, the law is not awe-inspiring, so that people offend against it. In the world much more attention is paid to the persecution of criminals than to upholding the respect of the law. Therefore *Han Fei Tse's* remarks do not agree with the law.

When the water of a creek is let out, those who know that it can drown a man, do not attempt to stop the current, but they <sup>p1.446</sup> keep boats and oars in readiness. They know the nature of the water, that its rush cannot be checked, and that it would certainly drown a man. When a subject or a son is bent upon committing a misdeed against his sovereign or his father, they are like the water which drowns a man. Now, *Han Fei Tse* does not inform us, which precautions might be taken against the crime, but takes exception that it is not known or heard of. This would be nothing else than not to prepare the necessary implements for the water, and merely to wish to learn, as soon as possible, that the water is drowning somebody. Being drowned by water one cannot hold the water accountable, but is oneself guilty of having neglected the necessary precautions.

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<sup>1</sup> *Han Fei Tse* chap. 19, p. 4.

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When a sovereign is robbed by a subject, he himself has neglected the law. Preparing against drowning, one does not dam in the fountain-head, and in guarding oneself against an attack, one does not look out for the misdemeanours of the subjects. *Han Fei Tse* stands in need of self-instruction on these points.

The nature of water is stronger than fire, but pour the water into a kettle, it will boil, but not gain the upper hand. A sovereign is like fire, a subject like water, administration is the kettle. Fire does not seek the misdeeds of water. Thus a prince ought not to search for the faults of his subjects.

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## 30. Book X, Chap. II

### *T'se Mêng. Censures on Mencius*

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p1.418 [When *Mencius* went to see King *Hui* of *Liang* <sup>1</sup>, the king said,

— You have not counted it far to come here, a distance of a thousand Li, Sir. By what could you profit my kingdom ?

*Mencius* replied,

— I have nothing but benevolence and justice. Why must Your Majesty speak of profit <sup>2</sup> ?]

Now, there are two kinds of profit, the one consisting in wealth, the other in quiet happiness. King *Hui* asked, how he could profit his kingdom. How did *Mencius* know that he did not want the profit of quiet happiness, and straightway take exception to the profit by wealth ?

The *Yiking* says,

It will be advantageous to meet with the great man <sup>3</sup>.

It will be advantageous to cross the great stream <sup>4</sup>.

*Chien* represents what is great and originating, penetrating, *advantageous*, correct and firm <sup>5</sup>.

And the *Shuking* remarks that the black-haired people still esteem profit <sup>6</sup>. They all have the profit of quiet happiness in view. By practising benevolence and justice, one may obtain this profit.

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<sup>1</sup> *Mencius* I, Pt. I, 1 [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)]. For the quotations from *Mencius* I adopt *Legge's* renderings, as far as possible.

<sup>2</sup> This interview took place in 335 B. C. *Liang* was the capital of the *Wei* State, the modern *K'ai-fêng-fu*.

<sup>3</sup> *Yiking* Bk. I, I, 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Yiking* Bk. I, V, 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Yiking* Bk. I, I, 1. [Legge's translation \(Sacred Books of the east Vol. XVI\), p. 57 and 67.](#)

<sup>6</sup> *Shuking* Pt. V, Bk. XXX, 6 [[Legge](#)] [[Couvreur](#)].

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*Mencius* did not say that he inquired of King *Hui*, what he meant by profiting his kingdom. Had King *Hui* said : 'The profit of wealth', *Mencius* might have given him the proper answer. But though he did not know the purport of King *Hui's* question, *Mencius* at once replied about the profit of wealth. Had King *Hui* really inquired about it, *Mencius* adduced nothing in support of his view. If, on the other hand, he had asked about the profit of quiet happiness, and *Mencius* in his reply had spoken about the <sup>p1.419</sup> profit of wealth, he would have failed to give the prince the proper answer, and would not have acted in the proper way.

[The king of *Ch'i* asked *Shi Tse* <sup>1</sup> saying,

— I wish to give *Mencius* a house, somewhere in the middle of the kingdom, and to support his disciples with an allowance of 10,000 *chung* <sup>2</sup>, that all the officers and the people may have such an example to reverence and imitate. Had you not better tell him this for me ?

*Shi Tse* conveyed this message to *Mencius* through *Ch'ên Tse* <sup>3</sup>. *Mencius* said,

— How should *Shi Tse* know that this cannot be ? Suppose that I wanted to be rich, having formerly declined 100,000 *chung*, would my now accepting 10,000 be the conduct of one desiring riches <sup>4</sup> ?]

In declining 100,000 *chung* *Mencius* was wrongly disinterested, for wealth and honour is what man desires. Only he does not stick to them, if he cannot obtain them in the proper way <sup>5</sup>. Therefore in the matter of rank and salary an honest man sometimes declines, and sometimes not, but why should he reject a present, which he ought to have taken, on the plea that he does not covet wealth or honour ?

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<sup>1</sup> An officer of *Ch'i*.

<sup>2</sup> A *chung* is an ancient measure. As to its capacity opinions differ. 100 000 *chung* of rice was the customary allowance of a minister in a feudal State.

<sup>3</sup> A disciple of *Mencius*, his full name being *Ch'ên Chin*. See below.

<sup>4</sup> *Mencius* II, Pt. II,10 [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>5</sup> See above p. 1.395.

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[*Ch'ên Chin* <sup>1</sup> asked *Mencius* saying,

— When you were in *Ch'i*, the king sent you a present of 100 *yi* <sup>2</sup> of the double metal <sup>3</sup>, and you refused to accept it. When you were in *Sung*, 70 *yi* were sent to you, which you accepted ; and when you were in *Hsieh* <sup>4</sup>, 50 *yi* were sent, which you likewise accepted. If your declining to accept the gift in the first case was right, your accepting it in the latter cases was wrong. If your accepting it in the latter cases was right, your declining to do so in the first case was wrong. You must accept, Master, one of these alternatives.

*Mencius* said,

— I did right in all the cases. When I was in *Sung*, I was about to take a long journey. Travellers must be provided with what is necessary for their expenses. The prince's message was, 'A present to defray travelling expenses'. Why should I have declined the gift ? When I was in *Hsieh*, I was apprehensive of my safety, and taking measures for my protection. The message was 'I have <sup>p1.420</sup> heard that you are taking measures to protect yourself, and send this to help you in procuring arms'. Why should I have declined the gift ? But when I was in *Ch'i*, I had no occasion for money. To send a man a gift, when he has no occasion for it, is to bribe him. How is it possible that an honest man should be taken with a bribe ?] <sup>5</sup>

Whether money offered as a gift can be accepted or not, always depends on some reason. We are not covetous, if we accept it, nor are we not covetous, if we do not accept it. There are certain rules, why money can be taken, and why not, and there are likewise certain principles on which a house can be accepted or not. Now, *Mencius* does not say that he does not deserve it, and that it would not be right for him as a non-official to take the house, but he replies that he is not craving for wealth, and adduces the

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<sup>1</sup> The same as *Ch'ên Tse*.

<sup>2</sup> One *yi* was about 24 taels.

<sup>3</sup> Double silver 'worth twice as much as the ordinary' (*Legge*).

<sup>4</sup> A small principality in the south of *Shantung*.

<sup>5</sup> *Mencius* II, Pt. II, 3 [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)].

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100,000 *chung* which he had declined on a former occasion to draw a conclusion in regard to the subsequent 10,000 *chung*. Formerly he ought to have accepted the 100,000, how could he decline them?

[*P'êng Kêng* <sup>1</sup> asked *Mencius* saying,

— Is it not an extravagant procedure to go from one prince to another, and live upon them, followed by several tens of carriages, and attended by several hundred men?

*Mencius* replied,

— If there be not a proper ground for taking it, a single bamboo-cup of rice may not be received from a man. If there be such a proper ground, then *Shun's* receiving the empire from *Yao* is not to be considered excessive.] <sup>2</sup>

How can the receiving of the empire from *Yao* be put on a level with the acceptance of 100,000 *chung*? *Shun* did not decline the empire, because there was a proper ground. Now *Mencius* does not contend that for receiving 100,000 *chung* there is no proper cause, but he says that he is not greedy of wealth and honour. That is not the right modesty, and it could not be an example for others.

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<sup>3</sup>[*Shên T'ung* <sup>4</sup>, on his own impulse, asked *Mencius*, saying,

— May *Yen* be smitten?

*Mencius* replied,

— It may. *Tse K'uei* <sup>5s</sup> had p1.421 no right to give *Yen* to another man, and *Tse Chih* had no right to receive *Yen* from *Tse K'uei*.

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<sup>1</sup> *P'êng Kêng* was a disciple of *Mencius*.

<sup>2</sup> *Mencius* III, Pt. II, 4 [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>3</sup> *Mencius* II, Pt. II, 8 [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>4</sup> A high officer of *Ch'i*.

<sup>5</sup> *Tse K'uei*, King of *Yen*, a silly man, had ceded his throne to his minister *Tse Chih*, hoping that the latter would decline the offer, but he unexpectedly accepted, and *Tse K'uei* lost his throne. During the troubles caused in *Yen* by *Tse K'uei's* son seeking to recover the kingdom, the *Ch'i* State made an unsuccessful attempt to conquer *Yen*. *Shên T'ung* had asked *Mencius's* advice about an invasion of *Yen*.

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Suppose there were an officer here with whom you, Sir, were pleased, and that, without informing the king, you were privately to give to him your salary and rank ; and suppose that this officer, also without the king's orders, were privately to receive them from you : — would such a transaction be allowable ? And where is the difference between the case of Yen and this ?

The people of *Ch'i* smote *Yen*. Some one asked of *Mencius*,

— Is it really the case that you advised *Ch'i* to smite *Yen* ?

He replied,

— No. *Shên Tung* asked me, whether *Yen* might be smitten, and I answered him, 'It may'. They accordingly went and smote it. If he had asked me, 'Who may smite it ?', I would have answered him, 'He who is the minister of Heaven <sup>1</sup> may smite it'. Suppose the case of a murderer, and that one asks me, 'May this man be put to death ?' I will answer him, 'He may'. If he ask me, 'Who may put him to death ?' I will answer him, 'The chief criminal judge may put him to death'. But now with one *Yen* <sup>2</sup> to smite another *Yen* — how should I have advised this ?]

One might ask whether *Mencius* did not really advise the king to smite *Yen*. When *Shên Tung* inquired, whether *Yen* could be smitten, he had his own designs, and wished to smite it himself. Knowing that he would be very pleased with the reply, *Mencius* ought to have answered that, although *Yen* could be smitten, it could not be done but by the minister of Heaven. Then *Shên Tung's* plans would have collapsed, and his intention of smiting *Yen* been given up. If *Mencius* was not aware of these designs, and straightway made a reply, he did not pay attention to what he said, and did not understand words.

<sup>3</sup>[*Kung Sun Ch'ou* <sup>1</sup> inquired of *Mencius*,

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<sup>1</sup> A man entrusted by Heaven with the execution of its designs.

<sup>2</sup> The one *Yen* is *Ch'i*, which was not better than *Yen*, and therefore not fit to punish *Yen* as Heaven's delegate.

<sup>3</sup> *Mencius* II, Pt. I, 2 [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)].

## Lun-hêng

— I venture to ask wherein you, Master, excel ?

*Mencius* replied,

— I understand words.

The other pursued,

— And what do you mean by saying that you understand words ?

*Mencius* said,

— When words are one-sided, I know how the mind of the speaker is clouded over ; when they are extravagant, I know how the mind is fallen and sunk ; when they are depraved, I know how the mind has departed from principle, and when they are evasive, I know how the mind <sup>p1.422</sup> is at its wits' end. These evils growing in the mind, do injury to government, and, displayed in the government, are hurtful to the conduct of affairs. Should a Sage again arise, he would undoubtedly follow my words.]

*Mencius* understood words and also knew, how a warning as to the catastrophe which *Shên Tung* was bringing about, would after all have been to his benefit. From the nature of the question he must have known the desire implied in the words of *Shên Tung*. Knowing his aims, he must have had an idea of the disaster, in which the thing was doomed to end.

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*Mencius* said <sup>2</sup>,

[— It would be for the happiness of the people of the whole empire. I hope that the king will change. I am daily hoping for this.]

Was the king whom *Mencius* left, the same on whom he did not wait at court formerly ? <sup>3</sup> Why did he think so little of him first, and make so much of

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<sup>1</sup> A disciple of *Mencius*.

<sup>2</sup> *Mencius* II, Pt. II, 12 [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>3</sup> The King of *Ch'i* wished *Mencius* to call on him at court, informing him, that he intended waiting upon *Mencius* himself, but had got a cold, and could not go out. *Mencius* knew this to be a pretence, and therefore declined to go to court on the



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him afterwards ? Had it not been the former king, he would not have abandoned him. If he quitted him later on, the second king must have been worse than the first. When he left the king, and stopped three days in *Chou* <sup>1</sup>, it was a less drastic measure than his not going to court, and staying with *Ching Ch'ou* <sup>2</sup>. Why was his behaviour not identical in the two instances ? Why did he not treat the king in the same manner in both cases ?

When *Mencius* was in *Lu*, Duke *P'ing* of *Lu* was about to pay him a call, but his favourite *Tsang Ts'ang* slandered *Mencius*, and stopped him. *Yo Chêng Tse* <sup>3</sup> told *Mencius* about it, who said <sup>4</sup>,

[— A man's advancement is effected, it may be, by others, and the stopping him, may be, from the efforts of others. But to advance a man or to stop his advance is really beyond the power of men. My not meeting with the prince of *Lu* is from Heaven'.]

p1.423 First he did not find favour with the prince of *Lu* and afterwards with that of *Ch'i*. There was no difference. But in the first instance he held Heaven alone accountable, in the second, the king. There is no stability in his reasoning. When the king of *Ch'i* disdained his services, and he did not advance, some fellow like *Tsang Ts'ang* must have slandered him. That was likewise stopping or keeping back, but in both cases it was Heaven's decree that he should not find employment, and beyond the power of men. Why then did he still linger three days, when he left, and not go straight on ? Provided it was the fate of Heaven that he should not meet with the king of *Ch'i*, who would not listen to his words, could Heaven have changed this fate within the space of three days, and bring about the interview ? In *Lu* he gave all the credit to Heaven, abandoned his schemes, and lost all hope. In *Ch'i* he counted solely on the king, and was full of hopes. Thus the missing of one interview would have been merely the result of insinuations of men.

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pretence that he was unwell likewise. Cf. *Mencius* II, Pt. II, 2 [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)]. The king and the philosopher were both too jealous of their dignity to get along well.

<sup>1</sup> A small place in *Ch'i*, where *Mencius* halted, expecting to be called back.

<sup>2</sup> An officer of *Ch'i*, with whom *Mencius* stayed, while the king was waiting for him, at the former occasion.

<sup>3</sup> A disciple of *Mencius*.

<sup>4</sup> *Mencius* I, Pt. II, 16 [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)].

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Some one may hold that Heaven's fate could not yet be settled first, and that for this reason *Mencius* hoped that within three days the king would call him back. This may be so, supposing that fate requires three days. But would, upon such a supposition, the fact that the king of *Ch'i* first allowed him to leave not be due to fate? If it was fate, and the limit three days, then Duke *P'ing* of *Lu* might as well after three days time have rejected *Tsang Ts'ang's* proposal, and followed the advice of *Yo Chêng Tse*, and have called on *Mencius*. Wherefore was *Mencius* so hasty in attributing every thing to Heaven? Had the duke paid *Mencius* a visit within three days, how would the latter have justified his former utterance?

<sup>1</sup>[When *Mencius* left *Ch'i*, *Ch'ung Yü* <sup>2</sup> questioned him on the way, saying,

— Master, you look like one who carries an air of dissatisfaction in his countenance. But formerly I heard you say, 'The superior man does not murmur against Heaven, nor bear a grudge against men'.

*Mencius* said,

— That was one time, and this is another. It is a rule that a true Imperial sovereign should arise in the course of five hundred years, and that during that time there should be some one illustrious in his generation. From the commencement of the *Chou* dynasty till now, more than 700 years have elapsed. Judging numerically, the date is passed. Examining the time, we might <sup>p1.424</sup> expect the rise of such individuals in it. But Heaven does not yet wish that the empire should enjoy tranquillity and good order. If it wished this, who is there besides me to bring it about? How should I be otherwise than dissatisfied?]

What proof is there for the assertion of *Mencius* that in the course of five hundred years a true emperor should arise? *Ti K'u* was such a sovereign, and *Yao* also ruled over the empire as a true sovereign. *Yao* transmitted the empire to *Shun*, who was likewise a true emperor. He transmitted the empire

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<sup>1</sup> *Mencius* II, Pt. II, 13 [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> A follower of *Mencius*.

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to Yü, who reigned in the same style. These four Sages were true Imperial sovereigns, but they followed one another quite closely <sup>1</sup>. From Yü to T'ang there is an interval of a thousand years and from T'ang to Chou also <sup>2</sup>. Wên Wang commenced the reign, and at his death handed it over to Wu Wang. When Wu Wang expired, Ch'êng Wang and Chou Kung together ruled over the empire. From the beginning of the Chou dynasty to the time of Mencius 700 years again had elapsed <sup>3</sup>, but no true emperor had arisen. In which period do we find then that in the course of five hundred years a true sovereign arises? Who has made this statement that there will be a true emperor every five hundred years? Mencius says something which has no foundation and no proof, and is based on some wild hypothesis. Not having found favour with the king, he left Ch'i, and wore a dissatisfied look. That does not show his wisdom, and places him on a level with ordinary scholars.

Five hundred years is considered the period in which Heaven produces a Sage. Moreover, Mencius says that Heaven did not yet wish that the empire should enjoy tranquillity and good order. His idea is that, when Heaven is willing to bless the empire with tranquillity and good order, it must produce a wise emperor in the course of five hundred years. According to what Mencius says, Heaven produces a Sage on purpose. But are five hundred years <sup>p1.425</sup> really the period within which it produces a Sage? If so, why did Heaven not send the Sage forth? — Because it was not the time for a wise emperor to arise, therefore Heaven did not produce him. Since Mencius believes in it nevertheless, he does not know Heaven.

From the commencement of the Chou dynasty upwards of seven hundred years had elapsed. 'Judging numerically, the date, therefore, was passed, but

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<sup>1</sup> Wang Ch'ung omits Ti Chih, who followed his father Ti K'u. Owing to his dissolute life, he was dethroned, and his brother Yao was elected in his place.

<sup>2</sup> Those are rather round numbers. According to the common chronology Yü reigned from 2205-2197, T'ang, the founder of the Shang dynasty from 1766-1753, and the Chou dynasty commenced in 1122. Wu Wang's reign lasted from 1122-1115, Ch'êng Wang's from 1115-1078. All these rulers are regarded by the Chinese as true emperors. The interval between Yü and T'ang is about 400 years, that between T'ang and Wên Wang about 600 years. It is difficult to understand why Wang Ch'ung in both cases speaks of a thousand years. The remark of Mencius that every five hundred years a true sovereign arises, comes much nearer the truth.

<sup>3</sup> About 800 years in fact after the usual chronology. The Bamboo Annals reduce this space to about 700 years.

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examining the time, it might be possible'. What signifies that the date is passed, and what, that it is possible ? Date is equivalent to time, and time to date. The date being passed, five hundred years are passed. From the beginning of the *Chou* epoch up to that time upwards of seven hundred years had elapsed *i. e.* two hundred years in excess. Should an emperor arise then, he would already have missed the proper time. Yet *Mencius* avers that considering the time, it might be possible. What does that mean ?

He says that in the course of five hundred years a true Imperial sovereign should arise, and further that during that time there should be some one illustrious in his generation. Is this somebody the same as the emperor or some one else ? If he is, why mention him a second time, if not, what sort of man is it who is illustrious in his generation ? Suppose the answer be : 'men like *Confucius* and scholars like *Mencius*, who will instruct the youth, and awaken the dullards and imbeciles', then *Confucius* has already lived, and *Mencius* himself also has been born. Should we say : 'wise ministers', they must live contemporaneously with a wise ruler, and a wise minister appear, when a wise emperor arises.

*Mencius* speaks of five hundred years, but why does he say 'during that time' ? If he does not mean the space of five hundred years, but the time between, he must think of two or three hundred years. Then a Sage could not work together with a wise emperor arising after five hundred years, whom then has *Mencius* in view, saying that during that time there should be some one illustrious in his generation ? 'Heaven', says he, 'does not yet wish that the empire should enjoy tranquillity and good order. If it wished this, who is there besides me to bring it about ?' By these words *Mencius* does not intend saying that he himself ought to be emperor, but that, if there were an emperor, he would act as his minister. Whether there be an emperor and a minister, depends on Heaven. When fate did not allow the empire to enjoy tranquillity and good order, *Mencius* did not acquiesce with a good grace in *Ch'i*, but resented it, and wore a dissatisfied look. That was very wrong of him.

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p1.426 <sup>1</sup>[*P'êng Kêng* asked *Mencius* saying,

— Is it proper that a scholar doing no service should receive support ?

*Mencius* answered,

— If you do not have an intercommunication of the productions of labour, and an interchange of man's services, so that one from his overplus may supply the deficiency of another, then husbandmen will have a superfluity of grain, and women will have a superfluity of cloth. If you have such an interchange, carpenters and carriage-wrights may all get their food from you. Here now is a man, who, at home, is filial, and abroad, respectful to his elders ; who watches over the principles of the ancient kings, awaiting the rise of future learners — and yet you will refuse to support him. How is it that you give honour to the carpenter and carriage-wright, and slight him who practises benevolence and righteousness ?

*P'êng Kêng* said,

— The aim of the carpenter and carriage-wright is to seek for a living. Is it also the aim of the superior man in his practice of principles thereby to seek for a living ?

— What have you to do, returned *Mencius*, with his purpose ? He is of service to you. He deserves to be supported, and should be supported. And let me ask, Do you remunerate a man's intention, or do you remunerate his service ?

To this *P'êng Kêng* replied,

— I remunerate his intention.

*Mencius* said,

— There is a man here, who breaks your tiles, and draws unsightly figures on your walls ; — his purpose may be thereby to seek for his living, but will you indeed remunerate him ?

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<sup>1</sup> *Mencius* III, Pt. II, 4 [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)].

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— No', said *P'êng Kêng* ;

and *Mencius* then concluded,

— That being the case, it is not the purpose which you remunerate, but the work done.]

*Mencius* referred to the breaking of tiles and disfiguring of walls with the object of impugning the remarks of *P'êng Kêng*, knowing very well that he who breaks tiles or disfigures walls does no services, but has a purpose, and that *P'êng Kêng* under no circumstances would support him. However, with this reference to the breaking of tiles and disfiguring of walls *Mencius* cannot refute *P'êng Kêng*, because people acting in this way do not belong to those who are seeking a living. Such being the case, this argument cannot be put forward against *P'êng Kêng*. People who, without a reason, are breaking tiles and disfiguring walls, are either mad, or merely playing. The purpose of madmen is not to seek a living, and those who are disporting themselves, have not this intention either.

p1.427 From those who seek a living a great many persons have no advantage whatever. Therefore those wishing to support themselves sell things in the market as merchants, and live on the price which they receive in exchange for their wares. Now, the breakers of tiles and scribblers profit nobody, and cannot have this intention. Reasonable persons know that such acts would profit nobody, and consequently desist therefrom. The unreasonable are akin to madmen, and certainly would not have that purpose.

Those who break tiles and disfigure walls, are like boys throwing mud on the road, or is there any difference ? When they are dumping mud on the road, have they the intention of seeking a living thereby ? — They are still children, and have no purpose.

When old folks are playing, they behave like those who are disfiguring walls. Have players the intention to seek a living ? Players rob each other of their money. When the sums won are very high, they may be used as a livelihood, and eventually there may be this intention.

People who throw stones and leap over them, are also very much alike to

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those scribblers. Is the intention of those stone-throwers and jumpers directed to their living ? In short, the criticisms brought forward by *Mencius* against *P'êng Kêng* are not very thorough. If *P'êng Kêng* trusted in *Mencius'* words, we may say that the latter 'put him off with great smartness of speech' <sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup>[*K'uang Chang Tse* <sup>3</sup> said,

— Is not *Ch'ên Chung Tse* <sup>4</sup> a man of true self-denying purity ? He was living in *Wu-ling* <sup>5</sup>, and for three days was without food, till he could neither hear nor see. Over a well grew a plum tree, the fruit of which had been more than half-eaten by worms. He crawled to it, and tried to eat some of the fruit, when, after swallowing three mouthfuls, he recovered his sight and hearing.

*Mencius* replied,

— Among the scholars of *Ch'i*, I must regard *Ch'ên Chung Tse* as the thumb among the fingers. But still, where p1.428 is the self-denying purity he pretends to ? To carry out the principles which he holds, one must become an earth-worm, for so only can it be done.

Now, an earth-worm eats the dry mould above, and drinks from the yellow spring-water below. Was the house in which *Ch'ên Chung Tse* dwelt built by a *Po Yi* <sup>6</sup>, or was it built by a robber like *Chê* <sup>7</sup> ? Was the millet which he ate planted by a *Po Yi*, or was it

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<sup>1</sup> A quotation from [Analects V, 4](#) [[Couvreur](#)], where *Confucius* condemns such smartness of speech. — *Wang Ch'ung* is much smarter here than *Mencius*. The arguments of *Mencius* are quite right, and *Wang Ch'ung* only takes exception at the example adduced by him, which indeed is not very lucky.

<sup>2</sup> *Mencius* III, Pt. II, 10 [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>3</sup> A grandee of the State of *Ch'i*.

<sup>4</sup> A recluse.

<sup>5</sup> A poor place in modern *Chi-nan-fu* (*Shantung*).

<sup>6</sup> The exemplar of purity cf. p. 168 Note 2 and below p. 1.435.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. p. 1.139.

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planted by a robber like *Chê* ? These are things which cannot be known.

— But, said *K'uang Chang Tse*, what does that matter ? He himself weaves sandals of hemp, and his wife twists hempen thread, to barter them.

*Mencius* rejoined,

— *Ch'ên Chung Tse* belongs to an ancient and noble family of *Ch'i*. His elder brother *Tai* received from *Ko* a revenue of 10,000 *chung*<sup>1</sup>, but he considered his brother's emolument to be unrighteous, and would not live on it, and in the same way he considered his brother's house to be unrighteous, and would not dwell in it. Avoiding his brother and leaving his mother, he went and dwelt in *Wu-ling*. One day afterwards, he returned to their house, when it happened that some one sent his brother a present of a live goose. He, knitting his brows, said, 'What are you going to use that cackling thing for ?' — By-and-by his mother killed the goose, and gave him some of it to eat. Just then his brother came into the house, and said, 'It's the flesh of that cackling thing', upon which he went out and vomited it. — Thus, what his mother gave him he would not eat, but what his wife gives him he eats. He will not dwell in his brother's house, but he dwells in *Wu-ling*. How can he in such circumstances complete the style of life which he professes ? With such principles as *Ch'ên Chung Tse* holds, a man must be an earth-worm, and then he can carry them out'.]

*Mencius* in reprehending *Ch'ên Chung Tse* does not hit his weak point. When *Ch'ên Chung Tse* showed such a disgust for the goose, that he felt like vomiting, was it, because he would eat nothing that came from his mother ? Previously already he had expressed his displeasure at the goose saying, 'What are you going to use that cackling thing for ?' When, later on, his mother had killed it, and gave him some to eat, and his brother remarked, 'It's the flesh of that cackling thing', he felt ashamed that he was acting p1.429

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<sup>1</sup> See above p. 1.419 Note 2.



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contrary to what he had said before, and vomited it. Had his brother not reminded him, he would not have vomited, and he would then have eaten what his mother offered him. Therefore to say that he would not eat anything coming from his mother conveys a wrong idea.

Suppose that *Ch'ên Chung Tse* was determined not to eat anything from his mother, he ought not to have eaten of the dish of the goose, when it was brought. Now, after he had eaten it, and learned that it was the goose, he felt so disgusted, that he vomited it. Thus the vomiting was the effect of his being ashamed that he had eaten something in opposition to his determination, it was no want of affection between mother and son, nor a desire to eat nothing that came from his mother.

'But still where is the self-denying purity *Ch'ên Chung Tse* pretends to ? To carry out his nature, one must become an earth-worm, for so only can it be done. An earth-worm eats the dry mould above, and drinks from the yellow spring-water below'. That would mean that an earth-worm is a paragon of purity, and that, unless he was like an earth-worm, he could not be pure and undefiled <sup>1</sup>. Now, provided the house he was dwelling in was built by *Po Yi*, and the millet he ate planted by *Po Yi*, his dwelling and eating would be unstained purity. But perhaps he ate millet sown by robber *Chê*, or lived in a cottage constructed by robber *Chê*, then this circumstance would contaminate his purity. These strictures on *Ch'ên Chung Tse* are not to the point either.

A house is built for man's sake to be lived in, and sandals and thread are bartered against millet. If it really was planted by a robber, or the house his building, at all events *Ch'ên Chung Tse* had no cognisance of it. His brother's unrighteousness, however, was apparent from his conduct. All saw his actions ; they were quite notorious and commented upon. Hence *Ch'ên Chung Tse* retired to *Wu-ling*. He did not stop in his brother's house, and by the weaving of sandals and twisting of thread obviated the necessity of living on

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<sup>1</sup> This seems not to have been the idea of *Mencius*. The *tertium comparationis* is not the purity of the earth-worm, but its independence and self-sufficiency. Having its earth to eat and some muddy water to drink, it has no further needs, as man has, who is never quite independent of others. Unless he break off all intercourse with his fellow-creatures, he cannot avoid all pollution. Thus the commentators and Legge understand the passage. *Wang Ch'ung's* interpretation is forced.

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his salary. If *Ch'ên Chung Tse* stayed in *Wu-ling*, he shunned the house of that brother, and vomited his food. Because <sup>p1.430</sup> these things could be heard with the ear and seen with the eye, and were so public, that there could be no doubt, it is evident that as a fact *Ch'ên Chung Tse* neither stayed with his brother nor partook of his meals.

Now he had not seen who was the builder of his own house in *Wu-ling*, nor did he know who planted the millet. But how could he take the house, when it was just completed, or eat the millet, when it was just reaped ? These criticisms of *Mencius* go too far.

The house where *Ch'ên Chung Tse* was living, may perhaps have been built by the robber, so that *Ch'ên Chung Tse* would have dwelt there without knowing it. Now *Mencius* contends that 'to carry out the principles which he holds, one must become an earth-worm, for so only can it be done'. But in the earth underneath the house of the robber there are also earth-worms. They eat the dry mould in the robber's house and drink from the yellow spring-water there. How then would an earth-worm meet the requirements ? To carry out the principles of *Ch'ên Chung Tse* to the satisfaction of *Mencius* one ought to be like a fish. A fish swims in the river or the sea, and feeds upon their earth. No robber can dig through the sea, or heap up its earth.

*Ch'ên Chung Tse* has done a great wrong, but the adverse comments of *Mencius* do not hit it. *Ch'ên Chung Tse* left his mother, and avoided his elder brother, to take up his solitary abode in *Wu-ling* together with his wife. Because the house of his brother was an unrighteous house, and his income an unrighteous income, he did not care to stay and live with him, which was the height of self-denying purity. However, when after his emigration to *Wu-ling* he returned to wait upon his mother, it was his duty to abstain from eating anything and leave again. When the goose was brought in, there must have been other food besides, all prepared by his mother. This food was bought with his brother's money, for it was evident that his mother had not her own private millet which she could have offered him. Then *Ch'ên Chung Tse* partook of his brother's salary.

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*Po Yi* rather than eat the millet of *Chou* <sup>1</sup> died of starvation below *Shou-yang* <sup>2</sup>. Would a meal of the millet of *Chou* have defiled his purity? *Ch'ên Chung Tse* was not like *Po Yi*, but he came very <sup>p1.431</sup> near him. Saying that one must become an earth-worm to carry out those principles, *Mencius* uses a comparison which does not justice to *Ch'ên Chung Tse* at all.

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<sup>3</sup>[*Mencius* said,

— There is a destiny for every thing. Those who act as they ought, receive the natural destiny <sup>4</sup>. Therefore, he who has the true idea of destiny, will not stand beneath a precipitous wall. Death sustained in the discharge of one's duties, is the natural destiny. Death under handcuffs and fetters is not the natural destiny.]

The meaning of these words of *Mencius* is that a man should not run counter to his allotted fate. Through fair conduct he obtains the natural destiny, whereas with recklessness and perversity he does not receive the natural one. Accordingly Heaven's decree would depend on human actions <sup>5</sup>.

*Confucius* <sup>6</sup> did not become an emperor, *Yen Yuan* died prematurely, *Tse Hia* <sup>7</sup> lost his eye-sight, *Po Mu* <sup>8</sup> got leprosy. Was the conduct of these four men not fair? Why did they not receive the right destiny? *Pi Kan* <sup>9</sup> was disembowelled, *Tse Hsü* <sup>10</sup> was cooked, *Tse Lu* <sup>11</sup> pickled. These were the most cruel modes of death on earth, otherwise painful than handcuffs and

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<sup>1</sup> The *Chou* dynasty which *Po Yi* regarded as usurpers of the throne of the legitimate emperors of the house of *Shang*.

<sup>2</sup> A mountain in *Shensi*.

<sup>3</sup> *Mencius* VII, Pt. I, 2 [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>4</sup> *Legge* understands this passage differently.

<sup>5</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* denotes by *natural* destiny something different from what *Mencius* expresses by it, which explains his polemic. *Wang Ch'ung's* natural destiny is not influenced by human actions, whereas the natural, right, or correct destiny of *Mencius* is the upshot of proper conduct. Cf. p. 1.138.

<sup>6</sup> *Vid.* p. 1.169.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. p. 1.164.

<sup>8</sup> On *Yen Yuan* and *Po Niu* see p. 1.165.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. p. 1.485 Note 6.

<sup>10</sup> *Tse Hsü* or *Wu Tse Hsü*, the same as *Wu Yuan* p. 1.140.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. p. 1.165.

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fetters. If handcuffs and fetters are really proving that the destiny of the person in question is not the right one, then the conduct of *Pi Kan* and *Tse Hsü* was not fair.

Man receives his destiny, and may be doomed to be crushed to death, or to be drowned, or to be killed in battle, or to be burned. He may be ever so conscientious in his dealings and careful in his doings, it is of no avail.

*Tou Kuang Kuo* was sleeping with a hundred persons below a mound of charcoal <sup>1</sup>. The charcoal collapsed, and all the hundred p1.432 people were killed, only *Tou Kuang Kuo* was saved, because it was his destiny to be made a marquis. What difference is there between the heaped up charcoal and the precipitous wall? Provided that one is not doomed to be crushed, there may be a collapse, those who have the fate of *Tou Kuang Kuo* will escape withal. 'A man's advancement may be effected by others, and the stopping him may be from the efforts of others' <sup>2</sup>. He who is to be crushed, may perhaps be induced to stand below a wall.

The son of the landlord into whose cottage *K'ung Chia* <sup>3</sup> entered, was predestinated to a premature death and meanness. Though he was introduced into the palace, he still became a doorkeeper. The not standing below a precipitous wall has the same result as *K'ung Chia's* carrying the child into the palace.

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<sup>1</sup> *Vid.* p. 1.179.

<sup>2</sup> *Mencius* I, Pt. II, 16 [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>3</sup> During a tempest the Hsia emperor *K'ung Chia*, 1879-1848 B. C., sought shelter in a cottage. The landlord imagined that the visit of the son of heaven was a lucky augury for his son, and that no misfortune would befall him in future. Yet this son, later on, doing carpenter's work, accidentally broke his axe, and cut off his two legs. He then became a doorkeeper, the only office for which he was still fit (*Lü Shi ch'un-ch'iu*).

## 31. Book XI, Chap. I

### T'an-t'ien. On Heaven

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p1.250 In the books of the Literati <sup>1</sup> we find the statement that *Kung Kung* <sup>2</sup> struggled with *Chuan Hsü* <sup>3</sup> for the empire, and that out of anger that he was defeated, he knocked against the *Pu Chou* Mountain <sup>4</sup>, thereby causing the break-down of the 'Pillar of Heaven' and the *délabrement* of the confines of the earth. But *Nü Wa* <sup>5</sup> melted multicoloured stones, and therewith plastered up the blue sky, and cut off the legs of a sea-turtle, which she erected at the four extremities of the universe. However, heaven was not complete in the north-west, therefore sun and moon moved <sup>6</sup>, and there was a piece of the earth missing in the south-east, hence all the rivers flowed to the ocean <sup>7</sup>. This is a very old tradition, believed by most people <sup>8</sup>. Well educated persons will think it strange, but they have nothing to say against it, or if they have, they are unable to settle the question. They may also be afraid, lest the thing should be really true, and therefore dare not discuss it seriously. According to the laws of nature and from a human point of view, it is all idle talk.

If a man fighting with another for the empire, out of anger that he did not win, knocked against the *Pu Chou* Mountain, and caused the pillar of Heaven to break, and the confines of the earth to be smashed, if his strength was like that, he would have no opponent on earth. With such a force he could engage three armies, and the soldiers would be to him like ants, and their weapons

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<sup>1</sup> In *Huai Nan Tse*. Cf. p. 1.089.

<sup>2</sup> A legendary being of prehistoric times.

<sup>3</sup> A mythical emperor.

<sup>4</sup> The *Pu Chou* Mountain forms part of the *K'un-lun*, which latter is also called 'Pillar of Heaven' (*T'ien-chu*).

<sup>5</sup> The sister of the mythical emperor *Fu Hsi*.

<sup>6</sup> To wit from east to west.

<sup>7</sup> The ocean is in the east of China.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Lieh Tse* V, 5v. [[Wieger](#)] ; where this old tradition is told with almost the same words.

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like blades of grass. Why should he, resenting his defeat, strike against Mount *Pu Chou* ?

There is nothing harder and heavier than a mountain. The strength of ten thousand men pushing would not be able to move <sup>p1.251</sup> even a small mountain, and Mount *Pu Chou* must have been a big one. If it was really the 'Pillar of Heaven', it would be a difficult thing to break it. If it was not, then it cannot be admitted that by knocking against the *Pu Chou* Mountain the 'Pillar of Heaven' was broken. — *Chuan Hsü* in his fight against *Kung Kung* might have mustered all the soldiers on earth and all the multitudes peopling the land within the seas, he would not have been a match for him. How should *Kung Kung* not have been victorious ?

Moreover, is heaven air or a body ? If it be air, it cannot be different from clouds and mist. Then there could be no pillar which might be broken. Since *Nü Wa* repaired it with stones, it must be a body. If it be so in fact, then it is something like gems and stones. The substance of stones is heavy, a single pillar would not be a sufficient support for a thousand Li. Not even the peaks of the Five Mountains <sup>1</sup> could prop heaven as pillars.

When Mount *Pu Chou* was struck, did it support heaven ? The mountain was broken by *Kung Kung*. At that time heaven ought to have fallen down. How could it be raised again, once collapsed, and how could the four poles be erected with cut off legs of a sea-turtle ? Some one might say that a sea-turtle was a monster of olden times with immense legs, and that its legs therefore could be erected as the four poles.

Now *Pu Chou* is a mountain, a sea-turtle an animal. Originally a mountain was serving as pillar of heaven. *Kung Kung* broke it, and it was replaced by the legs of an animal. Bones become putrified, how could they long stand upright ? If the legs of a sea-turtle could support heaven, the body of the turtle must have been of such enormous dimensions, that it would not have had room enough between heaven and earth. How could *Nü Wa* have killed it, though she was a saint ? If she was able to do it, how did she manage it ?

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<sup>1</sup> The Five Sacred Mountains of China : *Tai-shan* in *Shantung*, *Hêng-shan* in *Hunan*, *Hua-shan* in *Shensi*, *Hêng-shan* in *Chili*, and *Sung-shan* in *Honan*.

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Provided that the legs could be used as the pillars of heaven, their skin must have been as hard as stone and iron ; swords as well as halberds would have been ineffective against it, nor could a sharp arrow, shot from a strong cross-bow, have pierced it.

We see that at present heaven is very high and far distant from the earth. The heaven of to-day is the same with that of antiquity. When *Kung Kung* damaged it, heaven did not fall down upon the earth. *Nü Wa* was human ; a man may be very tall, he never will reach up to heaven. When *Nü Wa* was repairing it, on p1.252 what steps did she climb up, and on what did she stand, while doing her work ? Was the heaven of olden days perhaps like the roof of a hall, and not far distant from men, so that *Kung Kung* could destroy, and *Nü Wa* repair it ? If this was actually so, there would have been many *Nü Wa*'s. Of people living prior to *Nü Wa* the Human Emperors <sup>1</sup> were the oldest. Was at the time of the Human Emperors heaven like a canopy ?

The commentators of the *Yiking* say that previous to the separation of the primogenial vapours there was a chaotic and uniform mass, and the books of the Literati speak of a wild medley, and of air not yet separated. When it came to be separated, the pure elements formed heaven, and the impure ones earth. According to the expositors of the *Yiking* and the writings of the Literati the bodies of heaven and earth, when they first became separated, were still small, and they were not far distant from each other, so much so, that heaven might well have reclined on the *Pu Chou* Mountain, and that *Kung Kung* could smash, and *Nü Wa* repair it.

All beings filled with air grow. Heaven and earth contain air, which develops spontaneously. A great many years have elapsed since their first beginning. Hence it is impossible to calculate the distance between heaven and earth now, whether it be wide or narrow, far or near. What the scholars write about it may so far be correct, the statement, however, that *Kung Kung* knocked against Mount *Pu Chou*, broke the 'Pillar of Heaven', and smashed the borders of the earth, that with liquefied multicoloured stones the blue sky was repaired, and that the legs of a sea-turtle were cut off, and set up as the

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<sup>1</sup> These are still believed to have been preceded by a dynasty of sovereigns of Heaven, and of sovereigns of Earth, all fabulous beings.

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four poles, is all the same untenable. Even though a mountain might be moved, *Kung Kung's* force would not suffice to break it. Were at the time, when heaven and earth first separated, the mountains small and men great? How else could they have knocked against a mountain, and broken it?

The repairing of heaven by means of five kinds of stones may at least be discussed. These stones might have worked like mineral drugs curing a disease <sup>1</sup>. But the cutting off of the legs of a sea-turtle and putting them up at the four poles, cannot be mentioned in earnest. It is a long time since *Nü Wa*. Do the four poles look like the legs of a turtle?

p1.253 In *Tsou Yen's* <sup>2</sup> book there is a notice to the effect, that there are nine divisions of the Empire viz. the nine divisions forming the tributary land of *Yü*. The Nine Circuits of *Yü* are so to speak but one continent. If in the 'Tribute of *Yü*' <sup>3</sup> Nine Circuits are mentioned, they are the present Nine Circuits of the Empire. They are situated in the south-east of the earth and bear the name of *Ch'ih-hsien* <sup>4</sup> or *Shên-chou* <sup>5</sup> (China). But there are eight continents besides. Each continent is hemmed in by the Four Seas, which are called *Pai-hai* <sup>6</sup>. Beyond the Nine Continents there is still the Great Ocean <sup>7</sup>.

This statement is extraordinary and bewildering to the hearers, but they are unable to make out, whether it be correct or not. Thus it is being handed down by books, which are read, or repeated by word of mouth. Reality and fiction are equally transmitted to posterity, and the world does not distinguish between truth and untruth. People become perplexed, and a discussion is very difficult.

*Tsou Yen's* knowledge did not surpass that of *Yü*. When *Yü* controlled the deluge, *Yi* acted as his assistant <sup>8</sup>. While *Yü* was regulating the water, *Yi*

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<sup>1</sup> Supposing heaven to be a spirit or a human-like living being.

<sup>2</sup> A scholar of the 4th cent. B. C. who wrote on cosmogony and geography. See [Forke](#) p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> The well known chapter of the *Shuking* [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>4</sup> Literally the 'Red Region'.

<sup>5</sup> The 'Divine Circuit'.

<sup>6</sup> Minor Seas.

<sup>7</sup> *Ying-hai*.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. p. 1.330.



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noted all things. He explored the expanse of heaven, and penetrated to the farthest limits of the earth. He distinguished what was beyond the Four Seas <sup>1</sup>, and thoroughly investigated the region within the Four Mountains <sup>2</sup>. In the thirty five States he enumerated all the beasts and birds, plants, trees, minerals, stones, waters, and earths, but he did not say that there are still nine continents besides.

*Liu An*, prince of *Huai Nan* <sup>3</sup> invited scientists like *Wu Pei* and *Tso Wu*. His palaces were full of such men, who wrote books on the Taoist doctrine. In the chapter where he treats of the things of the world and the shape of the earth <sup>4</sup>, he speaks of p<sub>1.254</sub> prodigies and the wonders of foreign lands, he also talks of the peculiarities of the thirty-five countries, but does not mention the existence of Nine Continents.

*Tsou Yen* did not travel as far as *Yü* and *Yi* on earth, and his experience was not greater than that of either *Wu Pei* or *Tso Wu*. His talents were not those of a sage, and he did not learn things by a special revelation from heaven. How then could he make such statements ? Examined by the light of *Yü's* 'Mountain Book' <sup>5</sup> and of *Huai Nan's* chapter on the shape of the earth, his words are utterly wrong.

The Grand Annalist <sup>6</sup> says : In the 'Chronicle of *Yü*' <sup>7</sup> it is said that the Yellow River has its fountain-head in the *K'un-lun*, which is three thousand and five hundred Li <sup>8</sup> high. There where sun and moon hide in the *K'un-lun*, it is full of splendour. On the mountain there is the Jade Spring and the Flower Lake <sup>9</sup>. Now, after *Chang Ch'ien* went as envoy to *Bactria* <sup>1</sup>, he traced the

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<sup>1</sup> The Four Seas supposed to surround the habitable land *i.e.* China.

<sup>2</sup> The Four Sacred Mountains : *Tai-shan*, *Hêng-shan*, *Hua-shan* and *Hêng-shan* in the East, South, West, and North of ancient China. The *Sung-shan* in the Centre is omitted. See above p. 1.251.

<sup>3</sup> The Taoist philosopher *Huai Nan Tse* cf. p. 1.335.

<sup>4</sup> Chap. IV of *Huai Nan Tse's* work.

<sup>5</sup> The 'Mountain Book' = *Shan-king* forms the first five chapters of the 'Mountain and Sea Classic' = *Shan-hai-king*, which tradition ascribes to *Yü* and his minister *Yi*, but it is probably not earlier than the 4th or the 3d cent. B. C.

<sup>6</sup> *Shi-chi* chap. 123, p. 19v.

<sup>7</sup> This book is now lost.

<sup>8</sup> The *Shi-chi* has 2,500 Li.

<sup>9</sup> The *Shi-chi* writes : 'the Sweet Wine Spring and the Jasper Lake'.

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springs of the Yellow River, but did he see what the Chronicle relates about the *Kun-lun*? In what it says about the nine divisions, mountains, and rivers the *Shuking* may be near the truth <sup>2</sup>, of the wonderful things to be found in *Yü's* Chronicle and the 'Mountain Book' <sup>3</sup>. I dare not express myself.

'I dare not express myself' means that there is no truth in them. Every one has heard about the height of the *K'un-lun*, the Jade Spring, and the Flower Lake, but, when *Chang Ch'ien* went there personally, he found that these things did not exist. In the 'Tribute of *Yü*' mountains, rivers, and wonderful things, precious metals and stones occurring in the Nine Circuits are all enumerated, but there is no reference to the Jade Spring or the Flower Lake on the *K'un-lun*. In the opinion of the Grand Annalist the reports of the 'Mountain Book' and the 'Chronicle of *Yü*' are inventions.

p1.255 In all things which are difficult to know, it is not easy to find out the truth.

The pole is the centre of heaven. At present the world lies south from the pole of *Yü*, therefore the heavenly pole must be in the north, heaven must be high there, and more people living in that region. According to the 'Tribute of *Yü*' the east is washed by the ocean, and the west covered with 'flying sand'. These must be the extreme limits of heaven and earth.

When the sun pricks, his diameter measures a thousand Li. Now, if the sun is observed at his rise from *Yin* and *Chih hsien* <sup>4</sup> in *Kuei-chi* on the eastern sea-shore, his diameter appears to be no more than two feet, which proves that the sun is still very far. Consequently there must be more land eastward. This being the case, the assertion about the pole being in the north and about the extension of heaven and earth is not made at random <sup>5</sup>. In this way the statements of *Tsou Yen* cannot be controverted, and what the

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<sup>1</sup> *Chang Ch'ien* started on his famous expedition in 122 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> These subjects are treated in the chapter entitled the 'Tribute of *Yü*'.

<sup>3</sup> The *Shi-chi* writes : The *Shan-hai-king*.

<sup>4</sup> *Chih* [] must be a misprint, for such a character is not to be found in the dictionaries. We ought to read *Mou* []. *Yin* and *Mou* were two districts of the *Kuei-chi* circuit comprising *Chekiang* and parts of *Anhui* and *Fukien* under the *Han* dynasty. *Yin* was in the south-east of *Mou*, both situated in the present *Ningpo* prefecture. (Cf. *Kanghi's* Dict.)

<sup>5</sup> *Tsou Yen's* assertion.

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'Chronicle of Yü' says on mountains and seas, and *Huai Nan Tse's* lucubrations on the shape of the earth appear unreliable.

*Tsou Yen* holds that at present the 'land under heaven' <sup>1</sup> lies in the south-east of the earth, and is called *Ch'ih hsien* or *Shên Chou*. Now, the heavenly pole is the centre of heaven. If at present the 'land under heaven' were situated in the south-east of the earth, the pole ought to appear in the north-west. Since in fact it is straight north, the world at present lies south of the pole. In regard to the pole the world cannot lie in the south-east, hence *Tsou Yen's* statement to this effect is wrong.

If it were in the south-east, it would be near to the sun's rising place, and the light of the rising sun ought to appear bigger. Now, whether looked at from the Eastern Sea or from the Gobi, the size of the sun remains the same. Although the points of observation be ten thousand Li distant, it makes no difference in the size of the sun. That shows that at present the world occupies but a small part of the expanse of the earth.

p1.256 *Loyang* is the centre of the Nine Circuits <sup>2</sup>. Viewed from *Loyang* the north-pole appears direct north. The shore of the Eastern Sea is three thousand Li distant from *Loyang*. Seen from there the pole is likewise in the north. By analogy we may safely assume that viewed from the Gobi the pole will also appear in the north. The Eastern Sea and the Gobi are the eastern and western borders of the Nine Circuits, ten thousand Li distant from one another, nevertheless the pole appears always north. The earth must therefore be very small and occupying a narrow space, since one never gets away from the pole.

The principality of *Annam* (*Jih Nan i. e.* the South of the Sun) is ten thousand Li distant from *Loyang*. People who had emigrated there, and came back, when asked, have said that, when the sun culminates, his resting-place cannot be in *Annam*. If we go ten thousand Li further south, the sun there must reach his south-point. Then the south-point of the sun would be twenty thousand Li distant from *Loyang*. Now, if we measure the distance of the way

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<sup>1</sup> *I. e.* the habitable land or China.

<sup>2</sup> *Loyang* is considered the centre of the world *i. e.* China.

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made by the sun from *Loyang*, it cannot be the same, as if we measure from the north-pole, because the pole is still very far from *Loyang*. Let us suppose that we went thirty thousand Li north. Even then we would not arrive under the pole. But provided we did, then we could say that we had reached the place just beneath the north-pole. Since from there to the south-point there would be fifty thousand Li, there must be fifty thousand Li north of the pole likewise, and under these circumstances there would also be fifty thousand Li from the pole eastward and westward in either direction. One hundred thousand Li from north to south, and one hundred thousand Li from east to west multiplied would give a million square Li <sup>1</sup>.

*Tsou Yen* opines that between heaven and earth there are nine continents like China. At the *Chou* period the Nine Circuits measured five thousand Li from east to west, and from north to south also five thousand Li. Five times five gives twenty-five, one continent therefore would contain twenty-five thousand square Li, which would be the size of China <sup>2</sup>. Twenty-five thousand Li multiplied by nine would give two hundred and twenty-five thousand square Li. *Tsou Yen's* figure <sup>3</sup> may appear too high, but computation and a thorough investigation show us that, on the contrary, it is too low <sup>4</sup>.

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The Literati say that heaven is air, and therefore not far from man. Consequently it immediately knows, whether they are right or wrong, and whether they possess secret virtues or vices, and also responds to them. This is regarded as a proof of its vicinity. But, if we examine the question critically, we find that heaven's body is not air.

Men are created by heaven, why then grudge it a body ? Heaven is not

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<sup>1</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* is a better theorist than arithmetician. The square of 100,000 is 10,000 millions, not 1 million. *Wang Ch'ung* supposes the earth to be an equilateral, rectangular square.

<sup>2</sup> The same mistake. The square of 5,000 is 25 millions. 25 million square Li, about 8 million square kilometer is approximately the area of the Eighteen Provinces or China Proper.

<sup>3</sup> 225,000 square Li (225 millions), which number is based on *Tsou Yen's* hypothesis that there are nine continents as large as China.

<sup>4</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* has calculated a million square Li (10,000 millions). The area of our Earth measures about 510 million square kilometer, not 2,500 millions (= 10,000 million square Li) as results from *Wang Ch'ung's* calculation.

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air, but has a body on high and far from men. According to private traditions heaven is upwards of sixty-thousand Li distant from the earth <sup>1</sup>. Some mathematicians reckon the entire circumference of heaven at 365 degrees. Thus the world all round is divided into degrees, and its height measures a certain number of Li. If heaven were really air, air like clouds and mist, how could then be so many Li or so many degrees ? Besides we have the 'twenty-eight constellations', which serve as resting-places to sun and moon, just as on earth the couriers lodge in postal stations. The postal stations on earth correspond to the solar mansions on heaven. Hence the statement found in books that heaven has a body is not baseless. To him who considers the question, as we have done, it becomes evident that heaven cannot be something diffuse and vague.

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<sup>1</sup> *Huai Nan Tse* says 50,000 Li.

## 32. Book XI, Chap. II

### *Shuo-jih. On the Sun*

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p1.258 The Literati say that the sun, when he becomes visible in the morning, comes forth from darkness, and that, when he disappears in the evening, he re-enters darkness. The *Yin* fluid of darkness is obscure, they say, therefore the sun disappears in it, and becomes invisible.

In reality the sun neither leaves nor re-enters darkness, but how can we prove that ?

Night is darkness ; its fluid is also obscure <sup>1</sup>. But if a fire is made during the night, its light is not extinguished by the night. The darkness of night is the darkness of the north. The setting sun, which rises in the morning, is the kindled fire. The light of a fire, kindled at night-time, is not extinguished, that shows that, when the sun sets in the evening, a fluid <sup>2</sup> cannot be the cause of his disappearance.

Observing the sun-rise and the sun-set in winter, we remark that, in the morning, he rises in the south-east, and, in the evening, he sets in the south-west. The south-east and the south-west are not the region of the *Yin* or darkness <sup>3</sup>. How then can it be said that the sun proceeds from and reverts to darkness ? Furthermore, the stars notwithstanding their smallness remain visible, and the sun is extinguished in spite of his greatness ? The reasoning of the scholars of to-day is thoughtless and shallow.

They again say that the shortness of the days in winter, and their length in summer are also brought about by the *Yin* and the *Yang*. In summer, the

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<sup>1</sup> Night is here taken as something positive, something like a black veil, or dark air, not as the absence of light, which does not cause the disappearance of the sun, but is its consequence.

<sup>2</sup> The dark fluid of night.

<sup>3</sup> According to Chinese symbolism the *Yin* principle of darkness corresponds to the north.

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*Yang* fluid abounds, and the *Yin* fluid falls short. The *Yang* fluid shines with the same splendour as the sun. Consequently, when the sun comes forth, there is nothing to obscure him. In winter, the *Yin* fluid is dusky, and overshadows <sup>p1.259</sup> the sun-light. Therefore, although the sun rises, he remains dark and invisible. Thus in winter the days are short. The *Yin* is paramount, and the *Yang* is scarce, just the reverse of what takes place in summer.

However, if we consider the question seriously, we will find that the *Yin* and the *Yang* are not responsible for the length or the shortness of the days. This is made evident by the northern stars. The *Yin* of the north is the *Yin* of the sun. The *Yin* of the north does not overshadow the sparkling of the stars, why then, should the *Yin* in winter obfuscate the brightness of the sun? Hence those who speak about the *Yin* and the *Yang* miss the truth.

As a matter of fact, in summer the sun stands in Gemini, in winter in Aquila <sup>1</sup>. Aquila is far from the pole, therefore the curve described by the sun is short. Gemini being near the pole, the solar curve is long then. In summer the sun proceeds northwards as far as Gemini, in winter southwards as far as Aquila. Therefore the extreme solar points in winter and summer are called 'winter' and 'summer limit' <sup>2</sup>. Because in spring and autumn those extremes are not reached, one speaks of 'vernal' and 'autumnal division' <sup>3</sup>.

Some people hold that in summer, when the *Yang* fluid abounds, it is in the south, and that in consequence heaven rises and becomes high. In winter the *Yang* fluid decays, and heaven sinks down, and becomes depressed. When heaven is high, the course of the sun increases in length, and the days are lengthened ; when heaven is low, the solar curve decreases, and the days are short.

Now, if owing to the exuberance of the solar *Yang* fluid, heaven rises in the south, and the course of the sun is lengthened, the same increase ought to take place in regard to the moon. In summer, when the days are long, the sun rises in the north-east, but the moon in the south-east. In winter, when

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<sup>1</sup> Literally : *Tung-ching*, the 'Eastern Well', and *Chien-nu*, the 'Herdsman'.

<sup>2</sup> The two solstices.

<sup>3</sup> The two equinoxes.

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the days are short, the sun rises in the south-east, whereas the moon rises in the north-east. If in summer heaven were raised in the south, sun and moon ought equally to rise in the north-east, and, if in winter heaven were lowered, sun and moon should both rise in the south-east. It results from this, that in summer heaven does <sup>p1.260</sup> not rise in the south, and that in winter it is not depressed. On the contrary, in summer, when the days are long, the stars from which the sun rises are in the north, and in winter, when the days are short, these stars are in the south.

The following question may be raised. In summer, in the fifth moon, when the days are long, the sun stands in Gemini, which are near the pole, therefore the course of the sun is long. Now, we see that in the fifth moon the sun rises in the sign *Yin* <sup>1</sup> and sets in *Hsü* <sup>2</sup>. The solar curve being so long and far from men, how is it that we see the sun rise in *Yin* and set in *Hsü*? When the sun stands in Gemini, he is very near to men. Gemini are near the pole, hence, when the pole turns round, they ought to remain always visible <sup>3</sup>. Provided that Gemini are by the side of the pole, ought we not to have no night, but continuous day? <sup>4</sup>

Some scholars assert that sun and moon have nine different courses, therefore, they say, the sun in his course is near or far, and day and night are long or short. — However, in the fifth month day-time makes up 11/16 and night-time 5/16, and in the sixth month the day is 10/16 and the night 6/16. From the sixth month to the eleventh month every month the day decreases by 1/16. That means that to the course of the sun every month 1/16 is added. In the lapse of a year the sun takes 16 different courses on heaven and not 9 only.

Another idea is that heaven is high in the south and depressed in the north. When the sun rises into the higher region, he becomes visible, and when he sets into the lower one, he disappears. Heaven is believed to be like a reclining umbrella, which is shown by the fact that the pole, as seen from

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<sup>1</sup> This cyclical sign denotes ENE 3/4N on the compass and corresponds to Gemini.

<sup>2</sup> *Hsü* = WNW 3/4N and Aquarius.

<sup>3</sup> Turning round with the pole.

<sup>4</sup> The sun turning round the pole in Gemini and never disappearing.



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us, is in the north. The pole is the centre of the world. Since it is north from us, heaven must evidently resemble a reclining umbrella.

If to illustrate the shining of the sun the analogy of a reclining umbrella be used, heaven must really have the shape of an umbrella. The polar star in the north of the upper part would correspond to the top of the umbrella, the south in the lower part would be like the stick of the umbrella, but where would that be ? An umbrella reclining on the earth cannot turn round, but raise it straight, and it rotates. Now, provided that heaven revolves, p1.261 its northern edge cannot touch the earth, for how could it revolve, if it knocked against the earth ? We see from this that heaven cannot be shaped like a reclining umbrella, and that the sun rising or setting does not follow the elevation, and the depression of heaven.

Some people maintain that the northern edge of heaven sinks down into the earth, and that the sun following heaven enters into the earth. The earth being massive, obscures him, so that men cannot see him. But heaven and earth are husband and wife. They unite in one body, heaven is in earth, and earth joined to heaven. Their fluids mix and produce things. The north is *Yin*. When both are coupled, and their fluids mingle, it is in the north therefore <sup>1</sup>, but does heaven revolve in the earth ? If not, the earth in the north would be depressed <sup>2</sup>, and not even.

Let us suppose that heaven really is revolving in the earth. On digging up the earth ten feet deep we find springs. Does then heaven revolving in the earth plunge into the water, and then come out again ? If the north were depressed and not level, the Nine Streams <sup>3</sup> ought to flow north without ever filling it up. In reality heaven does not revolve in the earth, nor does the sun become obscured, because he follows heaven. Heaven is quite as level as earth, and the sun rises, and sets, being turned round along with heaven.

Heaven appears to us in the shape of a bowl turned upside down. Therefore the sun rising and setting looks like coming from and entering into the earth. When the sun rises, he is near, when he sets, he is far, and

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<sup>1</sup> The north is *Yin*, which is synonymous with female, here the female organ.

<sup>2</sup> *Viz.* By heaven knocking against it in its rotation.

<sup>3</sup> The Nine Streams regulated by *Yü*. See *Mayers* Pt. II, No. 267.

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becomes invisible, hence the term setting or entering. When in his rotation the sun appears in the east, he is near, hence we say that he is rising or coming out. But what proof have we? If you attach a moonlight pearl to the bow over a cart, and turn the cart round, the pearl will also turn.

To men heaven and earth seem to unite at a distance of no more than ten Li. That is the effect of the distance, for they do not come together in fact. When we behold the sun setting, he does not set either, it is also the distance. At the time, when the sun sets in the west, the people living there will perhaps say that he is culminating, and looking from the point, where the sun is setting, eastward to our world, heaven and earth may appear to <sup>p1.262</sup> the beholder joined together. Our world is in the south <sup>1</sup>, therefore the sun rises in the east, and disappears in the northern regions <sup>2</sup>. If the sun rose in the north, he would set in the south <sup>3</sup>, for everywhere, what is near seems to rise, and what is far, to set. In reality there is no setting, but it is the distance.

If standing on the shore of a big lake, you look out to its limits in the four directions, they are blended with heaven. As a matter of fact, they are not blended, but the distance gives this impression. Through distance the sun seems setting, and through distance the lake seems to be blended with heaven. It is the same in both cases. The lake is bordered by land, but we do not see it, for to the observer it looks, as if it were blended <sup>4</sup> with heaven. The sun also looks like setting. All this is brought about by distance.

The height of Mount *T'ai* equals that of heaven, and is lost in the clouds, yet from a distance of one hundred Li the mountain does not appear as big as a clod of earth. At a distance of one hundred Li Mount *T'ai* disappears, how much more the sun, whose distance from us is counted by ten thousands of

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<sup>1</sup> See above p. 1.255. On p. 1.263 *Wang Ch'ung* says that our world lies in the south-east of the universe.

<sup>2</sup> The sun sets in the west and passes through the north, before he rises again in the east.

<sup>3</sup> To people living in the east of the universe *i. e.* below the farthest eastern limit reached by the sun in his course, the sun would appear to rise in the north, to culminate in the east, and to set in the south.

<sup>4</sup> The context requires that we should read [] *blended* instead of [] *look out* of the text.

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Li ! The example of the *T'ai-shan* gives an explanation.

Let a man take a big torch, and walk at night on a level road, where there are no gaps. He will not have walked to a distance of one Li from us, before the light of the fire is gone out <sup>1</sup>. It does not go out, it is the distance. In the same manner the sun revolving westward and disappearing does not set <sup>2</sup>.

The following question may be asked : Heaven is level as much as the earth. Now, looking up to heaven and regarding the movements of the sun and the moon, it seems as though heaven were high in the south and low in the north <sup>3</sup>. How is that to be explained ?

p1.263 The answer is this : Our actual world <sup>4</sup> is lying in the southeast. Seen from below, heaven looks, as if it were elevated, and the courses of the sun and the moon are south of us. Now, our world lies beneath the courses of the sun and the moon, therefore it seems to us, as if in their motions they rose in the south, and descended in the north. How small we account for that ?

If heaven were elevated in the south, the southern stars should be elevated likewise. However, we see them going down. Is then heaven again depressed in the south ? The celestial bodies which are 'near appear high, those which are distant, low. To people north of the pole it seems high, and the south they regard as low. The same holds good for the regions east and West of the pole. All regard as high, what is near, and as low, what is far from them.

He who from beneath the *Northern Passes* <sup>5</sup> looks up, sees the polar constellation above him. The north of the *Hsiung-nu* is the border-land of the earth. Seen in the north, heaven still appears high in the north and low in the south, and sun and moon in their courses ascend heaven there also. For a man standing on Mount *T'ai* it is high, whereas ten Li from its foot it appears

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<sup>1</sup> The light becomes invisible for those who look after him.

<sup>2</sup> The great distance makes the sun invisible.

<sup>3</sup> Because the sun and the moon, which are supposed to be attached to heaven and revolving with it, rise on the southern hemisphere, and go down on the northern.

<sup>4</sup> *I. e.* China.

<sup>5</sup> In Mongolia.

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low. The height of heaven is like that of Mount *T'ai* as seen by men.

The four quarters and the centre, which are level, are of the same height, if, therefore, heaven seems to be depressed at the four cardinal points, this must be an illusion caused by the distance. Heaven does not only seem depressed there, but joined to the earth.

Some *savants* hold that at sunrise and sunset, in the morning and in the evening, the sun is near, and that while in the zenith he is far away. Conversely, others maintain that the sun in the zenith is near, whereas at sunrise and sunset he is a long way off. Those who believe that the sun is near, when he rises or sets, and far off, when he culminates, have remarked the large size of the sun rising or setting, and his smallness at noon. We find that things are large, when they are near us, and small, when seen from a distance. Therefore the rising and setting sun is considered to be near, and the sun in the zenith to be far distant. Those who believe that at sunrise and sunset the sun is far off, and at noon near us, have on the other hand made the observation that at noon the sun is warm, and that he is cool, while rising or setting. When a fire comes near us, we feel hot, whereas, when it is at a distance, <sup>p1.264</sup> we feel cold. Hence the idea that the sun at noon is near, while he is at a distance, when he is rising or setting <sup>1</sup>.

Both views are well-founded, and it has not yet been ascertained, which is right, and which is wrong. If we consider the question seriously, we arrive at the conclusion that the sun in the zenith is near, and at sunrise and sunset far off, as the following experiment will show. Place a pole upright in a room. The room is 30 feet high. The pole placed vertically under the roof-beam knocks against the latter above, and reaches to the bottom below. The beam then is 30 feet distant from the bottom. When the pole is inclined a little sideways, its top diverges sideways, and cannot touch the beam anymore, because the distance from the bottom is more than 30 feet.

When the sun is culminating, he just reaches the highest point on heaven, exactly like the pole standing upright so, that the distance from the bottom

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<sup>1</sup> This problem is already enunciated by *Lieh Tse* V, 9 [[Wieger](#)] who makes two lads expose it to *Confucius*. They ask the Sage to decide between the two antagonistic views, but he is unable to give a satisfactory reply.

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measures 30 feet. The sun rising or setting is deflected to our right or left like the pole inclining to one side, whereby the distance from the bottom exceeds 30 feet. We learn from this that the sun in the zenith is near, and the rising or setting sun more distant.

Let again a man be seated in the central hall of a house, and another walk on its roof. When he has reached the centre of the house, he is just above the man seated, and the distance from the man on the roof to the man sitting in the house, is 30 feet. When he is at the eastern or the western corner of the roof, his distance from the man in the house is greater than 30 feet. The sun in the zenith is like the man standing in the middle of the roof, when the sun is just rising or setting, he resembles the man at the eastern or western corner. The sun in the zenith is near us, therefore warm, at the time of his rising or setting, he is far, and consequently cool. However, when the sun stands in the zenith, he is small, whereas at sunrise and sunset he is large. That is because, when the sun is culminating, the brightness of daylight <sup>1</sup> makes him appear small, and when the sun is rising or setting, daylight is fading, and he looks larger in consequence. In the same manner a fire looks small at day-time, but big at night. What is shown by fire, can be proved by the stars also. The stars <sub>p1.265</sub> are not visible during the day, because the brightness of the day eclipses them. At night there is no light, and the stars become visible. Now the sun and the moon are stars. When the sun approaches the horizon, and is about to set, his light fades, and he appears bigger.

The scholars argue that in the morning the sun rises from *Fu Sang* <sup>2</sup>, and in the evening sets in *Hsi Liu* <sup>3</sup>. *Fu Sang* is the eastern region, *Hsi Liu* the western desert, both are the confines of heaven and earth, and the places where the sun and the moon use to rise and set.

I beg to put the following question : Every year in the second and the eighth months the sun rises exactly in the east, and sets exactly in the

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<sup>1</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* seems to think that daylight is distinct from the light of the sun.

<sup>2</sup> *Fu Sang* has been identified with Sakhalin.

<sup>3</sup> *Hsi Liu* must be the *Mongolian Desert*.

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west <sup>1</sup>. We might say then that the sun rises in *Fu Sang*, and sets in *Hsi Liu*. But in summer, when the days are long, the sun rises in the north-east, and sets in the north-west <sup>2</sup>. In winter, when the days are short, the sun rises in the south-east and sets in the south-west. In winter and summer rising and setting take place in four different corners. In which place exactly are *Fu Sang* and *Hsi Liu* situated then ? The above statement, therefore, is true for spring and autumn, but not for winter and summer. Yet, after all, the sun does not rise in *Fu Sang* nor set in *Hsi Liu* for the reason that he revolves with heaven and is visible, when near, and invisible, when far off. While he is in *Fu Sang* or *Hsi Liu*, the people there, from their standpoint, will say that the sun is in the zenith. At other times it may appear from *Fu Sang* and *Hsi Liu*, as though the sun were rising or setting. When he is above people's heads, they call it noon, when he is on one side, they call it morning or evening. How can the sun under these circumstances rise in *Fu Sang*, and set in *Hsi Liu* ? The Literati again assert that heaven is revolving from right to left <sup>3</sup>, and that the sun and the moon in their courses are not attached to heaven, but have each their own movement. It might be objected that, in case the sun and the moon had their proper movements, and were not attached to heaven, the sun would proceed one degree, and the moon thirteen. After their rise, both ought to go on and turn from west to east, how is it that nevertheless p1.266 they commence to turn westward ? They are attached to heaven, and follow its movements during the four seasons. Their movement may be compared to that of ants crawling on a rolling mill-stone. The movements of the sun and the moon are slow, whereas heaven moves very fast. Heaven carries the sun and the moon along with it, therefore they really move eastward <sup>4</sup>, but are turned westward.

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Perhaps the following question might be raised : The sun, the moon, and heaven have their movement each, but the number of degrees which they

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<sup>1</sup> At the equinoxes. See above p. 1.258.

<sup>2</sup> *Vid.* above p. 1.259.

<sup>3</sup> From right to left, facing the polar star which remains motionless and round which heaven revolves from east to west (cf. p. 267).

<sup>4</sup> Their own movement being from west to east, opposite to that of heaven.

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traverse is not the same. To what can their velocity be compared, if referred to the things of this world ?

I would reply that heaven makes one circumvolution every day. The sun moves on one degree equal to 2,000 Li, of which he makes 1,000 during the day-time and 1,000 during the night. The unicorn <sup>1</sup> also runs 1,000 Li during the day, therefore the speed of the sun is very much like the pace of the unicorn.

The moon moves on 13 degrees. 10 degrees being equal to 20,000 Li, and 3 degrees to 6,000, the distance made by the moon in one day and one night is 26,000 Li, which is like the flight of a wild duck.

Since heaven turns round 365 degrees, the multiplication gives 730,000 Li. This movement is very fast, and there is nothing like it. It can be compared to the rotation of a potter's wheel or the speed of an arrow, shot from a cross-bow.

But although the rotation of heaven be so very fast, it appears to us slow, because heaven is so high, and far away, for distant objects in motion look motionless, and things shifting their place, stationary, as the following observation will show. If any body is on board a ship, sailing with the wind, in a river or on sea, her speed is fast, while she is near the shore, and slow, while she is far off. The ship's real speed remains the same, its quickness or slowness merely depending on the distance from which she is seen.

When we look up to heaven, its movement does not appear as quick as that of the unicorn. With the sun over it the unicorn hastens on, but when darkness falls, the sun is in front, why ? <sup>p1.267</sup> Because the unicorn is near, whereas the sun is far. Distance conveys the impression of slowness, and proximity that of speed. If a journey extends over 60,000 Li, it is difficult to form an adequate idea of the real movement.

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The Literati assert that the sun moves one degree, and heaven 365 during

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<sup>1</sup> The *Kilin*, by Europeans usually called unicorn, whose prototype seems to have been the giraffe. The giraffe gallops like the fastest horse. The swiftest horses likewise said to make 1,000 Li a day.

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one day and one night, that heaven turns to the left, and, the sun and the moon to the right, and that they *meet* heaven.

The following question may be asked : The movements of the sun and the moon depend on heaven, they move, attached to heaven, not straight on. How shall we describe it ? The *Yiking* says :

The sun, the moon, and the stars rely on heaven. Fruits, grasses, and trees rely on earth' <sup>1</sup>.

Relying means that they are attached. The movement attached to heaven is like that of men walking round on the earth. The simile is like that of the ants crawling on the rolling mill-stone.

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There is the question : How do we know that the sun does not detach himself from heaven, nor move straight on independently ? If the sun could do so, he ought to turn eastward of himself, and not share heaven's movement to the west. The movement of the moon is the same as that of the sun, both being attached to heaven. This is proved by a comparison with the clouds.

The clouds are not attached to heaven, they always remain in their place. Provided the sun and the moon were not attached to heaven, we would expect them to keep their places likewise. From this it is evident that the sun's movement is connected with that of heaven.

Another question arises : The sun is fire. On earth fire does not move, why then does the sun move on heaven ?

The fluid attached to heaven has motion, that attached to the earth has not. If fire be attached to the earth, the earth does not move, consequently the fire does not move either.

Some one might object, how could water move, if the fluid attached to earth had no motion. The reply is that the water <sup>p1.268</sup> flows eastward into the ocean, because the north-western region is high, and the south-eastern low.

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<sup>1</sup> [Yiking, 30th diagram](#) (Li), *Legge's* transl. p. 237. — Our text slightly differs. It adds 'and the stars', and writes 'fruits' instead of 'grains'.



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It is the nature of water to seek the low places, whereas fire will rise. If the earth were not high in the west, the water would not run eastward either.

We will have to meet another objection as to how men, being attached to the earth, can move, if the fluid attached to the earth is motionless.

Human actions and desires all have an aim. Since purpose is at the root of human nature, man works and strives.

The ancients were plain and simple-minded. Though on the frontier of a neighbouring country they heard the cocks crow and the dogs bark, they never had any intercourse with that country.

Somebody will ask perhaps, why the stars do not move, if the fluid attached to heaven is in motion. I reply that the stars are fixed in heaven. Heaven moves, and since they are turned round along with heaven, they move also.

An opponent might urge that human nature is based on purpose, and therefore acts, but how could heaven move, since its principle is absence of purpose? — Heaven's movement consists in the spontaneous emission of fluid. The fluid being emitted, things are produced of themselves, but the fluid is not emitted on purpose, in order to produce things. Without movement the fluid cannot be emitted, and unless the fluid be emitted, things cannot be created. It is different from the movement of man. The movements of the sun, the moon, and the five planets all consist in the emission of fluid.

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The Literati hold that there is a three-legged raven in the sun, and a hare and a toad in the moon. However, the sun is the heavenly fire which does not differ from the fire on earth. In the fire on earth there are no living beings, how could there be a raven in the heavenly fire? There are no living creatures in the fire, when they enter it, they are burnt to death. How could a raven remain unscathed?

The moon is water <sup>1</sup>. There are living beings in the water, but not hares or

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<sup>1</sup> Again the misleading symbolism. The moon represents the female principle, *Yin*, to which water corresponds, whence the naive deduction is made that the moon *is* water.

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toads. When a hare or a toad remain long in the water, they inevitably die. The sun and the moon are attached to heaven just as shells and oysters swim in the deep, evidently p1.269 because they belong to the same fluid. Are perhaps that what we call a hare and a toad, shells or oysters ?

And let us ask the Literati whether the raven, the hare, and the toad are living or dead. If they be dead, and remain for a long time in the sun and the moon, they must become charred, decay and putrefy. If they be alive, where are they at the time of a total eclipse of the sun or, when on the last day of a month the moon totally disappears ?

The raven, the hare, and the toad must be the fluid of the sun and the moon, as the intestines of man, or the heart, and backbone of animals are the fluid of these creatures. It is still possible to examine the moon, but, when we look at the sun, our eyes are dazzled, and we cannot make out what fluid really pervades the sun, yet we should be able to distinguish an object in the sun, and call it a raven ? In fact, we cannot see the entire body of a raven, and we should remark that it has three legs ? This is certainly not true.

Moreover, we hear the literati speak of many animals, why then is there only one raven in the sun, and one hare and a toad in the moon ?

The *savants* maintain that the eclipse of the sun is caused by the moon. They have observed that the eclipses of the sun always fall on the last and the first day of a month. At that time the moon is united with the sun, therefore she must eclipse him, they think. Many eclipses of the sun have occurred during the 'Spring and Autumn' period. The Classic records that on the first day of such and such a moon the sun has been eclipsed, but it does not follow that the moon has any thing to do with these eclipses. If the chroniclers had known that the sun was eclipsed by the moon, why have they been silent on this point, and did not speak of the moon ?

They say that, when an eclipse of the sun takes place, the *Yang* is weak and the *Yin* strong. When a man possesses great strength, he can subdue others in this world. Now, on the last day of a month, the light of the moon is extinguished, and, on the first day of the new moon, it is gone so to say, which is the highest degree of weakness. How could it vanquish the sun, for the eclipse of the sun is said to be caused by the moon ? If, in an eclipse of

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the sun, the moon is believed to eclipse it, where is the moon ? The eclipse is not caused by the moon, since the moon herself is destroyed. If we regard the sun from the same point of view as the moon, his light at an eclipse is destroyed of itself.

p1.270 On an average, an eclipse of the sun occurs every 41 or 42 months, and an eclipse of the moon, every 180 days. These eclipses have their fixed time, and these changes do not always take place. When they happen, it is through the spontaneous action of the fluid. The last and the first day of a month recur very often, but does the moon cause an eclipse then ? The sun being in his full, the change is brought about by his shrinking together. Must we suppose something that consumes (eclipses) the sun ? What consumes the mountains or the earth, when the mountains collapse and the earth shakes ?

Some say that, when the sun is eclipsed, the moon covers him. The sun being above, the moon below, her shadow falls on the sun's body. When the sun and the moon are united, but the moon is above, and the sun below, the moon cannot cover the sun, whereas, when the sun is above, and the moon underneath him, she casts her shadow on him. The light of the moon then covers the light of the sun, hence the expression : eclipse <sup>1</sup>. The shadow of the moon is like that of the clouds which cover the sky in such a way that the sun and the moon are invisible.

Provided that both unite with their extremities, they must eclipse one another, and if both, when they come together, are joined like two pieces fitting one into the other, the sun must disappear as a matter of course. That the sun and the moon meet on the last and the first day of the month is a very common celestial phenomenon, but it is wrong to say that at an eclipse the moon covers the light of the sun for the following reason :

In case that, when the sun and the moon unite, the moon covers the light of the sun, the edges of the two luminaries must fall together at the

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<sup>1</sup> The Chinese expression is 'to consume', 'to eat'. In the popular belief the sun at an eclipse is being devoured by the 'heavenly dog', an idea perhaps derived from India. In *Wang Ch'ung's* time it must not yet have been current, for otherwise he would most likely not have omitted to mention and controvert it.

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beginning of the eclipse, and they must change their places, when the sun comes out again. Now, let us suppose that the sun stands in the east, the moon in the west. The moon moves quickly eastward, where she falls in with the sun. She covers the edge of the sun, and after a short time she passes the sun and proceeds eastward. The western edge of the sun has been covered first, its light must then come back. The eastern edge has not yet been overshadowed, it will be eclipsed next. p1.271 Thus we see that during an eclipse of the sun the light of the western edge is extinguished, and that, when the sun comes back, the light of the western edge returns. Then the moon goes on, and covers the eastern edge, while the western edge returns. Can we say then that the sun and the moon are joined together, and that one covers and overshadows the other ? <sup>1</sup>

The scholars assert that the shape of the sun and the moon is quite round. When they look up to them, they appear shaped like a peck, or a round basket. Their shape is a regular circle, they, are not like the fluid of a fire seen from afar, for a fluid is not round. — In reality the sun and the moon are not round, they only appear so through the distance, as will be seen from the following : The sun is the essence of fire, the moon the essence of water. On earth fire and water are not round, why should they be round in heaven alone ? The sun and the moon in heaven are like the Five Planets, and the Five Planets like the other stars. The stars are not round, only their radiance appears round, because they are so far from us. This will become evident from the following fact : During the 'Spring and Autumn' period stars fell down in the capital of *Sung* <sup>2</sup>. When people went near to examine them, they found that they were stones, but not round. Since the stars are not round, we know that the sun, the moon, and the planets are not round either.

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The scholars discoursing on the sun, and the mechanics hold that there is only one sun, whereas in the 'Tribute of Yü' and in the *Shan-hai-king* it is

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<sup>1</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* here speaks of a partial eclipse. That the shadow of the moon in most cases covers only part of the sun cannot invalidate the right view, which *Wang Ch'ung* rejects on insufficient grounds.

<sup>2</sup> *Ch'un-ch'iu*, Duke Hsi 16th year (*Legge, Classics Vol. V, Pt. I, p. 170*).

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stated that there are ten suns. Beyond the ocean in the east there is the 'Hot Water Abyss' <sup>1</sup>, over which rises *Fu-sang*. The ten suns bathe in the water. There is a huge tree. Nine suns remain in its lower branches, while one sun stays on the upper branch <sup>2</sup>. *Huai Nan Tse* also writes in his book about ten suns which were shining. During the time of *Yao* the ten suns came out together, and scorched everything, whereupon *Yao* shot at them <sup>3</sup>. Hence they never were seen together any more on the same day <sup>4</sup>.

Commonly the 'celestial stems' <sup>5</sup> are called suns. From the first to the last stem there are ten suns. There are ten suns, as there are five planets. Intelligent people and disputing scholars are at a loss, how to find out the truth, and do not wish to decide in favour of either opinion. Thus the two antagonistic statements are transmitted without criticism, and neither of the two opinions meets with general approval. Yet, if we examine the question thoroughly, there are not ten suns.

The sun is like the moon. If there be ten suns, are there twelve moons ? There are five planets, but the five elements <sup>6</sup> : metal, wood, water, fire, and earth all burn with a different light. Should there be ten suns, their fluids ought to be different. Now, we do not discover any difference in the light of the sun, and we find that his size is the same at different times. If there were really different fluids, the light would certainly be different. If, on the other hand, the fluid is identical, it must be united into one sun, and there cannot be ten.

We see that with a sun-glass fire is drawn from heaven, the sun being a big fire. Since on earth fire is one fluid, and the earth has not ten fires, how can heaven possess ten suns ? Perhaps the so called ten suns are some other things, whose light and shape resembles that of the sun. They are staying in

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<sup>1</sup> *T'ang-ku*.

<sup>2</sup> *Shan-hai-king* chap. 9, p. 1 v.

<sup>3</sup> According to other accounts *Yao* ordered his minister *Yi*, a famous archer, to shoot at the suns, of which he destroyed nine.

<sup>4</sup> The appearance of ten suns is mentioned in many ancient works : in *Chuang Tse* [[Wieger](#) ; cf. [Granet](#)], the *Li-sao*, the 'Bamboo Annula', the *Tso-chuan*, etc.

<sup>5</sup> The ten cyclical signs.

<sup>6</sup> The five elements are considered to be the substances of the Five Planets, which have been named after them : Metal Star (Venus), Wood Star (Jupiter), etc.

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the 'Hot Water Abyss', and always climb up *Fu-sang*. *Yü* and *Yi* <sup>1</sup> saw them, and described them as ten suns.

Some people have measured the light of the sun, and calculated his size. They found the diameter to be 1,000 Li long. Provided that the rising sun is the sun on the *Fu-sang* tree, this tree must overhang 10,000 Li to cover the sun, for the diameter of one sun being 1,000 Li, ten suns will require 10,000 Li.

Heaven is more than 10,000 Li distant from us.

When we look up at the sun, his brilliancy is so dazzling, and his glare so bright, that it becomes unbearable. If the rising <sup>p1.273</sup> sun was the sun from the *Fu-sang* tree, *Yü* and *Yi* would not have been able to recognise him as the sun. A look at one sun would have sufficed to dazzle the eyes, how much more so, if there were ten suns. When *Yü* and *Yi* saw the suns, they appeared to them like pecks and round baskets, therefore they called them suns. The fires looked like pecks and baskets, but an object seen at a distance of 60,000 Li appears different from one looked at and examined quite near. Consequently what *Yü* and *Yi* saw they took for suns, but were not suns.

Among the things of heaven and earth many resemble one another in substance, yet they are not the same in fact. Beyond the ocean in the southwest there is a pearl-tree <sup>2</sup>. It has pearls, but they are not fish-pearls <sup>3</sup>. The ten suns are like pearls of the pearl-tree. The pearls of the pearl-tree look like pearls, but are not real pearls. Thus the ten suns look like the sun, but are not real suns. *Huai Nan Tse* having read the *Shan-hai-king* wrongly asserted that for a Sage ten suns were lighted, and made the random statement that at *Yao's* time ten suns rose together.

The sun is fire, the 'Hot Water Abyss' water. Water and fire annihilate one another. Therefore the ten suns bathing in the 'Hot Water Abyss' should have been extinguished and destroyed. Fire burns trees, *Fu-sang* is a tree. When ten suns rested upon it, it ought to be parched and scorched up. However, in

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.330.

<sup>2</sup> Presumably a coral-tree in the Persian Sea is meant.

<sup>3</sup> The Chinese imagine that pearls are the produce of fish, not of shells or oysters.

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spite of the bath in *Tang-ku* the light did not become extinguished, and though the suns ascended *Fu-sang*, its boughs were not scorched or parched. The ten suns are like the sun which rises to-day, yet they cannot be tested by the five elements <sup>1</sup>. Hence we infer that they were not real suns.

When *Yü* and *Yi* beheld ten suns, it cannot have been night-time, but must have been day. When one sun rose, the other nine must have been left behind, how could they rise all ten together <sup>2</sup> ? It must have been like dawn before the sunrise <sup>3</sup>.

Furthermore, heaven turns and passes through a certain number of degrees. If the various suns follow this movement, and turn <sup>p1.274</sup> round with heaven, how could they remain in the branches of *Fu-sang* or in the water of the 'Hot Water Abyss' ? In case they stay back, they miss the movement, and differences in the movement would bring disharmony. If, therefore, the rising sun be different from the ten suns, they only resemble suns, but are not suns.

During the 'Spring and Autumn' period on the *hsin mao day*, in the fourth month of summer, in the seventh year of Duke *Chuang* at midnight the common stars were invisible, and stars fell down like rain <sup>4</sup>.

*Kung Yang* in his commentary asks : What does 'like rain' mean ? It is not rain. Then, why use this expression ? 'The unrevised *Ch'un-ch'iu*' says,

It rained stars, which previous to approaching to within a foot of the earth departed again.

The Sage corrected this, and said,

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<sup>1</sup> If they were of the same stuff as our sun, *viz.* fire, they would have been extinguished in water, and have burned the wood of the *Fu-sang* tree. Since they did not do that, they cannot have been real suns like ours.

<sup>2</sup> The one sun in the upper branches of the *Fu-sang* tree must have risen prior to the nine others still lingering in the lower branches.

<sup>3</sup> As far as the nine suns are concerned, which were still below the horizon.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Ch'un-ch'iu* [[Couvreur](#)] (*Legge, Classics Vol. V, Pt. I, p. 79*). The seventh year of Duke *Chuang* of *Lu* is 686 B. C.

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The stars fell down like rain <sup>1</sup>.

'The unrevised *Ch'un-ch'iu*' refers to the time, when the *Ch'un-ch'iu* was not yet revised. At that time the Chronicle of *Lu* had the following entry :

The stars fell down like rain. They came near the earth at a distance of over a foot, and then departed again.

The Sage is *Confucius*. *Confucius* revised it, and said

The stars fell like rain.

His idea was that on the earth there are mountains, hills, and high buildings, and he was afraid lest the statement about the stars coming near the earth at a distance of over a foot should not be true <sup>2</sup>. Therefore he made an alteration, and said 'like rain'. Being like rain they came down from above the earth. The stars also fall down from heaven and depart again. On account of this similarity he says 'like'. Although there was the notice that the stars came near the earth at a distance of over a foot, he merely said 'like rain'. The expression 'falling' which he uses refers to those stars. Though he assigned them their places, and fixed the text, he speaks of the falling stars in the same way as the Chronicle does.

When from the plain we look up at Mount *T'ai*, and behold a crane on its summit, it appears to us as big as a crow, and a crow, like a sparrow. It is the height of Mount *T'ai* and its distance which cause us to lose the true estimate of the size of things. <sup>p1.275</sup> The distance of heaven from earth amounts to upwards of 60,000 Li, which is not only the height and the distance of the summit of Mount *T'ai*. The stars are fixed to heaven. When we examine them, we do not obtain a correct idea of their nature, for the conditions, under which we see them, are still more unfavourable than those, under which we look at the crane or the crow. By calculations we find that the size of the stars must be a hundred Li. Their brilliancy is so strong, that they shed light. If, nevertheless, they appear to us only as big as a phoenix egg, we have lost the

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<sup>1</sup> A quotation from *Kung Yang's* commentary to the *Ch'un-ch'iu*.

<sup>2</sup> Had the distance of those meteors not been more than one foot from the surface of the earth, they would inevitably have collided with the elevations of the earth, such as mountains, buildings, etc. Therefore *Confucius* omitted the remark of the original text.



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true estimate by distance.

Let us suppose that the falling stars are in fact stars falling from heaven, then we would not be able to recognise them as stars, when they approach the earth, because during their fall their size is not the same as that which they have in heaven <sup>1</sup>. Now, as long as we see the falling stars in heaven, they are stars, if they are not, they are made up of air. We see ghosts having the semblance of dead people. In reality it is but air condensed into those forms, not real dead people. Thus the falling stars are in reality not shaped like stars. *Confucius* correctly calls them falling, which means that they are not stars, and rightly characterises them as being like rain, *i. e.* they are not rain, both features being opposed to the real nature of stars.

The *Tso-chuan* remarks on the above quoted passage of the *Ch'un-ch'iu*,

On the *hsin-mao* day, in the fourth moon during the night the common stars were not visible, because the night was bright. The stars fell like rain *i. e.* together with rain.

This remark that the stars were invisible owing to the brightness of the night tallies with a passage in the *Yiking* <sup>2</sup> to the effect that at mid-day the Dipper <sup>3</sup> is visible. If during the day the Dipper is visible, it must be dark, not bright, and if during the night the stars were invisible, the night must have been bright and clear. The facts were different, but the idea is the same, and it is consistent with truth.

The *Tso-chuan* says 'together with rain', which is tantamount to 'combined'. On the *hsin-mao* day the night was bright, therefore the stars were invisible, but this brightness shows that there was no rain. The rain fluid is dark and obscure, how could there be brightness than? There being brightness, rain is impossible, how could the stars fall 'together with rain'? Consequently the p<sub>1.276</sub> expression 'together with rain' is wrong. Moreover, if it be said that the night was so bright, that the stars became invisible, how could the stars falling together with rain be seen?

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<sup>1</sup> The meteors never measure a hundred Li.

<sup>2</sup> [Yiking, 55th diagram](#) (*Fêng*), Legge's transl. p. 336.

<sup>3</sup> A constellation.

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On the *wu-shên* day of the first month in the 16th year of Duke Hsi five stones fell down in *Sung* <sup>1</sup>.

The *Tso-chuan* remarks that they were stars. Since falling stones are called stars, those stars are believed to have become stones by falling. The stars falling in the *hsin-mao* night were stars, but in reality stones then. If the stars falling in the *hsin-mao* night were like those stones, the earth had high buildings, which must have been smashed. Although *Confucius* omitted to mention that the stars came near the earth as far as one foot, there certainly has been a certain distance from the earth, and the historiographer of *Lu*, who saw the event with his own eyes, would not have said so at random.

According to the *Tso-chuan* the stars fell down together with rain. As rain collects on the earth, the stones must have done so likewise, but, since, when they touched the earth, they did not demolish the buildings, it is evident that they were not stars. Besides, on what does *Tso Ch'iu Ming* base his statement that the stones were stars ? When the stones came down, their fall was very light, but why must they have fallen down from heaven ?

During the *Ch'in* epoch three mountains disappeared. Partly they were not dispersed, but collapsed, where they stood, which must have caused a great noise. Perhaps at that time the mountain of the *I Ti* went off its base, and came down in *Sung*. When the people of *Sung* heard the stones fall, they called them stars, and when *Tso Ch'iu Ming* had examined them, he also gave them this name.

The substance of the stars is identical with that of the various things and like that of the sun and the moon. The so-called Five Planets are the light of the substance of the five elements. The Five Planets and the other stars all have the same light, therefore I am afraid that we miss the truth, if we regard the fixed stars alone as stones. In reality the stars which fell during the *hsin-mao* night were like rain, but they were not stars, just as the ten suns in the 'Hot Water Abyss' resembled the sun, but were not real suns.

The Literati also maintain that the expression that rain comes from

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the *Ch'un-ch'iu* (*Legge* Vol. V, Pt. I, p. 170). The event took in 643 B. C.

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heaven means that it positively falls down from heaven. p1.277 However, a discussion on this subject leads us to the conclusion that rain comes from above the earth, but not down from heaven. Seeing the rain gathering from above, we simply say that it comes down from heaven. As a matter of fact, it comes from above the earth. But how can we demonstrate that the rain comes from the earth, and rises from the mountains ? The Commentary to the *Ch'un-ch'iu* <sup>1</sup> says,

It breaks through the stones one to two inches thick, and gathers. That in one day's time it spreads over the whole Empire, is only the case with the *T'ai-shan'* <sup>2</sup>.

From the *T'ai-shan* it rains over the whole Empire, from small mountains over one State, the distance depends on the height. As regards the forthcoming of the rain from the mountains, some hold that the clouds carry the rain with them. When the clouds disperse, the water falls down, and is called rain. Thus the clouds are rain, and rain, clouds. When the water comes forth, it is transformed into clouds ; they condense, and become rain, and, when they are compressed still more, coagulate into dew. When garments are moistened as with rain, it is not the effect of the clouds, but of the rain which they carry.

Some persons will refer to the *Shuking* which says,

When the moon follows the stars, there is wind and rain <sup>3</sup>,

and to the *Shiking*, where we read that

The moon approaches the Hyades, which will bring heavy showers of rain <sup>4</sup>.

They all believe that according to there passages of the two Classics it is not heaven which is causing the rain. How is that ?

When the rain comes from the mountains, the moon passes the stars, and approaches the Hyades. When she approaches the Hyades, it must rain. As

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<sup>1</sup> *Kung Yang's* Commentary, Duke *Hsi* 31st year.

<sup>2</sup> The highest peak in *Shantung*.

<sup>3</sup> *Shuking, Hung fan*, Pt. V, Bk. IV, 38 (*Legge* Vol. III, Pt. II, p. 342).

<sup>4</sup> *Shiking* Pt. II, Bk. VIII, Ode 8 [[Couvreur](#)] ([Legge](#) Vol. IV, Pt. II, p. 422).

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long as it does not rain, the moon does not approach, and the mountains have no clouds. Heaven and earth, above and below, act in spontaneous harmony. When the moon approaches above, the mountains are heated below, and the fluid unites. The fortuitous connexion between the various fluids and bodies is due to spontaneity. Clouds and fog show that there is rain. In summer it becomes dew, in winter frost. Warm it is rain, cold, snow. Rain, dew, and frost all proceed from earth, and do not descend from heaven.

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### 33. Book XI, Chap. III

#### *Ta-ning. On the Cunning and Artful*

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p2.043 The following question may be raised : The virtuous obtain honourable appointments and high wages, in case they behave properly, why then must people acquire wealth and honour by cunning ?

The reason is this. If the cunning, though well aware that proper conduct leads to wealth and honour, nevertheless seek a position and money by deceit, it is because they cannot withstand their inclinations. People know that vigorously tilling the ground, they can expect a harvest, and that a brisk trade will provide them with valuable goods. If they must steal them all the same, they are unable to overcome their natural propensities. Those who always do their duty, are held in esteem by every one, albeit yet the unrighteous are many, and the friends of justice in the minority ; the hearts of the former are concupiscent, and their will and intellect confused and weak. The cunning have the same qualities as the virtuous <sup>1</sup>, but succumb to their passions. The robbers are no less intelligent than farmers and merchants, but become guilty by their cupidity.

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*Question* : The cunning and the virtuous having the same qualities, qualities and conduct ought to agree. Why must the cunning alone succumb to their passions ?

*Reply* : Wealth and honour is what every one desires. Even he who by his conduct proves himself to be a perfect gentleman, in subject to the feelings of hunger and thirst. But a superior man combats his feelings by propriety, and dispels his desires by righteousness. Thus walking the right path, he eschews calamities. A vile man, on the other hand, yields to his greed and avarice, transgressing the rules of propriety and failing against the laws of

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<sup>1</sup> Their original nature is essentially the same, but develops differently. Cf. p. 1.390.

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righteousness. That leads to waywardness and cunning, by p2.044 which he becomes liable to punishment. The virtuous are superior men, the cunning are vile. In their doings and dealings the superior men and the vile widely differ, and their likes and dislikes are dissimilar.

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*Question* : Have the cunning and the slanderers the same principles, or is there any difference ?

*Reply* : The cunning and the slanderers are both vile, their principles are the same, but their qualities, different. Envy is the mainspring of their characters, which, however, manifest and reveal themselves in a different way. Slanderers hurt others by their tongues, whereas the cunning endanger them by their actions. The former take the direct road, the latter prefer the crooked one, and disguise their plans. The slanderers do not intrigue, the cunning have all kinds of devices. Therefore the sovereign can avoid the company of slanderers and seek that of the kind-hearted, but he is unable to distinguish the cunning from the virtuous.

*Exception* : Since a sovereign can always keep aloof from slanderers and consort with the kind-hearted, but is incapable of drawing a distinction between the virtuous and the cunning, is it impossible to know the mind of the latter ?

*Reply* : The cunning can be known, but a sovereign is not qualified to acquire this knowledge. An ordinary sovereign does not know the virtuous, and for that very reason cannot know the cunning either. Only wise and sage men examine their actions by the Nine Virtues and verify their words by the outcome of their deeds. If those actions do not harmonise with the Nine Virtues <sup>1</sup>, and if their words are not proved true by their doings, the persons in question are not virtuous, but cunning. By knowing the cunning one knows

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<sup>1</sup> Properly speaking these Nine Virtues are eighteen. According to the *Shuking* Part II, Book III, 3 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 71](#)) [*Couvreur*] they are :

« Affability combined with dignity ; mildness combined with firmness ; bluntness combined with respectfulness ; aptness for government combined with reverence ; docility combined with boldness : straightforwardness combined with gentleness ; easiness combined with discrimination ; vigour combined with sincerity ; and valour combined with righteousness.

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the virtuous, and by knowing the virtuous one knows the cunning. The knowledge of the cunning at the same time displays the nature of the virtuous and wise, and a conception of the virtuous is a key to understanding the character of the cunning and artful. The virtuous and the cunning proceed p2.045 in a different way, but the same investigation shows us what they are ; their aspirations are not the same, but one look reveals their real nature.

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*Question* : The system of the Nine Virtues has long been established, and there is no student but on seeing measures, knows their capacity, or on beholding scales, knows their weight. How is it that a ruler and lord of the land is ever surrounded by false and cunning ministers and always humbugged and hoodwinked ?

*(Reply)* : One must not complain that the measures are wrong, but that there is no grain to be measured, nor that there are no scales, but that there is nothing to be weighed. Those on the throne do not ignore that by means of the Nine Virtues they can investigate actions, and that from the results of his actions the sentiments of the agent may be inferred. If nevertheless they are blindfolded and see nothing, it is evident that they did not take the trouble to look. It is not always possible to act, but any action may be scrutinised, and men cannot always go into a question, but their sentiments may always be learned.

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*Question* : When the actions do not agree with the Nine Virtues, an investigation into the achievements does not disclose any deserts. Then such persons though promoted, do not turn out virtuous, and not being virtuous, they are cunning. Now, can men of trivial talents and superficial knowledge who cannot come up to the virtuous, since they have not their merits, nor act like them, be called cunning ?

*Reply* : The talents not being equally matched, there can be no rivalry of actions, nor a competition of merits. If people cannot cope together in knowledge, their talents may be in a proportion of ten to a hundred, but their likes and dislikes ought to be the same. However the virtuous and the

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cunning do not act in the same way. Both declare good to be good, and bad, bad, and both enjoy real fame, but in their works the former build up, the latter destroy. According to their distinction of right and wrong, their p2.046 doings must likewise be true or false. Now they agree in their words, but their proceedings are different, both have an excellent name, but the doings of the cunning are depraved.

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*Question* : — If those whose dealings are in accordance with the Nine Virtues are virtuous, then those whose actions are not, are cunning. Must then all the ordinary people be held to be cunning owing to their actions ?

*Reply* : All who are not right are wicked. Among the wicked those who kick against the pricks, are called unprincipled, and those who are artful, are considered cunning. In the penal laws of the holy emperors the cunning are ranked among the wicked, and in their rewards and exhortations the virtuous are among the good. The virtuous of perfect purity and the best among the good, are the sages among the virtuous. On the other hand, the great impostors among the wicked <sup>1</sup>, are the worst of the bad. Whence they say that one must look for the virtuous among the good, and search for the cunning among the wicked. When goodness and badness are well determined, the virtuous and the cunning become manifest.

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*Question* : The intelligent may be beclouded, and in arguing one may be mistaken. Now, if those who are right, are looked upon as virtuous, and those who are wrong, as cunning, this would be a misconception of the real nature of virtue, I should say.

*Reply* : That the intellect may be beclouded and arguments erroneous, is much to be regretted. Therefore we have the saying : [In punishing premeditated crimes none must be considered too small <sup>2</sup>, and in condoning

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<sup>1</sup> All editions have [], which should be [], unless *Wang Ch'ung* wishes to designate those impostors who have sneaked among the virtuous, but that would be somewhat forced.

<sup>2</sup> Too small to be punished.



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carelessness none should be deemed too great.<sup>1]</sup> A wise sovereign scrutinises the heart, and examines the mind, and then he punishes malice, and pardons mistakes. In case p2.047 of premeditated attacks the penalty is increased, for mistakes and errors it is diminished<sup>2</sup>. Every judge can make this distinction, and he will harbour no doubt, when he falls in with a virtuous man.

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*Question* : May those be called cunning whose words and deeds are not attended with any success ?

*(Reply)* : When *Su Ch'in*<sup>3</sup> brought about a confederation of Six States<sup>4</sup>, mighty *Ch'in* did not venture to review its troops outside the gates, and when *Chang Yi*<sup>5</sup> sowed distrust, the Six States did not risk a joint attack within the gates. The Six States being allied, *Ch'in* was afraid, and the Six States were powerful ; the Three *Ch'in*<sup>6</sup> having spread discord, *Ch'in* became powerful and the empire weak. The merits of these men were conspicuous, and their success was obvious. They have been recorded on bamboo and silks. Even worthies could not have outvied them. The Grand Annalist speaking of all the worthies, devotes special chapters to *Su Ch'in*<sup>7</sup> and *Chang Yi*<sup>8</sup>, nor is there any allusion to their having been envious or depraved. Their deserts were the same, and their fame not inferior to that of worthies. Merits which fall short of those of the worthies are like fame which is not real.

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<sup>1</sup> Too great to be pardoned. The passage is quoted from the *Shuking* Part II, Book II, 12 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 59](#)) [*Couvreur*].

<sup>2</sup> A fundamental principle of all penal law, based on the difference of *dolus* and *culpa*.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 1.304, Note 8.

<sup>4</sup> *Yen, Chao, Han, Wei, Ch'i, and Ch'u*.

<sup>5</sup> See p. 1.115, Note 2.

<sup>6</sup> The three kingdoms into which the State of *Ch'in* was divided by *Hsiang Yü* in B. C. 206, viz. *Yung, Sai, and Ti*. Since *Wang Ch'ung* here speaks of the 4th cent. B. C., the time of *Su Ch'in* and *Chang Yi*, when the Three *Ch'in* did not yet exist, and since by their creation *Ch'in* did not become more powerful, but broke up, I suppose that [ ] here is a misprint for [ ] *San Chin*, the Three *Chin* States : *Han, Wei, and Chao*, into which the once powerful State of *Chin* split in B. C. 453, thus enabling *Ch'in* to come to the front.

<sup>7</sup> *Shi-chi* chap. 69.

<sup>8</sup> *Shi-chi* chap. 70.

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*Chang Yi* and *Su Ch'in* were men who could arrange difficulties. Living in a time of great disorder and confusion <sup>1</sup>, they formed far reaching plans. At that time *Chi* <sup>2</sup> and *Hsieh* <sup>3</sup> could not have vied with them in scheming, and *Yü* and *Kao Yao* would not have been p2.048 as successful. When the *Yin* and the *Yang* are in harmony, wind and rain set in at the proper time, the Five Grains grow in abundance, and robbers and thieves desist from their iniquitous doings; this is the merit of some persons exhibiting disinterestedness and self-denial, and of families displaying morality and virtue. Appointments, salary, honour, and glory are the results of plans and schemes <sup>4</sup>, and not the upshot of morality and virtue. The Grand Annalist recording merits, the *Kao-lai-sse-chi-lu* was written. Illustrious deeds have been carefully gone through, and all the most excellent, put on record. *Chang Yi* and *Su Ch'in's* exploits being so famous have also been included in this narrative. From this it follows that the cunning may also distinguish themselves by their gift of speech <sup>5</sup>, and that those who have no success cannot be cunning.

*Exception* : Those among the wicked who win merit are called cunning. In order to acquire merit they must be possessed of high talents and a keen intellect. Their thoughts must be far-reaching and pay regard to justice and benevolence, that they may be confounded with the great worthies. Whence it is said in the chapter on recognising the cunning <sup>6</sup> : — When the ruler of men has a taste for disputations, the words of the cunning are sharp, and when he delights in literature, their speech is refined. Sympathising with his feelings and falling in with his views, they ingratiate themselves with the

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<sup>1</sup> The time of the contending States beginning in B. C. 480.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 1.130, Note 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Vid.* p. 1.318.

<sup>4</sup> Elsewhere *Wang Ch'ung* says that all these things are the outcome of fate alone.

<sup>5</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* apparently sees in the two politicians *Chang Yi* and *Su Ch'in* cunning schemers, but not worthies or virtuous men. The Chinese still cling to the idea that moral laws hold good for politics also, and have not yet accepted the phantom of political morality, another name for the right of the strongest. They call a liar a liar, even though he has been a great statesman who did all his misdeeds for the welfare of his country. Thus most Europeans admire *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti*, but every Chinese detests him.

<sup>6</sup> [] probably the title of a lost chapter of the *Lun-hêng*.

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ruler, who does not perceive the falsity of their words. How could he learn their duplicity and detect their deceitfulness ?

*Reply* : This remark only refers to an ordinary sovereign, of poor gifts and a limited intelligence, who is easily overreached, and then does not see anything, and takes a knave for a virtuous man. When a prince is a good observer, discrimination is as easy for him as beholding dried meat on a dish, pointing out the lines on the palm, counting the figures on a chessboard, and unharnessing a horse in p2.049 the shafts. Fish and turtles abscond in the depths, but fishermen know their resorts ; birds and beasts hide in the mountains, but hunters perceive their tracks. The conduct of the cunning is different from that of most other people, and only ordinary sovereigns and men of mediocre abilities cannot see the difference.

*Exception* : The sovereign being fond of discussions, the cunning will use sharp words, and, when he is partial to literature, the style of the cunning is refined. Their words and deeds thus being modelled upon those of the prince, how can they be discovered ?

*Reply* : *Wên Wang* says of the method how officials are to be treated : A consideration of their former actions makes us understand their present words, and hearing their present words we may form a judgment of their former actions. Beholding the outward appearance we learn to know what is hidden, and from the inside we infer the outside. Thus the hypocrites posing as law-abiding people may be known, and heartless deceivers be distinguished. Conversely, sterling characters and truly good people are found out, and the faithful who observe the laws, appear. When, by nature, the cunning do not like discussions, but the sovereign has a fancy for them, they will imitate their lord with a view to agree with him, and when originally their mind has no literary turn, upon learning that their sovereign is addicted to literature, they will endeavour to equal him. His Majesty being extravagant, the cunning wear costly dresses, and in case His Majesty is thrifty, they avoid all pomp. Their present actions disagree with the former, and their behaviour at court is other than at home. Comparing their conduct in their native village with their manners in the palace, and contrasting the way in which they treat their own people with the style in which they serve their prince, we become

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aware that there is a discrepancy between the outside and the inside, and that the name and the thing do not tally. At certain moments this becomes visible, when their falsehood leaks out.

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*Question* : Human actions are not constant and unchangeable. Special circumstances often determine the issue. The faithful become traitors, and the straight turn crooked, changes brought about by special circumstances. The actions differ at different times, each event is attended with its special effect, sometimes people say one thing, sometimes another. The books of the Literati give many instances, and such changes under special circumstances are not p2.050 unusual. Now, must we not fall into error, if we take normal conditions as a basis ?

*Reply* : The virtuous may be favoured by circumstances, and so may the cunning. When the virtuous are thus favoured, they act accordingly, whereas, when the cunning are, they lose all restraint and do evil. The virtuous avail themselves of such an opportunity for a noble aim and for their country, while the cunning use it for their personal profit and that of their family. Such an opportunity helps us to discriminate between the virtuous and the cunning. Observing how they react on such an incentive, we learn whom we may call depraved and whom virtuous.

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*Question* : Does it happen that the cunning like to defame others ?

*Reply* : The cunning do not defame others, those who do, are slanderers. For the cunning have no occasion to slander, because they merely seek profit. If some one is useful to them, why should they slander him, and if he is not, slandering would be of no avail. By their scheming they seek advantage, and by their plots to make profit, and this profit they acquire in a convenient manner.

In case they grudge others a share of it, they intrigue against them. When they intrigue against somebody, they do not defame him, and injuring some one, they do not treat him badly. On the contrary, they praise a man, while laying their traps for him, so that he does not become aware of them, and

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cajole him whom they are going to strike, so that he has no suspicions. In this manner the cunning plot, without incurring any hatred, and they injure, nay ruin a man, without fearing his vengeance. Hiding their feelings and concealing their intentions, they even give themselves the air of exerting themselves for others. If they slandered others, these would again slander them. Nobody would have any sympathy for them, and the scholars would not consort with them. How could they fill their place in the world then, and win the good graces of their lord ?

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*Question* : If the cunning do not slander others in society, do they slander them to the governors ?

*Reply* : The cunning deceive the governors with men, but they do not slander others in their presence. p2.051

*Question* : Then, how do the cunning proceed ?

*Reply* : When the cunning calumniate others, they praise them, and, when they plot against them, they lull them into security. Wherein consists their slandering and plotting ?

E. g. let a man have great accomplishments and a wonderful knowledge, that his fame spreads far and wide. A governor afraid, lest the sovereign summon the man to hear his advice, and put more reliance in him than in himself, seeks a pretence to pass him over in silence. But those who constantly extol and belaud the man and introduce him to his notice, are many. The governor mentions that he desires to employ him and asks somebody's opinion about him. This one does not reply that X is a worthy and deserving to be called to office, for X would not like to be retained in a district, he formerly heard him say so. He declared that he hoped to go to a prefecture, and being in a circuit, he hoped to be transferred to a department. If his aims be lofty, he does not act like other people, and if his hopes be far-reaching, he does not care for what is near <sup>1</sup>. Being given a small office, his ambition is not satisfied, or he lies down sick, and a poor appointment would

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<sup>1</sup> So says the one who seeks to frustrate the promotion of X by raising all kinds of fictitious difficulties.

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injure his virtue or hurt his dignity. Therefore the sovereign will prefer to choose ordinary officials, that he may not lose his name or derogate to his reputation, for, provided that he can bear the thought of deferring to the worthy, he may use him, but if he considers to be unable to do so, it is not advisable to employ him. In case he makes use of him, and both sides are not equally benefitted, or that he dismisses him, and both do not suffer, he fears his resentment. Consequently he trusts in the suggestions of his cunning adviser and dispenses with the services of the worthy.

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*Question* : Can the cunning, in order to acquire great talents and extensive knowledge, study the ancients alone, or must they learn from a teacher ?

*Reply* : Every one possesses himself the knowledge to deceive others, but approaching a ruler he must have special qualities to impress him, just as a person in an exalted position overawes his subjects by his boldness. When it comes to fighting he must be conversant with the military art. Those special abilities are uniting and disuniting, and *Kuei Ku Tse* may be the teacher.

p2.052 There is a tradition that *Su Ch'in* and *Chang Yi* both studied uniting and disuniting <sup>1</sup>. The teacher *Kuei Ku Tse* <sup>2</sup> dug a cavern into the earth and said,

— He that shall speak down to me, so that I come out crying, will be able to divide the territories of rulers.

*Su Ch'in* spoke down to him, and *Kuei Ku Tse* was so moved, that his tears fell and moistened his coat. *Chang Yi* did not equal *Su Ch'in*, who was chief minister of *Chao* and of the Six States at the same time. *Chang Yi*, poor and wretched, fell back upon *Su Ch'in*, who made him sit down at the lower end of the hall, and gave him the food of the servants and handmaids. Several times calling out for him, he roused his anger with the object of inducing him to become a minister of *Ch'in*. In high dudgeon *Chang Yi* betook himself westward to *Ch'in*. *Su Ch'in* sent some of his men to escort him with rich

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<sup>1</sup> [ ] political intriguing, forming and breaking alliances.

<sup>2</sup> An ascetic philosopher of the 4th cent. B. C.

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presents. Subsequently it dawned upon *Chang Yi*, and he exclaimed,

— This was planned by him, but I did not understand it. In these things I cannot compete with him <sup>1</sup>.

Such schemes proceeded from *Su Ch'in's* profound knowledge. Watching his opportunity, he did his hit at the right moment, hence the high honour in which he was held and his great renown, for he was considered the first hero of his time. In deep laid plans and brilliant devices the profound and the superficial cannot be equally successful, and the clear-headed cannot possess the same knowledge as the blunt-witted.

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*Question* : Is it possible that the cunning care for their good names and accomplish great things ?

*Reply* : The cunning live on profit and exclusively set store on power. They do not care for their good names nor accomplish great things. By affecting power and sticking to what is vulgar they win a great notoriety of themselves. They are admired by the base, but not esteemed by superior men, for profit and justice are antagonistic, and straightforwardness and crookedness are opposites. It is justice that moves the superior man, and profit the base one. The cunning strive for great profits and notoriety. The superior man not staying in low spheres exposes himself to dangers <sup>2</sup>, and the cunning of the whole world meet with so many calamities, p2.053 that they cannot take care of their persons and still less of their good names.

Many records of former ages give examples of men who abandoned their families to take care of their own persons. Renouncing all gain, they only thought of their names. On bamboo and silks it has been written how *Po Ch'êng Tse Kao* <sup>3</sup> left his country and tilled the ground, and how *Wu Ling Tse* <sup>4</sup> gave up his position to water a garden. In recent times, *Wang Chung*

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<sup>1</sup> Abridged from *Shi-chi* chap. 70, p. 2r.

<sup>2</sup> Their exalted positions have many dangers, and they easily come to fall.

<sup>3</sup> A vassal of *Yao* who resigned his fief, when *Yü* became emperor, and took to agriculture. *Yü* is reported to have visited and questioned him on his fields. See *Chuang Tse* V, 4v. (*Giles, Chuang Tse* p. 142). Cf. p. 2.033, Note 2.

<sup>4</sup> An appellation of *Ch'ên Chung Tse*, a scholar of *Ch'i*, mentioned by *Mencius*. Cf. p.

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*Tse*<sup>1</sup> of *Lan-ling*<sup>2</sup> and *Hsi-Lu Chün Yang*<sup>3</sup> in *Tung-tu*,<sup>4</sup> have resigned their dignities, and after a prolonged sickness did not respond to the call of their sovereign. They may be said to have been mindful of their repute.

Those who do not proceed on the path of righteousness, cannot advance on this road, and those who are never checked in their progress by the rules of justice, cannot win a reputation by their justice. The cunning, hankering after profit, make light of misfortunes, but think much of their own persons. They suddenly perish and are disgraced ; how should they care for their name. p2.054 Devoid of justice and destitute of virtue, subsequently, their proceedings must entail dishonour, and there can be no question of great accomplishments.

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*Question* : Is it easier to recognise great impostors or small impostors ?

*Reply* : It is easier to recognise great impostors, and more difficult to recognise the minor ones, for the great impostors have conspicuous abilities, and their whereabouts are easily traced. The small impostors are less shrewd, and their doings harder to detect, which will become clearer from the following consideration :

After a robbery it is difficult to detect small robbers, whereas the big ones are easily found. When they have attacked a city, besieged a town, robbed and pillaged, the thing transpires as soon as it has been done, and all the

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1.427. *Wu Ling Tse* is reputed the author of a short philosophical treatise in 12 paragraphs, contained in the *Tse-shu po-chia* Vol. 51. According to *Liu Hsiang* he wrote a work in 12 chapters (*Pei-wen-yün-fu* chap. 25). From the last paragraph of the work still extant we learn that he abandoned his post as minister of *Ch'u* to water other people's garden. At all events he was a rather extravagant recluse.

<sup>1</sup> *Wang Chung Tse* or *Wang Liang*, famous for his learning and excellent character, lived in the time of *Kuang Wu Ti*, 25-57 A. D. He declined the high offices conferred upon him owing to sickness.

<sup>2</sup> A place in *Yen-chou-fu*, *Shantung*.

<sup>3</sup> The *Li-tai ming-hsien lieh-nü shih-hsing p'u* calls the man : *So-Lu* and informs us that *Chün Yang* was his style, and that he was a native of *Tung-chün*, not of *Tung-tu*. The *Shang-yu-lu* again writes *So-Lo*. As his name both biographical dictionaries give *Fang*. *So-Lu Fang* was appointed governor of *Lo-yang* in A. D. 30. Twice he resigned owing to bad health. The second time in A. D. 55 he did not obey the summons of the emperor *Kuang Wu Ti*, who then sent a sedan-chair for him, and after the audience made him a grant of 2000 bushels of rice.

<sup>4</sup> A territory in *Honan*.



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wayfarers know the robbers. But when they pierce a wall and, stealthily sneaking into a compound, steal, nobody knows them.

Question : Great impostors create disorder by their extreme wickedness. Now, if great robbers are easily known by people in general, wherefore does the ruler find it such an arduous task ?

*Reply* : The *Shuking* avers that it requires intelligence to know men, and that only for an emperor it is hard work <sup>1</sup>. *Shun* was a great sage, and *Huan Tou* <sup>2</sup> a great impostor. For the great sage it was difficult to know the great deceiver, for how could it be easy, since the great deceiver did not give the great sage any annoyance. Therefore a distinction is made between the knowledge of the people and of their lord. The sovereign finds it difficult to know great impostors, but easy to know small ones, whereas the people easily know great impostors, but have difficulties to find out small ones. Provided that the impostors be very clever and fine speakers, then they make such a use of their talents, that the prince with all his power cannot well call them to account for mere thoughts, and with all his intelligence he does not perceive anything. The talents of small impostors are of a lower order. When, amongst their countrymen, at times they are thrown of their guard, their real character leaks out. Then the sovereign is startled, when he gets wind of it. Thus great deceivers cause much more trouble than small ones.

p2.055 When the roof of a house leaks, those who perceive it, are below. In case it leaks much, those below notice it quite clearly ; if the leak is small, those below see it but indistinctly.

[Some one said,

— *Yung* is benevolent, but not cunning.

*Confucius* said,

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 2.147, Note 3.

<sup>2</sup> The minister of works under *Yao*, subsequently punished by *Shun* (*Shuking* Part II, Book I, 12, [Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 39](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

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— Why should he use cunning. They who encounter men with smartness of speech for the most part procure themselves hatred. <sup>1</sup>]

By their ill-advised schemes they interfere with agriculture and commerce, they annoy the citizens to benefit the sovereign and irritate the people to please their lord. The advice of loyal officers is detrimental to the ruler, but advantageous to his subjects, the suggestions of the cunning are detrimental to the subjects and advantageous to the ruler <sup>2</sup>.

[The head of the *Chi* family was richer than the duke of *Chou*, and yet *Ch'iu* collected his imposts for him and increased his wealth. The disciples might have beaten the drum and assailed him.] <sup>3</sup> Collecting for *Chi*, he did not know how wicked it was, and that all the people condemned him <sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects V, 4 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> Only socialists would agree to this.

<sup>3</sup> [Analects XI, 16 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>4</sup> The disciple of *Confucius*, *Ch'iu* is pronounced to have been cunning owing to his having taken care of the interests of a nobleman instead of working for the people, a somewhat radical view, but collectors of taxes never have been popular. In the New Testament they are all decried as sinners.

34. Book XII, Chap. I

*Ch'eng-t'sai. Weighing of Talents*

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p2.056 Among those who have discussed the question many are of opinion that scholars cannot be placed on a level with officials. Seeing that the officials are of practical use, and the scholars unemployed, they stigmatise the latter as shallow and incompetent, and praise the former as very ingenious and proficient. That shows that they are as ignorant of scholars as of officials, for both have their talents and abilities, and it is not true that the parts of officers are superior to the accomplishments of literary men. Officers do business, and students have no practice. We may well say that officers are business men, and that students have no practice, but the assumption that officials are ingenious and proficient, and scholars shallow and incompetent, exhibits a want of judgment.

The public usually looks down upon scholars, and these themselves have no very high opinion of their worth, for they would likewise be only too glad to serve their country and imitate the officials, whom they regard as their models. Whatever may be their shortcomings, the public will sneer at them, but the faults of officers they dare not criticise. They lay all the blame on the students, and give all the credit to the functionaries. <sup>1</sup>

The talents of the Literati do not fall short of those of the officials, but they lack *routine* and have not done official work. However, the public slights them, because they notice that the authorities do not like to employ them, a dislike caused by the mass of affairs which they cannot all settle alone, and are obliged to leave to the care of officers. Respecting their qualities and talents they hope that their many abilities may be of use to them. The bureaucrats relieve them of their troubles, working hard in their offices. By

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<sup>1</sup> The masses not only in China, but in other countries as well view everything from the practical side. What is a man worth *i. e.*, how much does he earn, is the usual question of an American. They admire and affect wealth and power, and think very little of learning.

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their decisions they distinguish themselves, and their chiefs highly appreciate their skill.

p2.057 The scholars are timid and unqualified to overcome difficulties. When the governors are troubled with doubts, they cannot help them, and are unable to exert themselves. Their services being of no benefit under existing conditions, no post is conferred upon them. The governors judge talents by official efficiency and expect them to become manifest in the discharge of official duties. It is for this reason that the public is wont to esteem the officials and despise the scholars. This contempt of the latter, and admiration of the former, is based on the inability of the students to meet the *bureaucratic* requirements, for public opinion merely inquires into their usefulness.

At present, those in authority are very able and extremely learned men who thoroughly know the people. They take things up in the proper way and ever bring them to a good end. When they appoint officials, they take a sufficient number to assist them in carrying out their designs. Should these designs aim at the cultivation of virtue or at the introduction of reforms, then officers are only like tiles and stones, but scholars like pearls and jewels. Officers are merely able to break resistance and smooth over difficulties, but they know nothing about preserving their own selves pure and undefiled, and therefore cannot be of any great help to their governor <sup>1</sup>. Scholars have no experience of business, but excel in guiding and possibly rescuing their superiors. When governors and ministers are going wrong, they are not afraid to remonstrate with them, and warn them.

They who on earth were able to establish stringent rules, who up to three times offered their remonstrances, and enjoined upon the governors to examine and purify themselves, despising all crookedness, have for the most part been scholars. They who assent to everything and try to remain in favour at all cost, and, when their governor indulges his desires, merely bow their heads and remain silent, are mostly officials. They are strong in business, but

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<sup>1</sup> If these indictments of *Wang Ch'ung* are just and not dictated by his offended *amour-propre* owing to his inability to advance in the official career, officialdom in the *Han* time must have been different from what it is now, for at present the majority are scholars well versed in literature, but not in business.

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weak in lealty, whereas scholars are excellent on principles, but bad business men. Both have their special merits and demerits, between which those in power may choose. Those who prefer students, are such as uphold virtue and carry out reforms, p2.058 those who rather take officials, attach the greatest importance to business and the suppression of disorder.

If a person's gifts are insufficient, he wants help, and wanting help, he expects strength. An officer takes an assistant, because his own force is inadequate, and a functionary engages an able man, because his own talents do not come up to the mark. When the sun illuminates the dark, there is no need for lamps and candles, and when *Mêng Pên* and *Hsia Yü* oppose the enemy, no further helpmates are requisite. Provided that the knowledge and the power of governors and ministers be like the sun shining upon darkness or the irresistible *Mêng Pên* and *Hsia Yü*, then the talents of officials are of no use.

In case of sickness we call in a physician, and when misfortune happens, we employ a sorcerer <sup>1</sup>. If we could ourselves make out the prescriptions and mix the medicines, or enter into the house and expel the evil influences, we should not have to pay for the doctor, nor to invite the sorcerer.

Bridges are built, because the feet cannot cross ditches, and carts and horses used, because one cannot walk long distances. If the feet were able to jump over ditches, or if one could walk a long way, there would be no bridges built, and no carts and horses used.

People estimate those things of the world most, to which they must look to supply their deficiencies, owing to their weakness and limited knowledge. The high authorities of our age do not accuse their own inability, but disdain the students for their want of practice, nor do they study the qualities of the officials, but finding them useful, think very much of their talents, and declare them to be excellent functionaries. Without officials they cannot get rid of their troubles, and in default of these there is nobody to save them from their vexations. Wherefore they fill all posts with ordinary men. Since their appointment is never attended with any inconvenience, whereas the scholars

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<sup>1</sup> A remark very characteristic of *Wang Ch'ung's* time.

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have nothing to distinguish themselves, and with their abilities are incapable of filling difficult posts, they are left out, when new appointments are made, nor are their services desired at court.

Those among them who have a quick intellect, at once change and set about studying official work, following in the wane of the officials. The others who have not yet made themselves conspicuous by their admirable qualities, cling to antiquity and pursue their ideas, observing the rules of propriety and cultivating virtue, <sup>p2.059</sup> but governors and ministers do not entrust them with any duty, and the bureaucrats mock them. Not being called to office, they give up further efforts and resolve to resign. The scorn fills them with disgust. Since in the discharge of their duties they do not meet with encouragement, their treatment of affairs lacks thoroughness. Then they are supposed to be inefficient and pushed aside.

Men possessed of common gifts and not burdened with lofty ideals, commence to learn official work, and are soon merged in officialdom. Taking the knowledge of the high authorities as their load-star, and conforming to the exigencies of the times, they completely change their former ideas and their occupation. Studying day and night, they are not ashamed of anything, provided that they make their mark and master the official correspondence <sup>1</sup>.

Conversely, enthusiasts and remarkable characters disdain to sacrifice their convictions, or to demolish the objects of their veneration for the purpose of pushing on by sycophancy. They strongly disapprove of talented students entering into the ranks of office-holders. Strongly maintaining their high aims, they decline to take up those poor studies <sup>2</sup>.

Sometimes it may also happen that scholars do not quite understand their business. Their thoughts being wandering and not concentrated enough, they are not fit for the office of which they may be in charge. When asked, they give wrong answers, they do not know the art of genuflexion, and in coming forward and retiring, disregard the fixed rules. In their reports on various matters, young students will disclose faults, adducing the opinions of the

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<sup>1</sup> These are the opportunists among the scholars.

<sup>2</sup> These uncompromising characters stick to their principles, but do not get on in life.

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ancients. They denounce the selfish desires of their superiors with a terrible outspokenness, saying awkward things which they had better leave unsaid. Obstinate, and bound by their prejudices, they follow their own rules in all their writings, and do not manage things in the proper way. Their style is unusual ; being somewhat excentric, they depart from the ordinary standard, and do not do things as they should be done. Therefore people make light of them, the official class despises them, and the high dignitaries hold them in disrespect <sup>1</sup>.

p2.060 It is for this reason that common students dislike to go through the Classics, or make a thorough study in order to become well acquainted with ancient and modern times. Eager to collect one master's dicta and to get a smattering of theory, they all rush to study historical works and read law <sup>2</sup>. Reciting ordinances and institutions, they write reports on various subjects. They learn how to fawn upon their superiors, and how to kneel down and kotow, all with a view to laying the foundation of their house, and establishing their family. Once called to office, they are well off, hence their bias in favour of the present, and their disregard of the past. In the keen competition with their rivals, they give up their former ideas, and struggling to get to the front, pay no heed to propriety. The Classics are neglected, and study is an exploded idea. Ancient literature is no more cultivated, and what they have learned formerly, soon forgotten.

Literati lead a poor life in their lonely houses, while the officials are bustling about in the halls of the palace. Clever and able officials rise, later on, and come to the front, whereas persons fulfilling all moral obligations, are beset with so many difficulties, that they hide and steal away. The success is owing to cunning and the failure to awkwardness <sup>3</sup>. The talents of scholars

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<sup>1</sup> This sort of young firebrands and utopists would reform everything, but they do it with inadequate means, and soon are crushed under the inert masses they are attempting to stop.

<sup>2</sup> According to our modern view, this is just what a future official should do. Literature alone, which up to very recent times was the only study of all the candidates, does not suffice. A literary education can be nothing more than a basis for future special studies.

<sup>3</sup> This is not true. With virtue and literature alone a country cannot be governed. This requires practical knowledge and experience, of which the typical literati are destitute, and which they disdain to acquire.

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are not inferior, nor is their knowledge insufficient, but they lack experience and practice.

When the foot has never walked a road, even *Yao* and *Yü* must inquire at its turns, and when the eye has not yet spied an object, even *Confucius* and *Mê Ti* would ask about its shape. In the region of *Ch'i* <sup>1</sup>, the inhabitants make embroidery from generation to generation, and even common women possess this skill. In the city of *Hsiang* <sup>2</sup>, the people weave brocades, and even stupid girls know the art. That which we daily see and daily do, our hands become accustomed to. If talented scholars have not yet seen a thing, or if clever women have not yet done something, the work seems strange to them, and the handicraft extraordinary. <sup>p2.061</sup> When they are suddenly called upon to perform it, and for the first time behold it, even something apparently very easy gives them the greatest trouble.

Respecting scholars, at present their critics do not speak of a want of practice, but doubt their intellectual faculties ; they do not say that they have not yet done anything, but that their knowledge does not reach so far, which is a misrepresentation. The mental power of the literati is not too weak, and there is no profession which they might not comprehend, though they have not taken an active part in it <sup>3</sup>. Now the public noticing that they have no experience, regard them as incapable, and seeing them inactive, ascribe this to their dullness.

Ranked according to their usefulness and classed according to their efficiency, the officials are in front, and the students in the rear. That is the point of view of the government. But in a classification on scientific principles, the scholars are above, and the officials below. From an agricultural point of view, agriculturists come first, and from a commercial standpoint, merchants are the first class. As regards government, officers are its men. In their youth already they learn official work, and government in their field of action,

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<sup>1</sup> In *Shantung*.

<sup>2</sup> An ancient name of *Kuei-tê-fu* in *Honan*.

<sup>3</sup> As a rule perhaps, but there are many students so unpractical and only at home in the high spheres of pure thought, that just their great learning and idealism makes them absolutely unfit for business.



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knives <sup>1</sup> and pencils being their ploughs, and despatches, their labour. They resemble the sons of a house who, having grown up in it, know all its nooks and corners much better than any foreigner does. When a guest arrives only for a short while, he may be a second *Confucius* or *Mê Ti*, yet he will not be able to distinguish things as well as they do. Scholars are like these guests, and officials represent the sons. As sons the officials know much more than the scholars, for the latter are much less *au courant* than the former. The governors and ministers of our time know how sons are, yet believe officials to be exceptionally clever, unaware that the officials have acquired their efficiency by practice. They likewise know guests, and yet see in helplessness after a short stay a sign of foolishness, quite forgetting that the incompetence of the scholars is owing to their want of exercise. The vision of these dignitaries is blurred, and they are unable to reason by analogies.

A man fit to be assistant in a district, might also fill the post of a secretary in a prefecture, and he who could reform an entire <sup>p2.062</sup> prefecture, would be qualified for service in a province. However the prefecture does not summon the assistant, and the province will not have the reformer. It would be no harm, if they used their talents to acquire the necessary practice, their little knowledge of official correspondence would be compensated by their great virtue.

The Five Secretaries <sup>2</sup> of course have their rules and regulations, and for books and registers there exist certain precedents. How can a man who diligently studies and easily learns all these things, so that he becomes a clever official, for that reason be thought more of than others? Wise governors select officials according to their talents, regardless of their being experienced in discussing official matters. They set the highest store on character, and do not look to book-keeping.

Good officials are called loyal. Loyalty is not exhibited in books and registers. Business may be learned by study, and with the rules of etiquette one becomes familiar by practice; loyalty and justice however are not to be acquired in this manner. Officials and scholars have both their special aims.

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<sup>1</sup> Erasing knives, see p. 2.073. Note 2.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 1.065, Note 1.

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Loyalty and faith is the goal of the scholars, whereas the officials are chiefly interested in the management of affairs. As long as loyalty and honesty is maintained, a little bungling in business is not injurious to a man's reputation. Albeit yet owing to their inexperience in office work students are placed in the second rank by most critics.

Judges give their verdicts according to edicts and laws. In their administration the officials are obliged to consult jurists, and nothing is of greater importance in a district magistrate's office than edicts. If his competence be taken as a criterion of the worthiness of an official, then the jurisconsults <sup>1</sup> ought to take the first place. Perhaps people will admit this, saying that edicts are the Canons of the *Han* dynasty, on which the officials base the decisions which <sub>p2.063</sub> they propose, and that a case having been settled by law, everything is clear indeed.

I should say that the Five Canons are also standard works her the *Han* dynasty, and that the literati conversant with the theory of government, have all derived their wisdom therefrom. *Tung Chung Shu* explained the meaning of the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, and in comparing it with the laws did not find any divergence. Therefore the *Ch'un-ch'iu* is a Canon of the *Han*, composed by *Confucius*, it is true, but handed down to the *Han*. Those critics who merely appreciate jurisprudence and slight the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, are narrow-minded. The purport of this work and the other four Canons is intertwined, and unless the *Ch'un-ch'iu* were a great production, the Five Canons would not be universally read.

The Five Canons deal with principles, and business counts less than principles. There being principles, business is regulated, and in default of principles nothing can be done. Now that which scholars study, are principles, and that which officers learn, is business. In case they are of equal talents,

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<sup>1</sup> The writers on law form one of the Nine Schools into which *Liu Hsin* B. C. 7 divided the then existing philosophical literature. These writers are not jurists in the modern acceptation of the word, but rather authors philosophising on the nature of law, rewards and punishments, government, and political economy. The Catalogue in the *Han-shu* mentions only ten works of this class. The *Tse-shu po-chia* gives six works. The most celebrated so-called jurists are *Kuan Chung*, *Yen Tse*, *Shang Yang*, and *Han Fei Tse*, all well known to, and several times mentioned by, *Wang Ch'ung*, who has a special dislike for the criminalists *Shang Yang* and *Han Fei Tse*. Cf. Vol. I, chap. 29 *Structures on Han Fei Tse*.

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they should study principles if they wish to rank with officials <sup>1</sup>.

For washing dirty things one uses water, and for roasting raw and tainted meat, fire. Water and fire are the principles, and their use is business. Business is posterior to principles. If we compare students with officials, the former adjust what is antecedent, the latter care for what is subsequent. From the contrast between principles, which are first, and business, which is last, we may determine the superiority and greater dignity of either.

*Yao* by his brilliant virtue succeeded in conciliating the black-haired people. *Confucius* said that filial piety and brotherly love in the highest degree could even touch spirits. *Chang Shih Chih* <sup>2</sup> remarked that the *Ch'in* dynasty relied on petty officers with pencils and knives, and that, the dissolution having gone on up to *Erh Shih Huang Ti*, the empire broke down. *Chang T'ang* and *Chao Yü* were both honest officials of the *Han* period, and yet the Grand Annalist places them among the oppressors <sup>3</sup>. How can those p2.064 responsible for the breakdown of the empire, be compared with them whose piety affects the spirits ? This should fill people's minds.

The high dignitaries are cognisant of the great principles of the classical studies, but do not honour the students, because it strikes them that those students of classical literature are in the administration less efficient than functionaries.

With a butcher's knife one may carve a fowl, but it is difficult to slaughter an ox with a poultry knife. A master in embroidery can sew a curtain or a garment, but a workman twisting thread would be unqualified to weave brocade. Thus the scholars can do the business of the officials, but officials do not find their way through the science of scholars. The knowledge of officials is really bad and not up to the mark, the scholars however, in spite of their

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<sup>1</sup> The last clause from 'if they wish...' seems to be a gloss which ought to be expunged, since it spoils the meaning : officials being of equal talents with scholars, instead of devoting themselves to business, ought to study general principles.

<sup>2</sup> A high officer of strong character at the court of the *Han* emperor *Wên Ti*, B. C. 179-157.

<sup>3</sup> *Shi-chi* chap. 122. Both officers together enacted several laws, hence *Sse-Ma Ch'ien's* aversion, who like our philosopher had a strong inclination towards Taoism and in his introduction to the above chapter approvingly quotes chap. 57 of the *Tao-tê-king* 'The more laws and edicts, the more robbers and thieves'.

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want of practice, possess excellent qualities, only they have no experience.

Yü regulating streams and rivers did not handle the hoe or the spade, and the Duke of *Chou* in building *Lo yi* <sup>1</sup> did not hold battering-rams or poles in his hands. Pencils and ink, registers and books are like hoes and spades, rams and poles. To expect a man of vast ideas and high principles to carry them out personally, would be like bidding a general fight himself, or an engineer cut wood. In case a scholar able to interpret one Canon is called upon to do the work of one office, he can master it in ten months. For an office-holder, on the other side, to study the contents of one Canon a whole year would not suffice. Why ? Because official work is easy to learn, whereas classical studies offer great difficulties.

Students thumb the Classics to fathom the meaning of the Sages, and officials move their pencils to take note of public affairs. What is more difficult, to comprehend the thoughts of the great Sages, or to understand the affairs of the small people ? These men who by their genius overcome all difficulties, cherish more than a hundred thousand sentences and paragraphs in their minds, and never flag in what they take in hand. Their profound studies embrace antiquity as well as the present time, and from the rich p2.065 spring in their bosom pour out ingenious thoughts by thousands <sup>2</sup>. The wisdom of the bureaucrats consists merely in their books and registers, of which they understand all the intricacies.

What means the possession of ten or a hundred coins compared with the wealth of a thousand pieces of gold, and how could the granaries of the capital towering like mountains be placed on a level with heaps of grain not higher than mounds of earth ? A man famous for his talents is like a famous vessel. The bigger the vessel, the greater its capacity. The treasures hidden in the bosoms of the scholars can be pronounced greater than those of the officials.

Creepers growing among hemp, become straight without support, and white silk gauze placed amidst coloured one, takes a dark colour without

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<sup>1</sup> The new capital of the *Chou* dynasty in *Honan*.

<sup>2</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* is bragging somewhat here. Even in the best Chinese authors, let alone ordinary scholars, we do not discover ingenious thoughts by thousands.

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having been dyed. This means that the good and the evil we practice transforms our character. The nature of scholars cannot always be good, but revering the holy doctrines, they chant and hum them over day and night <sup>1</sup>, and thus take the habits of the Sages.

In their childhood already do the future officers become familiar with pencil and ink, which they learn to use by constant practice. They never read a page of a book, or ever hear the words benevolence and justice <sup>2</sup>. When they have grown up and are called to office, they abuse their power of writing and their experience in business. All their proceedings are dictated by selfish motives, and influence and profit are their only aims. When they have to make an investigation, they allow themselves to be bribed, and fleece all the people with whom they are brought in contact <sup>3</sup>. Having an honourable position, they crave for power, and, should they find favour with the sovereign, they contrive the disgrace of the governors. Once in power, they will wear elegant hats and sharp swords <sup>4</sup>, and after one year's service their estate and their mansion are well provided. They have not all a wicked character, but their practices are in opposition to the holy doctrines. Those who follow the method of the literati, reform and learn to love justice, so that their ideas as well as their dealings change and improve.

An enlightened governor who clearly saw this, and therefore employed scholars, was the minister of *Tung-hai* <sup>5</sup>, *Tsung Shu Hsi* <sup>6</sup>. He used to invite obscure scholars on a large scale. In spring and autumn he would assemble them to a feast and divide them into three classes. In a regular order he nominated them to vacant posts. Among the officials of a prefecture nine out of ten were scholars. The prefect of *Ch'ên-Liu* <sup>7</sup>, *Ch'ên Tse Yü* likewise opened the ways to the literati. They were given all the posts of secretaries and clerks, and the bureaucrats were only employed in the ratio of one or two

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<sup>1</sup> The recital of the Chinese Classics is more a chanting than a reading.

<sup>2</sup> This is greatly exaggerated.

<sup>3</sup> Bribery and corruption seem to have been the canker of Chinese officials at all time.

<sup>4</sup> The military spirit of the Chinese in the *Han* time was greater than it is now, for they were then just emerging from feudalism.

<sup>5</sup> A place in *Kiangsu*.

<sup>6</sup> The *Shih-hsing p'u* calls him *Tsung Chün* (T. *Shu Hsiang*). He died in A. D. 76.

<sup>7</sup> A place in *Honan*.

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among ten.

These two governors knew the respective value of principles and business, and could judge of the capacities of the candidates. Therefore the age has praised their names, and many of their doings have been recorded in books and memoirs.

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## 35. Book XII, Chap. II

### *Liang-chih. The Valuation of Knowledge*

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p2.067 In our essay on the weighing of talents <sup>1</sup> we have spoken on talents and conduct, but the great superiority of learning has not yet been set forth. Scholars surpass the officials by their learning, on which they spend a long time, purifying their characters and refining their talents. The learned thus suppress their evil desires and rectify their natures, until their talents are fully developed, and their virtue is complete. At that juncture a comparison shows that the capacities of those thus refined are much greater than those of the officials.

When poor and rich men both send a present of a hundred cash for funeral expenses <sup>2</sup>, the mourners, provided they are intelligent, know that the poor have no means and that, if they likewise have contributed a hundred, the rich, who have plenty, possess much more. The unintelligent infer that, since in both cases the sum is a hundred, the fortunes of the rich and the poor are the same. Scholars and officers are in a similar position. Both being employed as clerks or acting as secretaries, the wise among their chiefs are aware that officials and scholars are alike, as far as their writing is concerned, but that the students have many hidden treasures in their bosoms besides. The simple-minded, however, consider that they are both functionaries, and that, as to the thoroughness and extent of their knowledge, their acquirements are the same, a great mistake.

It is the nature of the earth to produce plants, and the nature of mountains to grow trees. If mallows and leeks be sown in the earth, and

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<sup>1</sup> Chap. 34.

<sup>2</sup> The custom of sending presents to the relations of the deceased as a contribution to the funeral expenses, is very old and already mentioned in the *Liki* (Cf. [Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVIII, p. 140 seq.](#)) [[Couvreur](#), § 8]. In ancient times these presents usually were *in natura*, at present they are mostly in money. I did not find any allusion to this custom in *De Groot* great work, [The Religious System of China](#).

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jujubes and chestnuts planted upon the mountains, we speak of a garden and a park, which can no more be placed on p2.068 a par with common land or ordinary mountains. The case of officials and students is analogous. Both have their faculties, and both use pencil and ink, but, in addition to this, the students are the guardians of the doctrine of former emperors, which doctrine means more than mallows and leeks, jujubes and chestnuts.

An ordinary woman spins and weaves with her hands. Should she be endowed with extraordinary skill, she will weave brocade and make embroidery, and be accounted exceptional so as not to come in the same class with the common run. Now, when the faculties of the scholars are contrasted with those of the officials, the former have still a surplus in their knowledge of classical and other writings, as the spinning girls still possess the special gift of weaving brocade and embroidering.

Poor fellows are prone to excesses, while rich people observe the rules, because the poor are hard up, whereas the rich live in opulence. Thus scholars do not do evil, but officials indulge in malpractices, for they are devoid of morality and virtue, and scholars have abundance of benevolence and righteousness <sup>1</sup>.

When poor and rich men together are guests, and receive a present from the host, the rich are not abashed, but the poor always feel ashamed : the former are in a position to make acknowledgments, the latter have nothing to give in return. Students and officials both look upon the high officers as their hosts. The students receiving their salary from them, repay them with virtue and wisdom ; the hearts of the officials are empty, they have not acquired humanity and equity, and merely live on their income, incapable of showing their gratitude, they are, as it were, dining gratis like the personators of the dead <sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* shares the mistake of most Chinese philosophers and of many westerners too, believing that virtue is a necessary correlate of learning. Virtue may be acquired without study, and many scholars are without it.

<sup>2</sup> Phrase quoted from the *Han-shu (Pei-wên-yün-fu)*. These personators of the dead were relatives of the deceased who had to represent the departed soul when sacrifice was offered to it. They were treated with great respect, and refreshments were presented to them. This custom, several times mentioned in the *Shiking* and the *Liki*, was abolished after the *Chou* dynasty.



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Gratis means for nothing : without virtue they live on a salary paid by others for nothing, whence the expression : dining gratis. They do not know any method or art, nor can they regulate the administration. They are sitting silent in the court, unable to discourse on any subject, exactly like corpses. Therefore they are called personators of the dead, and it is thus that the p2.069 officials are, so to speak, dining gratis like the personators of the dead.

Occupying places of honour and living in luxury, how would they venture to take notice of any wicked inclinations of their superiors or administer admonitions ? In the first place, they themselves cannot distinguish between right and wrong, and then they are apprehensive of punishment and dare not speak their minds.

The *Liki* says,

Human nature is fond of beauty.

Those who can speak with vigour are not appreciated owing to their bad style. They have backbone, it is true, but no flesh, and are not portly enough <sup>1</sup>. They who oppose the views of governors and ministers, are sure to incur their displeasure, and even if they should fight for their country, would not earn any fame. Therefore he who covets rank and emoluments must not remonstrate with his superiors.

The officials struggle for rank and money. Once instated, they desire substantial profit, which they can expend at discretion. To extort money they would even risk their lives, and could not explain the right principles to their covetous superiors. They might see wrongs as high as the *T'ai-shan*, how would they dare to utter the slightest reproof ? Under these circumstances they cannot clear themselves from the charge of dining gratis like the personators of corpses.

The scholars study the great principles, and serve their chiefs with virtue. When it is useless, they desist. Their aims being those of great ministers, they do their best to establish a just and proper course according to the canon. They do dare to speak. But by their rank they are far below the high

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in the *Pei-wên-yün-fu* chap. 7a. The meaning is that such passionate speakers are imbued with the right feelings, but want elegance, and therefore are not held in esteem.

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authorities, and when such inferior officers approach them to make remonstrances, the *Liki* calls it flattery <sup>1</sup>. Therefore the residences of prefects and district magistrates are always empty and short of men <sup>2</sup>.

Somebody may suggest that officials have the faculty of drawing up documents, of keeping books and registers, and of investigating and settling all kinds of affairs. Though ignorant of moral science, they yet exert their strength and their skill, and exhaust it in the <sup>p2.070</sup> service of the State, which must also be deemed a manifestation of their indebtedness to those above them <sup>3</sup>.

I reply that, in this respect, they again resemble poor men who have been burdened with a heavy official duty. Owing to their poverty, they have no other means of compensation than personally discharging their official duty, more they cannot do. This discharge of their duty is like house or wall building. For houses they use hatchets and axes, and for walls, beetles and spades. What difference is there between carrying hatchets and axes, and grasping beetles and spades, and the holding of knives, or the taking of styles? If the composition of official papers is held to be a manifestation of the indebtedness to one's superiors, the masons building houses or walls are likewise showing their gratefulness to those above them, and all are performing official duties, knives, styles, hatchets, axes, beetles, and spades all being the same <sup>4</sup>.

One takes cloth to barter silk ; exchanging that which it possesses against that which it has not, each party obtains what they desire. Students take their science to barter wages, the officials however possess nothing to trade with <sup>5</sup>. Peasants and merchants have different professions, and their products cannot be the same. He who, in regard to quality and quantity, produces in abundance, is called a rich man. To become rich is the desire of every

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<sup>1</sup> I did not succeed in tracing this passage in the *Liki*, and fail to see how a remonstrance can be construed as a flattery.

<sup>2</sup> Of men who might offer their advice, which they dare not for fear that they might be suspected of flattery.

<sup>3</sup> They are indebted to the high officers for the emoluments they receive from them.

<sup>4</sup> Ordinary officials without classical learning do not rank higher than menials and artisans.

<sup>5</sup> An unjust reproach, for experience in business is not to be disdained.

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villager. Now the doctrine of the ancient kings is not merely like the produce of peasants and merchants. Those who become high officers, gain honour and bring about great reforms, have more glory than rich people in their luxury. Moreover the work of the scholars is more than abundant produce. They perfect themselves, their intellect shines brightly and, what is still more remarkable, they correctly distinguish right and wrong.

The similarity of twigs of hemp with the trunks of the trees on the mountains is that they serve as torches <sup>1</sup>. First they give much smoke, but, after the fire has come through, their radiance is most lustrous, and lighted in a hall, they shed their splendour <sub>p2.071</sub> round about to a great distance, and have much more brilliancy than the fire on the hearth <sup>2</sup>.

Before a piece of silk is embroidered, or brocade woven, they do not distinguish themselves from common silk or ordinary fabrics. By the skilful use of variegated silk, the needle distributing the thread in an artistic way, a brilliant composition is created, in black and white, or black and blue : pheasants, mountains and dragons, the sun and the moon <sup>3</sup>. The *savants* have likewise compositions, which they study, resembling the multicoloured *chefs-d'oeuvres* of silk embroidery. By their original endowments they do not exceed others, but, when they have amassed learning, they leave them far behind.

Nuts which have no kernels, are called specious, and if they cannot be opened with knives or axes, they are termed solid. Officials who have not acquired the learning of the age have no kernel. How could the faculties of the specious and the solid be compared together ?

Bone is carved, ivory is sculptured, jade polished, and jewels are ground.

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<sup>1</sup> Still now-a-days torches are often made of hemp-hard.

<sup>2</sup> The fire on the hearth produced by ordinary fire-wood. It goes without saying that scholars are likened to the twigs of hemp, shedding a brilliant light by their intelligence, whereas officials are no more than trunks of trees.

<sup>3</sup> All these are emblematic figures mentioned in the *Shuking* Part II, Book IV, 4 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 80](#)) [[Couvreur](#)]. In ancient times they were partly depicted and partly embroidered on official robes, so that painted silk and silk embroideries must already have been known before the *Chou* dynasty, perhaps 2000 years B. C.

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By carving, sculpturing, polishing, and grinding <sup>1</sup> precious objects are produced. As regards human learning, knowledge and skill are developed in the same manner as bone, ivory, jade, and jewels are cut, carved, polished, or ground. Even in case such a polished scholar should prefer not to be employed, a wise ruler would not give him up.

*Sun Wu* <sup>2</sup> and *Ho Lü* <sup>3</sup> were the best experts of their age in enlisting soldiers. He who knows, or has learned the rules of war, must needs win a battle. But should he ignore the art of marshalling his troops by tens and by hundreds, or not understand fencing and swordsmanship, his army led on by force would be routed, and the leader defeated for not knowing the art of war <sup>4</sup>.

p2.072 When rice is ripe, they call it paddy. Pounded in a mortar and separated from chaff by sifting, steamed in a pot, and cooked with fire, it becomes well done food. Then it is sweet and eatable, which means that it has got the proper taste of food, and the necessary softness. Before paddy has been transformed into hulled rice <sup>5</sup>, and hulled rice into food, its raw flavour has not yet been removed, and its consumption would be injurious. Now, a man without learning is like rice not yet turned into paddy, or hulled rice not yet cooked. His mind is as unprepared as raw rice, whose consumption is prejudicial to our health. A student is improved by his studies and educated by his teacher, and the result is as remarkable as the transformation of rice into food, and the food becoming soft.

Before copper and tin are found, they are among other minerals. Picked or dug out by miners, melted in a furnace, heated with bellows, and polished, they are wrought into tools. Previous to the smelting process they are called

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<sup>1</sup> These different manufactures, which still to-day are so very characteristic for China, viz. the working of bone and ivory, of jade and jewels, are worthy of note. The four words are from the *Shiking* (Legge, *Classics* Vol. IV, Part I, p. 91).

<sup>2</sup> Commonly called *Sun-tse*, a celebrated general in the service of *Ho Lü*, to whom a [well-known work on the art of war](#) is ascribed.

<sup>3</sup> A king of *Wu* of the 6th cent. B. C., on whom cf. p. 1.380, Note 1.

<sup>4</sup> Officials are compared with such ignorant leaders.

<sup>5</sup> The variety of names for rice in its different stages — there are still others referring to its quality — show the great importance it has for China.

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ore <sup>1</sup>. Ore is the same as tiles found by the roadside, or small stones on mountains. Thus rice unhusked and not steamed is termed paddy, copper not yet molten and unpolished, ore, and men without instruction, blockheads resembling bamboo and wood.

While bamboo is growing on mountains and wood in forests, their future use is still uncertain. Bamboo is broken into tubes, which are split into tablets. The traces made on these with styles <sup>2</sup> and ink form characters. Big tablets become Classics, the smaller ones, records. Wood is cut into blocks, which are split <sup>p2.073</sup> into boards, which by dint of carving and planing become writing tablets for official memorials <sup>3</sup>. Bamboo and wood are coarse things, but by cutting and polishing, carving and paring are wrought into useful objects. What about man, the noblest creature of all, whose nature encompasses heaven and earth? Unless he goes to school to study the Classics and other works, and unless his honest, but uncultured mind is imbued with propriety and righteousness, he stands in the imperial court stiff like a lath or a tablet, and is of no use.

When the grass in the wilds of the mountains is luxuriant, they cut it down with sickles to make a road. Before scholars have taken the road to knowledge, their vicious inclinations have not yet been eradicated like the weeds, and the wood of the mountain wilds, before they have been mowed down to make a road. Dyed cloth and silk are called coloured stuffs. They are appreciated as dresses of lucky augury. Previous to the dying, one speaks of coarse silk, which is unpropitious, for mourners dress in it <sup>4</sup>. When illiterate people are in the government service, they cannot bring about any happy

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<sup>1</sup> Mining and metallurgy were practised long before the *Han* dynasty. The *Shuking* (*Yü-kung*) speaks of gold, silver, and copper [[Legge](#)] [[Couvreur](#)], the last being the metal *par excellence*. The *Chou-li* informs us that tin was mined [[Biot](#)]. From the 7th cent. B. C. a tax was levied on salt and iron, and we have a treatise on these two metals [] of the 1st cent. B. C.

<sup>2</sup> The same character later on served to designate a pencil or a brush made of hair and invented in the 3d cent. B. C. The style originally was a bamboo pencil dipped into lacquer to write on the wooden or bamboo tablets then in use.

<sup>3</sup> On ancient Chinese books before the invention of paper, the erasing knife, and the style or pencil see the remarkable paper of [Ed. Chavannes, les Livres chinois avant l'invention du papier](#) (*Journal Asiatique*, Janvier-Février 1905).

<sup>4</sup> The colour of mourning is a greyish white, the colour of undyed stuffs; whereas red is the colour of joy and good augury.

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results just as mourners dressed in coarse cloth do not attract happiness.

Those knowing how to hew and shape beams and pillars, go by the name of carpenters, those who dig holes and ditches, are called diggers, and those who understand how to carve and polish official documents <sup>1</sup>, are called scribes. Now the science of the officials consists in preparing official papers <sup>2</sup>; they must be ranked with carpenters and diggers, how then could they be placed on a level with scholars ?

Censors drawing up their documents give the exact weight of money, not losing an atom <sup>3</sup>, and those charged with placing the baskets and vessels at sacrifices, do not make any mistake in arranging them in the proper rows. All this practice they have acquired by previous learning, but people think nothing of it, for p2.074 it is trivial skill and not any valuable knowledge. Without a 'classical erudition' as the basis, they are familiar with style and ink. In great principles insufficient, they possess too many small abilities, and, although they may speak of their great learning, it is but the knowledge of secretaries, and the wisdom of stewards.

Eating millet, one becomes satiated, and dining on bran, one appeases one's hunger. Though in both cases we speak of eating, yet the taste is not the same. Scholars as well as officials are said to have learning, but their usefulness in the State is not equal.

*Tse Pi* <sup>4</sup> of *Chêng* wished to employ *Yin Ho* in the administration. *Tse Ch'an* <sup>5</sup> compared him with a man who had not yet held a knife in his hand and was called upon to cut <sup>6</sup>. *Tse Lu* got *Tse Kao* appointed governor of *Pi*. *Confucius* said,

— You are injuring a man's son <sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Documents written on wooden tablets which are carved and polished.

<sup>2</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* confounds scribes and officials.

<sup>3</sup> In auditing accounts.

<sup>4</sup> Chief minister of *Chêng*.

<sup>5</sup> Celebrated statesman. Cf. p. 1.209, Note 1.

<sup>6</sup> Allusion to the *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Hsiang* 31st year, where *Tse Ch'an* dissuades *Tse Pi* from making *Yin Ho* commandant of a city owing to his being too young and unexperienced (*Legge, Classics Vol. V, Part II, p. 562*) [[Couvreur](#), p. 579 seq.].

<sup>7</sup> Cf. p. 1.407.

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Both had not yet studied and were ignorant of the great principles.

Should a physician who has no method, say that he could cure diseases, he would be asked, how he performed his cures. If he then replied that he followed his own judgment, sick persons would distrust him. Now officials without a classical training pretend to be able to govern the people. Asked by what they were going to govern, they would reply, by their talents. That would be like the physician curing sickness without any method, according to his own fancy. How could the people put faith in such a man, or how should the ruler of men appoint and use him ?

Let somebody without money in his hands offer to purchase something, and the seller ask him, where his money was, then he would have to own that he had no money, and the proprietor would doubtlessly not give him the ware. An empty head is like empty hands. How could such a person expect the sovereign to employ, and the people to have confidence in him ?

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## 36. Book XII, Chap. III

### *Hsieh-tuan. Admitting Shortcomings*

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p2.075 In the chapters on the Weighing of Talents <sup>1</sup> and the Valuation of Knowledge <sup>2</sup>, we have pointed out that concerning their talents, scholars and officials have no reason to impeach one another, the former cultivating the great principles, and the latter studying their books and registers. Theory ranks higher than practice, whence it must be admitted that the literati outshine the functionaries by far. But this is an estimate and a valuation of their professions viewed externally, internally, they both have their shortcomings, which have not yet been openly avowed.

Scholars able to explain one Canon <sup>3</sup>, presume to understand the great doctrine <sup>4</sup>, and therefore look down upon the officials, and these well acquainted with their books and registers, think their learning above all criticism, and themselves entitled to laugh at the scholars. They all rely on their wealth and keep it for themselves ; satisfied with themselves, they find fault with their adversaries, ignoring their own shortcomings and unaware of their proper deficiencies. The *Lun-hêng* informs them with a view to making them open their eyes and see, where they are going.

The faults of the students are not limited to their inexperience in keeping registers, nor does the weakness of the officials merely consist in their ignorance of the great doctrine. They are, moreover, narrow-minded, and do not care for ancient and modern times : they do not understand their own business, and are not up to the mark. Either class has its defects, but is not conscious of them. How is it that even the writers of our time are unable to instruct them ?

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<sup>1</sup> Chap. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. 35.

<sup>3</sup> It is a curious fact that in the *Han* time already there were specialists studying only one book or one author just as we have our *Goethe*, *Shakespeare* and *Dante* critics.

<sup>4</sup> The doctrine of *Confucius* of course.



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p2.076 The scholar's sphere of activity is found in the Five Classics, which as professors in their schoolrooms they explain and teach day and night. They are familiar with every sentence, and they understand the meaning perfectly. In the Five Classics they are all right, it is true, but they fail in regard to all events which took place after the time of the Classics, under the *Ch'in* and *Han* dynasties, a knowledge of which is indispensable. Those who know antiquity, but ignore the present are called dryasdusts. It is the scholars that well deserve this designation.

Anterior to the Five Classics, up to the time, when heaven and earth were settled, emperors and rulers have come to the throne, but which were the names of these sovereigns, the scholars do not know either. Those who are conversant with the present time, but do not know antiquity, are called benighted. Compared with remote antiquity the Five Canons are quite modern. Since they only can explain the Classics, but are in the dark as to remote antiquity, the scholars are to be called benighted.

The students might object that primitive times are so remote, and their events so obliterated, that the Canons do not mention, and teachers not consider them. Even though the history of the Three Rulers<sup>1</sup>, who are comparatively modern, were omitted in the Classics, unity would require it, the Classics ought to know them, and the scholars be able thoroughly to discourse upon them.

The *Hsia* begin their reign with *Yü*. Having established their years, called *tsai*, they lasted down to the *Yin*<sup>2</sup> dynasty. The *Yin* commence with *T'ang*. Their years = *sse* go on to the *Chou* dynasty, which begins with *Wên Wang*. Their years = *nien*<sup>3</sup> reach down as far as the *Ch'in* dynasty. *Chieh* ruined the *Hsia*, and *Chou* destroyed the *Yin*, but who was it that caused the *Chou* dynasty to fall<sup>4</sup>?

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<sup>1</sup> The emperors *Yü*, *T'ang*, and *Wên Wang*, founders of the *Hsia*, *Shang*, and *Chou* dynasties, often mentioned in the Classics.

<sup>2</sup> *Yin* or *Shang* dynasty.

<sup>3</sup> [] the expression for a year now in use.

<sup>4</sup> The downfall of the *Hsia* and *Shang* dynasties is said to have been brought about by the wickedness of the last emperors *Chieh* and *Chou*. The last rulers of the *Chou* dynasty were not depraved, but weak, and so their house fell an easy prey to the

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p2.077 The *Chou* may be of too distant a period, but the *Ch'in* were defeated by the *Han*. The first ruler of the *Hsia* was *Yü*, and the first sovereign of the *Yin* was *T'ang*. The ancestor of the *Chou* was *Hou Chi*, but who was the progenitor of the house of *Ch'in* <sup>1</sup> ?

That *Ch'in* burned the Five Canons and threw the scholars into pits is well known to devotees of the Five Classics, but for what reason did *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* consign the Classics to the flames, and which feeling prompted him to kill the scholars <sup>2</sup> ?

The *Ch'in* are the former dynasty, the *Han* are the dynasty of the literati themselves. How many generations are there from *Kao Tsu* to the present day, and how many years have elapsed till now <sup>3</sup> ? How were the *Han* first invested by Heaven, which were the omens they found <sup>4</sup>, and did they win the imperial sway easily or with difficulties <sup>5</sup> ? How is their position compared to the *Yin* and the *Chou* dynasties in this respect ?

Let us suppose that the sons of a house have pursued their studies up to a certain age, and then are asked by somebody, how many years they have been living in their house, and who were their ancestors. If they do not know it, they are silly youngsters. Now the scholars who are ignorant of the affairs of the *Han* time, are the silly people of their age.

Those well versed in antique lore, and familiar with our time, are fit to be teachers, but why call a teacher a man who knows neither ancient nor modern times ? Should anybody inquire about the books of two feet four inches *viz.* the utterances of the sages <sup>6</sup>, they study these day and night, and

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attacks of powerful *Ch'in*.

<sup>1</sup> This is doubtful. *Sse-Ma Chien* makes the emperor *Chuan Hsü* their ancestor, *Sse-Ma Chêng*, the emperor *Shao Hao*. *Vid.* [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 1, Note 3.](#)

<sup>2</sup> These questions are answered in pp. 1.449 and 1.490 seq.

<sup>3</sup> Chronology is not the strong point of Chinese scholars. *Han Kao Tsu* reigned from 206-195 B. C. The *Lun-hêng* was written about 80 A. D.

<sup>4</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* speaks of these omens in chap. 57-60.

<sup>5</sup> *Kao Tsu* had to fight many battles against rival generals, his most powerful rival being *Hsiang Yü*, who nearly defeated him. It was only by chance that he and not the latter ascended the throne of the *Ch'in*.

<sup>6</sup> The collections of bamboo and wooden tablets forming books measured two feet four inches or three feet of the *Chou* measure in case of the Classics. Other works of less importance were much smaller, only about one foot long. But even the *Analects*

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take an interest in everything included in their sphere of thought. The things of the *Han* time however are not mentioned in the Classics, therefore p2.078 all works in which they are treated, are, in their eyes, small works, and trivial books, which they compare with minor arts. A knowledge of these works is not appreciated by the literati, and the ignorance of these matters not deemed a deficiency.

I should like again singly, and severally to question the literati, each on his own favourite Classic, which he interprets day and night. First I would ask the expositors of the *Yiking*, how it originated, and who was its author. They will most likely reply that *Fu Hsi* composed the Eight Diagrams, which *Wên Wang* developed into sixty-four, and that *Confucius* wrote the definitions, illustrations, and annexes. By the joint efforts of these three Sages the *Yiking* was completed.

I would ask again : There are three editions of the *Yiking*, the first is called *Lien-shan*, the second, *Kuei-tsang* and the third, the *Chou Yiking*. Was that *Yiking* composed by *Fu Hsi*, and written by *Wên Wang* the *Lien-shan*, or the *Kuei-tsang*, or the *Chou Yiking* <sup>1</sup> ? When the *Ch'in* burned the Five Canons, how did the *Yiking* escape <sup>2</sup> ? Some years after the accession of the *Han* it was restored. In the time of *Hsüan Ti* a woman in *Ho-nei* demolishing an old house, discovered one chapter of the *Yiking*. What name did it receive ? Was the *Yiking* complete at that time or not ?

To the students of the *Shuking* I beg to address the following questions : The *Shuking* which they are now explaining day and night, embraces 29 chapters. But in addition to this, there is an edition of 102 chapters, and one of 100 chapters. From which of the two did the 29 chapters proceed ? Who is the author of the 102 chapters ? Where were all the chapters of the *Shuking*, when *Ch'in* burned all the books ? Which emperor, after the rise of the *Han* dynasty, had the *Shuking* first transcribed <sup>3</sup>, and who was the man that was

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originally did not exceed one foot. Cf. p. 1.456.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.454, Note 4.

<sup>2</sup> As a book on divination the *Yiking* was preserved from destruction. See *Legge, Sacred Books* Vol. XVI, Introduction p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> The answers to all these questions are to be found in p. 1.447 seq.

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first initiated into it <sup>1</sup> ?

The following question is intended for the students of the *Liki* : Already before the time of *Confucius* the *Chou* had established their Rites, and there were those of the *Yin* and the *Hsia*. The Three Emperors would increase or decrease the Rites according <sup>p2.079</sup> to circumstances, the chapters were added to or diminished, and the text amplified or curtailed. Now I do not know, whether the present *Liki* is that of the *Chou*, or of the *Yin*, or the *Hsia* <sup>2</sup>. Because the *Han* succeeded the *Chou*, they will no doubt urge that it is the *Liki* of the *Chou* <sup>3</sup>. But in their Rites there were the 'Six Institutions' <sup>4</sup>, and six multiplied, six times six, gave the numbers thirty-six and three hundred and sixty, whence the three hundred and sixty officers of the *Chou*. In our *Liki* the Six Institutions are left out, there are no three hundred and sixty officers, and no mention is made of the son of Heaven. When were the rites of the son of Heaven abolished, perhaps at the downfall of the *Ch'in* dynasty ?

Under the reign of *Hsüan Ti*, a woman in *Ho-nei* demolishing an old house, found one chapter of the lost *Liki*. Which chapter was it among the sixty ?

*Kao Tsu* charged *Shu Sun T'ung* <sup>5</sup> with the edition of the different parts of the *Yi Li*. Where were the sixteen chapters previous to their new edition <sup>6</sup> ? The *Yi Li* appears in sixteen chapters, which escaped the fire of *Ch'in*. How many chapters were there after the *Ch'in* period <sup>7</sup> ?

Let me ask the students of the *Shiking* under which ruler it was composed. They are sure to reply that the *Shiking* was composed at the decline of the *Chou* dynasty, to wit in the time of King *K'ang* <sup>8</sup>. The virtue of the king being wanting in the houses of his subjects, and the great officers being remiss in their remonstrances, the *Shiking* was produced. But the

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<sup>1</sup> *Ch'ao T'so*, cf. p. 1.450.

<sup>2</sup> The double question is indicated by the two finals .... [] .... [], a mode of expression not seldom used in the *Lun-hêng*.

<sup>3</sup> This problem is ventilated in p. 1.455.

<sup>4</sup> *Loc. cit.* Note 4.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. p. 1.380, Note 5.

<sup>6</sup> According to *Wylie, Notes* p. 5 they were concealed in the house of *Confucius*.

<sup>7</sup> The Catalogue in the *Han-shu* mentions seventeen chapters. Cf. *Legge, Classics* Vol. XXVII, Introduction p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> 1078-1053 B. C.

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grandeur of *Wên Wang* and *Wu Wang* was still venerated under *Ch'êng* <sup>1</sup> and *K'ang*, and the latter's age was not yet degenerate <sup>2</sup> ; why did the *Shiking* appear then <sup>3</sup> ?

p2.080 The *Chou* dynasty had more than one king, how do we know that it must just have been *K'ang Wang* ? The two dynasties have both degenerated towards their close, why then was not the *Shiking* composed, when the ruin of the *Hsia* and *Yin* dynasties was drawing near ?

The *Shuking* says, [The *Shiking* is the expression of earnest thoughts, and songs are the chanting of these expressions] <sup>4</sup>, consequently at that time there must already have been a *Shiking*. They maintain, however, that it came down from the *Chou*, and that its origin goes back to that time <sup>5</sup>.

Of old they collected the Odes, which were committed to writing. To-day we have no book of Odes, but how do we know whether at the burning of the Five Canons by *Ch'in* no special regard was shown for the *Shiking* alone <sup>6</sup> ?

There is a question for the students of the *Ch'un-ch'iu* : In the time of which king of the *Chou* dynasty did *Confucius* write the 'Spring and Autumn' ? After his return from *Wei* to *Lu*, he edited the music and wrote the *Ch'un-ch'iu*. His return from *Wei* to *Lu* falls in the reign of Duke *Ai* <sup>7</sup>. But, when he left *Wei*, who was its ruler <sup>8</sup> and in what manner did he treat *Confucius*, that

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<sup>1</sup> *Ch'êng Wang*, 1115-1079 B. C., succeeded *Wu Wang*, 1122-1116.

<sup>2</sup> Both were wise and virtuous rulers.

<sup>3</sup> *Legge* holds that the *Shiking* is a fragment of various collections of odes made during the early reigns of the kings of *Chou*. The oldest pieces were composed during the *Shang* dynasty, the youngest go down to the 6th cent. B. C. (*Legge, Classics* Vol. IV Part I, Prolegomena pp. 27 and 82 seq.)

<sup>4</sup> *Shuking* Part II, Book I, 24 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 48](#)) [[Couvreur](#)]. *Legge* takes [] to mean 'poetry' and accordingly translates, 'Poetry is the expression of earnest thought ; singing is the prolonged utterance of that expression'.

<sup>5</sup> *Wang Ch'ung's* rendering [] by *Shiking* is very doubtful, and his surmise that the *Shiking* existed already at *Shun's* time very precarious.

<sup>6</sup> Something seems to be wrong in the text here, perhaps we should read 'we have a book of Odes', for in *Wang Ch'ung's* time there were several editions. The Odes were nearly all recovered in the *Han* time, having been preserved in the memory of the scholars more than the other Classics.

<sup>7</sup> 493-466 B. C. *Confucius* returned to *Lu* in 484 after having passed five to six years in *Wei* without taking office. What he did during this time, and how he was treated by the reigning duke we do not know. There is a blank in his history just at this time. Cf. *Legge, Classics* Vol. I, Prolegomena p. 83.

<sup>8</sup> Duke *Ch'u*, 492-481 B. C.

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he returned to *Lu* and composed the *Ch'un-ch'iu* ?

*Confucius* copied the chronicle <sup>1</sup> and made of it the *Ch'un-ch'iu*. Was *Ch'un-ch'iu* the original name of the chronicle <sup>2</sup>, or did it p.2.081 become a Classic by the revision, and then form part of the *Ch'un-ch'iu* ?

The jurists <sup>3</sup> might likewise ask the literati, who made the *Nine Statutes* <sup>4</sup>. They having heard of the legislation of *Kao Yao*, will certainly reply *Kao Yao*, but the others will object that *Kao Yao* lived under *Yü*, and that *Yü's* punishments were five <sup>5</sup>, which, however, are not contained in our law. They might perhaps say *Hsiao Ho*, only to be met with the rejoinder that *Hsiao Ho* was a contemporary of *Kao Tsu* <sup>6</sup>. Under the régime of *Hsiao Wên Ti* <sup>7</sup> a superintendent of the public granary in *Ch'i*, *Shun Yü Tê* had committed a fault and was summoned to appear in *Ch'ang-an*. His daughter, *T'i Jung* <sup>8</sup>, sent a petition to the emperor in behalf of her father, pointing out that, after suffering corporal punishment <sup>9</sup> there was no redress. *Wên Ti* was touched by her words and abolished corporal punishments <sup>10</sup>.

Now in our *Nine Statutes* we have symbolical <sup>11</sup>, but not corporal punishments. *Wên Ti* lived later than *Hsiao Ho*, and we know that then corporal punishments were still in vogue. *Hsiao Ho* in his legislation restored corporal punishments ; are we entitled then to assume that the *Nine Statutes* are the work of *Hsiao Ho* <sup>12</sup> ?

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<sup>1</sup> The chronicle of *Lu*.

<sup>2</sup> It was the name of the chronicle of *Lu* before *Confucius* edited it. See p. 1.457 and *Legge, Classics* Vol. V, Part I, Prolegomena p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 2.062, Note 3.

<sup>4</sup> The 'Nine Statutes' forming the Penal Code of the *Han* dynasty.

<sup>5</sup> Branding, cutting off the nose, cutting off the feet, castration, and execution.

<sup>6</sup> *Hsiao Ho* assisted *Liu Pang*, the later *Han Kao Tsu*, in his struggle for the throne. He also drew up a Penal Code for the *Ch'ien Han* dynasty. Died B. C. 193. Cf. *Giles, Bibl. Dict.* No. 702.

<sup>7</sup> B. C. 179-157.

<sup>8</sup> *Shun Yü Tê* had no sons, but five daughters.

<sup>9</sup> *Viz.* branding, cutting off the nose, and cutting off the feet.

<sup>10</sup> This episode is told with all the details in the *Shi-chi* chap. 10, p. 12v ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 474](#)), and in the *Han-shu* chap. 23, p. 12v., where the officer is called *Shun Yü Yi*.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *Chavannes loc. cit.*

<sup>12</sup> We read in the *Han-shu loc. cit.* p. 11r. that under the *Chou* dynasty there were

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Of old [there were three hundred rules of ceremony, and three thousand rules of demeanour] <sup>1</sup>. Of penalties there were likewise <sup>p2.082</sup> three hundred, and three thousand minor paragraphs. Such rules as were separated from the ceremonies were added to the penalties, and what was excluded from the former was incorporated into the latter. Therefore both were of equal number. Our Ritual has sixteen sections, and the laws of *Hsiao Ho* have nine sections ; how does this discrepancy come in ?

All the chapters of the Five Canons have headings referring to the subjects treated for the sake of distinction. Only the Ritual and the Penal Code are without such headings. A Ritual with headings is considered disfigured, and a Code spurious. What is the reason of this ?

In short, if we inquire of the scholars the meaning of old and modern institutions, they are at pains how to distinguish between the names, and if we question them on things concerning their Classics, they are no less ignorant. How can their indolence be held to be the proper method of teaching ? Their horizon is rather limited ; this we must reproach them with.

The officials pretend that they know official business and understand their books and registers. An inquirer would ask whether, in order to understand all these matters, it was not requisite thoroughly to grasp their principles and completely comprehend their meaning. In this respect the officials would prove quite incompetent.

Let me ask : In olden days the feudal barons were entrusted with the administration of special territories, now prefects and magistrates are appointed. What does that mean <sup>2</sup> ?

In ancient times there was the joined field system, people having to

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nine kinds of punishments, the five of *Yü* and in addition : banishment, fining, whipping, and flogging, and that the *Ch'in* dynasty was conspicuous by its cruelty. *Han Kao Tsu* first hoped to get on with three statutes providing capital punishment for murder, and talion for bodily injury and theft. These punishments proving insufficient, *Hsiao Ho* on the basis of the Penal Code of the *Ch'in* dynasty drew up the Nine Statutes in question.

<sup>1</sup> [Chung Yung chap. XXVII, 3.](#)

<sup>2</sup> Feudality was abolished by the *Ch'in* dynasty, and the feudal lords replaced by functionaries.

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cultivate one field for the community. Now land taxes are levied in grain and grass. What does that signify <sup>1</sup> ?

People are expected continually to exercise the same profession. On what is based the monthly turn <sup>2</sup> ?

p2.083 With the twenty-third year *corvées* <sup>3</sup> begin, from the fifteenth year the land tax is to be paid, and from the seventh the poll-tax. Why was the twenty-third year chosen ?

Under which ruler was introduced the sacrifice before the winter solstice ? Wherefore have been established the offerings to the Gate, the Door, the Well, and the Hearth ? And wherefore are the Spirits of the Land and Grain <sup>4</sup>, *Shên Nung*, and the *Ling* Star sacrificed to <sup>5</sup> ?

Why is sickness expelled at the close of the year <sup>6</sup> ? What does it mean that they set up a human figure of peach wood at the door, and for what purpose do they suspend cords of reeds over the entrance, and paint tigers on the door-screens <sup>7</sup> ? What is the idea of those who on the walls of the porches paint a hero, who is to quell fire ?

To what do the six feet of a pace, and the six inches of a bonnet correspond ?

If there is a commanding officer, and a chancellor, but no assisting under-secretary of State <sup>8</sup>, which rule then obtains ?

Two prefects corresponding together use the phrase : Your servant

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<sup>1</sup> The joined field system fell into desuetude in the *Chou* time already, when land taxes were introduced.

<sup>2</sup> This refers to the obligatory military service during the *Chou* epoch, which lasted one month every year. After one month of service it was other people's turn to serve.

<sup>3</sup> I suppose that [] should be written, for *ju* gives no sense. The *corvées*, especially military service, lasted from the 23rd to the 56th year under the *Han* dynasty. Cf. my paper '*Das chinesische Finanz- and Steuerwesen*' in the *Mitt. d. Sem. f. Orient. Sprachen* Vol. III, 1900, p. 187.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 1.510.

<sup>5</sup> See p. 1.520.

<sup>6</sup> See p. 1.534.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. p. 1.243. The custom of painting tigers on the door-screens to frighten away demons is practised to the present day. *Vid. De Groot, Fêtes annuelles d'Émoui* Vol. II, p. 608.

<sup>8</sup> The meaning of very concise sentence is very doubtful.



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ventures to state ; two district magistrates do not say so. How is this to be explained ? When a prefect has to address the two *fu* <sup>1</sup>, he says that he ventures to say, whereas corresponding with the minister of works he uses the expression 'to report'. What style is that ?

In what manner are the eight degrees of nobility <sup>2</sup> conferred upon the people ? What is the meaning of the titles : *tsan-niao* and *shang-tsao* <sup>3</sup> ?

p2.084 Extraordinary merits of officials are termed *fa-yüeh*. What does the expression : *chi-mo* mean ?

At the age of seventy, old people are presented with a jade staff <sup>4</sup>. How did this custom arise ? What sort of sticks are those with a pigeon, but not with another bird, at one end ? If the pigeon is considered auspicious, why do they not give a pigeon, but a pigeon-staff, and not a staff with another bird <sup>5</sup> ?

When the water in the clepsydra has sunk so far, the drum is sounded up to five times. For what reason <sup>6</sup> ?

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<sup>1</sup> A designation for the minister of revenue and the minister of works together.

<sup>2</sup> They seem to have been granted for military achievements during the *Han* time (*P'ien-tse-lei-pien*).

<sup>3</sup> [], [] are two of the twenty ranks of officials in vogue during the *Ch'in* and *Han* dynasties. *Tsan-niao* literally means a horse adorned with a silken harness. The officers of this rank were entitled to ride such horses. The original meaning of *shang-tsao* is not clear (Cf. [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. II, pp. 528, 529](#)).

<sup>4</sup> The staves which in the *Chou* dynasty were presented to old men by order of the emperor, were called 'imperial staves' ([Le Tscheou-li par Ed. Biot Vol. II, p. 394](#)).

<sup>5</sup> According to the *Hou Han-shu* in mid-autumn all the old men of seventy years received a 'jade staff', one foot long, adorned with a pigeon at one end, implying the wish that they might eat their food with the same ease as pigeons do. The *Fêng-su-t'ung* assigns another reason for this old custom : *Han Kao Tsu*, pursued by his adversary *Hsiang Yü*, concealed himself in the rushes. Pigeons cooing above him, his pursuers did not think that a man was hidden there, and he escaped. After his accession, he had pigeon staves made in remembrance of this adventure to support the old. (*Pei-wên-yün-fu* chap. 52). A picture of the handle of such a 'pigeon-staff', taken from the *Hsi ch'ing ku chien*, will be found in *B. Laufer's* paper, *The Bird Chariot in China and Europe*, reprinted from the Boas Anniversary Volume, 1906, p. 419. The entry in *Giles Dict.* No. 2267 to the effect that the figure of a pigeon was engraved on the staff, should be rectified.

<sup>6</sup> The drum is beaten to mark the five night-watches every two hours from 7 p.m. to 5 a.m., and from ancient times the hours are determined by the water-clock. It was in use in the *Chou* epoch, and a special officer had charge of the clepsydra ([Le Tscheou-li Vol. II, p. 201](#)). For day and night a stalk was marked with a hundred divisions, of which about 58 would have to be allotted to day-time and 42 to night. *Wang Ch'ung*

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The day is divided into sixty parts.

Officers dress in black, but within the palace gates they wear red single garments. Wherefore this nice distinction ?

Dresses are tightened round the waist. On the right side one carries the sword of honour in the girdle, and on the left, the blade for fighting. Who established this custom ?

p2.085 Shoes are curved like a hook, and what are the bonnets on the head like ? <sup>1</sup>

Officials live in the suburbs, and going out, ride in a carriage. Which emperor, who was in the habit of drawing up documents, first built suburbs ? And which artisan invented carriages ? Which was the place for breeding horses ? Which ruler invented the art of writing ?

It is difficult to know, who first erected suburbs, and where horses were bred, for it is too far away. The inventors of carriages and writing are easy to be known and, to be sure, people will reply to our question by saying that *T'sang Hsieh* invented writing, and that *Hsi Chung* constructed the first carriage. But if we go on to inquire what prompted *T'sang Hsieh* to make his invention, and whence *Hsi Chung* got the impulse to build a cart, they again do not know it <sup>2</sup>.

The officials ignore what they ought to know, and are to be blamed for not extending their learning. The scholars do not study ancient and modern times ; how can they understand what is distant in time ? Trusting in the text of the Classics, they peruse the same paragraphs over and over again, explaining complicated expressions and elucidating crucial points. The officials again are not at home in their own sphere. They merely go by decisions,

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says that day has 60 divisions. In the *Han* time 48 different stalks, corresponding to the varying lengths of day and night, were used. In 5 B. C. one hundred and twenty divisions were introduced for day and night, of which 60 would be allotted to each at the equinoxes.

<sup>1</sup> The *Hou Han-shu* says that in primitive times men lived in caverns and wild places, dressing in furs and covering their heads with skins. In later ages the Sages noticed that birds and beasts had horns, crests, and beards, in imitation whereof they invented bonnets and caps with ribbons. (*Kanghi's Dict.*).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 2.027.

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investigate matters, write letters, and take notes. In the presence of a minister they give their opinion with great volubility, but know nothing well. All their devices are superficial and inadequate. They are one-sided, unsteady, and lack thoroughness. All have their short-comings, and no reason whatever to cavil at one another.

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## 37. Book XIII, Chap. I

### *Hsiao-li. The Display of Energy*

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p2.086 In the chapters on the Weighing of Talents <sup>1</sup> and the Valuation of Knowledge <sup>2</sup> the discussion has been limited to knowledge and learning, and we have not yet spoken of the energy of talent. All the learned possess this energy. Officials display it in the administration, and students in their studies.

Some one inquired of *Yang Tse Yün* <sup>3</sup>, whether among the wise and virtuous there were also men strong enough to carry a huge tripod, or hold a decorative flag. 'A hundred', was the reply. A hundred among the wise and virtuous were held to be fit to match those carrying a big tripod or lifting a decorative flag, for athletes of great strength are capable of carrying a tripod or holding a flag, just as scholars of great energy possess an extensive knowledge and a penetrating intellect. Enlarged views and penetration are the force of students, whereas in raising heavy loads and tearing off hard objects lies the force of strong men.

We read in the chapter *Tse-t'sai* <sup>4</sup> :

Powerful is the king who opens the path to wisdom. He leads and reforms the people.

That means that the wise are likewise powerful in propriety and righteousness, and therefore can open the path to wisdom, guiding and reforming the people. Reforming requires propriety and rectitude, and propriety and rectitude necessitate literary abilities. Having still energy left after all exertions, one may use it for study, and this ability to study proves that one possesses energy.

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<sup>1</sup> Chap. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. 35.

<sup>3</sup> The well known philosopher. Cf. p. 1.124, Note 1.

<sup>4</sup> 'The Timber of the Tse Tree' a chapter of the *Shuking* [[Legge](#)] [[Couvreur](#)]. In our text this quotation is not to be found.

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Somebody might ask, whether a scholar who can explain one Classic may be regarded as a man full of energy. I would reply that he may not <sup>1</sup>.

p2.087 *P'ang Shao Tu* of *Ch'ên-liu* <sup>2</sup>, whenever he recommended some scholar for an office, was in the habit of saying that the talents of Mr. So-and-So equalled those of a hundred men. The prefect being diffident of these abilities and not replying, *P'ang Shao Tu* would add that perhaps he had not said enough, and that Mr. So-and-So could vie with a million men in talent.

— You speak nonsense, my dear friend, returned the prefect angrily,

but *P'ang Shao Tu* rejoined,

— Officials do not understand a single word of a single Canon and cannot repeat one sentence spoken by a teacher. Students, however, are able to enounce a million paragraphs and phrases, is their knowledge, therefore, not equal to that of a million people ?

The prefect could give no answer.

The remark of *P'ang Shao Tu* is true, still it is not quite to the point, for the scholars may be able to repeat a million sentences, yet they pay no heed to ancient and modern history. They have a blind faith in the methods of their teachers and, though their topics be manifold, after all they do not deserve the name of profound scholars. Many events which happened before the *Yin* and *Chou* epochs have been recorded in the Six Canons, but of these the literati know nothing. Of the affairs of the *Ch'in* and *Han* time they take no notice and thereby evince a lack of zeal and energy <sup>3</sup>.

The *Chou* looked up to the Two Dynasties <sup>4</sup>, and the *Han*, to the *Chou* and *Ch'in* times. What happened after the *Chou* and *Ch'in* does not exist for the literati. The *Han* wished to learn, the scholars have not this ambition. In case scholars are inclined to enlarge their views, they may be called learned

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<sup>1</sup> One Classic does not suffice.

<sup>2</sup> A circuit in *Honan*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 2.076.

<sup>4</sup> The *Hsia* and *Shang* dynasties.

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scholars. They have more energy than common ones and, as *P'ang Shao Tu* puts it, the talents of learned scholars are equal to those of ten million people <sup>1</sup>.

[*Tsêng Tse* said,

— The learned man may not be without breadth of mind and vigorous endurance. His burden is heavy and his course is long. Perfect virtue is the burden which he considers it is his to sustain ; is it not heavy ? Only with death does his course stop ; is it not long ?] <sup>2</sup>

p2.088 We learn from this that the scholar has to carry the burden of his conviction alone, and alone to walk the long way leading to the goal for which he is striving. His body carries a heavy burden up to his last moments, never tired and never broken, such is his single energy. The burden of *Tsêng Tse* consists in virtue, that of the scholar in learning ; the loads are dissimilar, but the weight is the same <sup>3</sup>.

A hundred-weight may be lifted by one man, but two men are incapable of moving more than 10 cwt. In the world, there are many apt to lift a hundred-weight, but very few have the force to raise 10 cwt. What the scholars carry is above 10 cwt.

When the productive power of the soil is great, plants and trees pullulate, and the crop of one acre is as much as the produce of five acres of average quality. Farmers know that the exuberant growth of grain is owing to the natural fertility of the soil, but people ignore that abundant literary productions are the upshot of extraordinary talents, and thus do not understand the real state of affairs. Now, the energy of learned scholars surpasses that of common students, and in a still higher degree that of functionaries.

Those who promote the wise and recommend the learned, are usually accounted very energetic. In order to raise the wise and recommend the

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<sup>1</sup> The typical conceit of a Chinese scholar.

<sup>2</sup> Quotation from *Analects VIII, 7* [*Couvreur*].

<sup>3</sup> I do not see why a distinction is made between *Tsêng Tse* and other scholars. Was *Tsêng Tse* not learned, and are the scholars not virtuous ?

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learned, they draw up their daily reports to the throne. Those able to write them are learned scholars, who must not necessarily be professionals. It suffices that they have a keen intellect as well as a ready pen. The memorials of *Ku Tse Yün* and *T'ang Tse Kao*<sup>1</sup> number more than a hundred, all written in a most vigorous style. They speak out what they think, conceal nothing, and are never at a loss how to express their ideas. Only men of genius can do that.

*Confucius* was the strongest man in the *Chou* epoch. He wrote the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, revised the Five Classics, and fixed the doubtful text of many an abstruse book<sup>2</sup>. The higher the mountains, the more clouds gather around them. Before the morning is over, Mt. *T'ai* has produced so much rain, that it pours down on the whole empire<sup>3</sup>. The knowledge of the wise is like those clouds and rain. p2.089 Consequently they put forth more than thousands of tablets full of letters, and must be admired for their great energy.

In praising force, people use to extol *Wu Huo*<sup>4</sup>. *Tung Chung Shu*<sup>5</sup> and *Yang Tse Yün* are the *Wu Huos* of letters. King *Wu* of *Ch'in* attempted with *Mêng Yüeh* to lift a tripod, but he could not carry it, broke a blood-vessel, and died<sup>6</sup>. When inferior scholars lay open their innermost thoughts to men like *Tung Chung Shu*, they are unable to carry the burden which they have taken, and break down, having sprung an artery.

When, in *Wang Mang's* time, the clauses of all the chapters of the Five Canons were gone through, they amounted to two hundred thousand. A gentlemen of vast learning, *Kuo Lu*, fixed the old text, during the night, and expired under his candle. His mind could not bear the strain, his arteries were broken, and his life extinguished.

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<sup>1</sup> The same as *Ku Yung* and *T'ang Lin* p. 1.469.

<sup>2</sup> This must refer to the Classics, for it is not known that *Confucius* revised other books besides.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 1.277.

<sup>4</sup> A 'Samson' of the feudal age. *Giles, Dict* No. 2334.

<sup>5</sup> A great writer. Cf. p. 1.357, Note 1.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Shi-chi* chap. 5, p. 26v. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 76](#)). The death of King *Wu* took place in B. C. 307. He was very strong himself and fond of strong men like *Mêng Yüeh*. After the king's death, the latter and all his relations were executed.

## Lun-hêng

The son of Yen <sup>1</sup> had already all but outrun *Confucius* in his course, when he flagged, completely shattered and exhausted. His hair turned white, and his teeth fell out. Even a person with almost perfect endowments may still break down. The strength of *Confucius* was wonderful, *Yen Yuan* could not bear the strain.

Unless talents and energy are equally balanced, knowledge does not come up to the mark. Those who perforce will rise from the rank and file up to the highest grades, come to spitting blood, swooning, and losing their consciousness, until at last their life ends.

To fill boards with five rows of characters or to write memorials of ten tablets, is a hard task for people of small talents and bad writers. How could they combine sentences to paragraphs, and write hundreds of chapters ? That requires special energy.

If the waters of streams and rivers come rushing, taking their course through the country, always flowing on and never drying up or stopping, they must have copious sources. People are aware that the long courses of rivers and streams require springs p2.090 abounding in water in the earth, but they overlook that men who write thousands of tablets have in their bosom an ever-flowing spring of ideas, and thus they are far from the truth. Looked at, the hoof of a racer does not distinguish itself from the hoof of a common horse, but no sooner does it gallop through the plain, than it becomes visible that it can run a thousand Li. The hoof of a horse and a human hand are the same after all. If those who make much of the hoof of a steed, do not call attention to the hand of a man of letters, they do not understand analogies.

A good judge of the strength of muscles, who has an eye for analogous facts, will place a man of great scientific energy in the service of the State, for a man strong in letters, assisted by a strong governor, is sure of great success through his strength, whereas, when a strong man is not assisted by another strong one, it ends in disaster. This will become evident from the following consideration :

A strong man may lift a big and ponderous thing, and a strong ox may

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<sup>1</sup> *Yen Yuan* = *Yen Hui*, the disciple of *Confucius*.



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draw a heavy cart. Such a cart ascending a hill, a strong ox must draw in front, and a strong man push behind, then it is possible to pull the vehicle over the height. If, however, the ox be feeble, and the man worn out, the heavy cart rolls back, tumbles into a ditch, upsets, and is smashed.

Learned scholars, cherishing the principles of the former kings in their hearts and harbouring the dicta of the diverse schools of thought, are hard to be pushed or pulled, even more so than a heavy cart. Should those who recommend and push them be weak and without energy, then they retire and hide in rock caverns <sup>1</sup>.

The *Yellow River* rises in the *K'un-lun*, and the *Yangtse* comes from the *Min-shan* <sup>2</sup>. The force of their currents is very great. After a heavy rainfall still greater masses of water flow down, and unless their banks were so wide, and the land so low, they would never reach the eastern sea in their course. If the banks were narrow, and the land high, a breach in a canal would cause the entire hill land to be flooded.

The knowledge of an able student bears some resemblance to this. When his learning pours out, and he does not fall in with a strong governor to introduce and recommend him, he is lost in <sup>p2.091</sup> his poor cottage, for how could he rise to the palace of the holy ruler and impart to him his views on government ?

The flame of a fire does not shine, unless it be raised. Now, here is a man whose knowledge rises as high as a peak, and whose virtue is like a mountain. In spite of his immense force, he cannot boast of it himself, and stands in need of somebody to introduce him. Should he not find such an assistant, he takes his wonderful energy and absconds in some small alley of a village for want of an opportunity to rise.

*Ao* <sup>3</sup> and *Hsia Yü* <sup>4</sup> were two men of great strength in ancient times. They

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<sup>1</sup> Scholars not finding the necessary support retire from public life to become recluses and hermits.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 2.023, Note 2.

<sup>3</sup> A strong man in the *Shang* dynasty.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 1.484, Note 6.

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could carry a thousand *chün* <sup>1</sup> on their bodies and with their hands tear off a horn or twist a hook, but called upon to lift themselves from the ground, they would have been unable to detach themselves from it.

Men whose bosoms are filled with wisdom and genius, deserve to be in the king's palace. They require no more than a tongue of three inches and a pencil of one foot to assert themselves. But they cannot push themselves to the front, and, if they could, not stay there. They want others to push them, and expect others to prepare a position for them. However it is rather difficult to find a suitable post for men imbued with great principles and extensive learning.

A small stone being attached to a mountain, the force of the mountain can hold it in its gravel and mounds of earth. Besides, the small stone is so light and subtle, that it can itself keep its position. As regards a big stone, however, it is not embedded in sand or earth, and the mountain cannot hold it. Placed on a precipitous cliff, it is sure to tumble down into the deep valley.

Provided that a scholar, heavy with knowledge, comes across a superior of modest endowments, there is no sand nor earth right and left to support him, and even if he is given an exalted position, his chief cannot keep him there. He shares the fate of the big stone tumbling down <sup>2</sup>.

Somebody cuts firewood on a mountain. The light brushwood can easily be tied together, but the big trees of ten spans and more <sup>p2.092</sup> neither admit of being moved by pulling nor of being pushed behind. Therefore the fuel-gatherer leaves them in the forest and returns home, collecting the small wood, which he binds together. Carrying on this argument, we must own that men of great abilities resemble trees of over ten spans in circumference. Human force cannot raise nor recommend them <sup>3</sup>, as the fuel-gatherer is incapable of pushing or dragging a huge tree.

*Confucius* was wandering about, and nowhere did he find a resting-place,

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<sup>1</sup> A *chün* in the *Han* time was equal to 30 pounds or catties.

<sup>2</sup> The chief is compared with a mountain unable to hold a big stone, the scholar : Only great men are qualified to appreciate great men and keep them in their service.

<sup>3</sup> Others may recommend them, but then their promotion is not of long duration. Ere long, they will get into conflict with their employers and abandon their posts.

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not because his sagehood was not enlightened enough, but his grand principles were too difficult to be put into practice, and nobody could make use of him. Consequently *Confucius* stood there like an enormous tree on a mountain.

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That Duke *Huan* succeeded in bringing about a confederation of the princes and re-adjusting the empire, was due to *Kuan Chung's* energy. *Kuan Chung* had this energy, and since Duke *Huan* could raise him, he may well be called a mighty monarch. *Wu* could not avail itself of *Wu Tse Hsü* <sup>1</sup>, and *Ch'u* had no employment for *Ch'u Yuan* <sup>2</sup>. The energies of these two persons were very great, but their sovereigns were unable to raise them.

After some unsuccessful efforts to raise a thing, people eventually leave it on the spot and depart, but it also happens that, out of anger, they cut it down with an axe and destroy it. This hardship was suffered by *Wu Tse Hsü* and *Ch'ü Yuan* <sup>3</sup>.

Fish in a pond mutually devour each other. Those which passing their mouths find room in them, are swallowed, but those which their mouths cannot hold, are not gulped down. Similarly *Shang Yang* thrice addressed Duke *Hsiao*, but solely his last proposal was accepted. The two former proved impracticable, and the last only was fit to be carried out. We notice that the enlightened laws of *Kuan Chung*, and the agricultural and military system of *Shang Yang* <sup>4</sup> were measures not to be taken by weak rulers.

p2.093 In the era of the Six States very clever officers went to *Ch'u*, and the *Ch'u* State became powerful <sup>5</sup>; they abandoned *Ch'i*, and its power declined. They succoured *Chao*, and *Chao* was well provided <sup>6</sup>, they turned

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 2.001, Note 1.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 2.001, Note 2.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 1.140, Note 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Vid.* p. 1.463. Notes 5 and 6.

<sup>5</sup> Such an officer was *Wu Ch'i* of *Wei*, who as chancellor organised the administration of *Ch'u*, and vanquished all her rivals.

<sup>6</sup> The *Chao* State flourished under *Fei Yi* as minister, who was put to death in B. C. 295.

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their back upon *Wei*, and *Wei* had to suffer <sup>1</sup>.

The *Han* State employed *Shên Pu Hai* <sup>2</sup> carrying out his three devices <sup>3</sup>, and for fifteen years no foe dared infest its territory. Then it dispensed with his services and did not read his books. The weapons were destroyed, the armour gone to pieces, and the State was annexed by *Ch'in*.

In the *Yin* and *Chou* epochs there was an uninterrupted series of revolutions, and one disaster followed the other. Their intention was not to do without government, but their power was too weak, and their knowledge too limited, so that the best advice was lost upon them. Thus a heavy mound of earth cannot be trampled down by one man's footsteps, nor a huge pile of stones be subverted by one man's hand. Wise officers excel by their strong sinews, and narrow-minded rulers are no match for them. If they seek each other, they pass one another like fish and quadrupeds <sup>4</sup>.

Unless a *Kan-chiang* blade <sup>5</sup> be thrust by a man, water-plants and gourds receive no injury, and unless fine bamboo arrows be shot from a cross-bow, *Lu* tissues <sup>6</sup> cannot be pierced. Not that the blade and the fine bamboo are worthless, but without a person dealing a blow or shooting, the gourd and the silk are not cut <sub>p2.094</sub> or pierced <sup>7</sup>. How could the feat of cutting a flag or piercing an armour be achieved ?

With strength sufficient to draw a bow one may not pull a powerful ballista. Provided that the force of the ballista is of five stones <sup>8</sup>, but is pulled with three, then the sinews are rent, and the bones broken without any

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<sup>1</sup> It was for this reason that King *Hui* of *Wei* in B. C. 336 summoned *Mencius* and other sages to his court.

<sup>2</sup> *Shên Pu Hai*, a native of *Loyang*, became minister under Prince *Chao* of *Han* and died in B. C. 337. He is known as *Shên Tse* and a Taoist author. The *Shi-chi* devotes some lines to him in chap. 63, which treats of *Lao Tse*, *Chuang Tse*, and *Han Fei Tse*.

<sup>3</sup> It is not clear which these three devices were ; the *P'ien-tse lei pien* quotes this passage, the *Pei-wên-yün-fu* refers to *Huai Nan Tse*. *Shên Pu Hai* reorganised the administration, sought the friendship of other States, strengthened the military power of *Han*, and reformed the criminal law.

<sup>4</sup> Living in different elements, they cannot unite or have any intercourse.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. p. 1.504, Note 1.

<sup>6</sup> Very soft things. The tissues of *Lu* in *Shantung* must have been exceptionally fine.

<sup>7</sup> There must be some force, in default of which the best weapons are useless.

<sup>8</sup> See p. 1.498, Note 1.

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result. The strength not sufficing for bending a strong bow, a catastrophe ensues such as breaking the spine. Those who are not intelligent enough to employ wise men, themselves injure their virtue and lose their good name. Yet most critics do not admit that talents may be too great and principles too high for a sovereign to use them, and hold that the unworthy only do not come to the front. He that knows how to push his way, does not make opposition, when his connection with the sovereign ceases, and he that recommends himself, does not resent the low price offered him.

All things used by man require somebody to use them, when their inherent value comes to light. That which drives a chisel into the wood are the blows of the hammer, and a spade can dig up the earth, if pressed down by the plant of the foot. All sharp-edged tools can cut and carve, provided there is a hand to grasp, and a force to push and pull them.

When *Han Hsin* <sup>1</sup> left *Ch'u* and went to *Han*, the peace of *Hsiang Yü* <sup>2</sup> was gone. *Kao Tsu* knew how to keep him and profit by his excellence, putting him in the right place. He could appreciate his energy and discern his merits.

*Fan Li* <sup>3</sup> earned fame by his assaults on cities and open battles, but when *Kao Tsu* made appointments, he gave the first to *Hsiao Ho* <sup>4</sup>. He likened *Hsiao Ho* unto a hunter, and *Fan Li* unto a greyhound, for *Hsiao Ho* was quietly seated, while *Fan Li* was running to and fro. The first appointment was not bestowed on that bustling person, but on him that was quietly sitting down. *Hsiao Ho's* forte was his acuteness, whereas *Fan Li* won his laurels by his energy. Therefore *Hsiao Ho* could send him on a mission to *Ch'in* to collect official documents. All the other high <sub>p2.095</sub> officers were amassing gold, and *Hsiao Ho* alone collected books. Sitting in his chair, he learned to know the conditions of *Ch'in*, and thus was enabled to lay his plans for its ruin. All the other dignitaries were hurrying about, and *Hsiao Ho* urged them on.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.148, Note 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Hsiang Yü*, the rival of *Han Kao Tsu*, was omnipotent in the *Ch'u* State.

<sup>3</sup> Better known under the name of *Fan K'uai*, originally a dog-butcher, who was raised to high honours by *Han Kao Tsu*.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 2.081, Note 10.

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In this way *Shu Sun Tung*<sup>1</sup> fixed the ceremonies, and *Kao Tsu* was honoured thereby. *Hsiao Ho* drafted the penal code, and the house of *Han* became pacified<sup>2</sup>. By rites and laws greater fame is to be won than on the battle-field, and cutting the heads of the enemies off, is not as meritorious as honouring the sovereign.

In ploughing the weeds, and sowing grain lies the force of peasants, in bold attacks and battles, that of soldiers, in scaffolding and hewing, that of artisans, in making books and stitching registers, that of official clerks, in propounding the doctrine and discoursing on government, that of learned scholars. Every living person possesses some faculty, but some of these abilities are highly estimable, some mean. *Confucius* could lift the bar of the north-gate, but did not boast of this strength<sup>3</sup>, being well aware that the force of muscles and bones in general esteem falls short of that of benevolence and rectitude.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.380, Note 5.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 2.081, Note 10.

<sup>3</sup> Both *Lieh Tse* VIII, 6r. [[Wieger](#), p. 189] and [Huai Nan Tse XII, 4r.](#) relate this same fact in almost identical words, but they speak of the gate of the capital. The *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* also has a reference to it.

## 38. Book XIII, Chap. II

### *Pieh-t'ung. On Intelligence*

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p2.096 In the houses of the wealthy, a space of ten feet serves as the inner apartment, and in this room are boxes and trunks all filled with lustres and other silk fabrics <sup>1</sup>. The poor likewise use a space of ten feet as inner apartment, but it is completely empty, merely consisting of four bare walls, whence they are called poor. The intelligent are like the wealthy, the unintelligent like the poor. Both are provided with a body seven feet high, but whereas the intelligent harbour the words of all the philosophers in their bosoms, the hearts of the unintelligent are empty, for they have never read a single tablet, like the interior of poor people, four bare walls.

In the general appreciation, the poor and the rich are not equal, and thus the sharp and the blunt-witted cannot be placed on a level. However the world holds the rich in affectionate esteem, and does not honour the clear-headed, it feels ashamed of the poor, and does not despise the unwise ; a treatment not warranted by the principles of analogy. As for the deference shown to rich people, they live in luxury because of their wealth, and therefore are held in respect. But rich men are not like scholars, and scholars fall short of strong-minded individuals.

The latter have more than ten chests crammed full of letters : the words of the sages, the utterances of worthies, as far back as *Huang Ti*, and down to the *Ch'in* and *Han*, methods of government, and for increasing the national wealth, criticisms on the age, and strictures on low class people, all is there. A man with a bright intellect, and large views has a better claim on our consideration, I should say, than lustres and silk stuffs.

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<sup>1</sup> Even to-day the Chinese do not use their silks and curios for decorating their poorly furnished rooms, but keep their treasures in trunks and boxes, whence they are seldom removed, to be shown to some good friend.

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*Hsiao Ho*<sup>1</sup> went to *Ch'in* to collect official papers, and it was by the force of these documents that the *Han* could sway the p2.097 Nine Provinces<sup>2</sup>. With documents they extended their rule over the entire empire, and how much greater is the wealth of empires than that of private persons ?

A man whose eyes cannot see green and yellow, is called blind. If his ears cannot hear the first and second notes, he is deaf, and if his nose has no perception of perfumes and stench, he is without the sense of smell<sup>3</sup>. Any one without the sense of smell deaf, or blind is not a perfect man. Now a person without a vast knowledge, ignorant of past and present, not conversant with categories, insensible of right and wrong, is like a blind or deaf man, or one without the olfactory senses. Even scholars who do not study must be considered beclouded, and fancy common people never reading a book and not knowing truth and untruth. Theirs is the height of narrow-mindedness. They are like dummies made of clay or wood, which have ears and eyes quite complete, and yet are insensible.

Wading through shallow water, people find crabs, in greater depth they discover fish and turtles, and in the deepest recesses they fall in with water snakes and dragons. As the steps taken are different, so the animals met with vary. The same rule applies to those who make more or less progress in science. Those remaining on the surface read stories and pleasant books, those entering deeper come to the school of the Sage, where they learn to know works of profound wisdom. The farther they penetrate into the doctrine, the more insight they acquire.

On a journey, people always want to visit the capital, because it has so many sights worth seeing, and in the capital they desire to see the market, where so many rare things are exposed for sale. The dicta of all the thinkers of the divers schools and the history of ancient and modern times are likewise very wonderful, even more so than the capital with its big market place. By a visit to the capital, the traveller's intention is accomplished, and the sight of

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 2.094.

<sup>2</sup> The *Han* took over the bulk of the administration of the *Ch'in* dynasty, for which purpose *Hsiao Ho* collected their official papers.

<sup>3</sup> [ ] *yung. Kanghi* quotes this passage and suggests that this character may be a variant of [ ] 'carbuncles' or extuberances viz. in the nose.



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the big market satisfies his desires. How much more must this be true of a journey into the realms of thought and science ?

Big rivers do not dry up in times of drought owing to their many tributaries. Pools, on the other hand, show the mud already, p2.098 when it has not rained for several days, because they have no affluents. The big rivers are connected, and the small ones linked together, so they flow eastward into the ocean <sup>1</sup>. Hence the greatness of the ocean. Unless the ocean were in connexion with all the rivers, it could not be termed immense. A man harbouring the sayings of all the philosophers is like the ocean receiving the water of all the rivers. If he is not deemed great, then the ocean must be declared to be smaller than the rivers likewise. That the ocean exceeds all the rivers in size is generally known by men, but they cannot comprehend that the intelligent are brighter than the unintelligent.

Moisture trickling down becomes salt, a taste produced by water. The water of the eastern ocean is briny and extends to a great distance. In *Hsi-chou* <sup>2</sup> there are salt-wells, which are very deep. Can a person have the benefit of a salt-well that either wishes to consume salt without possessing a well, or bores a well, but does not find a spring ? He who has no commerce with sages and wise men can hardly expect to win a name above all others.

The jurists are in the habit of neglecting practical life, and, when called upon, are unable to give judgment in a case. The students of clauses and paragraphs do not study old and modern literature, and are unfit thoroughly to argue a point.

Some people contend that to comment upon one Classic is the right thing <sup>3</sup>, for what is the use of extensive knowledge ? The school of *Confucius* takes up all the Five Canons, and no one but has mastered them all is accounted almost perfect. *Yen Yuan* said that the master extensively filled his

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<sup>1</sup> In China of course.

<sup>2</sup> According to the *T'ai-p'ing yü-lan* chap. 165 *Hsi-chou* would be identical with *Kao-ch'ang* or *Karakhodjo* in Turkestan. Rock-salt is mentioned as a produce of this country, brought as tribute to China under the *Liang* dynasty (*T'ai-p'ing yü-lan* chap. 865, p. 6r.). But perhaps *Wang Ch'ung* refers to a *Hsi-chou* in *Szechuan* (*Playfair* No. 2619, 4°), which province was famous for its salt-wells already in the *Han* time. See *T'ai-p'ing yü-lan* chap. 189, p. 1v., where a passage from the *Han-shu* is quoted.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 2.075, Note 3.

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mind with learning <sup>1</sup>. Only men of exceptional knowledge are worthy the name of well-read scholars, for could the term 'extensively' used by *Yen Yuan* refer to one single Classic only ?

p2.099 I cannot embrace all the Five Canons in my studies, nor can I trouble myself with all sorts of things. Reposing confidence in one doctrine, I do not like to enlarge my views. I am not clever enough to be well acquainted with antique lore or familiar with modern times, but am so stupid, that I cherish my stupidity and do not wish to learn. Thus any one who is satisfied with one Classic only should speak.

We open the door to let the sunlight in, and since this does not suffice to illuminate all the dark places, we pierce the walls to make windows and sky-holes, and thus add to the light penetrating through the door. The explanation of one Classic is like the light of the sun, the records used to assist it, are the windows and sky-holes. The words of the philosophers enlighten us even in a higher degree than windows and sky-holes afford a passage to the sunshine. As sunshine lights the interior of a room, so scientific researches enlighten the heart.

To open the door and let the light in, and to sit in a raised hall, or even to ascend a balcony to have a look at the surrounding buildings, is what people like to do. To shut the door and sit in obscurity, turned towards a pitch dark room, or to dig a mine and, lying on the back, work in the vicinity of the yellow springs <sup>2</sup>, is distasteful to everybody. They who shut their hearts and close their minds, never viewing things from a higher standpoint, are like dead men.

In the time of the emperor *Hsiao Wu Ti* <sup>3</sup>, the king of *Yen, Tan*, staying in the *Ming-kuang* palace wished to go to his sleeping apartments, but all the three hundred doors were tightly closed. He ordered twenty of his attendants to open them, but they did not succeed. Subsequently *Tan* became involved in an insurrection and committed suicide. The closing of the doors was a presage of the death of King *Tan* of *Yen*. Dying is a calamitous event, hence

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects IX, 10](#) [Couvreur].

<sup>2</sup> The Styx of the Chinese.

<sup>3</sup> B. C.140-87.

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the closing was referred to it.

*Ch'ing Fêng* of *Ch'i* was a dullard. When the high officers of six States at a meeting recited the Odes, he did not understand them <sup>1</sup>. Later on a catastrophe was brought about by *Ling* of *Ch'u* <sup>2</sup>. p2.100 He who does not let in the light of science is a corpse still walking about.

When a State has ceased to exist, its altar of the land is roofed above and fenced in below, to indicate that its connexion with Heaven and Earth has been interrupted <sup>3</sup>. The *Chou* took care lest in spring and autumn such altars should be treated with disrespect. People should read classical and profane books in the same manner as the altars of the land must be in communication with the fluids of Heaven and Earth. Those who do not study are like persons disregarding the altars of the land. The communication with the air being checked, even the strongest man dies, and luxuriant plants wither.

Eatable things in the eastern sea are manifold on account of its vastness. The procreative power of the water being exuberant, a great variety of very strange things is produced. Thus a great man has many treasures, enshrined in his bosom : great talents and great knowledge, and there are no principles or methods but he embraces them. Students with similar views and men of great learning all come to him, because he understands the profound meaning of the Classics and knows so many words of teachers. Things of the past and the present time and utterances of various philosophers he remembers a great many, and is not merely a man of learning of a certain school. No one can know the taste of sweet wine, if he has not purchased it, and merely used sugar <sup>4</sup>.

Peasants producing excellent grain in abundance are looked upon as

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<sup>1</sup> This fact is mentioned in the *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Hsiang* 27th and 28th year (*Legge, Classics Vol. V, Part II*, pp. 532 and 542) [[Couvreur](#), § 1 ; [Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> King *Ling* of *Ch'u* executed *Ch'ing Fêng*, who had fled to *Wu* in B. C. 537. See *Ch'un-ch'iu*, Duke *Chao*, 4th year [[Couvreur](#), § 5]. According to the *Tso-chuan* King *Ling* reproached *Ch'ing Fêng* with having murdered his ruler. So his ignorance was not the direct cause of his death.

<sup>3</sup> This rule is set forth in the *Liki*, *Chiao-t'é-shêng* (*Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 425*) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>4</sup> The meaning is somewhat obscure. I take it to be that it is not sufficient to sugar common wine to have the taste of sweet wine, which is a special quality. Sugar symbolises the learning of one school, sweet wine, that of all combined.

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superior husbandmen, and those whose crops are small, as inferior. The talents of men of letters correspond to the faculties of husbandmen. Those able to produce plenty of grain are called superior husbandmen, and the others apt to collect a vast amount of knowledge, are superior scholars. To praise the ox for carrying a heavy burden, and not to belaud the swiftness of the horse, to extol the hand, and revile the foot, who would think that reasonable ?

p2.101 Unless a district road communicates with the country, or a country road leads to town, a traveller on horseback or in a boat would not take it. Unless veins and arteries are in connexion, a man contracts a dangerous disease, for the cessation of this connexion is a very bad thing, a misfortune with the worst consequences. As robbers have their haunts in rank grass, wicked thoughts grow in unprincipled hearts <sup>1</sup>. Unprincipled means devoid of maxims and principles <sup>2</sup>.

A physician qualified to cure one disease is considered clever, and, if he can treat a hundred maladies, he is called excellent. Such an excellent physician gives prescriptions for a hundred diseases, and heals the ailments of a hundred patients. A genius imbued with the teachings of the divers schools of thought can settle the quarrels of a hundred clans. How could the numerous prescriptions of a *Pien Ch'io* be put on a par with the single ability of a clever physician ?

*Tse Kung* said,

[— If one do not find the door and enter by it, he cannot see the ancestral temple with its beauties, nor all the officers in their rich array.] <sup>3</sup>

The ancestral temple and all the officers here serve to illustrate the teachings of *Confucius*. They are so excellent, that they may be compared with the

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<sup>1</sup> Literally 'no road'.

<sup>2</sup> It is impossible to bring out the full meaning of this paragraph in English. In Chinese the principal words pointed out in Notes 1-3 have all a double meaning : to *communicate*, to *connect*, a *road* on one side and on the other : *intelligent*, *clever*, *principle*. The general purport is that intelligence, and good principles cannot be dispensed with just as good roads and communications are necessary.

<sup>3</sup> [Analects XIX, 23 \[Couvreur\]](#) (*Legge, Classics* Vol. I, p. 347).

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ancestral temple, and so numerous, that they bear resemblance to the hosts of all the officers. Therefore a man of comprehensive information and deep erudition is a follower of *Confucius*.

The land of the *Yin* and *Chou* dynasties extended as far as 5 000 Li, and even the wild and fortified dependencies were governed with the utmost care. Over 10 000 Li fell under the dominion of the vast territory of the house of *Han*, and in the fortified and wild tracts, people were wearing wide state-robles and broad girdles <sup>1</sup>. Without exceptional virtue nobody can be affectionately solicitous for distant countries, and in default of great talents one cannot <sub>p2.102</sub> enlarge one's views. Therefore men of great experience and deep erudition are not taxed with obtuseness, and those well versed in all the sciences are not charged with narrowness of mind.

People like to see paintings. The subjects reproduced in these pictures are usually men of ancient times. But would it not be better to be informed of the doings and sayings of these men than to contemplate their faces? Painted upon the bare wall <sup>2</sup>, their shapes and figures are there, the reason why they do not act as incentives, is that people do not perceive their words or deeds. The sentiments left by the old sages shine forth from the bamboos and silks, where they are written, which means more than mere paintings on walls.

If an empty vessel in the kitchen be gilt or silvered and, having nothing in it, be placed before a hungry person, he would not even cast a look at it. But suppose that dainty food and savory viands be served in an earthen pot, people would forthwith turn to it. The delicious and sweet words of old sages are more than food in vessels. The benefit derived from study is not merely that of eating. Thus the hungry do not care for empty vessels without contents, and the government does not employ men with empty heads without thoughts.

When swordsmen fight together, he who possesses the knowledge of the girl of *Yüeh* <sup>3</sup> in *Ch'ü-ch'êng* <sup>1</sup> gains the victory. Two adversaries meeting,

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<sup>1</sup> Even the natives of the colonies had assumed Chinese dress and Chinese civilisation.

<sup>2</sup> These must have been paintings in fresco, perhaps of a similar kind as those recently unearthed in *Turkestan*.

<sup>3</sup> A virgin living in the 'southern forest', skilled in swordplay and recommended to the

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one is cleverer than the other, and the one possessing greater ability becomes victor. The systems of *Confucius* and *Mê Ti*, and the books of worthies and sages are of greater value than the accomplishments of the girl of *Yüeh* in *Ch'ü-ch'êng*, and to improve human transactions and increase human knowledge, is more than a mere device to win in a contest. By the art of swordplay one acquires the repute of being ever victorious, and by virtue of the books of worthies and sages, one becomes exalted.

When the officers of the district cities are summoned before their superiors to be questioned on administrative reforms, the intelligent and well informed will communicate their experiences, and provided that the high officers are impressed thereby, the <sub>p2.103</sub> administration can be reformed and learning, cultivated. When the doings and sayings of worthies and sages, handed down on bamboo and silk, transform the heart and enlighten the mind, the result is more momentous than the replies of the district officers on the questions addressed to them.

*Yü* and *Yi* together regulated the Great Flood ; *Yü* took care of the water, whereas *Yi* recorded all strange things. The border mountains beyond the seas were not held to be too far to go there, and from what they had heard and seen they composed the 'Mountain and Sea Classic' <sup>2</sup>. If *Yü* and *Yi* had not travelled so far, the *Shan-hai-king* would not have been written. Its production testifies to the great multitude of things seen by them. *Tung Chung Shu* beheld the *Chung-ch'ang* bird, and *Liu Tse Chêng* knew the body of *Erh Fu*. Both had read the *Shan-hai-king*, and therefore could utter themselves on these two things. Had *Yü* and *Yi* not reached those distant lands, they could not have edited the *Shan-hai-king*, and without reading this book *Tung Chung Shu* and *Liu Tse Chêng* would not have been in a condition to verify the two doubtful questions.

A fruit fell down and sank into the steps leading up to a terrace (?). *Tse*

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king of *Yüeh* by *Fan Li* (5th cent. B. C.). She became the instructor of the king's best soldiers. I cannot explain why a place in *Shantung* is coupled with her name here. Was she invited there too ?

<sup>1</sup> A place in Shantung.

<sup>2</sup> This book has most likely not the age ascribed to it by Chinese critics and is not older than the 4th cent. B. C.

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*Ch'an*, with his great knowledge of things, could discourse on it. When a dragon made its appearance in the suburbs of *Chiang* <sup>1</sup>, *T'sai Mê* <sup>2</sup> knew how to account for it, so that the necessary precautions could be taken.

When a father or an elder brother on the point of death, more than a thousand Li distant from home, leave a testament with admonitions, dutiful sons and brothers are eager to read it, and never will dismiss it from their affectionate thoughts. Such is their solicitude in honouring a parent, and paying respect to an elder. Undutiful sons slight and disregard a testament, and do not care to examine its contents. The scripts of old sages and former worthies, left to posterity, are of much greater importance still than documents left by a father or a brother. Some read these writings and make abstracts of them, others throw them away and do not copy them. Even a man from the street could tell us, which of the two courses <sup>p2.104</sup> is preferable, and those whose business it is to distinguish between right and wrong, should not be fit to draw the line ?

When *Confucius* was taken ill, *Shang Ch'ü* <sup>3</sup> divined that at noon his time would come. *Confucius* said,

— Bring me a book, for what will be the matter, when it is noon ?

So fervent was the Sage's love of study, that it did not even cease at the point of death. His thoughts were in the Classics, and he did not renounce his principles, because he was near his end. Therefore it is not without reason that he is regarded as the Sage for a hundred generations, who himself took pattern by the institutions of the ancients.

From *Confucius* down to the *Han* there have been many persons famous for their talents and not solely such as 'stuff themselves with food the whole day, without applying their minds to anything good' <sup>4</sup>. Either did they explain the Five Canons, or read the Classics and other works, which are very voluminous, so that it is difficult to matter them all.

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<sup>1</sup> Capital of the *Chin* State. Cf. p. 1.308, Note 7.

<sup>2</sup> Historian of the *Chin* State, 6th cent. B. C.

<sup>3</sup> Styled *Tse Mu*, a disciple of *Confucius*.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted from [Analects XVII, 22](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

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Divination by diagrams, and fortune-telling are arts of the time of *Wên* and *Wu Wang*. Of yore, there was *Shang Ch'ü* who could interpret the diagrams, and more recently *Tung Fang So* <sup>1</sup> and *Yi Shao Chün* <sup>2</sup>, who were able to guess hidden objects. Though of no great importance, these arts are also derived from the sages, which has often been overlooked <sup>3</sup>.

Human nature is endowed with the Five Virtues, open to reason and prone to learning, which distinguishes it from that of all other creatures. But now it is different. People stuff themselves with food, and are given to drink, and to escape their remorse they wish to sleep. Their bellies are larders, and their bowels, wine-skins, and they are nothing better than inanimate things.

p2.105 Among the three hundred naked creatures <sup>4</sup>, man takes the first place, for of all the productions issued from the nature of Heaven and Earth he is the noblest, a superiority which he owes to his knowledge. Now those addle-headed, obese fellows do not care for knowledge. How do their desires differ from those of the other two-hundred and ninety-nine naked creatures, that they should lay claim to superiority and precedence ?

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The people of China are superior to the savages, for understanding the words benevolence and righteousness, and acquiring the sciences of ancient and modern times. If they merely use their brains for procuring themselves food and raiment, living on months and years, until they are white-headed and toothless, without ever cultivating their minds, they rank lower than savages. Look at the spiders, how they knit their webs with a view to entrapping flying insects. How are the transactions of those men superior to theirs ? Using their brains, they work out their selfish and deceitful schemes with the object of acquiring the amenities of wealth and long life, paying no heed to the study of the past or the present. They behave just like spiders.

Creatures with blood in their veins are not liable to die of starvation, for

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<sup>1</sup> A magician on whom see p. 1.346.

<sup>2</sup> Generally known as *Li Shao Chün*, his style being *Yün Yi*. Cf. p. 1.343 seq.

<sup>3</sup> The Chinese regard divination as a science for which the *Yiking* is the standard work.

<sup>4</sup> P. 1.528 *Wang Ch'ung* speaks of three hundred and sixty naked creatures.



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they all are possessed of the necessary astuteness to find food and drink. Even the unintelligent are able to support themselves. They make their living as officials, and even become high dignitaries. Governors, ministers, and those in authority are like our high officer *Kao Tse* <sup>1</sup> ; how can they discern them ? In the course of time they distinguish themselves, for it is their fate to be called to office. Knowing neither the past nor the present time, they are still looked upon as very clever owing to their position. How should the superior officers, by their unscientific methods, be able to find out men of intellect and treat them with due consideration, irrespective of rank and precedence ? Ministers and high dignitaries are unqualified for this.

p2.106 If there be men like *Ts'ai Po Ch'ieh*, governor of *Yu Fu-fêng* <sup>2</sup>, the prefect of *Yü-lin* <sup>3</sup>, *Chang Mêng Ch'ang*, or the prefect of *Tung-lai* <sup>4</sup>, *Li Chi Kung*, they are all endowed with an enlightened mind and conversant with the past as well as the present <sup>5</sup>. Consequently they hold intelligent persons in the same respect as distinguished guests. What sort of a character must have been *Chao* of *Yen* <sup>6</sup>, who plied the broom for *Tsou Yen's* sake ! *Tung Chung Shou*, magistrate of *Tung-ch'êng* <sup>7</sup> was held to be the chief of the scholars in knowledge, and everywhere reputed for his intelligence. Receiving somebody, he could discover his exceptional rank <sup>8</sup>. Thus he knew quite well that Mr. *Ch'an* of *Chung-li* <sup>9</sup>, a simple, registered citizen was to be solemnly invested with the jade *bâton* and the jade disk. For the knowing, every stone has its splendour, whereas the unknowing do not even remark the brilliancy of gold and gems.

From *Wu Ti* down to our dynasty, at various times very clever men have

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<sup>1</sup> This might be an allusion to [Analects V, 18](#) [[Couvreur](#)] : 'They are like our high officer *Ch'ui*' *i. e.*, as bad.

<sup>2</sup> The modern *Fêng-hsiang-fu* in *Shênsi*.

<sup>3</sup> In the province of *Kuangsi*.

<sup>4</sup> In *Lai-chou-fu*, *Shantung*.

<sup>5</sup> The three persons named seem to be contemporaries of *Wang Ch'ung*.

<sup>6</sup> Prince *Chao* of *Yen*, who employed *Tsou Yen* and treated him with great consideration.

<sup>7</sup> I suppose that [] should be written, a district in *Fêng-yang-fu*, *Anhui*, during the *Han* time.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Couvreur's* Dict.

<sup>9</sup> A district likewise in *Fêng-yang-fu*, *Anhui*.

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been promoted. If they were to be questioned at some examination, the replies of men like *Tung Chung Shu*, *T'ang Tse Kao*, *Ku Tse Yün*<sup>1</sup>, and *Ting Po Yü* would not only be perfectly correct, but their compositions would also be most brilliant, as the result of their extensive reading and diligent study. In case these four could only use their pen, commenting on the Classics, and that they had not perused old as well as modern books, they would not be able to establish their fame in the palace of the holy emperor.

When *Hsiao Ming Ti*<sup>2</sup> was reading the biography of *Su Wu*, he hit upon the name of a military officer called : *yi chung chien* (master of the horse<sup>3</sup>). He asked all his officers about the meaning, but none of them knew it. The words in the institutions of *T'sang Hsieh* and in the books of elementary learning are universally known, but when nobody is able to reply to the questions of His Imperial Holiness, it becomes evident that the majority of the officials were nothing but bureaucrats owing their position to good luck only. What was signified by the character *to* combined with *mu*, they could not tell. It would have been rather hard for them to explain the word '*chung-ch'ang*', as *Tung Chung Shu* did, or to know the word '*erh-fu*' like *Liu Tse Chêng*<sup>4</sup>.

It might be urged that intelligent men are appointed chancellors of the imperial library, whose business it is to revise books, and fix the texts like the grand historiographer or the grand supplicant, whose office is likewise purely literary. They are not employed to govern the people, or on other business. Therefore such officers of the library, men like *Pan Ku*, *Chia K'uei*<sup>5</sup>, *Yang Chung*<sup>6</sup>, and *Fu Yi*<sup>7</sup>, enjoy a great popularity, and their writings are much admired. Though they remain at their posts, and are not entrusted with other offices, they still render great services to the world.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 2.086, Note 2.

<sup>2</sup> The *Han* emperor, 58-76 A. D.

<sup>3</sup> The expression occurs in the biography of *Su Wu* in the *Ch'ien Han-shu (Couvreur)*.

<sup>4</sup> See above p. 2.103.

<sup>5</sup> *Chia K'uei*, eminent scholar, A. D. 30-101, who together with the historian *Pan Ku* was appointed historiographer.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. p. 1.469.

<sup>7</sup> A scholar who left a collection of poetry in 28 chapters. With *Pan Ku* and *Chia K'uei* he was attached to the Imperial Library and entrusted with editorial work.

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I beg to reply that this is not proceeding on the lines of the *Chou* period, when sharp-witted men like *Tsou Yen* and *Sun Ch'ing* <sup>1</sup> stood in high favour with their sovereigns, and all the honours and distinctions of the age were bestowed upon them. Although *Tung Chung Shu* did not hold a premier's post, he was well known to rank higher than all the ministers. The *Chou* looked up to the two preceding dynasties, and the *Han* followed in the wake of the *Chou* and *Ch'in*. From the officers of the library the government sees whether it prospers or not. The heart is like a ball or an egg, but it constitutes the most precious part in the body ; the pupil of the eye resembles a pea, but it illumines the whole body. Thus the chancellors may be petty officials, yet they secretly direct the principles governing the whole State. Learned men make this career, as the academicians are recruited from the scholars.

'They remain at their posts, and are not entrusted with other offices', does that mean that His Imperial Holiness has no confidence in them ? Perhaps they had not yet completed their works or discharged their duties.

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<sup>1</sup> The philosopher, cf. p. 1.387, Note 4.

## 39. Book XIII, Chap. III

### *Ch'ao-chi*. On Preeminence

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p2.295 They who have worked through more than a thousand chapters and less than ten thousand books, who know how to explain this plethora of fine sayings, and how to fix the meaning and the reading, and who as teachers impart to others the results of their studies, are very learned. If they can analyse their ideas, abridge or enlarge the texts, report to the throne and memorialize <sup>1</sup>, argue a point and discuss a question, adding paragraph to paragraph and chapter to chapter, they are men of letters and eminent scholars. Hard working students of profound learning and imposing erudition there are ever so many, but not one among ten thousand is qualified to write books or compose essays on subjects of the past or the present time. Only men of great learning understand to avail themselves of these subjects for literary purposes.

The big and small trees which we see on a mountain are a familiar sight to us, and in the higher or lower plants which we discover in the country we find nothing new. Still we cannot cut down the trees, and work them into cottages, or gather the plants, and prepare medicines from them. We know trees and plants, but cannot use them. A learned man may have an extensive knowledge, but he is unable to gather it into an essay. Such a man remains an obscure scholar and is merely book-learned.

In so far as *Confucius* is believed to have read three hundred Odes and transmitted them for the benefit of those ignoring the principles of government, he is on a level with those who cannot fell trees or collect herbs. But, on the other hand, *Confucius* took the chronicle <sup>2</sup> and transformed it into the *Ch'un-ch'iu*. When he came to setting forth his own views and developing

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<sup>1</sup> The Chinese have always bestowed great care on their state papers, so that reports to the throne pass for literary productions and are often collected and edited.

<sup>2</sup> The chronicle of *Lu*.

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his ideas, praising and condemning, rewarding and punishing, without regard to the chronicle, his wonderful thoughts poured out from his heart. <sup>1</sup>

p2.296 That which is so much esteemed in learned men is their creative power. Those who do nothing but reading, reciting verses and humming over learned treatises, may peruse over a thousand chapters, they are after all but talking parrots. The imaginative faculty necessary for books and stories and a rich and smooth diction are special gifts of men of genius. Well informed people there are plenty in every age, but writers are rare even in successive generations.

In recent times *Liu Tse Chêng*, father and son, *Yang Tse Yün*, and *Huan Chün Shan* <sup>2</sup> have flourished simultaneously like *Wên Wang*, *Wu Wang*, and *Chou Kung*. Otherwise such men appear sporadically, resembling pearls and jewels, which owing to their preciousness are never found in masses.

Whoever is able to explain one Classic is a scholar. Those well versed in ancient and modern literature are learned, those who collect books and records and present memorials to the throne, are men of letters, and those never in need of ingenious thoughts to compose themselves, joining paragraphs and chapters, are eminent scholars. Thus scholars surpass common people, the learned outvie the scholars, men of letters outrival the learned, and eminent scholars are superior even to men of letters. Eminent scholars are, so to speak, twice superior. To contrast them with ordinary scholars, in spite of their double superiority, is like comparing an elegant carriage with a common cart, or a silk embroidery with a quilted garment, for they leave them far behind. Setting them against common people is like collating the foot and the summit of Mount *T'ai* with the plant and the neck of a tall *Ti* <sup>3</sup>; a comparison is impossible.

Hills and mountains are formed of earth and stones, copper and iron are very seldom found in them. Copper and iron are rare, but eventually

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<sup>1</sup> We find nothing of all this in the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, which are but very dry chronological tables, but the Chinese interpret them in such an artificial way, according to their preconceived ideas, that they discover the deepest meanings in the plainest words, where an unprejudiced reader sees nothing but the statement of simple facts.

<sup>2</sup> All authors of the *Han* period often mentioned by *Wang Ch'ung*.

<sup>3</sup> Gigantic savages said to have come to China.

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mountains harbour even gold and gems. Eminent scholars are the gold and the gems of their age. They are rare in the second degree, but though so extraordinary, they still eclipse one another by their talents.

p2.297 There are various degrees of learning. Scholars apt to explain the meaning of words in a school are far ahead of uncultured persons. Some are unable to interpret one Canon <sup>1</sup> and teach their pupils, others gather crowds of disciples around them ; their words flow like a stream, and they are regarded as experts of the Classics. Some cannot complete one tablet or write one essay, others discourse on right and wrong and offer their advice to the government. Their words resemble those of the Classics and records, and their style is as luminous as the moon and the stars. Those of the highest order come up to *Ku Tse Yün* and *T'ang Tse Kao* <sup>2</sup>. Commentators move in the same sphere as memorialists <sup>3</sup>, they are not productive themselves.

Some *savants* collect and enumerate historical facts of ancient and modern times and narrate things that have happened. Such are *Sse-Ma Ch'ien* and *Liu Tse Chêng* <sup>4</sup>. They have thus compiled a great number of chapters, and their sentences are counted by tens of thousands. They surpass *Ku Tse Yün* and *T'ang Tse Kao* by far. But they rely on accomplished facts and merely record former events, without producing anything from their own minds like *Lu Chia* and *Tung Chung Shu* <sup>5</sup>, who, arguing on the affairs of the world, propound their own ideas and do not borrow from without. All shallowness thus becomes easily manifest. Nevertheless the readers will call their productions records.

*Yang-Ch'êng Tse-Chang* wrote the Classic of Music and *Yang Tse Yün* the *T'ai-hsüan-ching* <sup>6</sup> for the furtherance of thought, works so profound and abstruse, that but a man of almost perfect talents could have produced them.

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<sup>1</sup> They possess only an elementary learning, knowing how to read and write, but the Classics are too high for them.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 2.088, Note 2.

<sup>3</sup> Ed. B. Ed. A and C read [] for [], which would not agree with *Wang Ch'ung's* appreciation of memorialists whom he places above mere commentators.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 1.388, Note 2.

<sup>5</sup> P. 1.388, Notes 3 and 6.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. p. 1.088.

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*Confucius* wrote the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, and the two scholars each produced a Classic. They most remarkably followed the traces left by *Confucius*, as it were, and by their grandeur and elegance proved themselves to possess the genius of second sages.

*Wang Kung Tse* asked *Huan Chün Shan* about *Yang Tse Yün*. *Huan Chün Shan* replied that from the rise of the *Han* dynasty p2.298 there had not been such a man. In discriminating talents he may be said to have correctly distinguished between high and low. The minds of the lapidaries are more admirable than their precious stones, and the skill of those who perforate tortoise-shells is more wonderful than that of the tortoises. Similarly he who knows how to discriminate between the talents of all the scholars and assign his rank to each, must be superior to those thus ranked <sup>1</sup>.

Besides *Huan Chün Shan* wrote the 'New Reflections', in which he treats of the affairs of the world, clearly distinguishing between truth and falsehood. Unfounded assertions, lies, and fictions are all reduced to their proper entities. Among critics like *Yang-Ch'êng Tse-Chang* and *Yang Tse Yün*, *Huan Chün Shan* is the foremost <sup>2</sup>. From him downwards there have been many great and brilliant talents, and we have had excellent works. The style writing words, the heart must have produced the ideas. Words issue from the bosom, and the heart manifests itself through words. If these words appear unusually fine and remarkable, we may say that we have an able writer.

Consequently, prolific authors are a pride of mankind. They have their roots below, their leaves and blossoms above, their solid kernels within, and their husks without. The painted characters and the expressions are the leaves, the flowers and the husks of the writers. Their genuine ideas are in their bosoms, and the written words appear on bamboo and silk. Thus there is an interaction and a harmony between inside and outside. When the mind sets to work, the pencil follows suit. Then characters appear, and the kernels come out.

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<sup>1</sup> This is evidently wrong. A critic must not be superior to those he criticises. They are in most cases much above him.

<sup>2</sup> P. 1.466 *Wang Ch'ung* seems to assign the first place among the writers of the *Han* time to *Sse-Ma Ch'ien* and *Yang Tse Yün*, not to *Huan Chün Shan*.

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A man of letters resembles a bird with feathers. These feathers are variegated and all grow on the body. Should there be no idea illustrated by the letters, it would be like a variegated plumage of a bird growing ruffled and disorderly.

At a competition of archery the mind must be tranquil, the body straight, the bow and the arrow firmly grasped, then the mark may be hit. Arguing is like shooting arrows : the arguments must be in accordance with reason, as the arrows must hit the target. An archer proves his skill by hitting the mark with his arrow, and a debater shows his superiority by his writings. Both abilities proceed from the mind, their essence is the same.

p2.299 In writing deep thoughts and vast schemes may find expression. Somebody may not be able personally to put into action the administrative devices of sovereigns and their ministers, or to fix them by word of mouth, but he can give expression to his feelings and prove himself qualified to carry out those designs. *Confucius* wrote the *Ch'un-ch'iu* in which he reveals the ideas of the princes. Thus the *Ch'un-ch'iu* of *Confucius* is a chronicle of the usual way of living of rulers. The records of other scholars describe the usual proceedings of ministers. From the *Ch'un-ch'iu* we learn to know the minds of princes, and the other scholars acquaint us with the thoughts of ministers <sup>1</sup>.

They say that the cutting of meat by *Ch'ên P'ing* <sup>2</sup> was a forecast of his future premiership, and that *Sun-Shu Ao's* <sup>3</sup> finding a new channel for the *Ch'i-sse* river foreshadowed his becoming a prime minister. The study of historical works and adjusting government matters is more than those presages of the meat and the water-channel.

Without strong feet one cannot walk long, and without a sharp edge one

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<sup>1</sup> This distinction is rather arbitrary. The *Ch'un-ch'iu* treats as much of ministers and high officers as of princes, and the records of other writers embrace the doings of princes as well.

<sup>2</sup> One of the Three Heroes at the beginning of the *Han* dynasty, who died in 178 B. C. Called upon to distribute the sacrificial meats at the altar to the spirits of the land, he did it with such impartiality, that the elders wished he might manage the empire, which, later on, he really did.

<sup>3</sup> The text writes *Shu Sun Ao* which must be corrected. *Shu Sun Ao* was a minister of *Ch'u* in the 6th cent. B. C. We read in *Huai Nan Tse* that, when he diverted the waters of the *Ch'i-sse* river, to water the wilds of *Yün-lou*, King *Chuang* knew that he would be a good prime minister. See also p. 1.160, Note 2.



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cannot make a deep cut. Thus the composition of paragraphs and chapters requires great talent and a *savant* of exceptional genius.

Some contend that authors, provided they possess a vast experience, and a thorough erudition, learning and practice, may proceed by analogies and thus write their books, that literary productions are something external and do not necessitate a combination of genuine talent and learning. Moreover, poor thoughts, they say, are hidden in flowers of speech, there is no depth, no roots, and no kernels. The writers lose sight of the great principles and the main points. Therefore it is very seldom that they achieve success. In times of danger men of learning are not there <sub>p2.300</sub> to help, thus showing that they cannot accomplish remarkable deeds, and merely know how to ply their pen.

I reply that this is not true. In the *Chou* time all the writers were practical politicians, and under the *régime* of the *Han* all the outspoken scholars have been officials of great learning. Why then say that literary productions are not like leaves and flowers evolved from roots and kernels? Thoughts engender devices, and several tablets joined together form an essay. Feelings appear in expressions, and ideas manifest themselves in words.

*Shang Yang* <sup>1</sup> as minister of *Ch'in* brought about its supremacy and wrote a book on agriculture and war. *Yü Ch'ing* <sup>2</sup> formed plans for *Chao* and determined its moving forward and backward. He resolved to write a *Ch'un-ch'iu* <sup>3</sup> and offered his advice for the city <sup>4</sup>. The work on agriculture and warfare was a scheme kept in the archives of *Ch'in*. *Lu Chia* <sup>5</sup> superseded the devices of *Lü Pu Wei* <sup>6</sup>, whose work <sup>7</sup> had the same purport as his 'New Words', and *Huan Chün Shan* <sup>8</sup> abrogated the scheme of *Ch'ao Ts'o* <sup>9</sup>, which

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.463, Note 5.

<sup>2</sup> A politician of the 3rd cent. B. C. at the court of Prince *Hsiao Ch'êng* of *Chao*.

<sup>3</sup> The *Yü-shih-ch'un-ch'iu* in 15 books.

<sup>4</sup> We are ignorant of all further circumstances.

<sup>5</sup> See p. 1.388, Note 3.

<sup>6</sup> P. 1.463, Note 1.

<sup>7</sup> The well-known *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*.

<sup>8</sup> See above p. 2.298.

<sup>9</sup> A scholar of the 2nd cent. B. C. who gained the sobriquet the Wisdom-Bag. He advised the emperor to get rid of the feudal princes. A work of his in 31 books is mentioned in the *Han-shu* chap. 30, among the treatises on law.

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was agreeing with his own 'New Reflections'. In the case of *Ku Yung's* 'Reports' and *T'ang Lin's* <sup>1</sup> 'Words that must be said' or of *Liu Hsiang's* 'Earnest Propositions', we see how the notes originally taken were sent up to the Throne. How can they be held to be elegant writings and beautiful sayings or flowers of speech without a *raison d'être* ?

When deep feeling issues from the heart, it touches people to the core. Thus in consequence of the flying letter of *Lu Lien* <sup>2</sup> a general p2.301 of *Yen* laid violent hands upon himself, and on receiving the memorial from *Tsou Yang King Hsiao* of *Liang* opened his prison <sup>3</sup>. The letter and the memorial had taken the heart out of them. To compose such writings it does not suffice to possess great learning or much practice in writing.

Eminent scholars are scarce, but men of letters a great many. Are governors, ministers, and high functionaries not to appreciate them, and should they merely use their intellectual faculties for scribbling on boards and tablets ? Provinces or prefectures having troubles, these scholars can take all necessary measures, report to the emperor, and arrange all complications. Provided that a province or a prefecture be in difficulties and possess officers like *T'ang Tse Kao* and *Ku Tse Yün* <sup>4</sup>, who would set to work, strain their minds, and exert their literary abilities, would all disturbances not easily be removed ?

Since it is difficult to find records of men of letters in ancient days, which are too distant, or in out-of-the-way places at the outskirts of the empire, we shall confine ourselves to *Kuei-chi* in recent times. There lived a student of the very first order, *Chou Ch'ang Shêng* <sup>5</sup>. In a province he was engaged in writing memorials for the governor *Jên An*, and in a prefecture he made the reports for the prefect, *Mêng Kuan*. Matters were settled and all troubles

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<sup>1</sup> On *Ku Yung* and *T'ang Lin* see p. 1.469, Note 8.

<sup>2</sup> His full name is *Lu Chung Lien*, a wandering philosopher of the *Ch'i* State. When about 238 B. C. a general of *Yen* was beleaguered in *Liao-ch'êng*, a city in *Shantung* originally belonging to *Ch'i*, by an army of this State, *Lu Chung Lien* shot a letter bound to an arrow and addressed to the general into the surrounded city. This letter pointing out to the general his helpless condition induced him to commit suicide.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 1.067, Note 1.

<sup>4</sup> The afore-mentioned *T'ang Lin* and *Ku Yung*.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. p. 1.469, Note 3.

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removed. The province and the prefecture were delivered of all difficulties, and the two governors well off. *Chou Ch'ang Shêng* was not honoured, not because his knowledge was inferior, or his deserts too insignificant, but his two chiefs liked the common type of men and could not appreciate him. Had he lived in a former age under Prince *Chao* of *Yen*, he would have met with the same favour as *Tsou Yen* <sup>1</sup>. After the death of *Chou Ch'ang Shêng*, the province and the prefecture were thrown into disorder, for want of officials to draw up reports, so that the complications could not be adjusted. Officers were commissioned and paid their respects to those in authority, but the literate were neglected and their productions ceased. Officialdom gave much annoyance to the emperor indeed.

p2.302 But the jottings of *Chou Ch'ang Shêng* were not all, and his ability did not solely assert itself in his official documents, he also wrote the *Tung-li* in ten chapters, recording all the smallest details and minutiae from *Huang Ti* down to the *Han* dynasty, as the Grand Annalist did in his Tables. *Chou Ch'ang Shêng* went up to remote antiquity and down to recent times, whence the title of his work : *Tung-li* (*i. e.* Connexions). He was not only a man of letters, but an eminent scholar.

In former times there was *Yen Fu Tse* <sup>2</sup>, later on *Wu Chün Shang* <sup>3</sup>, and finally *Chou Ch'ang Shêng*. White pheasants were brought as a tribute from *Annam*, and odoriferous plants were offered from *Ferghana* <sup>4</sup>. In *Yung-chou* jewels are found, and *Ching* and *Yang-chou* <sup>5</sup> are productive of gold. As precious things grow in unknown, far distant countries of the four quarters, so it cannot be said that there are no extraordinary men.

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<sup>1</sup> A famous writer of the 4th cent. B. C. often mentioned by *Wang Ch'ung*. The prince of *Yen* treated him with great consideration and had a special palace built for him.

<sup>2</sup> *I. e.*, *Yen Chi*, a scholar who wrote poetry in irregular verse, 2nd cent. B. C. His original name was *Chuang*, which he changed because the character, being the name of an emperor, had become taboo.

<sup>3</sup> This man seems to be identical with the *Wu Chün Kao* mentioned in connexion with *Chou Ch'ang Shêng* as an elegant writer in p. 1.469, Note 3.

<sup>4</sup> In p. 1.505, Notes 2 and 3 we find the statement that white pheasants were offered by the *Yüeh-chang* people and odoriferous plants by the *Japanese*.

<sup>5</sup> *Yung-chou*, *Ching-chou*, and *Yang-chou* are three of the Nine Provinces of *Yü*. *Yung-chou* corresponds to modern *Shensi* and *Kansu*, *Ching-chou* comprised *Hunan*, *Hupei*, *Kuangsi*, and parts of *Szechuan*, *Kuei-chou* and *Kuang-tung*, and *Yang-chou* is the modern *Chekiang*, *Fukien*, and *Kiangsi*.

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[— *Wên Wang* is no more, said *Confucius*, but have we not here his writings ?] <sup>1</sup>

The works of *Wên Wang* were in the hands of *Confucius*, and the works of *Confucius* in the hands of *Tung Chung Shu*. Would after the death of *Tung Chung Shu* his works not be in the hands of men like *Chou Ch'ang Shêng* ?

What does extraordinary mean ? It denotes the excellence and superiority of writings. *T'ang Lo* <sup>2</sup> and *Sung Yü* <sup>3</sup> were also men of letters of *Ch'u*, but their names have not been transmitted on p2.303 bamboo or silk. *Ch'ü Yuan* has outshone them. Should *Chou Chang Shêng* have been the only literary talent of *Kuei-chi* ? He takes precedence among those who are not mentioned.

In the Nine Provinces <sup>4</sup> there are many mountains, but Mount *Hua* and *T'ai* <sup>5</sup> are the highest. There are many rivers in all directions, but the *Yangtse* and the *Yellow River* are the main streams. Mount *Hua* and *T'ai* are the most elevated, and the *Yangtse* and the *Yellow River* the largest of their kind, and so was *Chou Ch'ang Shêng* the greatest man of his prefecture and his province.

If a chief of the clan be a clever man, it is not right that his clan's-people slight him, to confer their praise upon a chief of another family. *Chou Ch'ang Shêng* was such a chief of the spoken word, whom all men of learning revered. That his name alone is mentioned is for the same reason that in the *Ch'un-ch'iu* the first years are designated after the chronology of *Lu*. <sup>6</sup>

Common people are prone to exalt antiquity and belaud what they have heard about it. If the question be about the deeds of the ancients, even

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects IX, 5](#) [[Couvreur](#)]. Legge and others here translate [] by 'truth', whereas *Wang Ch'ung* takes it in the sense given in the translation.

<sup>2</sup> A contemporary of *Sung Yü*. The *Han-shu* chap. 30 mentions his poems in 4 books.

<sup>3</sup> Another poet of *Ch'u*, nephew of the famous *Ch'ü Yuan*. According to the *Han-shu loc. cit.* he wrote 16 books of poetry, now incorporated into the 'Elegies of *Ch'u*'.

<sup>4</sup> According to the ancient division of *Yü*.

<sup>5</sup> Two of the Five Sacred Mountains, situated in *Shensi* and *Shantung*.

<sup>6</sup> In the *Ch'un-ch'iu* the chronology is based on the reigns of the dukes of *Lu* i. e., on their first years, which are specially noted. This is not done because these dukes were much superior to the sovereigns of the other States, but because this work is the chronicle of *Lu*. Thus *Chou Ch'ang Shêng* is mentioned as a *primus inter pares*.

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cabbage tastes sweet to them, and as to the recent achievements of their successors, even sweet honey and cream have a sour taste. *Chou Ch'ang Shêng's* home was in *Kuei-chi* and he lived in the present era. In spite of the excellence of his writings, he is looked upon as an epigone by many critics.

Heaven is filled with the primogenial fluid, and man endowed with the original essence. How could there be such an enormous difference between old and new ? The good rank highest, and the enlightened come first. Those who understand the true nature of things and see the difference between right and wrong, take them whom they find unworthy from their first place and push them into the background, and conversely they promote the worthy from the present time and rank them with the ancients. The brightness of their mind and their clear intellect act as a safeguard against common prejudices.

p2.304 *Pan Shu P'i* <sup>1</sup> continued the work of the Grand Annalist in more than a hundred chapters, recording everything with the greatest care. His style was easy, but his principles all right. The readers were of opinion that he was even superior to the Grand Annalist.

When his son *Pan Mêng Chien* <sup>2</sup> was secretary of a board, his style bore a great resemblance to that of *Pan Shu P'i* and not only a remote one. They were as similar as the Dukes of *Chou* and *Shao*, or *Lu* and *Wei* <sup>3</sup>, so to say. Provided that antiquity must be upheld, then *Pan Shu P'i*, father and son, are not worth mentioning.

The *Chou* had a brilliant literature, although they came after a hundred generations. The *Han* likewise are preceded by a hundred generations : why should their literary productions not be conspicuous ? Great things may be illustrated by small ones, and from the family affairs of a citizen we may obtain a glimpse upon the imperial court :

When a cottage has been built, there are usually mulberry trees and hemp first. After many years' residence, the children having been succeeded by

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 1.086, Note 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Mêng Chien* is the designation of the historian *Pan Ku*.

<sup>3</sup> Between there two model princes and the two States of *Lu* and *Wei* there was no great difference.

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grand-children, there are peach trees, pear, plum, and apricot trees covering the hills and overshadowing the plain. Roots and stems being so many, leaves and flowers grow in abundance.

It is long since the house of *Han* has been established. Vast is their territory and numerous their people. Rectitude flourishes, and everything prospers. Why then should there be no exuberance of exquisite literary compositions ? Blossoms usually grow together with fruit, and plants which bear fruit, but have no blossoms, are very rare. How should a barren mountain become densely wooded, or a dry field grow fertile ? The *Han* era is peculiarly fertile in literary talents, an eloquent testimony to its brilliant growth. When the sky is clear, the stars twinkle ; when it is covered and rainy, the sun and the moon are obscured. That in our age so many able writers have appeared simultaneously, sheds a lustre on the *Han* dynasty <sup>1</sup>.

*Kao Tsu* reading a book of *Lu Chia* exclaimed with a sigh, 'Ten thousand years for such a man !' *Hsü Yüeh* and *Chu Fu Yen* <sup>2</sup> p2.305 were appointed secretaries in consequence of their memorials. I have not heard that at present it never happens that a dish proves bitter or sour, but, if the mouth dislikes the taste, the hand does not lift the food to feed the mouth. Very often an imperial rescript is issued concerning a man belonging to one of the Four Branches, conspicuous in composition, thought, classical or historical literature. Such an edict is couched in most graceful terms, highly appreciative of literary merit. Had the afore-mentioned memorials had no purport and the book no sense, what would have been the cause of the exclamation 'Ten thousand years' or the appointment by imperial grace ?

They who adorn their faces all desire to become beautiful, but very few persons deign to look at them. Good musicians would like to touch their hearers, but those whose ear they win are not many. Before *Lu Chia* edited his book, and the schemes of *Hsü Yüeh* and *Chu Fu Yen* obtained a hearing, the great majority used to speak like blind people, using coarse expressions. Their style was unpolished and unrefined, and what they said had no sense.

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<sup>1</sup> The *Han* dynasty is like a fertile land with many trees full of blossoms and fruit, its able scholars, and like a clear sky on which twinkle its stars, many famous writers.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 1.147.

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They could congratulate themselves that for their licentious and dissolute talk they were not banished to sandy shores in distant parts ; as the saying is, how could they have deserved any appointment by imperial favour ?

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## 40. Book XIV, Chap. I

### *Chuang-liu. Apparent Backwardness*

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p2.108 Since able scholars, as we have asserted, rank above all others, people are amazed that as officials they do not advance, and that the posts and functions they have to fill are so inferior. As a matter of fact, we need not be surprised that talented men should be outpaced by ordinary functionaries, for just this circumstance will show us the difference between clever persons and unworthy ones, and display what more or less dignity really means.

When a tortoise is three hundred years old, it is as big as a cash and walks on lotus leaves. At the age of three thousand, it has a green edge and it measures one foot and two inches. When milfoil is seventy years old, it grows one stalk, and at the age of seven hundred it has ten stalks. Both are supernatural things <sup>1</sup>, which accounts for the slowness of their growth. These many years give them their wisdom and their knowledge of the truth.

Able scholars on earth are like the spiritual milfoil and the divine tortoise. They spend at least half the days of the year on their studies. Intensely bent upon their researches, they do not covet official honours, and, if called to office, their conduct is irreproachable, square and upright, and not like that of ambitious officials. Hence their advance in life is delayed, and their promotion fraught with difficulties.

If a needle or an awl pierce something, they go through, but in case the points of these implements were square, they would not even penetrate one tenth of an inch deep. Able scholars like square dealings, they do not possess the sharpness of a needle or an awl, and therefore have not the means of making their way and push themselves to the front.

A courser runs a thousand Li a day, but it must be unhampered. Should it

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<sup>1</sup> Owing to this supposed supernatural nature they are used for divining purposes.



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have to drag a cart, any hackney might compete with it. Used to pull a salt-wagon, it would drop its head, the perspiration would trickle down, and it would be unable <sup>p2.109</sup> to advance. However, if *Po Lo* <sup>1</sup> started it, or *Wang Liang* <sup>2</sup> took the reins and allowed it to chase along, free of any burden, it would keep up its reputation of a thousand Li runner.

Our students encompass the wisdom of the past and the present in their bosoms, and carry the burden of propriety and righteousness on their shoulders. Within they are troubled with all their learning, and without harassed with their care for a decent and honest behaviour. They dare not recklessly advance or seek promotion at all cost. Consequently they are left behind. How could they start on a bright morning and win the prize of a thousand Li race, unless they find a friendly *Po Lo* or a protector like *Wang Liang* ?

Furthermore, it is a fact that all living creatures, filled with the vital fluid, have their backs turned upwards and their bellies downwards, as long as they move about. When they fall sick or die, the back is turned downwards and the belly uppermost <sup>3</sup>. The reason is that on the back the flesh is thick and heavy, whereas on the belly it is thin and light <sup>4</sup>. When able scholars and ordinary officials meet in life, their relation is similar : Under enlightened governors, and when sciences flourish, ordinary officials have to carry the scholars, who rise upon their shoulders, but, when the highest authorities are short-sighted, and sciences neglected, then the officials rise above the scholars, who are kept in subordinate positions, as with animals struck by a fatal blow the belly is uppermost and the back turned downwards.

Moreover, the back has a certain tendency towards heaven, and the belly, towards earth. As long as a creature is alive and moving, the proper order is observed, the belly and the back being in their respective places. By sickness or death this order is reversed, for then the belly usurps the place of the back above.

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<sup>1</sup> A famous horse trainer, see p. 1.239, Note 1.

<sup>2</sup> The well known charioteer.

<sup>3</sup> That depends on circumstances.

<sup>4</sup> This is no reason.

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This is not only true in regard to the belly, for when creatures happen to fall, the feet of others are above them also, and when scholars in life meet with misfortune and come to fall, officers who do not rank higher than their feet or ankles, walk over them.

*T'ang Fang So* <sup>1</sup> made the remark that, if the eyes were not in the face, but in the feet, they would not be fit to dispel p2.110 darkness, for how could they see then ? *Chi Yen* <sup>2</sup> said to the emperor *Wu Ti*,

— Your Majesty employs officers as one heaps up fuel. That which comes last is placed on the top.

The dictum of *Tung Fang So* and the remark of *Chi Yen* did not merely disapprove of ordinary officers obtaining positions and able scholars being dismissed. For, when an officer has lost his post, it is difficult to discover his virtue, whereas, while he keeps it, it is hard to perceive his unworthiness. Fame always attends high offices, and aspersions are cast on low positions in which able scholars usually find themselves.

Observing the rules of propriety and walking the right path, purifying themselves and keeping the moral laws, they do not take heed of what is mean and below them. Thus they happen to stick fast, and their progress is checked. They have enough to do to get clear and save themselves, but this impediment prevents them from pushing themselves to the front. For the purpose of acquiring and storing up as much knowledge as possible they do all that is in their power.

Common officers do not think of self-education. When they have advanced, their covetousness is aroused, and they do mean things, making unlawful gain by oppression and extortion <sup>3</sup>.

The maple and the varnish trees grow very rapidly, therefore their bark and their wood cannot be very solid. The hard-wood tree gets its leaves but in the fifth month, much later than those trees blooming in spring, but its timber is very hard, so that it can be used for axle-trees. The paper-mulberry of the

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 2.104, Note 5.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 1.094, Note 3.

<sup>3</sup> This seems to have been the vice of Chinese officials from time immemorial.

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*Yin* dynasty <sup>1</sup> measured a span after seven days, but after its sudden growth it completely dried up, and therefore was regarded as a miracle. Big vessels require a considerable time for their completion, and precious merchandise is difficult to be sold. That which does not need a whole day and forthwith fetches a price, are things like fruit and vegetables <sup>2</sup>.

In the current of rapids, gravel turns round, while big stones remain unmoved. Why ? Because big stones are heavy, and gravel is light. The gravel whirling round is deposited on the big stones, p2.111 which are completely hidden and become invisible. Able scholars meeting with ordinary officials in life, are in a similar condition. Blunt-witted superiors push the ordinary officials and make them jump over the heads of the scholars, who must lie low and suffer their rivals to pass over them. So it may happen that they retire altogether, to lead a hermit life in a grotto or a cavern. Those in authority are responsible for it, for they are unfit to discern real merit. These able men are proficient students, but without influence, and they cannot well commend themselves.

Things that can be taken in hand are utensils. He that finds his strength inadequate to lift them, does not dare to move them. The principles of able scholars are not merely as heavy as vessels <sup>3</sup>.

Gold and iron placed on the ground are not moved by a north-easter, whereas a hair or straw amongst them are carried away a thousand Li. The principles cherished by the scholars are like the heavy stones in the water, or gold and iron on the ground. Their advance is not as swift as that of ordinary functionaries, and the high officers are too weak to use them. One breath suffices to blow away a hair or a straw from among gold and iron, and no north-easter is required. Ordinary officials are as easily shifted as a hair or chaff are blown away.

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 2.161.

<sup>2</sup> All good things require time, therefore the progress of able scholars is slower than that of common officials. The former are like the hard-wood trees, big vessels, or precious merchandise, the latter correspond to the maple and varnish trees, the paper-mulberry, fruit and vegetables. They advance very quickly, but the stuff they are made of is not very valuable.

<sup>3</sup> They are heavier and of greater moment.

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When gravel is rolled about by a current, and a mote carried away by a north-easter, it is not a mere swelling, or a soft sea breeze that moves it <sup>1</sup>. An unprincipled governor who, acting upon uncontrollable impulses, promotes whomever he just chances to like, without any careful inquiry, (and thus recklessly confers posts and honours), is like a wild current turning gravel about, or a northeaster wafting aloft a hair or a straw. They fly about in a strong gale, gravel rolls to and fro in a wild current, and common officials advance, when falling in with a wayward governor.

When we throw a round thing on the ground, it may roll in one of the four directions, north, south, east, or west. Knocked with a stick, it comes to rest after a short while. Square things thrown on the ground remain motionless immediately after their fall. In order to shift them, men must push or lift them. Able scholars are always square <sup>2</sup>, therefore hard to be moved, and to advance them men <sup>3</sup> are required.

p2.112 Birds have more agility than man, who, in hurrying to a distant place, cannot cope with them. In spite of that, amongst the creatures of Heaven and Earth man is the noblest <sup>4</sup>. Locusts can fly ten thousand Li, and the unicorn must be sent as a tribute, to reach the court of the emperor. Yet locusts are a plague, and the unicorn, a felicitous presage <sup>5</sup>. It has four legs, still it cannot arrive of itself <sup>6</sup>, how then should man make his way with his two legs? Thus swallows are more light-winged than phœnixes, and hares more nimble-footed than unicorns. A frog jumps better than a spiritual tortoise, and a snake leaps with greater agility than a divine dragon <sup>7</sup>.

Men like *Lü Shang* <sup>8</sup> are conspicuous among grey-heads, and the wisdom of *Po Li Hsi* <sup>9</sup> shines even among persons with yellow hair <sup>1</sup>. By their excellent

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<sup>1</sup> The text is not very clear. The simile is illustrated by the next clause, where unprincipled governors are likened to a wild current and a strong gale.

<sup>2</sup> *I. e.*, fair and honest.

<sup>3</sup> Strong men.

<sup>4</sup> Swiftness alone, in our case a quick promotion, is not a sign of superiority.

<sup>5</sup> The sacred unicorn is not as quick as the worthless locusts.

<sup>6</sup> It is sent as a tribute, and does not arrive of its own accord.

<sup>7</sup> The four sacred animals are outrun by many ordinary ones.

<sup>8</sup> The surname of *T'ai Kung*. p. 1.238, Note 1.

<sup>9</sup> Famous character of the 7th cent. B. C. p. 1.502.

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excellent political advice they became the helpmates of their princes. They were weighty personages and not easy to be promoted. Futile and frivolous things are quickly done, calamities and disasters happen quite suddenly. Therefore they say that he who advances with impetuosity is prompt to retire.

The warmth of the *Yang*, and the cold of the *Yin* take months till they arrive. A calamitous change is a disaster completed in one day. For the ice of a river to close, one day's frost is not sufficient, and forming a mountain by heaping up earth is a work not to be completed in a short time.

A *Kan-chiang* <sup>2</sup> sword must be long on the coal in the furnace. To sharpen the blade and make it pointed, it must be smelted and hammered under intense heat, and it is only taken out of the fire after a long heating. The working is a very slow process, but it thus acquires its sharpness.

Flesh suddenly grown, is called a tumor, and a spring violently rushing forth, a fountain. Wine suddenly heated, easily becomes sour, and minced meat, suddenly made sour, is easily spoiled <sup>3</sup>. From these considerations we may infer that the slow advance of able scholars has its analogies and its causes. Which are they? Great learning and momentous thoughts weigh heavily upon the whole being.

p2.113 Plants and trees, while alive, are full of sap ; and being sappy, they are heavy. Dead, they are dry : While dry, they are light and easy to lift ; being sappy, they are heavy and difficult to move. Now the original fluid resides in living organisms, not in those withered <sup>4</sup>.

When carts drive on land, and ships sail through a canal, those heavy and full of cargo proceed slowly, whereas the empty and light ones move swiftly. The weight of the doctrines of former emperors, carried in the bosom, is heavier than the burden of ships or the loading of carts, and for those carrying so heavy a burden, a quick promotion becomes difficult.

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<sup>1</sup> Very old people whose white hair has already become yellowish.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 1.504, Note 1.

<sup>3</sup> Great haste is not always an advantage, for it may spoil everything.

<sup>4</sup> Ordinary functionaries, of course, are compared to withered organisms. Being much lighter than those full of sap viz. men of learning, they are much more easily moved about.

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Thieves stealing other people's property obtain it soon enough, but the things, thus obtained, are not their own, nor acquired by their own industry. A man of the world may very soon obtain a high post which spreads a lustre about him, but, at the same time, evil reports will be set on foot to the effect that he is nothing but a dummy, living on his salary and doing nothing. That able scholars do not get on in their career is owing to the lack of insight on the part of the higher authorities and superior officers.

Peasants bring their grain to the capital, and merchants convey their goods to distant places, both expecting to see their hopes realised. But should the gates and the suburbs be closed to traffic, or fords and bridges have been made impracticable, they would, in spite of all their efforts, and all their speed, not be able to arrive in time and make the gains they expected <sup>1</sup>.

The higher officers are envious of able men, and will have nothing to do with them. If the latter are not put in irons and treated as mean criminals, they may congratulate themselves. How can they hope to rise in the service, or expect that their doctrines will soon be realised ?

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<sup>1</sup> Like peasants with their bags of grain, students with their learning betake themselves to town, but the high officers do not care to admit them, so that their learning is of no practical use to them.

## 41. Book XIV, Chap. II

### *Han-wên. On Heat and Cold*

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p1.278 People reasoning on heat and cold assert that, when the sovereign is pleased, it is warm, and, when he is angry, it is cold. How is that ?

Joy and anger originate in the bosom. Subsequently they find their way out, and once outside, are the causes of rewards and punishments, rewards and punishments being the manifestations of joy and anger. When heat and cold are sufficiently strong, things become withered, and men are injured, and that is done by heat and cold, which are said to be the representatives of joy and anger.

Within the course of a few days a sovereign is not always full of joy or anger, which sentiments having broken forth from the bosom, expand and appear as heat and cold outside, thus showing the feelings of the bosom. When the sovereign is pleased or angry, this fluid of his bosom is not changed into heat or cold. Why should the fluid in his bosom be different from the fluid within the territory of a country ? The fluid of the bosom is not transformed through joy or anger, how then should heat and cold originate within the territory ?

During the time of the *Six States*<sup>1</sup>, and the *Ch'in* and *Han* epoch the feudal princes were subjugating one another, armour-clad warriors filling all the roads. The States were investing each other with the greatest animosity, and their leaders thought of nothing else than of vanquishing their enemies. A feeling of universal slaughter pervaded everything. Yet at that time it was not always cold in the Empire. The time of *Yü* was one of universal peace. The government was good, the people contented, and the sovereign always pleased. In every house they were playing the guitar, singing, beating drums,

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<sup>1</sup> *Yen, Chao, Han, Wei, Ch'i* and *Ch'u*, which in 332 B. C. made an offensive and defensive alliance to check the encroachments of the *Ch'in* State, but by and by the latter overpowered and absorbed them all.

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and dancing. Yet at that time it was not constantly warm in the Empire. Is the feeling of joy and anger evoked by small things only, and does it not care for great ones ? How is it so little in accordance with the deeds done ?

p1.279 Near the water it is cold, near the fire warm, the heat and the cold decrease in proportion to the distance, for the quantity of the fluid varies according to the distance. The seat of the fire is always in the south, that of the water in the north <sup>1</sup>, therefore the northern region is cold, and the southern limit hot.

The fire in a stove, the water in a ditch, and the fluid in the human body are all governed by the same principle. When the sovereign is pleased or angry, this fluid of heat or cold ought to be especially strong in his private apartments, and much less so outside his territory. Now the temperature is the same without and within, consequently it cannot well be the result of the sovereign's joy or anger, and the assertions of our scholars to that effect are futile.

With an emperor a sudden change of the mental fluid takes place in the empire, with princes in their territory, with ministers and high officers in their department, and with common people in their house. Since even ordinary people are liable to such changes, their joy and their anger must also produce such fluids (as heat and cold). The father quarrels with the son, and husband and wife reprove one another. If there ought to be anger, but anger be turned into joy, or if faults be forgiven, and the wrong done hushed up, there would be cold and heat in the same house. This shows us that the sudden changes (of temperature) are not being caused by joy and anger.

Some one will say that there is attraction by affinity. If a man be pleased, he is kind and genial, and in his kindness gives rewards. The *Yang* principle is giving, and the *Yang* fluid is warm, therefore the warm fluid corresponds to it. If a man be angry, he is enraged and indignant, and in his rage puts people to death. The *Yin* principle is cold murder, and the *Yin* fluid is cold, therefore the cold fluid corresponds to it.

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<sup>1</sup> According to ancient natural philosophy. Consequently temperature cannot be the result of the feelings of the sovereign.



## Lun-hêng

When the tiger howls, the wind blows from the valley, and when the dragon performs its antics, the brilliant clouds rise <sup>1</sup>.

Their fluids being identical, and their species the same, they attract one another. Hence the saying that with the body one removes the shadow, and that with the dragon one attracts the rain <sup>2</sup>. The rain responds to the dragon and comes, the shadow responds to the body and goes <sup>3</sup>. The nature <sup>p1.280</sup> of heaven and earth is spontaneity. In autumn and winter punishments are meted out <sup>4</sup>. Smaller misdemeanours are partly pardoned, but the capital punishments cause a bitter cold. The cold comes as an accompaniment of punishment, which shows that they attract one another.

If heat and cold be compared with wind and clouds, and joy and anger refer to the dragon and the tiger, a mutual attraction might be possible, provided that the fluids be the same and the categories similar <sup>5</sup>. When the tiger howls, the wind rises from the valley, and when the dragon gambols, the clouds rise within a radius of one hundred Li, but in other valleys and other regions there is no wind nor clouds. Now, sudden changes of temperature take place everywhere, and at the same time. There may be executions within a territory of a hundred Li, but it is cold within a thousand Li, consequently this could not well be considered a proof of a connexion between the two events. *Ch'i* and *Lu* were conterminous, and gave rewards and punishments at the same time. Had *Ch'i* rewarded, while *Lu* punished, the effects would have been different also. Could then the *Ch'i* State have been warm, whereas it was cold at the same time in the *Lu* country ?

In former times nobody was more cruel in punishing than *Ch'ih Yu* and the doomed prince of *Ch'in* <sup>6</sup>. The subjects of *Ch'ih Yu* were most perverse and dissolute, and in doomed *Ch'in* red clad criminals were walking on the roads shoulder to shoulder, and yet at that time it was not always cold in the

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<sup>1</sup> A quotation from *Huai Nan Tse* III, 2, with a slight variation of the text.

<sup>2</sup> Therefore during a drought clay figures of dragons are set up and worship to attract the rain. Cf. [Forke](#), p. 55, No. 47.

<sup>3</sup> *Viz.* with the body.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 1.148, Note 7.

<sup>5</sup> An attraction between joy and heat, anger and cold.

<sup>6</sup> *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti*.

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Empire. On the market of the emperor's capital oxen and sheep were slaughtered every day by hundreds. He who executes man as well as he who kills animals has a wicked heart. Albeit, the air on the market place of the capital cannot always be cold.

One might object that a man is far superior to animals, and that man alone provokes the fluid. However, does the one who puts to death provoke the fluid, or do those who are put to death, cause the change? In the first case, no matter, whether the one who inflicts the death penalty executes a man, or kills an animal, the mind is the same, and in the latter men and beasts are both creatures. They all belong to the ten thousand beings, and would not a hundred mean ones be worth as much as one precious one?

Some people will maintain that a sovereign alone can evoke the fluid, but not common people. If, to set the fluid in motion, <sup>p1.281</sup> a sovereign is required, why does the world make so much of *Tsou Yen*? *Tsou Yen* was a commoner, and yet he could move the fluid quite alone, as everybody admits <sup>1</sup>.

When one man is put to death, the air becomes cold, but, when a man is born, does the temperature become warm then? When a general amnesty is granted to the four quarters, and all punishments are remitted at the same time, the fluid of the month and the year does not become warm thereby.

In former years thousands of people have had their houses burnt, so that the flames and the smoke went up to heaven, and the Yellow River broke through its dykes, flooding a thousand Li, so that far and wide there was no bound to the prospect. Fire is identical with the hot fluid, and water with the cold one. At the time of the conflagration or the inundation of the Yellow River it has not been warm or cold. The setting in of heat and cold do not depend on government, I dare say, but eventually heat and cold may be simultaneous with rewards and punishments, and it is for this reason that the phenomenalists <sup>2</sup> describe them as such.

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<sup>1</sup> When *Tsou Yen*, a scholar of the 4th cent. B. C., had been put into prison upon a trumped up charge, he looked up to heaven and wept. All of a sudden snow began to fall, although it was midsummer. See also p. 1.112.

<sup>2</sup> A class of scholars, often mentioned in the *Lun-hêng*, who seem to have devoted

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Spring is warm, summer hot, autumn cool, and winter cold. These four seasons are spontaneous, and do not concern the sovereign. The four seasons are not caused by government, but they say that heat and cold correspond to it. At the beginning of the first month and subsequently at the 'commencement of spring' all the punishments have been meted out, and the prisons remain empty. Yet one day it is cold, and one day warm. What manner of punishment is being inflicted, when it is cold, and what kind of rewards are given, when it is warm? We see from this that heat and cold correspond to the time periods of heaven and earth <sup>1</sup>, and are not made by men.

When people are suffering from a cold or from fever, their actions have no influence upon these diseases. By exposure to the wind, or to bad air their body has become chilly or feverish. By changing their habits, or altering their style of life they do not <sup>p1.282</sup> get rid of their cold or their fever. Although the body is quite near, it cannot bring about a change and a cure. Now a city or a State is much more distant, how should it be possible to regulate their fluids? — When a man has caught cold, he drinks medicine, which soothes his pain, and when, being somewhat weak, he has got fever, he swallows pills, which make him perspire, and thus cure him.

In *Yen* there was the 'Cold Valley' in which the five kinds of grain did not grow. *Tsou Yen* blew the flute, and the 'Cold Valley' could be cultivated. The people of *Yen* sowed millet in it, and called it 'Millet Valley'. If this be true that with playing the flute the cold fluid was dispelled, how could this calamity be averted by a change of government or action? Therefore, a cold and fever cannot be cured but with medicine, and the fluid of the 'Millet Valley' cannot be transformed but with music.

When *Yao* was visited with the Great Flood, he ordered *Yü* to regulate it.

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themselves to the study of natural phenomena and calamities, such as heat and cold, inundations, droughts, famines, etc. to which, however, they did not ascribe natural, but moral causes, misled by the pseudo-science of the *Yiking* and similar works.

<sup>1</sup> Of which the Chinese distinguish 24, beginning with *li-ch'un* 'commencement of spring'. They count from the days on which the sun enters the first and fifteenth degree of one of the zodiacal signs.

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Cold and heat are essentially the same as the Great Flood <sup>1</sup>. Yao did not change his administration or conduct, being well aware that the Great Flood was not the result of government or conduct. Since the Flood was not brought about by government or conduct, we know that heat and cold cannot be caused by government either.

Some one might in disproof quote from the 'Various Verifications' of the *Hung-fan* which says that

« excitement is as a rule accompanied by cold, and cheerfulness by tepidity <sup>2</sup>.

Accompanied means : followed, tepidity : warmth, and 'as a rule' : always. When the sovereign is excited, cold weather always follows, when he is cheerful, warm weather follows. Cold and heat correspond to excitement and cheerfulness, how can their connexion with the government be denied ? Does the Classic say that excitement causes no cold, and cheerfulness no warmth ?

The sovereign being excited or cheerful, cold or heat set in, but by chance and of their own accord. If they corresponded intentionally, it would be like the obtaining of omens by divining with shells, or like the finding of numbers by telling the fortune from straws. People pretend that heaven and earth respond to the questions addressed to them, but, as a matter of fact, it is nothing but chance. Heat and cold respond to excitement and cheerfulness, as omens and numbers are the response to the p<sub>1.283</sub> inquiries of the diviners. Externally they seem to respond, but actually it is hazard. How can we prove that ?

The principle of heaven is spontaneity. Spontaneity means absence of purpose. When the two kinds of divination are applied, things may meet eventually, or happen by accident, and perhaps coincide with human affairs. The heavenly fluid is there already, therefore one may speak of a principle. Should it correspond to government, however, there would be no more spontaneity.

*Ching* <sup>1</sup> has distributed the 64 symbols of the *Yiking* over one year. One

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<sup>1</sup> They are all natural phenomena.

<sup>2</sup> *Shuking, Hung-fan* Pt. V, Bk. IV, 34 (*Legge* Vol. III, Pt. II, p. 340).

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symbol rules over 6 days and 7/10. The symbols consist of *Yin* and *Yang* <sup>2</sup>. The fluid rises and falls. When the *Yang* fluid rises, it becomes warm, and, when the *Yin* fluid rises, it becomes cold. According to this theory heat and cold depend on the symbols, but do not correspond to government. In accordance with the 'wu-wang' symbol <sup>3</sup> of the *Yiking*, inundations and droughts have fixed times. All the innumerable calamities and disasters are of the same kind.

I am afraid that the phenomenologists have missed the truth for the following reason :

The ideal man is endowed with the same virtue as heaven and earth. When man takes the lead, heaven does not disagree with him, and when he follows heaven, he respects heaven's time <sup>4</sup>.

The *Hung-fan* on the other hand says that

excitement is as a rule accompanied by cold, and cheerfulness by tepidity.

According to this passage of the *Hung-fan* the heavenly fluid follows man. The *Yiking* however only says that, when man takes the lead, heaven does not disagree with him. But why does it add that, when he follows heaven, he respects heaven's time ? To follow means that heaven was already cold or hot before, and that man followed with his rewards and punishments afterwards. This statement of men does not agree with the *Shuking*. That is my first doubt.

*Ching* determines heat and cold by the *Yin* and the *Yang* fluids ascending and descending, whereas the phenomenologists lay all the stress on punishments, joy and anger. The two schools walk different ways. That is my second doubt.

When people determine heat and cold, it may be cold to-day, and warm

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<sup>1</sup> *Ching Fang*, a metaphysician of the 1st cent. B. C., who spent much labour on the elucidation of the *Yiking*.

<sup>2</sup> Marked by broken and unbroken lines.

<sup>3</sup> [The 25th hexagram of the Yiking](#).

<sup>4</sup> Quotation from the [Yiking, 1st diagram](#) (Ch'ien). Cf. pp. 1.098 and 1.128.

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to-morrow, or at dawn there is plenty of hoar-frost, p1.284 and in the evening resplendent light, or one morning is rainy, but warm, and another bright and cold. Now rain is *Yin*, and brightness *Yang*, and conversely cold is *Yin*, and warmth is *Yang*. A rainy day may clear up, and become cold, and a bright day become rainy, and warm. The categories do not correspond correctly. That is my third doubt.

These three doubts are not set at rest, and the principle of spontaneity is not upheld either.

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42. Book XIV, Chap. III

*Ch'ien-kao. On Reprimands*

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p1.119 In regard to extraordinary calamities they say that, when of old a sovereign in his administration departed from the right way, Heaven reprimanded him by visiting him with calamities. Those calamities are manifold. Heat and cold are put forward as proof. When a prince punishes at a wrong time, it becomes cold, and when he grants rewards, but not at the right moment, it becomes warm. The Spirit of Heaven reprimands a sovereign in the same manner, as a sovereign shows his displeasure to his subjects. Therefore King *Yen* of *Ch'u*<sup>1</sup> said,

— Heaven does not send down misfortunes. Has Heaven forgotten me ?

Those calamities are a reproof, therefore King *Yen* thought of them with fear.

I say that this seems very doubtful to me. The calamities of a State are like the misfortunes of an individual. If they say that Heaven reprimands a sovereign through calamities, does it also reprove an individual through his misfortunes ? Since the individual is known to us, we may make use of the human body for comparison. A sickness of the body is like a calamity from Heaven. When the circulation of the blood is not in order, a man contracts a disease, and when the wind and the air do not agree, the year develops calamities. Provided that Heaven blames the administration of a State by calamities, does it blame an individual by his sickness ?

By fermenting wine in jars, and cooking meat in cauldrons, one wishes to make their tastes palatable. Sometimes they are too salty, bitter, sour, or insipid, and not to our taste, just as a spoonful of medicine does not taste well. The calamities of Heaven are like the bad taste of cooked meat or fermented wine. If calamities are believed to be expressive of Heaven's

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<sup>1</sup> 836-826 B. C.

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displeasure, we ought to see such manifestations also in case of a mistake in cooking or fermenting. One measures big things by small ones, and learns to know Heaven, if one understands analogies.

p1.120 Were King *Yen's* knowledge like that of *Confucius*, his utterance could be believed, but as a leading prince during a time of decay, he did not possess more ability than the phenomenologists <sup>1</sup>, and his words are not to be trusted. Hence my doubts.

Heaven's principle, spontaneity, consists in inaction. If it did reprimand people, that would be action, and not spontaneous. The school of *Huang Ti* and *Lao Tse* arguing on Heaven's principle have found the truth.

If Heaven could really reprimand the sovereign, it should change the fluid to call his attention. In case the prince punished at the wrong time, the fluid of punishment would be cold, and Heaven ought to make it warm, and should the prince reward unseasonably, the fluid of reward would be warm, and it would be incumbent upon Heaven to make it cold. A transmutation of the fluid in case of the perversion of government would call the attention of the sovereign to his fault. Now Heaven lets the cold and the heat go on, and again causes cold and heat with a view to reprove the sovereign, and to induce him to change.

The illustrious prince *Tan Fu* <sup>2</sup> thinking that he might elevate the later king *Chi*, on purpose changed his name of *Chi* into *Li*, which is synonymous with *ti* = 'heir'. *T'ai Po* took the hint, and went to collect medicines in *Wu* and *Yüeh* in order to get out of King *Chi's* way <sup>3</sup>. Had the illustrious prince not changed the name of *Chi*, and again styled him *Li*, how could the eldest son have taken the hint, and got himself out of the way? Now, if rewards and punishments are not given in the proper way, and Heaven wishes a change of administration, it ought to use a different fluid, just as the illustrious prince changed the name of *Chi*. Instead of that it again produces the same fluid to show its displeasure to the sovereign, but, when will the latter become aware of it, and see the mistake he has made in rewarding and punishing?

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<sup>1</sup> Who explain natural phenomena by transcendent causes.

<sup>2</sup> The grandfather of *Wên Wang*, the founder of the *Chou* dynasty.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 1.131.



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When a guitar-player makes a mistake in tightening the cords and placing the bridges, 'kung' and 'shang' <sup>1</sup> change their tunes. When the music-master hears it, he changes the strings, and shifts the bridges. Heaven sees mistakes in rewarding and punishing, as the music-master takes notice of the wrong handling of the cords and bridges. If Heaven did not change the fluid to rouse the p<sub>1.121</sub> sovereign, on the contrary, still increased it, and made the wrong worse, it would be unprincipled, and blindly commit the same mistake as the sovereign, which cannot be.

*Chou* had banquets lasting the whole night ; *Wên Wang* said every morning and evening,

— Pour out this wine in libation <sup>2</sup>.

*Ch'i* <sup>3</sup> was very extravagant in sacrifices ; *Yen Tse* <sup>4</sup> offered a sucking pig in the temple, which did not fill the dish <sup>5</sup>. Such disapprobation was necessary to bring about a change.

When sons and younger brothers are impudent, their fathers and older brothers instruct them in politeness. When officials behave rudely, their elders teach them good manners. *K'ang Shu* <sup>6</sup> and *Po Ch'in* <sup>7</sup> disregarded the duties of sons and younger brothers. They called upon *Chou Kung*, prostrated themselves, and rose in a haughty manner. Thrice they called, and thrice they were bamboed. They vent to see *Shang Tse* <sup>8</sup>. *Shang Tse* bade them look at the pine and the Rottlera. Both looked at the pine and the Rottlera. Their hearts were moved, they caught the meaning, and understood the rules of etiquette to be observed between father and son <sup>9</sup>.

*Chou Kung* might have followed the two princes in their haughtiness, and

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<sup>1</sup> The first and the second of the five ancient notes of the Chinese gamut.

<sup>2</sup> *Shuking* Part V, Bk. X, 2 ([Legge, Vol. III, Pt. II, p. 399](#)) [[Couvreur](#)] cf. chap. 25.

<sup>3</sup> The *Ch'i* State in *Shantung*.

<sup>4</sup> *Yen Ying*, an official of *Ch'i*, noted for his thrifty habits, died 493 B. C.

<sup>5</sup> So small was the offering.

<sup>6</sup> A younger brother of *Chou Kung*, the first Duke of *Wei*.

<sup>7</sup> A son of *Chou Kung* and his successor in the Dukedom of *Lu*.

<sup>8</sup> A minister of *Wu Wang*.

<sup>9</sup> The lofty pine and the low Rottlera tree are emblems of father and son.

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*Shang Tse* might have imitated their arrogance, but it was necessary to resort to blows and parables to make them see the difference, and awaken their conscience by this strange procedure. The wrong government of a sovereign is like the bad behaviour of the two princes. If Heaven did not make any announcement about the style of government in order to rouse the conscience, just as the two princes were roused, when looking at the pine and Rottlera, but on the contrary made the mistake in rewarding and punishing his own by requiring the sovereign with heat and cold, Heaven's fault would not be less than that of the sovereign.

It cannot be the intention of high Heaven that people's conscience should not be roused, and that one fluid should be exactly like the other. It would not love its subjects, nor reprimand them in this way. All things which can destroy one another, must <sup>p1.122</sup> have a different nature, whereas those which further and complete each other, are of the same fluid. *Li* <sup>1</sup> below and *Tui* <sup>2</sup> above are called transformation <sup>3</sup>, which is equivalent to change. Fire and metal are different fluids, therefore they can change one another. If they were both fire, or both metal, how could they complete each other ?

*Ch'ü Yüan* was sick of the stench and filth <sup>4</sup> of *Ch'u*, therefore he composed the stanzas on perfumes and purity. The fisherman remonstrated with him for not following the common habits, thereupon he spoke the words on bathing. Whenever a man feels unclean, some will advise him to put on fragrant flowers, others to carry a pig. Both advices aim at removing stench and filth. Which is right, and which wrong ? <sup>5</sup> At all events, there must be a change, but no increase by any means. If heat and cold are produced as a protest against rewarding or punishing, could they be changed thereby then ?

*Hsi Men Pao* <sup>6</sup> used to tighten his leather belt to soothe himself, and *Tung*

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<sup>1</sup> [The 3rd diagram.](#)

<sup>2</sup> [The 58th diagram.](#)

<sup>3</sup> In the terminology of the *Yi-king*.

<sup>4</sup> Filth in a metaphorical sense.

<sup>5</sup> The first advice of course. Bad odour can be removed by its contrary, perfumes, but not by more stench.

<sup>6</sup> A worthy of the 5th century B. C. (*Giles, Biogr. Dict.* N. 678).

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*An Yü* <sup>1</sup> would loosen the strings of his girdle to stimulate himself. These two wise men knew that the belt and the girdle will help us to change countenance, consequently they made use of them for the purpose of repressing their bodily weakness, which was very intelligent indeed. If in case of bad government of a sovereign high Heaven did not reprimand him with another fluid, that he might change, on the contrary, followed his error, emitting the same fluid, Heaven's wisdom would be inferior to that of the two men.

King *Chuang* of *Ch'u* <sup>2</sup> had a passion for hunting, therefore Lady *Fan* did not eat any game, or poultry. Duke *Mu* of *Ch'in* <sup>3</sup> was very fond of voluptuous music, for this reason the Princess of *Hua Yang* declined to listen to the tunes of *Chêng* and *Wei* <sup>4</sup>. The p<sub>1.123</sub> two ladies found fault with the two princes. They opposed their wishes, and did not agree to what they did. Heaven, on the other hand, shows its disapproval of the sovereign's rewarding and punishing by letting him act as he pleases, and still increasing the fluid. Thus the virtue of high Heaven would not be equal to that of the two wise ladies.

To remonstrate means to reject by words. To keep the good, and reject the bad must certainly be regarded as a mistake. King *Mu* of *Chou* relied on punishments. In the Chapter on Punishments he says that violence is requited with force <sup>5</sup>. Force and violence are both bad. To requite evil with evil is the most serious misrule. Now, in criminal law not to give mercy, when it should be given, is wicked. Heaven, however, adds wrong to wrong to correspond to it. Thus Heaven would act like King *Mu*.

With goodness one combats badness, and with badness good people are frightened. This is the way to admonish people, and to induce them to do good. *Shun* exhorted *Yü* saying :

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<sup>1</sup> Another famous character of old (*Giles, Biogr. Dict.* N. 2088). *Giles* gives another version of the peculiarities of the two gentlemen regarding their belts. Cf. chap. 8.

<sup>2</sup> 612-589 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> 658-619.

<sup>4</sup> The music of these two States was considered licentious, and most objectionable.

<sup>5</sup> In the *Shuking, Lü-hsing* Pt. V, Bk. XXVII, 5 ([Legge Vol. III, Pt. II, p. 593](#)) [[Couvreur](#)] King *Mu* uses these words with reference to *Huang Ti*, who in this manner repressed the lawlessness of the *Miao-tse*.

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— Be not as overbearing as *Tan Chu* <sup>1</sup>.

*Chou Kung* called King *Ch'êng* and said to him,

— Be not like King *Chou* of *Yin* <sup>2</sup>.

'Not' is preventive. *Tan Chu* and *Chou* of *Yin* were the greatest scoundrels, therefore the word 'not' was used to prevent them (from following their example) ; *Shun* and *Chou Kung* said 'Be not like', who would say 'Be like ?' The Sages discriminated between the positive and the negative, would they have reprov'd the wrong doing by doing wrong themselves, or would they by continuing the faults of others have even increased the evil ? Heaven and man obey the same law, and great men equal Heaven in virtue. Sages and worthies reform bad people by goodness. If Heaven added wrong to evil, would that be a manifestation of the same law, or show the similarity of virtue ?

The emperor *Hsiao Wu* <sup>3</sup> took a great interest in immortals. *Sse Ma Hsiang Ju* <sup>4</sup> presented to him a poem on the Great Man, by which the emperor became so excited, that he felt like flying up to the clouds <sup>5</sup>. The emperor *Hsiao Ch'êng* <sup>6</sup> was very fond of building <sup>p1.124</sup> big palaces. *Yang Tse Yün* <sup>7</sup> offered him a hymn on the *Kan-ch'üan* palace <sup>8</sup>, which he extolled as something supernatural, as if he were saying that human force could not achieve such a work, and that spirits must have lent their aid. *Hsiao Ch'êng*, without knowing it, was induced thereby to go on building. If *Sse Ma Hsiang Ju* in his poem spoke of immortals, he had no proof for it, and, if *Yang Tse Yün* wrote a panegyric on extravagance, he did the emperor a bad service. How could *Hsiao Wu* have the feeling of flying, and how could *Hsiao Ch'êng*

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<sup>1</sup> *Shuking, Yih-chi* Pt. II, Bk. IV, 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Shuking, Wu-yi* Pt. V, Bk. XV, 13 ([Legge Vol. III, Pt. II, p. 471](#)) [[Couvreur](#), § 13].

<sup>3</sup> *Hsiao Wu* = *Han Wu Ti*, 140-86 B. C.

<sup>4</sup> A distinguished scholar and poet.

<sup>5</sup> The emperor *Han Wu Ti* was infatuated with alchemy, and the magical arts taught by the Taoists.

<sup>6</sup> *Hsiao Ch'êng* = *Han Ch'êng Ti*, 32-6 B. C.

<sup>7</sup> The philosopher *Yang Hsiung*, a philosopher of note of the Confucian school, 53 B. C.-18 A. D.

<sup>8</sup> A celebrated palace near *Hsi-an-fu* (*Ch'ang-an*) originally founded by *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti*.

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be under a delusion without knowing it? If Heaven does not use another fluid to reprimand the sovereign, on the contrary meets his wishes, and responds to him with evil, he acts like the two scholars, who imposed upon the two emperors by their poetry so, that their conscience was not roused.

*Tou Ying* and *Kuan Fu* <sup>1</sup> were so disgusted with the wickedness of the time, that every day they mutually pulled a string to fasten their hearts. Their disgust was such, that they would, on no account, have yielded to their desires. *T'ai Po* <sup>2</sup> taught the *Wu* <sup>3</sup> to wear a cap and a girdle, how would he have followed their customs, and been naked, as they were? Thus the *Wu* learnt propriety and righteousness, and it was *T'ai Po* who changed their customs. *Su Wu* <sup>4</sup> went to live among the *Hsiung-nu*, but he never buttoned his coat on the left side <sup>5</sup>. *Chao T'o* <sup>6</sup> lived among the southern *Yüeh* <sup>7</sup>. He would sit down, spreading out his legs, and wear his hair in a tuft upon a frame. At the court of the *Han*, *Su Wu* was praised, and *Chao T'o* blamed, because he had taken to the uncivilised fashions of the *Yüeh*, abandoning the cap and the girdle. *Lu Chia* <sup>8</sup> spoke to him about the costume of the Chinese, and their polished <sup>p1.125</sup> manners, and held up their morality to him. *Chao T'o* felt remorse, and turned his heart back to his native land. Had *Lu Chia* again used the dress of the *Yüeh*, and their barbarian language, and followed their wild customs, how could he have caused *Chao T'o* to feel remorse, to reform, and to adopt again the rules of *Han*. A divergence of government, and culture necessitates the use of different language, and different arguments. If a bad government be not transformed, it goes on as before.

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<sup>1</sup> Two high officers of the 2nd cent. B. C. Cf. chap. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 1.131.

<sup>3</sup> Aborigines in modern *Kiangsu*.

<sup>4</sup> In 100 B. C. *Su Wu* was sent as envoy to the *Hsiung-nu*, who kept him prisoner for about nineteen years. Though the *Hsiung-nu* made every endeavour to win him over to their cause, he never threw off his allegiance to the *Han*, wherefore he is praised as a paragon of loyalty.

<sup>5</sup> Only a barbarian would button his coat on the left side, a Chinaman will button it on the right.

<sup>6</sup> A famous general of the 2nd cent. B. C., who subjugated the southern barbarians, and subsequently became their king. (Cf. chap. 8.)

<sup>7</sup> Aborigines in *Canton* province.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. chap. 8.

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In case that a sovereign be reprimanded for a mistake, but that his bad government be not changed, and his wrong continued, why is the advice given him as a reproof not heeded ? — When *Kuan Shu Hsien* and *T'sai Shu Tu* <sup>1</sup> were revolting, *Chou Kung* remonstrated with them several times. Did he tell them that they should revolt, when he admonished them ?

It is human law to like good, and hate evil, to do good as reward, and to inflict evil as punishment. The law of Heaven must be the same. Now, if rewards and punishments be not meted out in the proper way, there is evil. Should the fluid of evil respond to it, the principle of hating the evil would not be preserved.

The *Han* improved the punishments for the hiding of criminals <sup>2</sup>, and fixed penalties for the assistance given to accomplices to make their escape. They were indignant that the criminals found helpers, and that bands were organised. By restraining the prisoners, when they were taken before the magistrates, and separating them from bad characters, keeping them in different places, the law concerning the hiding of criminals, and the absconding of the accomplices might have been dispensed with.

*Yi Ti* and *Yi Ya* knew how to give the right flavour to what they were cooking. When it was too sour, he poured water in, and, when it was tasteless, he added salt. Water and fire mixing and transforming one another, the food became neither too salty, nor too tasteless. Now, if in case of improper rewarding or punishing the <sub>p1.126</sub> fault is not made good by another fluid, cold being still added to cold, and heat to heat, this would be like finding a food too sour, and adding salt, or thinking it too insipid, and pouring water in. Hence, are there not serious doubts about the alleged reprimands of Heaven, or must we believe in them ?

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<sup>1</sup> Two brothers of *Chou Kung* and of *Wu Wang*, who attempted to deprive their nephew *Ch'êng Wang* of the throne, but their rebellion was put down by *Chou Kung*.

<sup>2</sup> A new law was enacted in the 4th year of the Emperor *Hsüan Ti* (70 A. D.), by which descendants concealing their ascendants, and wives hiding their husbands guilty of a crime, were to be acquitted, whereas ascendants and husbands doing the same for their sons and wives, had to suffer capital punishment. Descendants were no doubt under a moral obligation to help their ascendants under any circumstances, but the same moral law did not exist for ascendants towards their sons. (Cf. *Ch'ien Han-shu* chap. 8, p. 11.)

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When by burning fuel one heats a cauldron, the water in it boils, if the fire is strong, but it remains cool, if the fire is weak. Government is like the fire, heat and cold like boiling and coolness. Speaking of the government of a sovereign, we may say that he does not keep the right medium in rewarding and punishing, but in case the *Yin* and the *Yang* are in disorder, and the fluids not in harmony, are we justified in saying that Heaven produces heat or cold for the sovereign's sake with the object of reproving him ?

The *savants* also maintain that, when the administration of a sovereign is bad, Heaven sends extraordinary events. If he does not change, Heaven visits his people with misfortunes, and if he does not reform even then, it visits his own person. That is to say : first extraordinary events, afterwards calamities, first exhortations, then punishments. I doubt this likewise. If one plants something in summer, it withers, and does not grow, and if one reaps corn in autumn <sup>1</sup>, it lies about and cannot be harvested. Administration and instruction may be compared to planting and reaping. We may say that in governing the right time has been missed, but can we pretend that, in case of disasters caused by fluids or other things, Heaven has sent extraordinary events to reprimand the sovereign, and that, because the latter did not reform, Heaven sent down misfortune upon him in order to slay him ? These opinions of the literati are those of illiterate people.

In mid-summer the *Yang* fluid is broiling hot. The *Yin* fluid rushes against it, and there is a hissing, shooting forth, and crashing. When a human being is hit by it, and killed, they hold that Heaven has punished him for his hidden sins. To a superficial observer this may seem quite likely, but in reality it is not so. First they pretend that calamitous events serve to reprimand, and punish a sovereign, and then again they say that a man killed by a thunderstroke is punished for his hidden crimes, — a wrong statement, and an untenable assertion !

Some say that *Ku Tse Yün* in a memorial to the emperor explained that extraordinary phenomena were visible signs of Heaven's <sup>p1.127</sup> reprimands, which would be repeated, unless a change took place <sup>2</sup>. He was prepared to

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<sup>1</sup> Which begins in November.

<sup>2</sup> In 34 B. C. *Ku Tse Yün* = *Ku Yung* attributed an eclipse and an earth-quake to the

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await that time in fetters. Subsequently they were repeated in fact. Wherefore were they repeated, provided that they were not meant as reprimands ? For these reasons the words of *Ku Tse Yün* were later on used as an incentive to reforms.

My reply is that in case of extraordinary phenomena the *Yin* and the *Yang* can be determined beforehand. The fluids of all things, of course, have their beginning and their end. Walking upon frost, one knows that hard ice will necessarily follow. That is Heaven's law. *Ku Tse Yün* possessed this subtle knowledge, and was aware of what subsequently was bound to happen. Therefore he borrowed the theory of the phenomenologists to corroborate his own view. Thus he was resolved to await the time in fetters. Just like *Yen Tse* of *Ch'i* <sup>1</sup>, who saw the 'Hook' star <sup>2</sup> between the constellations of the 'House' <sup>3</sup> and the 'Heart' <sup>4</sup>, he knew that there would be an earth-quake. Had *Ku Tse Yün* seen the 'Hook' star, he would again have said that through this star Heaven expressed its displeasure, and that, unless the government was changed, an earth-quake would happen. *Ku Tse Yün* was looking out for the time to come as *Tse Wei* <sup>5</sup> did, who fell down on the steps of the throne to await that the planet Mars should shift its position, an event which was sure to take place. Hence the theory of reprimands was believed. If we admit it, would it be contrary to justice, or injure high Heaven's virtue ? Spontaneity and inaction would be humanised thereby, therefore we cannot listen to it.

By crediting Heaven with the power of reprimanding, one extols its wisdom in investigating the truth. However, this wisdom would conflict with Heaven's excellence.

- How do we know that any one is deaf ?
- If he hears distinctly.
- How do we know that he is blind ?
- If he sees clearly.

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excessive favour shown by the emperor to the ladies of his seraglio. He wrote many memorials against the abuses of the palace.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.121.

<sup>2</sup> The planet Mercury.

<sup>3</sup> The stars Beta, Delta, Pi, and Nun, in the head of Scorpio.

<sup>4</sup> The stars Antares, Sigma, and Tau, in the heart of Scorpio.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. p. 1.158.



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- How do we know that he is mad ?
- If he talks properly <sup>1</sup>.

Proper talking, and clear and distinct hearing and seeing is what the Taoist school calls madness, p1.128 blindness, and deafness <sup>2</sup>. Now to speak of Heaven's reprimanding would therefore be tantamount to calling it mad, blind, and deaf.

The *Yi-king* says that the great man equals Heaven and Earth in virtue <sup>3</sup>. Therefore *Tai Po* <sup>4</sup> holds that Heaven does not speak, but that its law is ingrafted in the hearts of the wise. Consequently, the virtue of the great man is the virtue of Heaven, and the words of the wise are the words of Heaven. When the great man reproves, and the wise rebuke, it is Heaven which reprimands, and yet people see its reprimands in calamitous events, which I cannot believe.

In the text of the Six Classics <sup>5</sup> and in the discourses of the Sages every now and then Heaven is referred to, because they intend to reform the lawless, and to frighten the ignorant. They wish to make it understood that what they say is not only their private opinion, but that it is Heaven's thought also. They speak of Heaven, as if they were dealing with a human heart, for it is not the blue empyrean which they have in view. The phenomenologists hearing the unfounded assertion that the calamitous events of Heaven always happen at a fixed time, have therefrom derived the theory of reprimands.

The past affords us a key for the present. Heaven acts through man '(Shun) received (Yao's) abdication from the Accomplished Ancestor' <sup>6</sup>. It is

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<sup>1</sup> A Taoist rhyme, quoted from the *Lü-shih-ch'un-ch'iu*. See also *Huai Nan Tse* XVII, 1v : 'He who hears the sounding sound is deaf, but he who hears the soundless sound is quick at hearing'.

<sup>2</sup> The Taoists despise the natural organs : the eye, the ear, the mouth, and pretend to see with a spiritual eye, to hear with a spiritual ear, etc.

<sup>3</sup> *Yi-king, 1st diagram* (*Ch'ien*).

<sup>4</sup> The son of *Tan fu* (cf. p. 1.120).

<sup>5</sup> We now speak of the Five Classics : *Yiking*, *Shuking*, *Shiking*, *Liki*, and *Ch'un-ch'iu*. During the *Han* period the 'Book of Music' was added, ranking as the fifth Classic before the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, bringing up the number to six.

<sup>6</sup> *Shuking, Shun-tien Pt. II, Bk. I, 2* (Legge, Vol. III, Pt. I, p. 32) [*Couvreur*] According to the commentators this passage means that *Shun* received the empire from *Yao* before the shrine of the latter's ancestor, who thus might be regarded as the donor.

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not said that he received the abdication from Heaven. From *Yao's* heart we learn to know Heaven's sentiments. *Yao* made an appointment, and Heaven did the same, and all the officials, and subjects became inclined towards *Shun*. *Shun* appointed *Yü*, and *Yü* transmitted the sway to *Ch'i*. In all these cases we learn from the human heart, what Heaven's feelings were like. As regards the 'affectionate looks' of the *Shiking* <sup>1</sup> and the 'mighty anger' in the *Hung fan* <sup>2</sup>, the human body serves to exemplify Heaven's feelings.

p1.129 When King *Wên* and King *Wu* had died, King *Ch'êng* was still an infant, and the institutions of the *Chou* dynasty were not yet completed. The duke of *Chou* acted as lord protector, but there was no special instruction from Heaven. The duke of *Chou* asked his own heart, and conformed to the intentions of Heaven.

The heart of high Heaven is in the bosom of the Sages. When Heaven reprimands, it is done through the mouths of the Sages. Yet people do not believe the words of the Sages. They trust in the fluid of calamitous events, and strive to make out Heaven's meaning therefrom. Why go so far? But, should there be no sages during a generation, where are their words to come from? — Wise men, whose talents are almost up to the mark, rank closely after the Sages.

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<sup>1</sup> *Vid.* p. 1.134.

<sup>2</sup> We read in the *Shiking*, *Hung fan* Pt. V, Bk. IV, 3 ([Legge, Vol. III, Pt. II, p. 323](#)) [[Couvreur](#)] 'K'un dammed up the inundating waters, and thereby threw into disorder the arrangement of the five elements. God was thereby roused to anger'.

## 43. Book XV, Chap. I

### *Pien-tung*. Phenomenal Changes

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p1.109 Arguing on calamitous events I have already expressed my doubts as to Heaven reprimanding man by misfortunes <sup>1</sup>. They say, moreover, that the sovereign, as it were, moves Heaven by his government, and that Heaven moves the fluid in response. Beating a drum and striking a bell with a hammer would be an analogous process. The drum represents Heaven, the hammer the government, and the sound of the drum or the bell is like Heaven's response. When man acts below, the heavenly fluid survenes, and accompanies his actions. I confess that I doubt this also.

Heaven can move things, but how can things move Heaven? Men and things depend upon Heaven, and Heaven is the master of men and things. Thus one says that, when *Wang Liang* <sup>2</sup> whips the horses, the carriage and the steeds rush over the plain. It is not said that, when the carriage and the steeds chase over the plain, *Wang Liang* subsequently whips the horses. The heavenly fluid changes above, and men and things respond to it below. Consequently, when Heaven is about to rain, the *shang-yang* <sup>3</sup> begins to dance, and attracts the rain. The '*shang-yang*' is a creature which knows the rain. As soon as Heaven is about to rain, it bends its single leg, and commences to dance.

When Heaven is going to rain, the mole-cricket and ants leave their abodes, the earth-worms come forth, the chords of guitars become loose, and chronic diseases more violent. This shows, how Heaven moves things. When Heaven is about to blow, the creatures living in nests become restless, and, when it is going to rain, the insects staying in holes become excited. The fluid of wind and rain has such an effect upon those creatures. Man takes the same

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<sup>1</sup> In chap. 42 and 43.

<sup>2</sup> A famous charioteer (cf. p. 1.138).

<sup>3</sup> A one-legged bird said to portend rain.

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position between Heaven and Earth as fleas and bugs between the upper and lower garments, or crickets and ants in crevices. Can fleas and bugs, crickets and ants, in so far as they p1.110 are either rebellious or peaceful, wild or quiet, bring about a change of the fluid in the crevices ? Fleas and bugs, mole-crickets and ants cannot do this. To pretend that man is able to do so, shows a misconception of the nature of the fluid of things.

When the wind comes, the boughs of the trees shake, but these boughs cannot produce the wind. In the same manner at the end of summer the field crickets chirrup, and the cicadas cry. They are affected by the *Yin* fluid. When the thunder rolls, the pheasants become frightened, and, when the insects awake from their state of torpidity, the snakes come forth. This is the rising of the *Yang* fluid. When it is near mid-night, the cranes scream, and when at dawn the sun is about to rise, the cocks crow. Although these be not phenomenal changes, they show at least, how the heavenly fluid moves things, and how those respond to the heavenly fluid. One may say that heat and cold influence the sovereign in such a way, that he emits a fluid by which he rewards or punishes, but are we warranted in saying that rewards and punishments affect high Heaven so, that it causes heat or cold to respond to the government ?

In regard to the Six Passions <sup>1</sup> the expositors of the wind theory maintain that, when the wind blows, robbers and thieves set to work under its influence, but the nature of robbers and thieves cannot move Heaven to send the wind. When the wind blows, it has a strange influence on perverted minds so, that robbers and thieves do their deeds. How can we prove that ? Robbers and thieves seeing something, take it away, and beholding an enemy, kill him. This is an off-hand business, and the work of a moment, and not premeditated day and night. When the heavenly afflatus passes, the time of greedy scoundrels and stealthy thieves has come.

Those who predict dearness and cheapness from the wind, hold that a wind blowing over residences of kings and ministers brings dearness, whereas

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<sup>1</sup> Cheerfulness, anger, grief, joy, love, and hatred. It is more common to speak of Seven Passions. They are the same as those given above, but joy is replaced by fear, and desire is added.

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a wind coming from the dwellings of prisoners, or of the dead, brings cheapness. Dearness and cheapness refer to the amount of pecks and bushels to be got. When the wind arrives, the buyers of grain raise or lower the prices, such is the wonderful influence exercised by the heavenly fluid on men and things. Thus the price of grain rises, or falls, becomes dear, or cheap.

p1.111 In the book on the Celestial Governors <sup>1</sup> it is stated that the wind blowing from the four quarters is determined on the morning of New Year's Day. When the wind blows from the south, there will be droughts ; when it blows from the north, inundations. Coming from the east, it forebodes epidemics, and coming from the west, war. The Great Annalist is right in saying that water, dryness, war, and diseases are predetermined from the wind, for luck and mishap of men and things depend on Heaven.

It is spring that animates things, and winter that causes them to die. Spring vivifies, winter kills. Should Heaven for any reason wish spring to kill, and winter to vivify, things would not die or live at all, why ? Because the life of things is governed by the *Yang* principle, and their death depends on the *Yin* <sup>2</sup>.

By blowing air upon a person one cannot make him cold, nor can one make him warm by breathing upon him. But if a person who has thus been blown or breathed upon, comes into winter or summer, he will have the unpleasant sensation of chill or heat. The cold and hot fluids depend on heaven and earth, and are governed by the *Yin* and the *Yang*. How could human affairs and government have any influence upon them ?

Moreover, Heaven is the root, and man the apex. Climbing up a tree, we wonder that the branches cannot move the trunk, but, if the trunk is cut down, all the twigs wither. Human affairs resemble the branches of a tree, that which gives warmth is like the root and the trunk.

For those creatures which are born from Heaven and filled with its fluid

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<sup>1</sup> *Shi-chi* chap. 27, p. 34v. The 'Celestial Governors' are the sun, the moon, and the planets. The passage referred to here speaks of 8 winds, however, and their attributes are different from those given by *Wang Ch'ung*.

<sup>2</sup> Heaven could not purposely act against the laws of nature, by which the vegetation grows in spring, and fades in winter.

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Heaven is the master in the same manner as the ear, the eye, the hand, and the foot are ruled by the heart. When the heart has that intention, the ear and the eye hear and see, and the hand and the foot move and act. To maintain that Heaven responds to man would be like saying that the heart is under the command of the ear and the eye, the hand and the foot.

Streamers hanging down from flags are attached to the flagstaff. The flagstaff moving eastward, those streamers follow, and float westward. If they say that heat and cold follow rewards and punishments, then the heavenly fluid must be like those streamers.

p1.112 The fact that the 'Hook' star (Mercury) is amidst the 'House' constellation forebodes an earth-quake <sup>1</sup>. The Great Diviner of *Ch'i* was cognisant of this, and told Duke *Ching* <sup>2</sup> that he could shake the earth, which Duke *Ching* believed <sup>3</sup>. To say that a sovereign can cause heat and cold is like Duke *Ching's* trusting in the ability of the Great Diviner to shake the earth. Man cannot move the earth, nor can he move Heaven. Heat and cold are heavenly fluids. Heaven is very high, man very small. With a small rod one cannot strike a bell, and with a fire-fly one cannot heat a cauldron. Why? Because a bell is large, and a rod short, a cauldron big, and a fire-fly small. If a tiny creature, seven feet high <sup>4</sup>, would attempt to influence the mighty fluid of great Heaven, it is evident that it would not have the slightest effect.

When it has been predetermined that a great general is about to enter a territory, he will be angry, in case the air is cold, and pleased, if it be warm. Now, joy and anger are called forth by actions. Previous to his entering the territory, they are not yet manifest, and do not come forward, before the conduct of the people and the officials has been inquired into. But the hot or the cold fluids have been there previously. If joy and anger evoked heat and cold, those fluids ought to appear later than joy and anger. Therefore only the

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 127 and *Shi-chi* chap. 27, p. 27v.

<sup>2</sup> 546-488 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> We learn from [Huai Nan Tse XII, 22r](#) quoted in *Lun-hêng* IV, 13 (*Pien-hsü*) that *Yen Tse* told the Great Diviner that the earth-quake would take place, because the 'Hook' star was between the constellations of the 'House' and the 'Heart', whereupon the Great Diviner confessed to the Duke that the earth would shake, but that it would not be his doing (cf. p. 1.127).

<sup>4</sup> *I. e.* man. The ancient Chinese foot was much smaller than the one now in use.

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hot and the cold fluids evoke the sovereign's pleasure or wrath.

Some will say

— Not so ; the greatest sincerity is required. In one's actions one must be most sincere, as *Tsou Yen* was, who implored Heaven, when frost began to fall <sup>1</sup>, or the wife of *Ch'i Liang* <sup>2</sup> who by her tears caused the city wall to collapse. How ? The heavenly fluid cannot be moved ?

The greatest sincerity is shown in the likes and dislikes of the heart. When fruits are hanging before a man's face, no more than one foot away from his mouth, he may desire to eat them, and his breath may touch them, yet he does not obtain them <sup>p1.113</sup> thereby. But, when he takes them in his hand, and conveys them to his mouth, then he can eat them. Even small fruits which can easily be moved in a basket, and are not far from the mouth, cannot be procured merely by a desire, be it ever so strong. How about Heaven then, which is so high and distant from us, and whose fluid forms the shapeless empyrean without beginning or end ?

During the dog-days, people stand against the wind, and in the depth of winter, they sit turned towards the sun. In summer, they are anxious to obtain coolness, and in winter, they would like to have warmth. These wishes are most sincere. When their desires reach their climax, they will perhaps stand against the wind, and simultaneously fan themselves, or turned towards the sun-shine, light a fire in a stove. Yet Heaven will never change its fluid for summer or winter's sake. Heat and cold have their fixed periods, which are never transmuted for man's sake. With an earnest desire one does not obtain it, how should it be brought about by rewards and punishments, when the thoughts are not longing for heat or cold at all ?

The sighs of ten thousand people cannot move Heaven, how should it be possible that the sobs of *Tsou Yen* alone could cause the frost to fall ? Could the predicament of *Tsou Yen* be compared to that of *Yuan* ? Was his unjust

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. chap. 41.

<sup>2</sup> On officer of the *Ch'i* State, who was slain in a battle against the *Chü* State (cf. *Mencius* Book VI, P. II chap. 6) [[Legge](#)] [[Couvreur](#)].

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imprisonment like jumping into the river ? Were the lamentations of the *Li-sao* and the *Ch'u-t'se* <sup>1</sup> nothing more than a sigh ? — When *Ch'ü Yuan* died, there fell no frost in the State of *Ch'u*.

This happened during the reign of the Kings *Huai* and *Hsiang* <sup>2</sup>. At the time of the Kings *Li* and *Wu* <sup>3</sup>, *Pien Ho* <sup>4</sup> presented them with a jade-stone, and had his two feet cut off. Offering his stone he wept, till his tears ran dry, when he went on weeping blood. Can the sincerity of *Tsou Yen* bear a comparison with *Pien Ho's* sufferings, or his unjust arrest with the amputation of the feet ? Can the sighs towards heaven be put on a parallel with tears of blood ? Sighs are surely not like tears, nor *Tsou Yen's* imprisonment p1.114 like the cutting of the feet. Considering their grievances *Tsou Yen* is not *Pien Ho's* equal. Yet at that time no frost was seen in the *Ch'u* country.

*Li Sse* <sup>5</sup> and *Chao Kao* <sup>6</sup> caused the death of the crown-prince *Fu Su* by their calumnies. *Mêng T'ien* <sup>7</sup> and *Mêng Ao* <sup>8</sup> were involved in his fall. At that time they all gave vent to their pain, which was like sighing. Their misfortune culminated in death, and was not limited to unjust banishment. Albeit yet no cold air was produced, where they died.

*Ch'in* buried alive 400,000 soldiers of *Chao* below *Ch'ang p'ing* <sup>9</sup>, where they were all thrown into pits at the same time. Their wails and cries then were more than sighs. Even if their sincerity was less than that of *Tsou Yen*, yet the sufferings of 400,000 people must have been commensurate to the

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<sup>1</sup> The 'Elegies of *Ch'u*' comprising the *Li-sao* and some other poems of *Ch'ü Yuan* and his contemporaries, all plaintive pieces referring to *Ch'ü Yuan's* disgrace.

<sup>2</sup> King *Huai* of *Ch'u* 327-294, King *Ch'ing Hsiang* 294-261. *Ch'ü Yuan* committed suicide in 294 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> King *Wu* reigned from 739-688. His predecessor is called *Hsiung Hsün* (756-739) in the *Shi-chi*, not *Li*.

<sup>4</sup> *Pien Ho* was taken for an impostor, and first sentenced to have his left foot cut off. When he presented the stone, a second time, his right foot was cut off. At last the genuineness of the jade-stone was discovered.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. p. 1.171.

<sup>6</sup> A eunuch, who together with *Li Sse* caused the death of *Fu Su*, eldest son of *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti*, and under *Hu Hai* usurped all power. In 207 B. C.. he was assassinated by order of *Tse Ying*, son of *Fu Su*.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. p. 1.167.

<sup>8</sup> The grand father of *Mêng T'ien*, also a general of *Shih Huang Ti*.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. p. 1.136 and p. 1.166.



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pain of one wise man, and the cries they uttered, while falling into the pits, must have been worse than the moans of one fettered prisoner.

In spite of this no hoar-frost was seen falling down below *Ch'ang-p'ing*, when the above related event took place.

We read in the '*Fu-hsing*' chapter <sup>1</sup> :

The people maltreated universally complained that they had not failed against the Ruler of Heaven <sup>2</sup>.

This means that *Ch'ih Yu's* subjects suffering under his vexations universally complained that they had not sinned against high Heaven. Since the complaints of a whole populace could not cause a fall of frost, the story about *Tsou Yen* is most likely fictitious also.

In the south it is extremely hot : the sand burns, stones crumble into dust, and father and son bathe in the same water. In the north it is bitterly cold : water turns into ice, the earth cracks, and father and son huddle together in the same den. *Yen* is situated in the north. *Tsou Yen* was there in the 5th month of *Chou* <sup>3</sup>, which corresponds to the 3d month of the corrected year. p1.115 In the central provinces frost, and snow-falls are of frequent occurrence during the first and the second months. In the northern region, where it is very cold, frost may fall even during the third month, and that would not be an extraordinary phenomenon. Perhaps it was still cold in the north in the third month, and frost happened to fall, when by chance *Tsou Yen* gave vent to his feelings, which just coincided with the frost.

It has been recorded that in *Yen* there was the 'Cold Valley', where the five grains did not grow. *Tsou Yen* blew the flute, and the 'Cold Valley' became warm. Consequently *Tsou Yen* was able to make the air warm, and also to make it cold. How do we know that *Tsou Yen* did not communicate his grievances to his contemporaries, and instead manifested his sincerity through the heavenly fluid ? Did he secretly blow the flute in the valley of

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<sup>1</sup> The chapter on Punishments in the *Shuking*, now entitled *Lü-hsing*.

<sup>2</sup> *Shuking*, *Lü-hsing*, Pt. V, Bk. XXVII, 4 (*Legge*, Vol. III, Pt. II, p. 592).

<sup>3</sup> The *Chou* epoch. The *Chou* calendar began with the 11th month, the *Ch'in* calendar with the 10th. In 104 B. C. *Han Wu Ti* corrected the calendar, and made the year commence with the 1st month, so the *Chou* were 2 months ahead with their months.

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Yen, and make the air of the prison cold, imploring Heaven for that purpose ? For otherwise, why did the frost fall ?

*Fan Chü* <sup>1</sup> calumniated by *Hsü Chia* was most disgracefully treated by *Wei Ch'i*, had his back broken, and his ribs doubled up. *Chang Yi* <sup>2</sup> while travelling in *Ch'u*, was arrested by the prime minister of *Ch'u*, and beaten, until the blood ran out. The way in which these two gentlemen were maltreated has been narrated by the Great Annalist <sup>3</sup>. The imprisonment of *Tsou Yen* resembles the adventures of *Fan Chü* and *Chang Yi*. Why does *Sse Ma Ch'ien* omit to mention this ? Since it is not mentioned in *Tsou Yen*'s biography that during his imprisonment he caused the frost to fall, it must be an invention, and a random statement like the story of Prince *Tan* <sup>4</sup>, who is believed to have ordered the sun to return to the <sub>p1.116</sub> meridian <sup>5</sup>, and Heaven to rain grain. Thus we may assume that the story about the frost falling down upon *Tsou Yen* imploring Heaven is untrue, and that the report of the wife of *Ch'i Liang* causing the city wall to collapse is false.

When *Tun-mou* <sup>6</sup> rebelled, the Viscount *Hsiang* of *Chao* <sup>7</sup> led an army against it to invest it. When his soldiers had arrived at the foot of the city wall, more than one hundred feet of this wall of *Tun-mou* crumbled down. Viscount *Hsiang* thereupon sheathed his sword, and went back. If the wife of

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<sup>1</sup> A native of *Wei* of humble origin, who first served under *Hsü Chia*, and accompanied him on a mission to the court of King *Hsiang* of *Ch'i* (696-683). This prince appreciating *Fan Chü* for his great dialectical skill, sent him some presents. *Hsü Chia* presuming that *Fan Chü* had betrayed some State secrets of *Wei*, denounced his servant to the premier of *Wei*, *Wei Ch'i*, who had him beaten almost to death. *Fan Chü* was then wrapped in a mat, and thrown into a privy, where the drunken guests urinated upon him. Still he managed to escape, and later on became minister in *Ch'in*.

<sup>2</sup> Also a native of the *Wei* State from a poor family, who played a very important political rôle in *Ch'in* and *Wei*. In his youth, he was suspected in *Ch'u* of having stolen a valuable gem, and severely beaten. Died 310 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> *Shi-chi* chap. 79 and 70.

<sup>4</sup> Prince *Tan* of *Yen* was detained as a hostage in the *Ch'in* State. Its sovereign promised with an oath to set him free, when the sun returned to the meridian, and Heaven rained grain, when the crows got white heads, and the horses, horns, and when the wooden elephants, decorating the kitchen door, got legs of flesh. Heaven helped the Prince, and brought about these wonders, when *Tan* was released, or, as others say, he made his escape in 230 B. C. The story is narrated in *Lun-hêng* V, 7 (*Kan-hsü*).

<sup>5</sup> The same is said of *Hsin Yuan Ping* (*Shi-chi* chap. 28 p. 19v).

<sup>6</sup> A city in *Honan*.

<sup>7</sup> 456-424 B. C.

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*Ch'i Liang* caused the collapse of the city wall by her tears, was there anybody crying among *Hsiang Tse's* men ? When *Ch'in* was about to be extinguished, a city gate collapsed inside, and when the house of *Ho Kuang*<sup>1</sup> was going to ruin, a wall of the palace was demolished of itself. Who was weeping in the *Ch'in* palace, or crying in the house of *Ho Kuang* ? The collapse of the gate, and the demolition of the wall were signs of the catastrophe awaiting *Ch'in* and *Ho*.

Perhaps at the time, when the *Ch'i* State<sup>2</sup> was about to be subverted, the wife of *Ch'i Liang* happened to cry at the foot of the wall, just as *Tsou Yen* chanced to cry to Heaven, when it was still very cold in the *Yen* State. There was a correspondence of events and a concordance of time. Eye-witnesses and people who heard about it, most likely were of this opinion. Moreover, provided that the city wall was old, and the house-wall, rotten, there must have been a collapse, and a destruction. If the tears of one woman could make 50 feet of the wall tumble down, the wall must have been such, that one might have pushed a beam of 30 feet into it with one finger.

During the Spring and Autumn period several mountains were transformed in an extraordinary way. Mountains and walls belong to the same class. If tears subvert a city wall, can they demolish a mountain also ? If somebody in white mourning like a woman p<sub>1.117</sub> cries so, that his tears flow like rivers, people generally believe that a city wall can collapse through these tears, and regard it as quite the proper thing. But *Ch'i Liang* died during the campaign, and did not return. His wife went to meet him. The Prince of *Lu* offered his condolence on the road, which his wife did not accept. When the coffin had arrived in her house, the Prince of *Lu* condoled with her again<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> A faithful servant of the Emperor *Han Wu Ti*, who appointed him Regent for his minor son, *Chao Ti*. He died in 68 B. C. His family was mixed up in a palace intrigue aiming at the deposition of the reigning emperor, which was discovered, when all the members of his family were exterminated.

<sup>2</sup> Instead of *Ch'i* [], an old feudal State in *Honan*, we ought probably to read [], the name of the *Ch'i* State in *Shantung*, of which *Ch'i Liang* was a native.

<sup>3</sup> We learn from the *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Hsiang* 23rd year (550 B. C.) (*Legge, Classics* Vol. V, Pt. II, p. 504) [[Couvreur](#), p. 405-406] and from the *Liki, T'an Kung* Pt. III, 1 (*Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 188* [[Couvreur](#)]) that, when the bier of *Ch'i Liang* was brought home to *Ch'i*, the Marquis of *Ch'i, Chuang*, sent an officer to present his condolences, but the widow declined them, because the road was not the proper place to accept condolences. The Marquis then sent them to her house. The 'Prince of Lu' of

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She did not say a word, and cried at the foot of the wall. As a matter of fact, her husband had died in the campaign, therefore he was not in the wall, and, if his wife cried turned towards the city wall, this was not the right place. In short, it is again an unfounded assertion that the wife of *Ch'i Liang* caused the city wall to tumble down by her tears <sup>1</sup>.

On this principle of sympathetic actions a white halo encircled the sun, when *Ching K'o* stabbed the king of *Ch'in* <sup>2</sup>, and *Venus* eclipsed the *Pleiades*, when the scholar from *Wei* drew up the stratagem of *Ch'ang p'ing* for *Ch'in* <sup>3</sup>. This again is an absurdity. When *Yü Tse* <sup>4</sup> was planning the murder of Viscount *Hsiang*, and was lying under a bridge, *Hsiang Tse's* heart throbbed, as he approached the bridge. *Kuan Kao* <sup>5</sup> intended to murder *Kao Tsu*, and had concealed a man in the wall. When *Kao Tsu* arrived at *Po jen* <sup>6</sup>, his heart also beat high <sup>1</sup>. Those two individuals being about to stab the two princes, the hearts of the latter palpitated. If we reason in a proper way, we cannot admit that the princes were affected by the souls of the two assassins, and should we do so in the case of the king of *Ch'in*? When *Ching K'o* was preparing to stab him, the king's heart was not moved, but a white halo encircled <sub>p1.118</sub> the sun. This celestial phenomenon of a white halo encircling the sun happened of its own accord, and it was not the mind of *Ching K'o* which produced it.

*Mercury* between the constellations of the House and the *Heart* denotes an impending earth-quake. When an earth-quake is going to take place, *Mercury* corresponds to the House and the *Heart*. The offuscation of the *Pleiades* by *Venus* is like the position of *Mercury* between the House and the *Heart*. Therefore the assertion that the design of *Ch'ang p'ing*, devised by the scholar from *Wei*, caused *Venus* to eclipse the *Pleiades*, is very doubtful.

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our text is probably a misprint, for why should the prince of *Lu* condole in *Ch'i*?

<sup>1</sup> The *Lieh-nü-chuan* relates that *Ch'i Liang's* wife cried seven days over her husband's corpse under the city wall, until it collapsed, and then died by jumping into a river.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. chap. 25 and 26.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 1.114.

<sup>4</sup> *Yü Jang*, a native of the *Chin* State, who made an unsuccessful attempt on the life of Viscount *Hsiang* of *Chao*, who had killed his master, Earl *Chih*. Vid. chap. 22.

<sup>5</sup> A minister of *Chao*.

<sup>6</sup> A place in the prefecture of *Shun-tê fu* (*Chili*)

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When *Jupiter* injured the Bird <sup>2</sup> and the *Tail* stars <sup>3</sup>, *Chou* and *Ch'u* were visited with disasters, and when a feather-like fluid appeared, *Sung*, *Wei*, *Ch'ên*, and *Chêng* suffered misfortunes. At that time, *Chou* and *Ch'u* had not done any wrong, nor had *Sung*, *Wei*, *Ch'ên*, or *Chêng* committed any wickedness. However, *Jupiter* first occupied the place of the *Tail* star, and the fluid of misfortune, for a while, descended from heaven, whereupon *Chou* and *Ch'u* had their disasters, and *Sung*, *Wei*, *Ch'ên*, and *Chêng* suffered likewise at the same time. *Jupiter* caused injury to *Chou* and *Ch'u*, as the heavenly fluid did to the four States. Who knows but that the white halo encircling the sun, caused the attempt on the life of the king of *Ch'in*, and that *Venus* eclipsing the *Pleiades*, brought about the stratagem of *Ch'ang-p'ing* ?

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<sup>1</sup> This attempt on the life of *Han Kao Tsu* in 199 B. C. was frustrated.

<sup>2</sup> The star *Cor Hydra*, mentioned in the *Shuking* (cf. *Legge* Vol. III, Pt. I, p. 19.)

<sup>3</sup> The '*Tail*' is a constellation consisting of nine stars in the tail of *Scorpio*, the 6th of the 28 Solar Mansions.

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44. Book XV, Chap. II

*Chao-chih*

This chapter has been lost.

## 45. Book XV, Chap. III

### *Ming-yü. On the Rain Sacrifice*

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p2.327 Phenomenalists hold that long rain causes floods, and that long heat produces droughts. Droughts correspond to intense *Yang*, and floods to heavy downpours.

It may be argued that, in the course of a year, about every ten days it rains once, and every five days there is wind <sup>1</sup>. Long lasting rain forebodes a flood, and a long period of heat gradually conduces to a drought. However, during the time of a flood, the ruler of men must not, necessarily, be dripping, or during a drought, be burning hot. In his administration he remains the same before and after, and that at one time there is an inundation, at another dryness, is owing to the fluid of the season.

*Fan Li* <sup>2</sup> in his work 'Calculations' said,

The planet *Jupiter* being in the constellation *tse* <sup>3</sup>, water means destruction, metal a good harvest, wood a famine, and fire a drought.

Accordingly water, a drought, a famine, and a good harvest would follow the revolutions of *Jupiter*. *Jupiter* agrees with their terms, and the fluid of the season accords with their periods, yet the phenomenalists give their own explanations, and the sovereign, trusting their words, endeavours to find out his guilt and reform <sup>4</sup>. After a long time of heat, it rains of itself, and after much rain, sunshine reappears of itself. Then the phenomenalists point to the success achieved by the prince, who agrees with them and henceforth

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<sup>1</sup> The *Tai p'ing-yü-lan* chap. 11, p. 2v. quotes this passage but in a different form. The rule, here expressed, refers only to the time of general peace.

<sup>2</sup> A minister of *Yüeh*, cf. p. 1.310.

<sup>3</sup> = *Aries*, right north. Cf. the passage *Shi-chi* chap. 129, p. 3v.

<sup>4</sup> According to *Fan Li*, floods and droughts depend on the position of the planet *Jupiter*, whereas the phenomenalists believe these phenomena to be caused by the conduct of the sovereign. The passage of the *Shi-chi* seems defective.

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believes in their theories.

Had, for example, the sovereign kept quiet and not taken any trouble, nor searched for his own imaginary faults, Heaven would likewise have rained spontaneously, and rain would have been succeeded by sunshine as a matter of course. Even though, when <sup>p2.328</sup> the heat or the rain cease, the prince may have been inactive, phenomenologists still propound their devices, so that the fluids of the *Yang* and *Yin* would be regulated by man, and not depend upon Heaven. However, man cannot affect Heaven by his dealings, and Heaven does not pay heed to human actions and respond to them.

During the 'Spring and Autumn' period, the great Rain Sacrifice in *Lu* was an offering together with a prayer for rain in a time of dryness. When, after a long drought, it had not rained, they prayed and sacrificed to obtain happiness, as, in a case of serious illness, the spirits are sacrificed to, that they may dispel the calamity. All this aims at a return to the normal state.

The *Shiking* says that,

The moon approaches the Hyades, which will bring heavy showers of rain,

and in the *Shuking* we find the remark that

When the moon follows the stars, there is wind and rain <sup>1</sup>.

Accordingly, wind and rain would be dependent on this movement of the moon.

There are three ways parting from the 'House' constellation in different directions <sup>2</sup>. The sun and the moon in their courses pass on these ways, departing northward, they cause a flood, departing southward, a drought. Yet there are some who contend that their departure northward is followed by a drought, and the departure southward, by a flood. The moon is a sign for the whole world, whereas the 'House' constellation is a mark for the Nine

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.277, Notes 3 and 4.

<sup>2</sup> Three ways for the sun and the moon passing this constellation. They either continue their course, without deviating from the original direction, or they turn to the left or the right. Revert they cannot, else there might be four ways.



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Provinces <sup>1</sup>. The northerly and the southerly directions of the moon, therefore, do not concern *Lu* alone.

*Confucius*, on the point of going out, bade *Tse Lu* prepare his rain apparel, and, after a few minutes, in fact a great shower came down. *Tse Lu* asked for an explanation, and *Confucius* replied,

— Yesterday evening the moon approached the Hyades.

Later on, the moon had again approached the Hyades. *Confucius* going out, *Tse Lu* wished to prepare his rain apparel, but *Confucius* would not have it, and really it did not rain, after he had left. *Tse Lu* asked the reason.

— Formerly, said *Confucius*, the moon drew near <sup>p2.329</sup> the northern part, hence it rained. Yesterday evening the moon came near the southern part, therefore it did not rain <sup>2</sup>.

Consequently in *Lu* the rain depended on the approximation of the moon, and by no means on government. If it was really influenced by administrative measures, and if the moon approaching the Hyades was but a presage of rain, it was common to the whole world, and, when it rained in *Lu*, it should have done so everywhere on earth.

During the period of the Six States government was not everywhere the same, and rewards and punishments were meted out at different times by the various princes. Provided that rain is to respond to these administrative acts, then at least six or seven Hyades are necessary for the moon to approach.

Under the *régime* of Duke *Mu* of *Lu* <sup>3</sup> there was a year of drought. The duke addressed *Hsien Tse* saying,

— Heaven has sent dryness, and it does not rain. I would like to burn a sorcerer <sup>4</sup>. What do you think ?

*Hsien Tse* did not approve of this measure. The duke then proposed to shift

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<sup>1</sup> Certain regions of the sky are supposed to correspond to certain countries on the earth. The moon, wandering through the sky, is not connected with any places of our planet, and a sign for the whole world.

<sup>2</sup> The *Pei-wên-yün-fu* quotes this passage, chap. 66a.

<sup>3</sup> 407-377 B. C.

<sup>4</sup> Sorcerers are believed to be filled with the *Yang* fluid. Cf. p. 1.247, Note 2.

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the market to some other place.

— At the death of the son of Heaven, said *Hsien Tse*, it is the habit to hold the market in side-alleys for seven days, and, when a ruler of a State expires, this is done for five days. Wherefore should the market not be shifted ? <sup>1</sup>

According to these words of *Hsien Tse*, by shifting the market-place rain is obtained, whereas it appears from the text of the *Shiking* and the *Shuking* that the vicinity of the moon to a constellation has this result. The courses of the sun and the moon have their regular periods, would they approach the south of the Hyades on account of a market-place having been moved ? The moon and the Hyades are prognostics for the whole world, how could the shifting of a market-place in *Lu* cause the moon to alter its course ? The moon completes one circumvolution round the sky in thirty days, and within one month's time it once passes the Hyades. When it comes near its southern part, there is heat. Provided that the shifting of the market could have such an influence on the moon, that it approached the southern part of the <sup>p2.330</sup> Hyades, would rain be obtained, if at that time the market-place were moved ? The dictum of *Hsien Tse* cannot be accepted.

*Tung Chung Shu*, with a view to attracting rain, used the scheme of the *Ch'un-ch'iu* <sup>2</sup>, raising a hill and setting up a sacrifice. A father does not accept oblations from collateral branches of his descendants <sup>3</sup>, nor Heaven on low earth <sup>4</sup>. As to the rites of the rain-sacrifice of the princes, we ignore to which spirit it was offered. If it was to the Spirit of Heaven, Heaven would not receive an oblation but from the emperor, and would refuse those from the feudal lords or our present high officers. But unless a spirit accepted the sacrifice, how could its succour be obtained ? If the clouds and the rain were the recipients of the sacrifice, they are air. In what manner should the air of

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<sup>1</sup> Culled from the *Liki* (*T'an-kung* p. 80), [Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 202 \[Couvreur\]](#), where three days instead of five is written.

<sup>2</sup> In the *Ch'un-ch'iu* the great rain sacrifice is frequently mentioned.

<sup>3</sup> Only a son or a grandson may sacrifice to his ancestors.

<sup>4</sup> Therefore *Tung Chung Shu* raised a hill for his sacrifice. A sacrifice from the low earth would be as unacceptable to Heaven as an offering from collateral descendants to a deceased.

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clouds and rain smell and enjoy offerings ?

[It breaks through the atones one or two inches thick, and gathers. That in one day's time it spreads over the whole Empire is only the case with the *T'ai-shan*.] <sup>1</sup> From the *T'ai-shan* it rains over the whole Empire, from small mountains over States and cities. Such being the case, is the great Rain Sacrifice an offering to the mountains perhaps ? Were it really so, it would be ineffectual for the following reason : Water in different rivers and differing in height by some inches or lines, does not run together, unless led through artificial channels, nor mix, unless, by digging, a common water-level be produced. Suppose that a ruler of men were to pray and sacrifice on the banks of a river, would it be in his power to cause water of a higher level to mix with other water below ?

Even in the case of visible water of but slightly different level the prayers of a sovereign would be of no avail at all, and how about rain, which has no apparent form, hidden as it is in the depths of high mountains ? How could the rain sacrifice of a ruler elicit it ?

Rainy moisture is amidst heaven and earth, as tears are in the human body. If some one were to place wine and food before a kind-hearted person imploring him to shed tears, which he had not yet done, that kind-hearted gentleman would on no account <sup>p2.331</sup> comply with this request, because tears do not issue forth on being commanded. How then could rain be procured by supplication ?

The laments of *Yung Mên Tse* moved the prince of *Mêng Ch'ang* to tears <sup>2</sup>, and in consequence of the sorrowful speech of *Su Ch'in* and *Chang Yi* in the cavern, the tears of *Kuei Ku Tse* dropped down on his coat <sup>3</sup>. Is it possible then to affect Heaven by laments like those of *Yung Mên Tse*, or by words like those of *Su Ch'in* and *Chang Yi* ? The ears and the eyes of Heaven are very far away, and the fluid of sound does not reach it.

The wife of *Ch'i Liang* also cried pitifully, but, instead of raining, the city

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.277.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 2.178, Note 2.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 2.052.

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wall crumbled down. Then how can rain be produced, and which method do those performing the rain sacrifice employ to impress Heaven ?

When the moon proceeds on the northern way, and approaches the northern part of the Hyades, it nearly always rains. Accordingly, the Hyades must be situated on the northern way. But would this constellation of the northern way be willing to send down rain, in response to a rain sacrifice ?

When *Confucius* was going out, and calling upon *Tse Lu* to get his rain apparel ready, there certainly was no rain sacrifice offered in *Lu* simultaneously, and, notwithstanding, torrents of rain came down spontaneously, and without any prayer there was bright sunshine again of itself. Thus fine weather and rain have their times. In the course of a year, sunshine and rain alternate. When there is to be rain, who must pray for it, and, when there is to be sunshine, who can stop it ?

A ruler who listens to supplications and, to please his people, shows clemency, is not virtuous. Heaven possesses the highest degree of virtue. If, before the proper time for rain has come, somebody unreasonably prayed for it, and if then Heaven recklessly sent it down, it would be on a level with a prince yielding to solicitations.

Phenomenalists do not argue or investigate the question by analogies, and setting forth their preposterous theories, they deceive the sovereigns. Either the time of rain has not yet come, and a virtuous prince prays for it in vain, or it just must rain of its own accord, and a wicked prince praying for rain just hits upon the right moment. Then the virtuous ruler receives unjust reproof, and the bad one gains undeserved praise.

p2.332 The world considers sages to be perfect, whereas worthies have their imperfections. The dealings of perfect men are irreproachable, and being irreproachable, their government is faultless. Among the sage rulers of all the ages none can vie with *Yao* and *T'ang*. Yet *Yao* was visited with the Great Flood, and *T'ang* with the Great Drought. If this be regarded as the outcome of their government, then *Yao* and *T'ang* must have been two iniquitous rulers, if, however, their government be not answerable, then it was mere luck. Luck has its time, and cannot be prayed for.

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People reasoning on these subjects, pretend, in regard to the Flood and the Drought of *Yao* and *T'ang*, that they were the result of the season, but that small droughts and floods are due to government. Provided that this view be correct, what is to be done to procure a rainfall ? If it is really caused by government, a recourse to prayer instead of mending the defects of the administration could not bring about a change. If, on the other hand, the Flood and the Drought of *Yao* and *T'ang* were the effect of the revolution of the celestial fluid, and not the upshot of government, as they say, then the time of this revolution cannot but be spontaneous, and any sacrifices or prayers would be of no advantage whatever.

There is another report that *T'ang*, having prayed in a mulberry grove, acknowledging five faults, forthwith obtained rain <sup>1</sup>. Believing in the revolution of the fluid, one cannot uphold the story of the mulberry grove, and maintaining the truth of this story, one must discard the notion of a revolution of luck. How can those holding either of these views escape from this *impasse*, and which means should be taken to avert water or dryness ?

Of these calamitous changes there are two kinds, I should say : calamities in consequence of bad government and disasters without any guilt. In case of calamities of the first kind, one must search for the cause and try to remove it, and though these endeavours prove ineffectual, they at least show the compassion of the sovereign, his kind solicitude for his people, and his inability to help. Such is the conduct of a loving father towards his son and of a dutiful son towards his parent. Though knowing that in case of a sickness it is useless to immolate to the spirits, and that against great pains medicines are in vain, and though aware that a disease is incurable, and all treatment of no avail, yet they do not let things go and await the end ; they still consult the <sup>p2.333</sup> tortoise and milfoil, inquire after evil influences, and call persons qualified to prepare medicines. Their compassionateness and affectionate devotion makes them still hope for a result.

When death has come, and life is extinguished, so that there remains nothing to be done, they climb upon the ridge of their house, and with a

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 2.016, Note 4.

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garment beckon to the departed to revert <sup>1</sup>. In their sorrow and deep love, they will not give up the hope that the dead may become aware of it. The feelings of those who make oblations for rain are like the sentiments of a loving father or a dutiful son.

Of calamities without any guilt people know nothing, and lay them to the charge of the ruler. Those governing, in order to comply with the wishes of the people, in this case offer sacrifice likewise.

A question as to the difference of a calamity caused by government and a disaster without anybody's guilt I should answer thus : When virtue is flourishing <sup>2</sup>, and the government well ordered, and a disaster happens all the same, no one is responsible for it. When virtue is declining, and government disorganised, and some catastrophe takes place, the government is responsible. In the last instance, there is a sacrifice without and reforms within, to make good the damage. In the former instance, the old style of government is continued within, and the sacrificial rites are discharged without, to comfort the people.

Undeserved ill-luck has happened in all ages. When it comes one must remain faithful to one's principles, and not change the government. How do we know ? We learn it from the words, addressed by the Duke of *Chou* to King *Ch'êng*, concerning the establishment of government.

[ Sometimes things will interfere. Then stick to your words and your speech, and let us be thinking of officers of complete virtue, to regulate the people whom we have received.] <sup>3</sup>

The establishment of the government by the Duke of <sup>p2.334</sup> *Chou* must be admitted to be most considerate. He was aware that extraordinary accidents are not to be avoided by liberality. Therefore he admonished the king to stick

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<sup>1</sup> A garment of the deceased is used, that the soul may slip into it and return. This custom is very old. The three Rituals : *Liki*, *I-li*, and *Chou-li* give minute prescriptions about it. They are found in [De Groot, Religious System Vol. I, p. 243 seq.](#) in a special chapter 'Calling back the soul of the dead'.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 2.222, Note 5.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from the *Shuking* Part V, Book XIX, 16-17 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part II, p. 518](#)) [[Couvreur](#), ! 16]. To the first part of this clause *Legge* gives quite a different interpretation : 'And let us never allow others to come between us and them. Yea, in our every word and speech let us be thinking ...'.

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to his word and, since the administration was unimpeachable, not to introduce any changes. Extraordinary events might interfere, but they were not caused by any recklessness.

The wet fluid interfered with *Yao*, and the dry one, with *T'ang*. King *Hsüan* of *Chou* <sup>1</sup>, generous as he was, met with a long drought, and at the commencement and the end of the *Chien-ch'u* period <sup>2</sup>, all the northern provinces had to suffer from a continued drought. The cattle died, the people were famished and driven from their homes, reduced to poverty. The views of our sage Lord occupying the Imperial Throne, were most liberal and enlightened, and under him the officials all discharged their duties. It was obviously a time of universal peace, and not the slightest deficiency was to be discovered in the government. And yet the dry fluid rushed in. The wise ruler understood the state of affairs, and did not change the mode of government, but he sent about grain, to be distributed among the poor, and he used his affluence, to help the indigent. This displayed his clear insight, and thus those charged with the relief work did all they could.

Duke *Wên* of *Lu* was visited with a great drought one year <sup>3</sup>. *Tsang Wên Chung* <sup>4</sup> suggested that he should repair the inner and outer walls, making economies by reducing his expenses, practising frugality, and calling upon the people to contribute. *Tsang Wên Chung* was alive to the fact that government was not responsible for the drought, hence he confined himself to building the walls, without altering the administration.

The phenomenologists witnessing a sudden change, do not hesitate to ascribe it to government, paying no regard to its innocence, and viewing an extraordinary event, in their alarm and confusion, they change their proceedings, and, by changing what should not be altered, they merely bring down misfortune upon themselves.

On what do they base their affirmation that the rain sacrifice is

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<sup>1</sup> 827-782 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> 76-83 A. D.

<sup>3</sup> According to the *Ch'un-ch'iu* *Lu* had to suffer great dryness in the second and in the tenth year of Duke *Wên* *i. e.*, in 625 [[Couvreur](#), § 5] and 617 B. C. [[Couvreur](#), § 4].

<sup>4</sup> A scholar and officer of *Lu*.

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necessary? They contend that respecting the great rain sacrifice of the *Ch'un-ch'iu* the commentators *Kung Yang* as well as *Ku Liang*, p2.335 in their comments, have no word of criticism, whence it is obvious that the rain sacrifice must be performed.

*Tsêng Hsi* in reply to a question of *Confucius* as to his wishes said,

[— At the eve of spring, when the spring dress is ready, along with five or six young men who have assumed the cap, and six or seven boys, I would dash through the *Yi*, carol among the dancing performers of the rain sacrifice <sup>1</sup>, and with songs make my offering <sup>2</sup>.

*Confucius* replied,

— I agree with *Tien*.] <sup>3</sup>

In *Lu* they used to hold the rain sacrifice on the banks of the *Yi*. The 'eve' is synonymous with late. Spring denotes the fourth moon; that the spring dress is ready means to say that the dress for the fourth moon is ready. Young men with caps and boys are those gamboling at the rain sacrifice. To dash through the *Yi* signifies to wade through its water in imitation of dragons rising from the water <sup>4</sup>. To carol among the dancing performers of the rain sacrifice is the same as to sing. With songs to make offerings means to sing hymns, and make some oblation for the sacrifice *i. e.*, to sing and sacrifice.

Some critics are of opinion that *yü* (to dash) means to bathe in the *Yi* river, and *fêng* (to carol) to dry the body. The fourth month of the *Chou* dynasty corresponds to the second month of the corrected year <sup>5</sup>. Then it is still cold, and no proper time for bathing or drying the body in the wind. Consequently wading through water, but evidently not bathing was a part of the rain sacrifice.

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<sup>1</sup> *Legge* translates: 'enjoy the breeze among the rain altars'. See Note 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Legge*: 'and return home singing'.

<sup>3</sup> *Analects XI, 25*, VII [*Couvreur*]. Cf. p. 1.520. I had to remodel my translation of the first volume, borrowed from *Legge*, in order to agree with *Wang Ch'ung's* comments.

<sup>4</sup> *Legge* has 'to wash', adding in his notes that this word is used with reference to a custom of washing the hands and clothes at some stream, to drive away evil influences.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. p. 1.114, Note 8.



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In *Tso Ch'iu Ming's* commentary to the *Ch'un-ch'iu* it is said that, when the torpid insects begin to stir, it is time for the rain sacrifice, and also that, when the Dragon appears, the rain sacrifice p2.336 is offered <sup>1</sup>. The insects begin to move, and the Dragon becomes visible in the second month. The second month of spring is the time for the rain sacrifice, and the eighth month of autumn likewise. In spring they sue for grain rain, and in autumn, that the grain may bear fruit. Our present worship of the *Ling* constellation is the autumnal rain sacrifice. The vernal sacrifice has fallen into desuetude, and only the autumnal one remains. Thus the invocation of the *Ling* constellation is the yearly rain sacrifice <sup>2</sup>.

*Confucius* said 'I agree with *Tien*'. He approves of his wish to offer the rain sacrifice and harmonize the *Yin* and *Yang*. In this he concurs with him. If the rain sacrifice had not been proper, and *Tien* wished to have it performed, *Confucius* would have been obliged to reprove him instead of giving his assent.

*Fan Ch'ih* rambling with the master, was impressed by the rain sacrifice and asked the pertinent question why in *Lu* they did not exalt virtue, and merely cared for the rain sacrifice <sup>3</sup>. This sacrifice is of very old origin, for the *Liki* says that the rain sacrifice is an offering made in times of inundation and drought. Consequently it is based on custom. *Confucius* did not criticize it, and it was set forth by *Tung Chung Shu*. The rain sacrifice is an established rite. In the same manner as the rain sacrifice is based on custom, in case of high water drums are beaten, and animals immolated at the altars of the land, also an old custom. There being such a ceremony, it cannot be wrong <sup>4</sup>. This is the first justification of the rain sacrifice.

It is customary to sacrifice. We acknowledge the merits of the spirits of the land which produce all things. But the earth is of great extent, and it becomes difficult to sacrifice everywhere. Therefore the altars of the land

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<sup>1</sup> *Tso-chuan* to Duke *Huan* 5th year [[Couvreur](#)]. See also p. 1.520.

<sup>2</sup> *Legge* puts quite a different construction upon the words of *Tso Ch'iu Ming loc. cit.* See *Classics* Vol. V, Part I, p. 46, Note 7.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. [Analects XII, 21](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>4</sup> A strange argument.

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have been erected as centres of devout worship. Floods and droughts are the fluids of the *Yin* and *Yang*. Since they spread everywhere, it is difficult to sacrifice to all. Whence altars have been built to represent them, where they are implored with the greatest reverence. The worship is analogous to that of the spirits of the land, and with a view to removing calamitous events.

The dead are worshipped like the living, and ghosts, as though they were men. If the original fluid of the *Yin* and the <sup>p2.337</sup> *Yang* be like living man, can it eat and drink ? Under this supposition they are presented with perfumes, and offered the choicest dishes, all with the greatest care, with the hope that these offerings will be requited. This analogy with the sacrifices to the spirits of the land is the second justification for the rain sacrifice.

While the fluids of the year are in harmony, no calamities ensue ; still they prepare the rain sacrifice. The worship of the 'Ling' constellation is a very ancient custom, moreover the fluid of the year may suddenly change, and freshets and droughts are not subject to time, which accounts for the extreme fear of the ruler of men. Therefore, in addition to the oblations made to the 'Ling' constellation, they still offer the rain sacrifice with the idea that, should the former rites have been insufficient, the deficiency may be supplemented by repeating the sacrifice on a second day, and with a view to making good again the disaster caused by the calamity, and being rewarded with an abundant harvest. This is the third reason.

At a religious ceremony the heart feels distressed, and, when music is made, it is cheerful. The distressed disclose their sentiments by offering jewels and brocade, and the cheerful give expression to their feelings with bells and drums. The prayers at the rain sacrifice testify to the sincerity of the sovereign, but this sincerity resides in the heart, and does not become manifest without. Therefore all the alarm and anxiety is manifested by the rain sacrifice, and the previous sincerity of the heart thus revealed, which is the meaning of jewels and brocade, bells and drums <sup>1</sup>. This is the fourth argument.

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<sup>1</sup> Jewels and brocade are offered in sacrifice, and bells and drums sounded. The *Liki*, *Yüeh-ling*, p. 50v. ([Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 274](#)) [[Couvreur](#)] states that the instruments of music are employed at the great summer sacrifice for rain.

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A subject having offended against his sovereign, and a son having failed against his father, reform, when they are punished, and, moreover, acknowledge their guilt. Provided that droughts, which cause such an alarm, be brought about by government, then it would be like the offence of a subject, or the guilt of a son. If then the administration were quietly changed, and the proceedings stealthily altered, it would not appear without, and Heaven's anger could not be appeased. Therefore the rain sacrifice is necessary to show the anxiety. That is the fifth argument.

p2.338 The *Han* established the office of scholars of great learning who were to teach the youth the art of disputation with the object of probing every question to the bottom, and exposing the right and wrong principles. They were not to raise unnecessary difficulties, nor always to acquiesce, neither were they to be lavish of bitter criticisms, nor to give a sweet reply, whatever they heard. They guide the talents of their disciples, now bending them down, now raising them up, but for their benefit. Grinding a sword, we do not cut the whetstone, our only wish being to make it pointed <sup>1</sup>. By expounding the meaning of the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, we endeavour to elucidate the rain sacrifice, examining the view of *Confucius*, and scrutinising the ideas of *Tung Chung Shu*. Since *Confucius* is no more, and *Tung Chung Shu* is also dead, to whom in the world can we apply for instruction ? None but disciples of *Confucius* and followers of *Tung Chung Shu* <sup>2</sup> are qualified to give a satisfactory answer.

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<sup>1</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* seems to imply that he acts like the scholars of great learning, that his criticisms do not exceed the right measure, but are necessary to bring out the truth.

<sup>2</sup> Our author, obviously, claims to be such a disciple.

## 46. Book XV, Chap. IV

### *Shun-ku. Gentle Drums*

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p2.339 According to the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, [in time of high water the drums were beaten, and animals immolated at the altars of the spirits of the land] <sup>1</sup>. The expositors of the Classic hold that the drums symbolise an attack or compulsion, which is equivalent to an attack. The *Yang* <sup>2</sup> being paramount, the spirits of the land are attacked, to deliver people from the calamity.

Some one might object that an attack upon the spirits implies victory and defeat, and that such a measure cannot be in accordance with justice. A ruler of men honours Heaven like his father and Earth like his mother. In case the kindred of his mother had done mischief, would he attack his mother, in order to help his subjects ? He whose government is deficient and who throws the *Yin* and the *Yang* into disorder, is the sovereign. If, to restore order, instead of attacking himself, he violated all laws, and offended against august Heaven and Earth, would they bring him relief ?

Provided that an inundation injured Heaven, but that it were not injured by Earth, then the water might be warded off ; but now things have to suffer from the water. All the various things together are much inferior to Earth, and to violate her sacred body would be contrary to all principles <sup>3</sup>. The critics of the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, however, are unable to raise these objections.

Rain issues from mountains and flows into rivers <sup>4</sup>. Mountains and rivers are, therefore, nearly related to inundations. Yet when high water causes disaster, they do not attack mountains or rivers.

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, Duke *Chuang* 25th year [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> I suppose that *Yin* should be written here, for at times of great floods the *Yin*, and not the *Yang* fluid preponderates. See below p. 345 seq.

<sup>3</sup> It would be improper to hurt the sacred body of Earth, by attacking the spirits of the land, merely for the sake of the various things injured by an inundation. Neither Heaven nor Earth are materially affected by floods.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 1.277.

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The altars of the land are earth. As regards the nature of the Five Elements, water and earth are quite dissimilar. When <sup>p2.340</sup> water does evil, earth is attacked. Earth is stronger than water. This is the idea underlying the attack upon the spirits of the land.

Is it not like the workmen of our time using a hammer and a chisel ? With the hammer they beat the chisel, and make it enter the wood. Now, by attacking earth, do they cause it to subdue water ?

Furthermore, the object of attacking the spirits of the land is to assault the kindred of the *Yin* <sup>1</sup>. Suppose that *A* is a robber who has wounded people. *A* is there and has not fled, but the injured let him go and attack *B*. Would they stop *A* from committing more crimes in this way ? Rain is water, and the water is there, but in lieu of assaulting water, they attack the spirits of the land.

When Heaven is going to rain, the mountains first emit clouds, which gather and become rain. The rain flows and becomes water. Thus the mountains are the parents, and water is their progeny. In capital punishment even relatives are implicated, but does the punishment attain ascendants and descendants only, or even the friends of the criminal ? If mountains and water as well as the altars of the land are held to be related to rain, which of them are the nearest relatives <sup>2</sup> ? The altars of the land are earth. The fluids of the Five Elements are different and vary very much <sup>3</sup>.

In the time of *T'ai Mou* of the *Yin* dynasty a mulberry and a paper-mulberry grew together. Some say that *Kao Tsung* terrified began to practise virtue with stooping body. He would ponder over the government of former kings, illustrate the principle of feeding the old, regenerate extinguished States, re-establish the succession of extinct princely houses, and raise obscure scholars. Upon this the two trees died, and he enjoyed his government for a long time. This story was universally known in the 'Spring

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<sup>1</sup> Heaven is *Yang* and Earth is *Yin* and so far the kindred of water which is *Yin* also.

<sup>2</sup> Mountains and water of course, the parents and the progeny of rain as *Wang Ch'ung* puts it.

<sup>3</sup> Therefore earth and water should not be interchanged, nor earth be made responsible for inundations.

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and Autumn' period. Floods are not different from the extraordinary phenomenon of the mulberry trees, yet the king of *Yin* changed his government, whereas in the *Ch'un-ch'iu* era they attacked the spirits of the land. The two methods are conflicting ; which of them must be followed ?

In the time of King *Ch'êng* of *Chou*, a tempest broke loose over the empire, with thunder and rain. The grain lay down, p2.341 trees were uprooted, and the damage was enormous. King *Ch'êng* opened the book from the metal-bound coffer, to inquire what was to be done, and about the merit of the Duke of *Chou*. He held the book in his hands with tears in his eyes, and lo ! the rain ceased, and the wind stopped. The grain rose again, and the big trees were raised up again <sup>1</sup>.

Great rain and continual floods are of the same nature. King *Ch'êng* changed his faults, and in the *Ch'un-ch'iu* period they attacked the spirits of the land. Since the views of the two Classics disagree, what is to be done ?

When insects eat the grain of the crops, those well versed in the calendar, cause the officers, whom they liken to the insects, to be flogged and maltreated, for the purpose of removing the calamity <sup>2</sup>. If we thoroughly go into the question, we find that this is not right, but it is done out of regards to the public feeling.

Now, is it the government which brings about the rain, or the officers ? If neither the government is changed, nor the officers are punished, and merely the spirits of the land attacked, how can this put a stop to the rain ?

Provided that the same kind must be attacked, then the moon is the essence of all the *Yin*. When we hold up a moon-mirror towards the moon, water comes down <sup>3</sup>. The moon approaching the Hyades or leaving the constellation of the 'House' from the north, it nearly always inevitably rains <sup>4</sup>. The animals in the moon are the hare and the toad <sup>5</sup>. Their counterparts on earth are snails and corn-weevils. When the moon is eclipsed in the sky,

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 17 seq.

<sup>2</sup> For more details on this peculiar custom see chap. 49.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 2.351 and *Huai nan Tse* III, 2r.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 2.328.

<sup>5</sup> See p. 1.268.

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snails and corn-weevils decrease on earth, which proves that they are of the same kind <sup>1</sup>. When it rains without ceasing, one attacks all that belongs to the *Yin*. To obtain a result one ought to hunt and kill hares and toads, and smash snails and corn-weevils.

When locusts appear, they either pass flying or they alight, and wherever they alight, all grain and grass wither and die. The officers and underlings direct the people to draw furrows and dig moats, and with rattles to drive the locusts into them. There they p2.342 scrape together heaps of locusts, thousands and thousands of bushels, but, although they attack the locusts themselves, they cannot stop them. Now, what would be the effect of an attack upon the kind of the *Yin* ? How could rain be checked thereby ?

We read in the *Shang-shu ta-chuan* <sup>2</sup> :

When there are inauspicious vapours, and the sacrifices to Heaven and Earth are neglected, mountains and rivers not prayed to, wind and rain not in season, and frost and snow fail to come down, the minister of Heaven is held answerable. When officers frequently assassinate their prince, and illegitimate sons murder their progenitor, the five relationships being in discord, the minister of Men is made responsible. When the city walls are not refitted, and ditches and moats in bad repair, the springs not flowing, and the people visited with floods, then the minister of Earth bears the responsibility.

The king as well as the three ministers <sup>3</sup> all have their functions, and the princes, lords, and high officers all have their special duties. Now floods are

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 2.004.

<sup>2</sup> It is a work written by *Fu Shêng*, the preserver of the *Shuking* of the 2nd and 3rd cent. B. C. Cf. p. 1.447, Note 2, and *Giles, Bibl. Dict.* No. 599. According to *Chang Chih Tung's* Bibliography the work is still in existence.

<sup>3</sup> This expression usually denotes the three chief ministers of the *Chou* dynasty : [] Grand Tutor, [] Grand Assistant, and [] Grand Protector, mentioned in the *Shuking* Part V, Book XX, 5 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part II, p. 527](#)) [[Couvreur](#)]. The titles given to them in the *Shang-shu ta-chuan* : minister of Heaven, of Men, and of Earth, seem not to occur elsewhere ; the *Pei-wên-yün-fu* ignores them. They bear some resemblance to the 'officer of Heaven' and the 'officer of Earth' of the *Chou-li*, who have been identified with the 'prime minister' and the 'minister of Instruction' of the *Shuking*. Cf. *Legge, loc. cit.* p. 528, Notes 7 and 8.

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not laid at the charge of lords and high officers, but drums are beaten, and the spirits of the land attacked. How do we know but that this is wrong and that *Lu* acted contrary to the rites ? *Confucius* writing the Classic mentioned the incident as a warning against malpractices. *Kung Yang Kao* <sup>1</sup> could not fathom it, and *Tung Chung Shu*, not determine its meaning, so that, p2.343 at present, the idea of attacking the spirits of the land is again being put forward.

If *Kung Yang Kao* were still alive, and *Tung Chung Shu* not dead, we might nonplus them with the following argument : When, after a long rain, the waters rise and flow over, who is responsible for it ? If it be the ruler, then he must change his government, and amend his dealings, to stop them. If it be his ministers, they must suffer the penalties of their crimes, to appease Heaven. Should it be neither the sovereign nor his ministers, but the fluids of the *Yin* and *Yang* viz. their fortuitous revolutions, of what use would be the beating of drums and the attacking of the spirits of the land ?

In the 'Remarks on the *Ch'un-ch'iu*' <sup>2</sup> it is said :

The sovereign boiling over, causes droughts, plunged in dissipation, he causes floods.

Accordingly, in times of drought, one must commit acts of dissipation, and, in case of floods, proceed in a hot-headed way. Why then attack the spirits of the land ? This attack is inexplicable. Besides they draw round red silk, which is likewise unaccountable <sup>3</sup>. They endeavour to explain it by the supposition that the altars correspond to the *Yin*, and red to the *Yang*. Water, being *Yin*, becomes surrounded by the colour of *Yang*, which cooperates with the drums in bringing relief.

If a big mountain catches fire and is sprinkled with water from a pool, every one knows the uselessness of such a measure, because the fire is much

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<sup>1</sup> In his commentary to the above quoted passage of the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, *Kung Yang* says that the ceremony was correct.

<sup>2</sup> Apparently a work on the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, but not enumerated in the Catalogue of the *Hou Han-shu*.

<sup>3</sup> *Kung Yang loc. cit.* refers to this custom and gives a similar explanation as here given.



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too intense, and the water too little to quench the flames. Now, the inundation of a State is like a big mountain on fire. To draw such a silken thread round the altars of the spirits of the land for help, would be like sprinkling a big mountain with water from a pool.

To understand the mind of Heaven, one takes human thoughts as a starting point, and to form an idea of Heaven's government, one considers human actions <sup>1</sup>. At a battle, victory cannot be won, unless the combatants try conclusions man to man, and measure swords. Now, if in a State suffering from floods they really wished to attack the *Yang*, in order to extinguish the fluid, and if they sent forth all their men, armed with spears, and swords in hand, p2.344 to smite it, as at the end of the year, they expel sickness, then perhaps a success might be achieved. When in the struggle between *Ch'u* and *Han* <sup>2</sup> and in the time of the Six States, they flew to arms, the stronger held the field, and the weaker were defeated. If one man alone assaults the spirits, beating the drum, without force of arms, what can he do against the rain ?

Sunshine and rain are like day and night, and met with as *Yao* and *T'ang* encountered the flood and the drought. They are also like summer and winter. Should anybody desire to sacrifice to them, according to human custom, in order to check their changes, trying to turn winter into summer, or night into day, would he be successful ? In case that it rains uninterruptedly, and that the sovereign quietly reclines on his high couch, the rain stops, all the same, of itself, and after having stopped for a long time, so that a great dryness has been the consequence, it also begins to rain afresh, spontaneously, even though the sovereign remains inactive on his pillows. Why ? Because the *Yang* having reached its climax, suddenly turns into the *Yin*, and the *Yin* having gone to extremes, again turns into the *Yang*.

How do we know but that the floods of heaven and earth are like the 'water sickness' of mankind, and whether a drought is not like jaundice among men ? By prayers and supplications for happiness they are not to be cured, and a change of conduct or reforms are of no avail. By using a

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.287.

<sup>2</sup> The struggle between *Hsiang Yü* who had made himself king of *Ch'u* and *Liu Pang*, the later *Han Kao Tsu*.

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physician and taking medicines, they may perhaps still be cured, but, when life is at an end, and one's time is up, no doctor and no medicine can help.

The Great Flood, which *Yao* fell in with, is the high water of the *Ch'un-ch'iu*. The wise ruler understood its nature, and did not invoke the spirits, or change his government, but he employed *Yü*, to regulate the water and make all the rivers run eastward. *Yao's* employment of *Yü* for the regulation of the water is like a dropsical man's recourse to a doctor. The Great Flood of *Yao*, therefore, is the 'water sickness' of heaven and earth, and *Yü*, regulating the water, was the clever doctor of the Great Flood. Wherefore did the critics change all this ? The attack on the spirits of the land is not justified by facts.

In case of incessant rain, they sacrifice to *Nü Wa* <sup>1</sup>. The Rites know nothing of this. *Fu Hsi* and *Nü Wa* were both sages ; that, p2.345 omitting *Fu Hsi*, *Nü Wa* is to be sacrificed to, is not stated in the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, on what then does *Tung Chung Shu* base his suggestion ? <sup>2</sup>

The Classic of the 'Spring and Autumn' speaks of drums only ; why does that mean to attack ? The critics reading the word 'drums', imagine that it means attacking, but drums need not necessarily refer to an attack. This view of the critics is erroneous.

[The head of the *Chi* family was richer than the duke of *Chou* had been, and yet *Ch'iu* collected his imposts for him, and increased his wealth. *Confucius* said,

— He is no disciple of mine. My children, you may beat the drum and scold <sup>3</sup> him.] <sup>4</sup>

Scolding means reproof, and reproof, recriminating. From the mutual armed attacks of the Six States an objection cannot be derived here <sup>5</sup>. But this course would likewise be improper <sup>6</sup>. For a mean person to reprove an

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<sup>1</sup> See below p. 2.347.

<sup>2</sup> The suggestion that *Nü Wa* should be sacrificed to.

<sup>3</sup> The same word which in the foregoing discussions is used in the sense of attacking.

<sup>4</sup> [Analects XI, 16](#) [[Couvreur](#)]. Cf. p. 2.055.

<sup>5</sup> The objection that [a] should be taken in the sense of 'attack' in the passage of the *Analects*, as it must be understood in regard to the struggles of the Six States.

<sup>6</sup> The word [a], used concerning the high water sacrifice, cannot be explained by

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exalted one, is impertinent <sup>1</sup>. But may be that in reproving he acts under instructions from Heaven. The emperor treats Earth as his mother. A mother having committed some fault, can her son be charged by his father to reprove her? As to explanations of that sort between inferiors and superiors, a subject has solely the right to remonstrate, whereas the ruler may reprove and recriminate. Why then violate all the rules of propriety?

It is a human custom to reinforce cries and intensify shouts by drums. Of old, when a ruler was about to go out, bells were struck and drums beaten, to frighten and warn off low class people <sup>2</sup>. If drums were really beaten for the purpose of assailing the spirits of the land, then the sound of bells and the roll of drums would mean an aggression and an onslaught on the highest powers.

At inundations, drums are most likely used to address the spirits of the land a second time. When the *Yin* is in its apex, the rain pours down unceasingly, *Yin* reigns supreme, and *Yang* is <sup>p2.346</sup> weak. This is not the proper course of things. Since oral supplications are inadequate, drums are employed, to assist the prayers in the same manner as, at an eclipse of the sun, drums are beaten and animals sacrificed at the altars of the land <sup>3</sup>. All this is done, to inform the spirits of the urgent need, and to show the undue preponderance of the *Yin*.

In important and urgent matters bells and drums are used, in small and indifferent ones, jingles and fives <sup>4</sup>. They make known what has happened, announce the urgency, and help the voice of the petitioner. Great principles are difficult to know. Provided that great floods and long inundations be occasioned by government, the urgent need is announced first nevertheless. But this is a government affair. When robberies are rife, the proceeding is the same. Robberies are likewise the upshot of government. As soon as the loss has been ascertained, in this case also an announcement is first made. The

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scolding or reproving.

<sup>1</sup> Men are mean, compared with the spirits of the land, whom they are supposed to attack.

<sup>2</sup> Now gongs are used for the same purpose.

<sup>3</sup> This custom is mentioned in the above quoted passage of the *Ch'un-ch'iu*.

<sup>4</sup> Neither *Kanghi* nor the *Chêng-tse-t'ung* know this character. It is perhaps a misprint for [], a fife or a shrill pipe used to exhort people to work, as the dictionaries say.

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beating of drums and immolating of the animals at the altars of the land is the publication. The spirits of the land are the chiefs of all the *Yin*, therefore they are informed by the beating of drums.

Those who maintain that drums imply an attack, attack a mother. Such an impiety is the consequence of this view. Now, if we say that it is an announcement of the preponderance of the *Yin* and the impotence of the *Yang*, the difficulty of assaulting a venerable being does not arise. Moreover, an announcement agrees well with the offering of an animal, but a sacrifice does not tally with an assault. To immolate an animal, while making an announcement, is according to the rites, but is there any rule prescribing the combination of an attack and a sacrifice ?

Red silk in the shape of a cord points to heat. Because the hot fluid is exhausted, one uses such a small thing. By driving in a needle one inch long, and by rubbing a ball of moxa over a vein, a violent disease may be cured. Red silk is like a needle an inch long and a ball of moxa.

*Wu* attacked and defeated *Ch'u* <sup>1</sup>. King *Chao* fled, and *Shên Pao Hsü* <sup>2</sup> took an opportunity to walk afoot to *Ch'in*. With plenty <sub>p2.347</sub> of tears he asked for help, and finally obtained auxiliary troops with which he repulsed *Wu* and saved *Ch'u*. How does a drummer beat the drum ? Provided that he be as upright as *Shên Pao Hsü*, then one single person may eventually suffice to beat the drum. If one man beat the drum, then it might be possible to prevail upon the spirits of the land, that they feel the same pity as the king of *Ch'in*, and with earth overcome the power of water, averting and stopping the clouds and the rain. The fluids of clouds and rain cause fears like that of *Wu*. When they disperse, reverting into the mountains, the harrassed people are blessed with sunshine and repose, enjoying the peace of the kingdom of *Ch'u*.

[‘When a strong wind blows, and the thunderclaps quickly follow each other, a superior man will be deeply moved. Though it be night, he will rise, don his clothes and cap and sit up’,] <sup>3</sup> apprehending an untoward accident. Water and drought are like thunder and storm. Though it be natural

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<sup>1</sup> In 506 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> A grandson of a ruler of *Ch'u*. See *Giles, Bibl. Dict.* No. 1697.

<sup>3</sup> Quotation from the *Liki*. Cf. p. 1.296, Note 1.

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phenomena, subject to certain laws, it would show a want of sympathy for the troubles of the people, if the sovereign were to recline apathetically on the bulging pillows of his bed-chamber, awaiting a change.

*Yao* did not immolate, which was perhaps owing to the simplicity of primitive times. *T'sang Hsieh* invented writing, and *Hsi Chung* wrought carts. Can the inventions of later generations be condemned, on the plea that in former ages writing and carts were unknown ? When the times are the same, but doings differ, difficulties may arise. Different ages, however, have different customs, which do not exclude each other <sup>1</sup>.

People painting pictures of *Nü Wa*, make a likeness of a lady and give it the appellative *Nü* (woman). In accordance with the view of *Tung Chung Shu*, the name *Nü Wa* was first introduced as designation for a lady and a ruler of ancient times. *Yang* is male, and *Yin* female. Since the *Yin* fluid causes disasters, *Nü Wa* is sacrificed to, to implore her protection.

There is a tradition that *Kung Kung*, fighting with *Chuan Hsü* for the imperial dignity, was vanquished, and, in his wrath, knocked against Mount *Pu Chou*, causing the 'Pillar of Heaven' to break and the confines of the earth to be smashed. *Nü Wa* melted five-coloured stones, and repaired the blue sky, and having cut the legs of a sea-turtle, erected them at the four poles <sup>2</sup>. When p2.348 *Tung Chung Shu* sacrificed to *Nü Wa*, this tradition first became current. Originally, there was a goddess who repaired the blue sky and erected the four poles. Provided that, the fluid of Heaven being in disharmony and the *Yang* principle vanquished, *Nü Wa* with her spiritual force helped a wise emperor, would she be able to check the rain showers ?

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<sup>1</sup> Therefore *Yao's* not immolating does not tell against the later custom.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 1.250.

## 47. Book XVI, Chap. I

### *Luan-lung*. Last Word on Dragons <sup>1</sup>

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p2.349 *Tung Chung Shu* explained the rain-sacrifice of the *Ch'un-ch'iu* and set up a clay dragon to attract rain, his idea being that clouds and dragons affect each other. The *Yiking* says that the clouds follow the dragon, and wind, the tiger <sup>2</sup>. With a view to this sympathetic action, he put up the clay dragon. *Yin* and *Yang* follow their species, and clouds and rain arrive as a matter of course.

Scholars might raise the following question : The *Yiking*, speaking of clouds following the dragon, means a real dragon ; how can it be a clay dragon ?

The Duke of *Shê* in *Ch'u* <sup>3</sup> was very partial to dragons. On all his walls, panels, plates, and dishes he had them painted <sup>4</sup>. If these semblances must be looked upon like genuine ones, then there must have been a continual rainfall in the State of the Duke of *Shê*.

The *Yiking* also says that wind follows the tiger, that means that, when the tiger howls, wind blows from the valley <sup>5</sup>. There being likewise a sympathetic fluid between wind and the tiger, would a clay figure of a tiger, set up in a valley, also attract wind ? If a clay tiger cannot attract wind, how could a clay dragon bring down rain ?

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter is not to the credit of our author, who here shows himself as credulous and unjudicious as those of his countrymen whose superstitions he likes to expose.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 1.356, Note 2.

<sup>3</sup> A contemporary of *Confucius* of the name of *Tse Kao*, mentioned in *Chuang Tse* (*Giles'* translation p. 45). *Shê* was a district of *Ch'u*.

<sup>4</sup> The duke was so fond of dragons, that, in his residence, he had many dragon ornaments carved. The heavenly dragon, hearing of it, once made its appearance, looking through the window and dragging its tail through the hall. By this unexpected aspect the duke was frightened out of his wits. *K'ung Tse chi-yü* I, 2v. quoting *Shên Tse*.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. p. 1.279, Note 2.

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In ancient times, they used to rear dragons, which they yoked to their carriages. Hence there was a dragon-keeper and a master p2.350 of the dragons. In the palace of the *Hsia* emperors there were always two dragons, but in the last year of this dynasty, when its downfall was impending, they absconded <sup>1</sup>. Even so long as real dragons were on earth, there were no clouds and no rain. What can be expected of fictitious semblances then ?

According to the Book of Rites the shape of thunder was represented on an ornamented thunder-goblet <sup>2</sup>, but we do not hear that this thunder-goblet could attract thunder. How then should a clay dragon occasion a rainfall ? Amber <sup>3</sup> takes up straws, and a load-stone attracts needles, but under condition that they are genuine, for they cannot borrow from other species. Other species, resembling them, cannot take up or attract things. Why ? Because the nature of the fluid being different, no mutual influence is possible.

*Liu Tse Chün* <sup>4</sup> directed the rain sacrifice and took care of the clay dragon. *Huan Chün Shan* also took exception, on the ground that amber and the loadstone could not take up needles or raise straws, unless they were genuine. *Liu Tse Chün* was at a loss for an answer. He was a *Han* scholar of vast erudition and a prolific writer, yet he was embarrassed. That does not prove that the proposed sacrifices were a mistake, but solely that he did not know their real reason. I say :

I. The objection that the dragon was not genuine, is all right, but it is wrong not to insist on relationship. When an east wind blows, wine flows over, and [when a whale dies, a comet appears.] <sup>5</sup> The principle of Heaven is spontaneity, and does not resemble human activity, being essentially like that

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<sup>1</sup> P. 1.354 seq.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 1.293, Note 1.

<sup>3</sup> See on amber the learned paper of *B. Laufer, Historical Jottings on Amber in Asia* (Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association Vol. I, Part 3, 1907) who refers to this passage as the first literary mention of amber in China. The words quoted by *Laufer* p. 218, Note 3 : '*tun-mou* is identical with *hu-p'o*=amber' does not occur in the *Lun-hêng*, and must be a gloss.

<sup>4</sup> Son of *Liu Hsiang*, more generally known under the name of *Liu Hsin*, a celebrated scholar like his father. He lived in the 1st cent. B. C. and A. D. and was a *protégé* of *Wang Mang*. His studies included the *Yiking* and occult arts.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted from *Huai Nan Tse* III, 2r.

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affinity between clouds and dragons. The sun is fire, and the moon is water. Fire and water are always affected by genuine fluids. Now, physicists <sup>T</sup> cast p2.351 burning-glasses wherewith to catch the flying fire from the sun, and they produce moon-mirrors to draw the water from the moon <sup>1</sup>. That is not spontaneity, yet Heaven agrees to it. A clay dragon is not genuine either, but why should it not be apt to affect Heaven ?

II. With a burning-glass one draws fire from Heaven. In the fifth month, on a *ping-wu* day at noon, they melt five stones, and cast an instrument with which they obtain fire. Now, without further ceremony, they also take the crooked hooks on swords and blades, rub them, hold them up towards the sun, and likewise affect Heaven <sup>2</sup>. If a clay dragon cannot be compared with a burning-glass, it can at least be placed on a level with those crooked hooks on swords and blades.

III. Prince *Mêng Ch'ang* of *Ch'í* wished to pass through the gate of *Ch'in* during the night, but the gate was not yet open. A companion of his imitated the cock-crow, and a veritable cock responded <sup>3</sup>. Since a cock could be roused by a false crow, rain can also be caused by fictitious effigies.

IV. When *Li Tse Chang* was at the head of the government, he wished to see clear in criminal affairs. He, therefore, caused a human figure, resembling a criminal, to be made of *wu-tung* wood. A pit was dug in the earth, a coffin made of rushes, and the wooden criminal placed into it. Whenever the punishment of a criminal was just, the wooden criminal did not move, but, when he had to complain of unjust and cruel treatment, the wooden figure moved and came out. Did the spirit of the criminals enter the wooden figure, or did the spiritual fluid operate upon it ? <sup>4</sup> At all events, the spirit affected the wooden criminal <sup>5</sup> ; why then should a clay dragon not have the same effect ?

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<sup>1</sup> *Vid.* p. 2.341.

<sup>2</sup> *Cf.* p. 1.378.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 2.132.

<sup>4</sup> The *Pei-wên-yün-fu* quotes this passage but slightly altered.

<sup>5</sup> It is strange that a man as critical as *Wang Ch'ung* should believe such a story.



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V. When *Shun* with his holy virtue went into the wilds of the big mountain forests <sup>1</sup>, tigers and wolves did not hurt, and snakes and serpents did not injure him. *Yü* cast metal tripods, on which he shaped the figures of a hundred objects. These tripods were carried into the mountain woods, where they averted noxious influences <sup>2</sup>. Many critics contend that this is not true, but those times of p<sub>2.352</sub> highest antiquity are long ago, and the spirits of the *Chou* tripods must have existed <sup>3</sup>. Metal and earth both belong to the Five Elements. Provided that the virtue of him who forms the clay dragon equals that of *Yü*, it must also have the power to attract clouds and rain.

VI. Amber takes up straws. The horse-shoe magnet resembles it, but a magnet is not amber. Both can attract small things. A clay dragon is not real either, but it must be compared and be classed with a horse-shoe magnet.

VII. The duke of *Shê* in *Ch'u* had a *penchant* for dragons : on walls, panels, vases, and goblets he had pictures of dragons painted. A genuine dragon heard of it and came down. Dragons, clouds, and rain are of the same fluid, wherefore they can mutually affect each other, following their species. By making pictures, the duke of *Shê* succeeded in bringing down a real dragon. Why should it not be possible, now, to attract clouds and rain ?

VIII. Spirits speak to men by images, and not by realities. While asleep, they perceive these images in their dreams. When things are going to be lucky, lucky images arrive, and, when they are going to be unlucky, inauspicious signs appear. The fluid of spirits is of the same class as that of clouds and rain <sup>4</sup>.

IX. Spirits show the truth by images ; wherefore can clay dragons alone not attract the real by what is unreal ? In remote antiquity, there were two brothers, *Shên Shu* and *Yü Lü*, possessing the power to dominate ghosts. They lived on the *Tu-so* Mountain in the eastern Sea, where, under a peach-

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Shuking* Part II, Book I, 2 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 32](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 1.505 seq.

<sup>3</sup> In p. 1.506 *Wang Ch'ung* denies that these tripods had any supernatural forces.

<sup>4</sup> The purport of this somewhat misty argument seems to be that a clay image must suffice for clouds and rain, just as images and omens are correlates of spirits.

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tree, they looked after the hundred ghosts. The reckless ones who maliciously caused human misfortune, were bound by *Shên Shu* and *Yü Lü* with cords of reeds, and thrown before tigers, to be devoured. Therefore, the district magistrates of our time are in the habit of having peach-trees cut down and carved into human statues, which they place by the gate, and they paint the shapes of tigers on the door-screens <sup>1</sup>. Peach-wood men are not *Shên Shu* and *Yü Lü*, nor painted tigers, such as devour ghosts. These carvings and paintings of images <sub>p2.353</sub> are intended to ward off evil influences. Now, clay dragons are not real dragons attracting rain either. But people believe only in peach-wood men and painted tigers, and know nothing of clay dragons.

X. True, these are but arguments from ancient books, for which no strict proofs are to be found. However, *Lu Pan* and *Mê Tse* carved wooden kites which could fly three days without alighting, very ingenious inventions indeed <sup>2</sup>. If the formers of clay dragons have the talents of *Lu Pan* and *Mê Tse*, their productions can be similar to these wooden kites, flying without alighting. The fluid of flying kites is the fluid of clouds and rain, an air which causes the wooden kites to fly. Why should it not be able to follow a clay dragon ?

XI. It cannot be said that the fluid of clouds and rain is more intelligent than that of flying kites. Anglers make fishes out of wood, the bodies of which they cover with red varnish. Going to a current, they throw them into the water, where they rise in the stream and move. The fish take them for real ones, and all gather round them. A piece of red wood is not a real fish, for fish have blood and possess knowledge. Still they allow themselves to be duped by a semblance. The knowledge of clouds and rain cannot be greater than that of fish. How could they have misgivings, on beholding a clay dragon ?

XII. However, these are fish whose intelligence falls short of that of mankind. The *Hsiung-nu* were in respectful awe of the power of *Chih Tu* <sup>3</sup>. A

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.244, Note 1.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 1.498, Notes 2 and 3, and *Huai Nan Tse* XI, 14v.

<sup>3</sup> A general of *Han Ching Ti*, who in 142 B. C. made an attack upon the *Hsiung-nu*. He

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figure of him was carved in wood. The *Hsiung-nu* shot at it, arrow after arrow, but could not hit it once. We ignore the fact whether the spirit of *Chih Tu* was residing in the figure, or whether, since he was dead, the spirits of the *Hsiung-nu*, doing homage to his ghost, were in the wood. If the mind of *Chih Tu* was in the statue, the spirit of the heavenly dragon must likewise be in the clay dragon, and in case the spirits of the *Hsiung-nu* clung to the wood, then the minds of those offering the rain sacrifice must be in the clay dragon as well. p2.354

XIII. *Chin Wêng Shu* was the heir-prince of the King of *Hsiu Ch'u* <sup>1</sup>. Together with his father he went to submit to the *Han*. His father having died on the road, he went with his mother, and received the rank of an imperial prince (*chi-tu-yü*). When his mother had died, *Wu Ti* caused her portrait to be painted in the *Kan-ch'üan* palace with the inscription : Consort of King *Hsiu Ch'u*, née *Yen* <sup>2</sup>. *Chin Wêng Shu*, accompanying the emperor, went up to the *Kan-ch'üan* palace. There he stood paying his respects, and turned towards the pictures, he wept, that his tears moistened his garment. It was a long while before he went away. The portrait was not his mother in person, yet, when he saw her features, his tears burst forth. At the thought of his beloved parent, his feelings were touched, and he did not expect reality. A clay dragon is like the picture of the *Kan-ch'üan* palace. Why should clouds and rain, on perceiving it, not be moved ?

XIV. But this was the story of a savage only. *Yu Jo* <sup>3</sup> resembled *Confucius*. After the decease of *Confucius*, his disciples would sit together, affectionately thinking of their master. *Yu Jo* occupied his seat. The disciples were aware

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was a man of great courage and a stem character, who received the sobriquet 'Grey Eagle'. When he died a figure of wood, resembling him, was carved and placed in view of the *Hsiung-nu* at *Yen-mên*. They shot at it, but, being too much afraid, did not hit it. This is the simple version of the *Shi-chi* (*Pei-wên-yün-fu*), favourably contrasting with *Wang Ch'ung's* mysticism.

<sup>1</sup> *Chin Mi Ti*, styled *Wêng Shu*, the son of *Hsiu Ch'u*, a khan of the *Hsiung-nu*, was first made a government slave and afterwards raised to high honours, when he received a Chinese name. He died B. C. 86. See *Giles, Bibl. Dict.* No. 382.

<sup>2</sup> The words of the text give no sense. In the biography of *Chin Mi Ti*, *Han-shu* chap. 68, p. 21r. the last two words are written [], the family name of the mother of *Chin Mi Ti*, which should be inserted for the spurious [].

<sup>3</sup> A disciple of *Confucius*. Cf. p. 1.360.

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that *Yu Jo* was not *Confucius*, still they sat together, and did homage to him. In case the intelligence of clouds and rain equals that of the disciples, their thoughts would be touched, although they knew that it was a clay dragon, and not a veritable one, and they would make their appearance.

XV. The disciples of *Confucius* had their doubts about the features of *Yu Jo*, and therefore merely said that he resembled *Confucius*. The emperor *Wu Ti* was very fond of his consort, Lady Li. When she died, he pondered whether he could not see her figure again. The Taoists made an artificial figure of the lady, which passed through the palace-gate. When the emperor beheld her, he did not ignore that she was not real, albeit yet he was <sup>p2.355</sup> so moved, that, full of joy, he went near her <sup>1</sup>. If the fluids of clouds and rain be like the heart of *Wu Ti*, their tender passion is roused, and they appear in spite of their knowledge of the unreality of the clay dragon.

In addition to these fifteen arguments, there are still four analogies :

I. At the beginning of spring, when the ground is tilled in the east, they mould clay figures, a man and a woman, both holding a plough and a hoe in their hands, or they set up a clay ox <sup>2</sup>. These cannot labour the ground, but they correspond to the season, and agree with the time, and are to exhort the common people to be industrious. Now, although it is obvious that a clay dragon cannot attract rain, it likewise accords with the summer time, and by its category favours a change of weather, the same idea which has led to the moulding of clay men and clay oxen.

II. According to the Rites the tablets in the ancestral temple are made of wood, one foot and two inches long, to represent a deceased ancestor <sup>3</sup>. A dutiful son, entering the hall, worships them with all his soul. Although he knows that these wooden tablets are not his parents, he must show them the greatest respect, and they call for his veneration. A clay dragon is like a

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<sup>1</sup> P. 1.97.

<sup>2</sup> The so called 'spring ox' already mentioned in the *Liki*. It used to be carried in procession during the last month of the year, to see the cold air off. This custom is still practised in many parts of China. See [De Groot, Fêtes à Emoui p. 92 seq.](#)

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 1.536, Note 1.

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wooden tablet ; even though it is not genuine, it exercises such an influence, that the image must be taken notice of.

III. Sages are cognisant of the uselessness of mud carts and straw figures <sup>1</sup>, but since they symbolise life, they do not dare to dispense with them. Putting up a clay dragon, one knows that it cannot cause rain, but it is symbolical like the mud carts and the straw figures, and has effect.

IV. The son of Heaven shoots at a bear, the princes at an elk, ministers and high officers at a tiger and a leopard, officers at a stag and a wild boar <sup>2</sup>, to illustrate the subjugation of the p<sub>2.356</sub> fierce. A piece of cloth is called target (*hou*) implying that unprincipled princes are to be shot <sup>3</sup>. Pictures of bears and elks are painted on the cloth, which is styled target (*hou*). It is right to appreciate these symbolical images and to choose names full of meaning. A clay dragon is like a cloth target upon which a bear and an elk are painted.

There are fifteen proofs, based on affinity, and four analogies, explaining the meaning by other customs. *Tung Chung Shu's* insight was immense, and his institutions are not inconsiderate. For putting up a clay dragon he had his good reasons. When a dragon suddenly emerges from the water, clouds and rain appear. Of old, as long as there used to be a dragon keeper and a master of the dragons, there were no clouds and no rain. It is like an unexpected meeting of old friends, who have been separated by a great distance. In their joy, they sing and laugh, or they turn sad, shed tears, and, for a while, are down-spirited. Their doings appear to be quite abnormal <sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> They were used at funerals in ancient and modern times. The dead are supposed to make use of them. See *Liki, T'an-kung*, p. 52r. ([Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 173](#)) [[Couvreur](#)] and also p. 2.117.

<sup>2</sup> This competition of archery was a great ceremony described in the *Liki, I-li*, and *Chou-li*. The latter work also speaks of the various targets, but the wild beasts allotted to the emperor and his officers are different from those here given (Cf. [Biot, Tscheou Li p. 138](#)).

<sup>3</sup> This explanation is mere fancy. Since the emperor took part in the shooting, one might as well say that the ceremony was meant as a warning for the emperor that he would be shot like a bear, in case he proved to be unprincipled.

<sup>4</sup> So it is with dragons. They did not attract clouds and rain, as long as they were domesticated and always there, but their sudden and unexpected arrival has this

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The *Yiking* says that clouds follow the dragon, but not that the dragon follows the clouds. On the cloud goblet, thunder and clouds were carved, but did the dragon deign to come down ? The scholiasts cannot explain this, so that *Huan Chün Shan* could urge his objections, which *Liu Tse Ch'ün* was unfit to meet. Owing to this inability, the remarks of *Tung Chung Shu* on dragons remained fragmentary. The *Lun-hêng* has supplemented them, 'A Last Word on Dragons' denoting a supplement.

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effect. The clouds are touched, so to say, and then drop their tears.

## 48. Book XVI, Chap. II

### *Tsao-hu. The Tiger Trouble*

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p2.357 The phenomenalists aver that the devouring of men by tigers is a consequence of the misdeeds of the high commissioners, their idea being that as the high commissioners are the chiefs of the officers, so tigers are the fiercest of beasts. The commissioners do mischief by fleecing their subordinates, therefore tigers devour men to accord with this idea.

Tigers eat men, but it likewise happens that men kill tigers. If they contend that, as tigers eat men, the commissioners plunder the officials, do the latter extort money from the commissioners, when men eat the tigers ?

In our age, there is not one unselfish and undefiled officer among a hundred, and all high commissioners have wicked designs <sup>1</sup>. By good connexions and old friendship one succeeds, and bribes of all sorts, big and small, are always welcome. If tigers are considered to correspond to high commissioners, tigers in the country always destroy people. Tigers come out at certain times, as dragons appear at fixed periods. The *Yin* creatures appear in winter, whereas *Yang* animals come out in summer <sup>2</sup>. Their appearance corresponds to their fluid, which prompts its corresponding species.

*Orion* and its sword come forth in winter, the '*Heart*' <sup>3</sup> and the '*Tail*' <sup>4</sup> become visible in summer. *Orion* and its sword are the constellation of tigers, the '*Heart*' and the '*Tail*', the heavenly signs of dragons. When these signs are visible, the creatures make their appearance, and the fluid supervening, the respective species is affected. Such is the nature of Heaven and Earth.

Those who move about in forests and marshes just fall in with tigers, which assault them and tear them to pieces. Tigers are endowed with

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<sup>1</sup> A hard judgment indeed.

<sup>2</sup> The tiger represents the masculine principle *Yang*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 1.127, Note 5.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 1.118, Note 2.

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fierceness. When they are greedy and hungry, and encounter a man arriving of his own accord, why should they p2.358 not eat him ? Human muscles and sinews are weak and powerless, and man lacks agility, therefore meeting a tiger, he is sure to perish. If *Mêng Pên* ascends a mountain, or Mrs. *Fêng* <sup>1</sup> enters a wood, they do not succumb.

When *Confucius* was walking through a forest in *Lu*, a woman cried most mournfully. He sent *Tse Kung* to inquire, wherefore she cried so sadly. The woman replied,

— Last year a tiger devoured my husband, and this year it devoured my son, hence my lamentation.

*Tse Kung* rejoined,

— Why do you not leave the place under these circumstances ?

— Because, said the woman, I like the government which is not oppressive, and the officials who are not tyrannical.

*Tse Kung* went back, and reported what he had heard to his master. *Confucius* said,

— Remember, my disciples, that an oppressive government and tyrannical officials are worse than tigers. <sup>2</sup>

That tigers kill men has ever been the case. Government not being oppressive, and the officers not being tyrannical, the effects of virtue are apt to avert tigers. Nevertheless, those two individuals were eaten in two successive years, ergo the beasts in the forest did not conform to goodness. There being no such correspondence in the case of unselfish officials, it cannot be expected for depraved ones either.

Some say that tigers comport with the perversity of high commissioners, but that the so-called inoppressive government is not equivalent to these commissioners. The woman was under the rule of unselfish officers. but how

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<sup>1</sup> A lady of the seraglio of *Han Yuan Ti*, 1st cent. B. C., who once faced a bear that had escaped from its cage.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 2.145, Note 3.



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could good government operate upon tigers ? <sup>1</sup>

In *Lu* there were no high commissioners, who are nothing else than ministers of State. The ministers of *Lu* were not *Confucius* or *Mê Ti*, but members of the three families <sup>2</sup>. Their proceedings as ministers cannot have been recommendable. All power and influence being invested in persons devoid of virtue, their doings must have been wicked, and there can be no question of disinterestedness. If the depravity of ministers induces tigers to devour men, then those in the wilds of *Lu* must always have eaten men.

p2.359 The destruction in the water does not reach the hills, and the fluid on the hills does not enter into the water. All creatures fall a prey to their enemies which are near. Thus fish, caught by the fisherman, do not die on the mountains, and animals, chased by the hunter, do not dive into the pond <sup>3</sup>. If people like to rove through the mountain woods, to spy out obscure caverns, and intrude into the tiger's den, it cannot be a matter for surprise that the tiger pounces upon and devours them <sup>4</sup>.

Duke *Niu Ai* of *Lu*, during a sickness, was changed into a tiger, which attacked and devoured his elder brother <sup>5</sup>. People do not wonder at this simultaneous metamorphosis ; why then be surprised that in mountain forests, jungles, and marshes people are killed by tigers ? Snakes and vipers are very fierce, and likewise injurious to mankind. If somebody meets with a snake in a marsh, to which class of officials does it respond ? Wasps and scorpions hurt people, and so do poisonous exhalations, water, and lire. If a person is stung by a wasp or a scorpion, infected by poisonous air, burned in fire, or drowned in water, who has been the cause ?

Provided that there be a sort of relation between wild animals and officers or government, then all those animals living on mountains or in forests, such

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<sup>1</sup> Government as a whole could be bad, even though the local officials were good.

<sup>2</sup> The three noble families, *Mêng*, *Shu*, and *Chi* which in the time of *Confucius* were the real rulers of *Lu*, the reigning duke being more or less dependent upon them.

<sup>3</sup> The catching of fish is what *Wang Ch'ung* denotes by 'destruction in the water', and the hunting of animals what he calls the 'fluid, *i. e.* destructive, on the hills'.

<sup>4</sup> Remaining in their own places, where the destructive fluid of mountain forests *viz.* tigers do not intrude, people would be safe.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. p. 1.326, Note 2.

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as elks, stags, wild boar, oxen, elephants, brown and spotted bears, wolves, and *rhinopithecus*, kill men. But should a correspondence be assumed only in case they eat men, then fleas, lice, mosquitoes, and gadflies all feed on men, yet the human body being so strong and big, it does not occasion its death. In times of famine, when food is dear, and the people starved, they go even the length of eating one another. Such an atrocity is far worse than tigers, but phenomenologists do not ascribe this to oppressive government.

Moreover, tigers do not only eat men : birds with blood in their veins, and animals with bodies, all afford them food. If a man eaten is believed to testify to the wickedness of the high commissioners, to which functionaries do other birds and animals refer, when devoured ? The tiger is a hairy mammal, and man a <sup>p.2360</sup> naked one. If a hairy mammal in its hunger eats a naked one, why must this be accounted an extraordinary phenomenon ?

Beyond the countries of the four classes of savages <sup>1</sup>, the Giants devour the Pigmies. The nature of tigers is like that of the *Man* and the *Yi*. <sup>2</sup>

Plains and large cities are not resorts for tigers. They thrive in mountain forests, jungles, and marshes. Supposing that a tiger's devouring a man is a correlate of the depravity of high commissioners, then in the districts of the plain with large cities, the commissioners must always be excellent, whereas in territories covered with mountains, woods, and marshes they are always culpable. Accordingly, the tiger's eating a man in the country, has its counterpart in the viciousness of the commissioners. But, when it happens that a tiger enters a city, and walks about among the people, do, at that time, the commissioners saunter about through lanes and alleys ? <sup>3</sup>

As a matter of fact, the killing of a man by a tiger in the country has nothing to do with government, but its appearance in a big city is a prodigy, for the tiger is a wild beast of the mountains and woods, and not domesticated. It lives in jungles, and cannot be tamed, and bears some

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<sup>1</sup> The barbarians living towards the four Quarters of China.

<sup>2</sup> The savages in the south and the west, here meaning savages in general.

<sup>3</sup> Provided that there be always a correspondence between the doings of tigers and high commissioners.

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resemblance to the common rat, which is not always visible, as it usually hides itself, and seldom comes out. As long as people live in happiness and tranquillity, rats do not stir, but scarcely is their felicity destroyed, and are dangers impending, when rats by their agitation indicate an extraordinary calamity <sup>1</sup>. The same holds good for tigers. While cities and districts enjoy peace and happiness, and the high officers have no trouble, tigers do not leave their hiding places, but no sooner are the high officers on the road to ruin, than tigers enter the cities, and wander about among the populace. The glory of the high officers being extinguished, their towns and cities sink to the level of a wilderness <sup>2</sup>.

Proceeding on this line of argument, we arrive at the conclusion that, when a man is eaten by a tiger, fate and time come <sup>p2.361</sup> into play. Fate being exhausted <sup>3</sup>, and time out of gear, the lustre of the body fades away, the flesh appears as a corpse, consequently the tiger eats it. It is a fortuitous coincidence according to the principles of Heaven that a tiger happens to eat a man, and that the high officers are just wicked. Thus, what is looked upon as an extraordinary phenomenon, is in harmony with the laws of Heaven.

In ancient and modern times all kinds of wild animals have served as inauspicious auguries, not tigers alone. Before the upper story of the *Ying* palace of the king of *Ch'u* was completed, a stag walked over its terrace. Some time after, the king expired. — Duke *Chao* of *Lu* going out one morning, a 'mainah' arrived, and began building its nest. Subsequently the *Chi* family expelled the duke, who fled to *Ch'i*, where he afterwards died without returning to his own country <sup>4</sup>.

*Chia Yi* was privy councillor to the king of *Ch'ang-sha*. A screech owl perched on his house <sup>5</sup>. He opened his book and divined that he was going to

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<sup>1</sup> The *Han-shu* relates that, when the kings of *Kuang-ling* and *Yen* were going to stir up an insurrection, rats were observed dancing in their palaces. Even with us rats are credited with some kind of prescience, for we say that rats leave a ship which is going to be wrecked.

<sup>2</sup> For this reason they are visited by tigers.

<sup>3</sup> Fate is looked upon as something material of which there may be greater or smaller quantities.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 2.162.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. p. 2.313, Note 4.

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leave his master, and, later on, he was transferred to be councillor to the king of *Liang*. King *Huai* <sup>1</sup> was fond of riding, but was thrown from his horse, and breathed his last. *Chia Yi* took this death so much to heart, that he contracted a disease and died likewise. — In the time of the king of *Ch'ang-yi* <sup>2</sup>, an exotic partridge alighted under a palace hall, and was shot by the king, who questioned the steward of the palace, *Kung Sui* <sup>3</sup>. *Kung Sui* replied that the entering of an exotic partridge, a wild bird, into the palace was an augury of death. Subsequently, the king of *Ch'ang-yi* in fact, lost his life.

The magistrate of *Lu-nu* <sup>4</sup>, *T'ien Kuang* conjointly with *Kung-Sun Hung* <sup>5</sup> and others planned an insurrection. When it was about to be discovered, a wild cat mewed on the roof of his house. *T'ien Kuang* felt disgusted. Afterwards the intrigue was discovered, and he suffered execution. — In the time of *Li Wên Po*, the p2.362 commander of the eastern part of *Kuei-chi*, a sheep lay down in his reception hall. Subsequently he was promoted and appointed prefect of *Tung-lai* <sup>6</sup>. When *Wang Tse Fêng* was commander, a deer entered his residence, and afterwards he rose to the rank of a prefect of *Tan-yang* <sup>7</sup>.

Good and bad luck can both be ascertained, promotion and dismissal both have their prognostics. When they all point to desolation and death, the vital force disperses and vanishes. Thus, when a man is about to die, wild birds intrude into his home, and when a town is to be deserted, animals from the prairies enter its precincts. These affinities are very numerous, and similar events, constantly met with. I have selected some conspicuous ones, to prove the truth of such prognostics.

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<sup>1</sup> King *Huai* of *Liang* in *Honan* was a son of the emperor *Wên Ti*. He died in 169 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> A place in *Shantung*.

<sup>3</sup> A celebrated official of the 2nd and 1st cent. B. C.

<sup>4</sup> The modern *Ting-chou* in *Chili*.

<sup>5</sup> Originally a poor scholar, later on a privy councillor of the emperor *Han Wu Ti*, who died in 121 B. C.

<sup>6</sup> The present *Lai-chou-fu* in the province of *Shantung*.

<sup>7</sup> A circuit in *Kiangsu* and *Anhui*.

## 49. Book XVI, Chap. III

### *Shang-ch'ung*. Remarks on Insects

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p2.363 The phenomenalists maintain that the eating of grain by insects is caused by the officials of the various departments. Out of covetousness they make encroachments, which results in the insects eating the grain. Those with black bodies and red heads are called military officers, those with black heads and red bodies, civil officers. If these officers related to insects be punished, the insects desist from their ravages, and are seen no more.

If those red heads are supposed to be produced by military officers, and the black heads, by civilians, sometimes insects have red heads and white bodies, or black heads and yellow bodies, or their heads as well as their bodies are yellow, or both are green, or both white, as is the case with worms in fish or meat. To which officials do these correspond ?

Sometimes influential citizens disturb officials, interceding for those who are to be tortured. Their ascendancy is greater than that of office-bearers, and their usurpations are more varied than those of officers. How are their corresponding insects shaped ?

Insects are usually destroyed by wind and rain, but at that time the officials are not necessarily subjected to punishment.

On dry land there are always mice, and in paddy fields, fish and crabs, which all injure the grain. Either they seldom come out and suddenly cause damage, or they are always there, doing mischief. Their kinds are very numerous. To which officers are they related ?

Duke *Hsüan* of *Lu* levied the land tax on each acre, when simultaneously larvae of locusts were born <sup>1</sup>. Some say that they resemble winged ones.

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<sup>1</sup> In 594 B. C. Duke *Hsüan* introduced a new tithing system. Cf. *Ch'un-ch'iu*, Duke *Hsüan* 15th year [[Couvreur](#)]. *Tso Ch'iu Ming* condemns this measure as contrary to rule. The locusts are regarded by *Wang Ch'ung* as a retribution for this unjust mode of taxation.

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When locusts appear, they obscure the sky, falling down on the earth like a shower of rain. They eat everything, making no difference between grain and other plants. Judging by their heads and bodies, which class of officials do they represent? With which do they tally in the opinion of the phenomenologists?

p2.364 In the thirty-first year of *Chien-wu*<sup>1</sup>, locusts rose in the T'ai-shan circuit<sup>2</sup>. They went to the south-west, passing *Ch'ên-Liu*<sup>3</sup> and *Ho-nan*<sup>4</sup>, and then entered the country of the *I* and *Ti*. In hundreds and thousands of districts and villages they alighted, but the officers of these places had not all measured the fields for taxation<sup>5</sup>. Locusts eat grain and grass, and, in a few days, reach the end of their life. Either they proceed on their journey, or they stop, dry up, and die. But at that time the local authorities are not all liable to punishment.

The insects' eating of grain has its term, as the silkworms' feeding on mulberry leaves has a limit. Their breeding takes a number of days, and they die after a number of months. Having completed their span, they are transformed, and do not always remain grubs. If the sovereign does not punish his officers<sup>6</sup>, the insects die nevertheless, of their own accord.

Insects are produced by the fluid of wind. *Ts'ang Hsieh* knew it, and therefore formed the character *fêng* (wind) of *fan* (all) and *ch'ung* (insects). Having received their fluid from wind, they are bred in eight days<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> 55 A. D.

<sup>2</sup> The present *T'ai-an-chou* in *Shantung*.

<sup>3</sup> A circuit comprising the modern *K'ai-fêng-fu* in *Honan*.

<sup>4</sup> *Ho-nan-fu*.

<sup>5</sup> Therefore the locusts could not be considered a punishment for unjust taxation.

<sup>6</sup> For those offences for which the insects are supposed to have made their appearance.

<sup>7</sup> This explanation is forced and certainly erroneous. It would be to the point, if the character 風 designated some insects, and not wind, for to whom would the two components 'all' and 'insects' suggest the idea of wind? The explanation given by *Wieger, Rudiments* 12, *Leçons étymologiques* p. 77 is not satisfactory either. He submits that the ancient character was composed of 日 sun, 丿 movement, and 凡 expansion, and that this combination suggests the atmospheric currents produced by the action of the sunbeams. I suppose that in the character 凡 is the phonetic, and 虫 the radical. 虫 is a crawling animal, a reptile, and describes the crawling, the

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p2.365 The insects of spring and summer either live on the Five Grains, or on other herbs. As they eat the Five Grains, officers collect money and grain, but what manner of things do they exact, when the insects feed on other herbs ?

Among the three hundred naked animals man takes precedence, consequently he is an animal also. Man eats the food of insects, and insects likewise eat what man lives on. Both being animals, what wonder that they eat each other's food.

Were insects endowed with intelligence, they would scold man. saying,  
— You eat the produce of Heaven, and we eat it as well. You regard us as a plague, and are not aware that you are yourself a calamity to us. Inasmuch as all animated beings like the taste of something, their mouths and bellies are not different. Man likes the Five Grains, and detests the insects for eating them, he is himself born between Heaven and Earth, and detests the coming forth of insects.

Thus the insects would censure man, if they could speak, and he would be unable to refute their charges. The existence of insects amongst other creatures is nothing wonderful for the knowing, and that they eat so many things, the latter do not consider an exceptional calamity.

In fragrant and succulent plants there are always insects in great numbers. Therefore of all kinds of grain millet has most insects, rice has them at times, wheat and beans never. If the officials be always made responsible for the existence of insects, the departmental officers of villages growing millet would invariably be culpable.

The system of *Shên Nung* and *Hou Chi* of sowing grain consisted in boiling horse dung and soaking the seeds in liquid manure, lest they should be

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undulating of the currents of air. Some ancient forms of 風 are formed of 𩇛, a current, instead of 虫, a reptile, and from the antique form 𩇛 we infer that 日 and 丿, occurring in other characters, were originally connected : 𩇛, and are nothing else than a viper with a big head, a synonym for 虫 a reptile=空.

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damaged by insects <sup>1</sup>. Thus, by soaking the seeds in horse dung, the village officers would become *Pao Chiao* <sup>2</sup> and *Ch'ên Chung Tse* <sup>3</sup>. How could these officers get rid of all viciousness by merely employing the method of *Hou Chi* and *Shên Nung*, since, in case no insects were produced with the crop, the emperor could not discover their guilt ?

p2.366 As long as insects content themselves with other plants, it is not the custom to see anything extraordinary in them, but no sooner do they feed on the Five Grains, than it is called a calamity. Cassia trees have wood-worms, and mulberry trees, wood-fretters. Cassia furnishes medicine, and mulberry trees serve as food for silkworms. Their usefulness is very great, no less than that of grain. To see nothing wonderful in these wood-worms and wood-fretters, and to decry insects as a disaster, shows ignorance of the real character of the various classes of animals, and a misconception of the nature of calamitous phenomena.

By insects we usually understand those which feed on grain, grubs are like moths. When millet and rice turn mouldy, the fermentation produces grubs. Now these grubs eating millet and rice are not considered disastrous, whereas, when insects eat the leaves of corn, it is laid to the charge of the government.

If in the course of discussion they urge that millet is of much less consequence than corn in general, we reply that there is the greatest variety of insects, and not only one species. When fish and meat rot, worms are produced, and so they are, when minced-meat and gravy are not covered, or when cooked rice gets warm and damp, or when the scrolls of books are never unrolled, or when garments are folded together and not hung up. Diseased snails <sup>4</sup>, flies, mole-crickets <sup>5</sup>, and crabs all have parasites : some

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<sup>1</sup> A method still followed to the present day.

<sup>2</sup> A recluse of the *Chou* epoch, celebrated for his purity. *Tse Kung* is said to have blamed him for living in a country the government of which he condemned, and under a prince whom he despised. *Pao Chiao* took these words so much to heart, that he withered up into dead wood.

<sup>3</sup> Another hermit. Cf. p. 1.427, Note 4.

<sup>4</sup> My translation is a conjecture. Perhaps the latter character 'an ulcer' is spurious.

<sup>5</sup> I have omitted translating [], some insect or reptile not mentioned in the dictionaries.



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are white, some black, some long, some short. They are greatly diverse in size, and they are by no means all similar. All are the upshot of the fluid of wind, which they keep up to their end. They cannot choose their days of life, and when their life-time is very short, they perish almost as soon as they appear. Struck with the rarity of their appearance and with the fact that when they come out, they eat something, the phenomenologists call them a calamity, but a calamity presupposes some guilt. Therefore they put forward such officials as bear some resemblance to them.

Man has three worms in his intestines. The worms living in low marshes are called leeches. They eat man's feet <sup>1</sup>, as the three worms eat his bowels. To whom will these critics, so fond of similarities, compare the three worms ?

p2.367 All creatures that are born between Heaven and Earth from the *Yin* and the *Yang*, such as ant-dragons and entozoa, reptiles and vermin <sup>2</sup>, are imbued with the fluid, while alive ; they open their mouths to eat, and what they eat, they either like or do not like. Their instincts are the same, and their propensities similar : the strong and big ones devour the weak and small ones, the shrewd and clever hurt the blunt-minded. If other creatures, big or small, lacerate one another, it is not regarded as a calamity. Therefore only to consider this an echo of the actions of government if insects eat grain, is to misunderstand the true principles and to ignore the real nature of the animal fluid.

The birth of insects depends upon warm and damp weather. As a rule, the air is warm and damp in spring and summer, and it is cold and dry in autumn and winter, when insects are not yet produced. If the village officers are made responsible for the growth of insects, then these officers must be covetous in spring and summer, and disinterested in autumn and winter. Even though they be functionaries like robber *Chê*, they would in their offices imitate the conduct of *Po Yi* in autumn and winter.

Spring and summer are not always the same ; when insects grow, it must

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<sup>1</sup> When a man passes through marshes, leeches may stick to his feet, and suck his blood.

<sup>2</sup> [] for which the dictionaries only give the meaning 'to wriggle'. Here it must be a substantive.

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be exceedingly warm and damp. Exceedingly means that the *Yin* and the *Yang* are not in harmony. For a disharmony of the *Yin* and the *Yang* the government has to account, to which alone it can be ascribed. Consequently it is preposterous to point to the depravity of the officials of the various departments.

Whence do we know that insects grow from warmth and dampness ? From noxious insects. Grain being dry, insects do not grow, but when it becomes warm and damp, it moulds and putrefies, and the growth of insects can no further be precluded. If the grains of stored up old wheat are dried in the hot sun, and then put in a dry vessel, insects do not generate, but should the seeds not be dry, voracious grubs would grow like clouds and mist. The analogy of voracious grubs makes it evident that all insects owe their birth to warmth and dampness.

The *Shiking* says :

[ They buzz about, the blue flies, lighting on the fences. O happy and courteous sovereign, do not believe slanderous speeches.] <sup>1</sup>

Slanderous reports injure honest men, just as the blue flies pollute white things. The damage is the same, and the *Shiking* therefore used this image.

p2.368 The king of *Ch'ang-yi* dreamt that below the western flight of stairs the dirt of flies was piled up. The next morning, he summoned the officer of the Guards *Kung Sui*, and asked his opinion. *Kung Sui* replied,

— The flies are emblems of slanderers. The fact that their dirt is piled up below the stairs, denotes that Your Highness is going to listen to the insinuations of slanderous officers <sup>2</sup>.

According to this view, flies as insects would tally with the princes lending his ear to defamations ; why not regard them as a calamity then ? If flies may be looked upon as a calamity, they live throughout the year ; but does a ruler always listen to slanderers ?

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<sup>1</sup> *Shiking* Part II, Book VII, Ode 5 ([Legge, Classics Vol IV, Part II, p. 394](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> This story is narrated in the biography of the king of *Ch'ang-yi*, *Ch'ien Han-shu*, chap. 63, p. 18r. The king was a grandson of the emperor *Han Wu Ti*.

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Of insects hurtful to mankind, none are worse than mosquitoes and gad-flies, which are generated the whole year. In case mosquitoes and gad-flies represent some calamity, are there always officers on earth preying upon their fellow-people ?

Provided that the eating of animals be a calamity, then man being the noblest of all creatures, mosquitoes and gad-flies feeding upon him must be the worst of calamities. If to be accounted a calamity, animals must have unexpectedly been produced and have hurt others, which annoyance is greater, that of creatures produced the whole year and feeding on man, or that of others appearing but occasionally and doing mischief ?

Itching is an occasional and not a constant complaint ; wherefore are the insects producing it not held to be calamitous ?

Moreover, when Heaven is about to rain, ants come out, and gnats fly about, thus conforming to the weather. Perhaps the birth of all insects of itself, accords with the temperature, but why then incriminate the officials of the various departments ? The principle of Heaven is spontaneity, good and bad luck happen by chance. Rare insects happen to be produced, when covetous officials happen to be in office. Noticing their transactions and observing the simultaneous growth of noxious insects, people presume that it has been caused by the officials.

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## 50. Book XVI, Chap. IV

### *Chiang-juì.* Arguments on Ominous Creatures

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p1.359 The scholars in their essays claim for themselves the faculty of knowing the phœnix and the unicorn, when they see them. They, of course, rely on the pictures of the phœnix and the unicorn. Besides there is a passage in the *Ch'un-ch'iu* concerning the capture of a unicorn to the effect that it was a sort of a deer with a horn <sup>1</sup>. Hence a deer with a horn must be a unicorn. When they see a bird like a phœnix, they take it for a phœnix.

*Huang Ti, Yao, Shun*, and the sovereigns of the *Chou* dynasty, when it was flourishing, all caused the phœnix to make its appearance. Under the reign of *Hsiao Hsüan Ti* <sup>2</sup> a phœnix alighted in the *Shang-lin* park, and afterwards also on a tree at the east-gate of the *Ch'ang-lo* palace. It was five feet high, and had a beautiful variegated plumage. The unicorn caught by the people of *Chou* resembled a deer, and had a horn ; the unicorn of *Wu Ti* was also like a deer with a horn. If there be a huge bird with a variegated plumage, or an animal shaped like a deer having one horn on its head, it is possible, they fancy, to determine, whether it be a phœnix or a unicorn, by referring to drawings and pictures, and to ancient and modern traditions.

Now the phœnix is the holy bird, and the unicorn the holy animal as the *Five Emperors*, the *Three Rulers*, *Kao Yao*, and *Confucius* are the holy ones among men. The Twelve Holy Men <sup>3</sup> vary considerably in their appearance, can we then call a deer with a horn a unicorn, or a bird resembling a phœnix by this name ? Between the hair and the colour of the holy birds and the holy animals there is as much difference as between the osseous structure of the twelve holy men.

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<sup>1</sup> The last paragraph of the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, Duke *Ai* 14th year, merely mentions the capture of a *lin* [Couvreur]. That it was a deer with one horn is recorded in the 'Family Sayings' of *Confucius*. See *Legge's* transl. Vol. II, p. 834, Note.

<sup>2</sup> 73-48 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 1.304.

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The horn is like the character 'wu' worn on the front. *Chuan Hsü* had this character on his brow, but *Yao* and *Shun* were not necessarily marked in the same way. If the unicorn caught in *Lu* p1.360 had a horn, it does not follow anyhow that the unicorns observed later on had all a horn. Should we be desirous to learn to know the unicorn of the present day by using the unicorn caught in *Lu* as a prototype, we may be sure to fail in our endeavour. The fur, the bones, and the horn vary. Notwithstanding their difference, there may be a certain resemblance, but that does not mean identity.

*Shun* had double pupils, and *Wang Mang* also, Duke *Wên* of *Chin* had his ribs all in one piece, and *Chang Yi* likewise. If a resemblance be based on the osseous structure, the hair and the complexion, then *Wang Mang* <sup>1</sup> was a *Shun*, and *Chang Yi* <sup>2</sup> a Duke *Wên* of *Chin* <sup>3</sup>.

*Yu Jo* in *Lu* bore a striking resemblance to *Confucius*. After the death of the latter, his disciples all made *Yu Jo* sit down and questioned him on some points of the doctrine, but *Yu Jo* could not answer. Why ? Because there was only a likeness of his external appearance, whereas his mind was different. Thus, variegated birds and animals with one horn may sometimes look like a phoenix or a unicorn, but, as a matter of fact, they are not real ones. Therefore it is a mistake to distinguish a phoenix or a unicorn by their shape, their hair, or their colour.

In this manner did *Yen Yuan* <sup>4</sup> almost equal *Confucius*, but he was not like him, whereas *Yu Jo*, quite an ordinary type of man, looked like a sage. Consequently a real phoenix or a real unicorn may perhaps not look like it, in its outward shape and, on the other hand, quite common birds and animals resemble the real phoenix and unicorn by their hair and colour. How can they be distinguished ? The literati who maintain that they are able to recognise a phoenix or a unicorn, when they see them, must also say of themselves that they know a holy man, when they perceive him.

*Kao Yao* had a horse mouth, and *Confucius'* arms were turned

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<sup>1</sup> The usurper.

<sup>2</sup> A political adventurer, cf. p. 1.115.

<sup>3</sup> An enlightened sovereign, cf. p. 1.162.

<sup>4</sup> Disciple of *Confucius*.

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backwards <sup>1</sup>. If, later on, their wisdom far exceeded that of other people, still they could not be called sages on account of the horse mouth or the concave forehead, for as the features of the Twelve Holy Men differed from those of former sages, they cannot be characteristic either for future sages. The configuration of the bones differs, as do their names and their physical frame ; and they <sup>p1.361</sup> are born in different places. Therefore, how could a sage be known, provided that one were born again ?

*Huan Chün Shan* <sup>2</sup> said to *Yang Tse Yün* <sup>3</sup>,

— If in future generations there should be again a man like the sages, people would be well aware that his talents surpassed theirs by far, but they would not be able to know, whether he really was a holy man or not.

*Yang Tse Yün* replied,

— So it is, indeed.

It is difficult to know a sage. Even men like *Huan Chün Shan* and *Yang Tse Yün*, who could judge the excellence and the attainments of a sage, felt incompetent. The scholars of the age represent mediocrity. The knowledge of mediocrity consists in the combination of ordinary observations, but we can be sure that, on seeing a sage, they would not be in a position to recognise him as such. Being unable to recognise a sage, they could not know a phoenix or a unicorn either. Why must people at the present day, who are speaking of the phoenix and the unicorn, pretend that they have such a knowledge ?

In former generations people used the words phoenix and unicorn merely upon hearing of the queerness of a bird or an animal. If those had a peculiar plumage or horn, and if they did not fly at random, or wildly roam about, struggling for their food with other birds or animals, they were called phoenix or unicorn. The knowledge which the men of to-day have of the sages is of very much the same kind. They have been told that sages are wonderful men.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.304.

<sup>2</sup> *Huan Tan* = *Huan Chün Shan* lived in the 1st cent. B. C. and A. D. He was a man of wide learning. Of his works the '*Hsin-lun*' '*New Reflections*' have been preserved.

<sup>3</sup> The Confucian philosopher, cf. p. 1.391.

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Therefore, when a man's body shows some peculiarity of the bones, and his wisdom is profound and extensive, they call him a sage. Those who really know what a sage means, do not give that name at first sight, and when they have heard a man for the first time. They first bow to him, hear his lectures, and receive his instruction, and afterwards learn to know him. This will become more clear from the following facts.

When *Tse Kung* had served *Confucius* one year, he thought himself to be superior to *Confucius*, after two years he thought himself to be his equal, but after three years he had learned that he could never come up to him. During the space of one and two years, he did not yet know that *Confucius* was a sage, and it was not until three years had elapsed, that he became aware of it. If *Tse Kung* required three years to find this out, our scholars p1.362 must be in error, when they imagine they know a sage, for they are less gifted than *Tse Kung*, they see a sage, but do not study under him, nor have they three years intercourse with him, a sudden glance is all they rely upon.

In *Lu*, *Shao Chêng Mao* <sup>1</sup> was placed on a level with *Confucius*. The school of *Confucius* was three times full, and three times empty. Only *Yen Yuan* did not leave him. *Yen Yuan* alone knew that *Confucius* was a sage. The other pupils abandoned *Confucius*, and returned to *Shao Chêng Mao*. Not only did they not understand the sagehood of *Confucius*, but they did not even know *Shao Chêng Mao*. The disciples were all imposed upon, so that *Tse Kung* asked *Confucius* saying,

— *Shao Chêng Mao* is a famous man in *Lu*, how can you know more about government than he ?

*Confucius* replied,

— *Tse Kung* ! You had better leave this, for you are not up to it.

Only the intelligent can distinguish the artificial. Since a man like *Tse Kung* was unable to know a sage, it is nonsense, if our scholars claim to know

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<sup>1</sup> *Shao Chêng Mao*, a high officer of *Lu*, was later on executed by *Confucius* for high treason, when *Confucius* was assistant-minister (*Shi-chi* chap. 47, p. 9v.). Some say that *Shao-chêng* is the official title and *Mao* the cognomen. *Shao-chêng* might mean a sub-director, or an assistant-judge. (Cf. *Huai Nan Tse* XIII, 22 comm.) See also [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. V, p. 326, Note 7.](#)

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a sage upon seeing him. From their inability to know a sage we may infer that they do not know a phœnix or a unicorn either.

Let us suppose that a phœnix has long and broad feathers, and that the body of a unicorn is high and big. Then the beholder would regard them as a big bird or a huge animal, but by what should he distinguish them ? If their big size were to be taken as a criterion, then one ought to know a sage by his size also. During the 'Spring and Autumn' Period there arrived a bird and remained, but it could not be considered a phœnix, and, when the tall *Ti* <sup>1</sup> made their appearance, they could not be taken for sages either. The phœnix and the unicorn being like other birds or animals, what can people do to know them ?

Should three creatures not live in China and come across the desert, they would be like the 'mainah' <sup>2</sup>, which is not a Chinese bird ; nor would the phœnix and the unicorn be Chinese animals then. Why then do the Literati decry the 'mainah', and applaud the phœnix and the unicorn, if none of them is of Chinese origin ?

p1.363 Some one may say that, when at the time of *Hsiao Hsüan Ti* a phœnix alighted in the *Shang-lin* park <sup>3</sup>, flocks of birds crowded around it on the trees, thousands and ten thousands. They reverently followed the phœnix, because it surpassed all the other birds by its size as well as by the holiness of its spirit. Provided that a large bird around which, when it alights, all the multitudes of birds gather, is a phœnix, then we would know what a phœnix really is. Now the phœnix has the same character as the unicorn. If, when a phœnix appears, all the birds follow it, then all the animals ought to accompany the unicorn, when it shows itself, likewise. But in regard to the unicorn of the 'Spring and Autumn' no mention is made of all the animals following it. *Hsüan Ti* and *Wu Ti* both got a unicorn, but nothing is said about animals accompanying it.

Should anybody be of opinion that the train of the unicorn disperses, when it is caught by man, whereas the phœnix is never caught, and that the

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chap. 25.

<sup>2</sup> *Acridotheres cristatellus*.

<sup>3</sup> *Vid.* p. 1.359.



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birds following it become visible, when it is flying about, I refer to the *Shuking*. There we read that, when the nine parts of the imperial music were performed, the male and female phoenix came gambolling <sup>1</sup>. The *Ta-chuan* <sup>2</sup> speaks of a phoenix on the trees, but does not mention that flocks of birds were following it. Was the phoenix attracted by *Hsüan Ti* of another kind perhaps ?

One might suggest that this is an omission on the part of the chronicler, that under *Yü's* reign the phoenix was really accompanied by other birds, that the time of remote antiquity is so far away, that the chroniclers might well have omitted to mention it, and that the text of the Classics cannot be a proof. Of course, it may happen that something has really taken place, which the historians have dropped, but, in the same way, it can be the case that something really never happened, and was invented by the historians. Therefore it is difficult to find out the truth from the text of the works of the Literati, and our attempts to know a phoenix from its following are in vain.

Moreover, there are cunning fellows among men, who succeed in winning followers, as there are wily birds, which assemble others around themselves. Was the phoenix of the time of *Yü* honest then, and that of *Hsüan Ti's* time a trickster ? How is it possible that they were both endowed with the virtue of holy men, and that still their actions should be so dissimilar ?

p1.364 A bird may perhaps be phoenix, although there are no birds following it, or it may not be a phoenix, notwithstanding the great number of birds flocking around it. The superior man leads a pure life. He preserves his integrity, and does not care to have many adherents. In his doings and dealings he has not many followers. A cunning intriguer, on the other hand, uses all his energy, and bustles about so much, that the scholars gather around him like clouds. The phoenix is like the superior man. If the number of followers were to decide, whether a bird is a phoenix or not, then a cunning impostor ought to be considered a superior man.

The more refined a song is, the fewer are the persons who can sing to the

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<sup>1</sup> *Shuking*, *Yi-chi* Pt. II, Bk. IV, 9 (*Legge* Vol. III, Pt. I, p. 88).

<sup>2</sup> This must be the name of an ancient work.

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tune, and the more disinterested one's actions are, the fewer are one's sympathisers. The same holds good for birds and animals. To find out a phoenix by the number of its followers would be like calling a song a good one, because it can be sung by many.

The dragon belongs to a similar class of animals as the phoenix. Under the reign of *Hsüan Ti* <sup>1</sup> a yellow dragon came out at *Hsin-fêng* <sup>2</sup>, but the snakes did not accompany it. The 'spirit bird' and the '*luan*' take a prominent place among the common birds. Although their goodness and their holiness be not as developed as that of the phoenix, still they ought to have a suite of at least some ten birds.

*Hsin Ling* and *Mêng Ch'ang* <sup>3</sup> entertained three thousand guests, and were called wise and superior men. The *Han* general *Wei Ch'ing* <sup>4</sup> and the general *Ho Ch'ü Ping* <sup>5</sup> had not a single guest in their houses, famous generals though they were. The Grand Annalist notes that robber *Chê*, in spite of all his misdeeds, had several thousand partisans, whereas *Po Yi* and *Shu Ch'i* <sup>6</sup> lived in concealment on Mount *Shou-yang*.

The actions of birds and animals are like those of man. A man may win the crowd, but that is not sufficient to characterize him as a wise man. Thus the fact that other birds follow it, is not a sufficient testimony for a phoenix either.

Some say that the phoenix and the unicorn are omens of universal peace, and that at a time of universal peace one sees them <sup>p1.365</sup> arrive. However, they also appear, when there is not universal peace. By their quaint plumage and extraordinary bones they distinguish themselves from the ordinary birds and animals, and can be known. Provided that the phoenix and the unicorn usually arrive at a time of general peace, then the unicorn of the Spring and Autumn period must have disliked to appear during the reign of *Confucius*.

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<sup>1</sup> 73-48 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> A locality in *Shensi* province.

<sup>3</sup> The princes of *Hsin Ling* and of *Mêng Ch'ang*, cf. chap. 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Vid.* p. 1.308.

<sup>5</sup> A celebrated commander, who gained many brilliant victories over the *Hsiung-nu*. Died 117 B. C.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. p. 1.168.

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When the Emperor *Kuang Wu Ti* <sup>1</sup> was born in the *Chi-yang* palace, a phoenix came down. *Kuang Wu Ti's* birth fell in the time of *Chêng Ti* <sup>2</sup> and *Ai Ti* <sup>3</sup>, by no means a time of universal peace, nevertheless the phoenix made its appearance. If it did so, because it knew *Kuang Wu Ti's* wisdom and virtue, then it was an omen of the birth of a holy emperor, but not a sign of universal peace. Lucky omens may correspond to universal peace or happen to mark a special birth. It is difficult to find out the real cause. Therefore it would not be proper to think of a period of universal peace only.

Some say that the phoenix and the unicorn are born as members of a certain species of animals, just as the tortoise and the dragon belong to a certain species. For this reason a tortoise will always beget a tortoise, and a dragon will always beget a dragon. In shape, colour, and size the offspring does not differ much from the progenitors. Why should it not be possible for us to know these animals, seeing the father and beholding the son and the grand-son ?

For the following reason. Common creatures have their species, but ominous creatures have not ; they are born by accident. Therefore they say that the tortoise and the dragon are endowed with virtue. How can people distinguish a spiritual tortoise or a divine dragon, when they perceive them ?

At the time of King *Yuan of Sung* <sup>4</sup> fishermen caught a spiritual tortoise in their nets, but they did not know that it was a spirit. The scholars of our days are like those fishermen. Since the fishermen did not know a spiritual tortoise, we may be sure that the people of to-day do not know a divine dragon either.

Sometimes a dragon is like a snake, and sometimes a snake resembles a dragon. *Han Fei Tse* remarks that a horse resembling a stag is worth one thousand *chin*. An excellent horse resembles a stag, and a spiritual dragon sometimes looks like a snake. If <sup>p1.366</sup> those creatures really belonged to a certain species, there would be no discrepancy in shape or colour.

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<sup>1</sup> 25-58 A. D.

<sup>2</sup> 32-6 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> 6 B. C.- 1 A. D.

<sup>4</sup> 530-515 B. C.

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During the time of *Wang Mang* <sup>1</sup> there was an enormous bird, as big as a horse, with variegated plumage adorned with dragon like ornaments, which, together with several ten other birds, alighted in *Ch'i-hsien* in the State of *P'ei* <sup>2</sup>. The phoenix, which during the time of *Hsüan Ti* sat down on the ground, was 5 feet high, which would correspond to the size of a horse aforementioned. Its plumage was multicoloured, which would be like the variegated colour with dragon ornaments, and the several tens of birds would be like the flocks of birds all alighting at the same time. If at *Hsüan Ti's* time it was a phoenix in shape and colour, accompanied by all the other birds, how do we know that it was one? Provided it was, then the bird attracted by *Wang Mang* was a phoenix likewise. That being the case, it cannot have been an omen, since *Wang Mang* caused its appearance, and if it was not a phoenix, how is it that in shape and colour and, as regards the following, it was exactly like it?

All ominous things originate from a propitious fluid. Born in an ordinary species, they have their peculiar character, and therefore become omens. Thus the arrival of a phoenix is like the appearance of the 'red crow' <sup>3</sup>. If the phoenix is said to belong to a species, is there a distinct species of 'red crows' also?

As regards the auspicious grain, the wine springs, and the sweet dew, the auspicious grain grows amidst other grain, but it has its peculiar spikelets, wherefore it is called auspicious grain. The wine springs and the sweet dew flow forth sweet and nice. They come from sources and dew, but there is not a special kind of sweet dew in heaven, or a certain class of wine springs on earth. During the just reign of a wise ruler the sweet dew falls down, and the wine comes up.

The 'felicitous plant' <sup>4</sup> and the 'vermilion grass' also grow on earth along with other plants, but they do not always sprout from the same root. They

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<sup>1</sup> 9 B. C. -23 A. D.

<sup>2</sup> In modern *Anhui*.

<sup>3</sup> A propitious bird which appeared to *Wu Wang*, cf. p. 1.130.

<sup>4</sup> The felicitous plant, '*ming chia*', was found in the court-yard of the emperor Yao. With the waxing moon it grew one new leaf every day, with the waning moon one leaf dropped every day.

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come forth for a certain time, and after ten days or a month they wither and fall off. Hence they are <sup>p1.367</sup> considered as omens. The phoenix and the unicorn are omens as well. Why should they form a distinct species ?

When there was perfect peace under the *Chou* dynasty, the people of *Yüeh-ch'ang* <sup>1</sup> brought white pheasants as a present. These white pheasants were short-lived and of white colour, but there was not a special class of white pheasants. When the people of *Lu* caught a deer with one horn, and called it a unicorn, it descended perhaps from a deer, and there was no species of unicorns.

Accordingly the phoenix is perhaps also born from a snow goose or a magpie, but differing so much from the majority of birds by its quaint plumage and peculiar feathers, it is given the name phoenix. Wherefore must it belong to quite another class than the other birds ?

*Yu Jo* <sup>2</sup> said,

— The position the unicorn takes among quadrupeds, the phoenix takes among flying birds, Mount *T'ai* among hills, and the Yellow River and the Ocean among water-courses.

Consequently the phoenix and the unicorn are to be classed together with birds and animals, only their shape and colour is exceptional. They cannot constitute a separate class. Belonging to the same category, they have their anomalies, by these anomalies they fall out of the common run, and owing to this irregularity the distinction becomes difficult.

*Yao* begot *Tan Chu*, and *Shun*, *Shang Chün*. *Shang Chün* and *Tan Chu* belonged to the same species as *Yao* and *Shun*, but in body and mind they were abnormal. *Kun* begot *Yü*, and *Ku Sou*, *Shun*. *Shun* and *Yü* were of the same class as *Kun* and *Ku Sou*, but differed from them in wisdom and virtue. If we try to sow the seed of auspicious grain, we cannot reap auspicious grain thereby, but we may frequently find millet with abnormal stalks or ears. People beholding *Shu Liang Ho* could not know that he was the father of *Confucius*, nor could they see in *Po Yü* the son of *Confucius*. The father of

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<sup>1</sup> In chap. 26 we read *Yüeh-Shang*, which were a people near the *Annamese* frontier.

<sup>2</sup> See above p. 1.360.

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*Chang T'ang* <sup>1</sup> was 5 feet high, *Chang T'ang* himself 8, and his grand-son 6. The phoenix of *Hsiao Hsüan Ti* measured 5 feet. The bird from which it was born perhaps measured but 2 feet, and the own offspring of the phoenix only 1 foot, for why should a species be quite stereotype ? Since classes and species are not stereotype, *Tsêng Hsi* had a son, *Tsêng Shên* <sup>2</sup>, whose character was <sub>p1.368</sub> unique, and *Yen Lu* was father to *Yen Hui*, who outshone every one in ancient and modern times. A thousand Li horse must not be the colt of a unicorn, and a bird may be benevolent and wise without being the fledgeling of a phoenix.

The brooks on the mountain tops are not connected with rivers and lakes, still they are full of fish. The generative power of the water has produced them independently. On the terraces of ruined palaces and crumbling halls grows grass, sent forth by the force of the soil of itself. The fish in the brooks and the grass on the terraces of the halls have no progenitors of their own species. In the same manner an omen corresponding to something happens spontaneously, there is not a special class for it in the world.

An omen corresponds in the same way, as a calamitous event supervenes. The omen corresponds to something good, a calamity to something bad. Good and bad are opposites, it is true, but the corresponding is the same. As a calamitous revolution does not belong to a class, an omen corresponding to something has no species. The fluids of the *Yin* and the *Yang* are the fluids of Heaven and Earth. Falling in with something good, they harmonize with it, and meeting something bad, they suddenly turn. Do Heaven and Earth in addition to the government which they exercise over good and evil still produce a harmonious and a suddenly changing fluid ? By no means : when an omen corresponds to something, it is not of a certain class or category, but it comes forth along with something good, and grows from the harmony of the fluids.

Sometimes during a peaceful administration and, while the fluids are in harmony, various creatures undergo a metamorphosis. In spring e. g. the eagle changes into a pigeon, and in autumn the pigeon becomes an eagle.

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<sup>1</sup> *Chang T'ang* lived at the beginning of the 1st cent. A. D. *Vid.* chap. 56.

<sup>2</sup> *Tsêng Tse*, the well known disciple of *Confucius*, cf. p. 1.164.

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Snakes, mice, and the like are transformed into fish and turtles, frogs into quails, sparrows into clams <sup>1</sup>. These creatures change in accordance with their fluids. Their existence cannot be denied. *Huang Shih* <sup>2</sup> became an old man, presented *Chang Liang* with a book, and then became a stone again. The Literati know this. Perhaps at the time of universal peace, when all the fluids are in harmony, a deer might be transmuted into a unicorn, and a snow-goose into a phoenix. In this way the nature of animals would be changed at times, but there would not be a stereotype species.

p1.369 *Pao Sse* <sup>3</sup> was the daughter of a black lizard, and born from the saliva of two snakes <sup>4</sup>. Two ministers of *Chin* were the progeny of a brown and a spotted bear <sup>5</sup>. The stories about the eating of the swallow's egg <sup>6</sup>, and the pearl-barley <sup>7</sup>, and the walking upon an enormous foot-print <sup>8</sup> are likewise accepted by the people of to-day, why then shall the omens belong to a stereotype species? If we consider the question from the point of view that creatures have not a well-defined species, nor men a separate class, and that a body can be metamorphosized, then the phoenix and the unicorn are not born from an unchangeable species. But wherefore must they be alike then in shape and colour?

We read in the chapter on omens in the *Liki* <sup>9</sup> that the male phoenix is called 'Fêng' and the female 'Huang', and that the male sings 'chi, chi', and the female 'tsu, tsu' <sup>10</sup>. In the *Shiking* we find the following verses:

The oil tree is growing on yonder high hill, and the male and female phoenix is singing there in the morning sun-shine. Luxuriant

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.336 Note 2.

<sup>2</sup> I. e. 'Yellow Stone'.

<sup>3</sup> The favourite consort of the Emperor *Pu Wang*, 781-771 B. C.

<sup>4</sup> On this legend, see p. 1.321.

<sup>5</sup> *Fan Wên Tse* and *Ch'ung Hang Chao Tse*, cf. p. 1.225.

<sup>6</sup> The mother of *Hsieh*, the ancestor of the *Yin* dynasty swallowed an egg dropped by a swallow, and thereupon conceived. Cf. p. 1.318.

<sup>7</sup> The mother of Great *Yü* is said to have conceived after having eaten pearl-barley. See p. 1.318.

<sup>8</sup> *Vid.* p. 1.318.

<sup>9</sup> There is no chapter on omens, 'Jui-ming', in the *Liki* now.

<sup>10</sup> A similar passage occurs in the *Han-shih-wai-chuan* (*T'ai p'ing-yü-lan*) 2nd cent. B. C.

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and flourishing is the tree, 'yung, yung, chieh, chieh' sing the phoenixes <sup>1</sup>.

The chapter on omens as well as the *Shiking* describe the singing of the phoenix the one as 'chi chi, tsu tsu', the other as 'yung, yung, chieh, chieh'. These sounds differ. Provided that they are really like this, then the shape of the birds cannot be the same, and if it is, then there is a discrepancy between the *Shiking* and the *Liki*. Consequently the common traditions about the singing of the phoenix are suspicious.

Of the unicorn caught in *Lu*, it is said that it was a deer with a horn, that means that its colour was like that of a deer. The colour of a deer is invariable, as the colour of birds is. At the time of *Wu Wang* a stream of light appeared in the form of a crow. Its colour is said to have been red. Red not being the colour of crows, it is expressly stated that the colour was red. p.1.369 If the unicorn resembled a deer, but had a different colour, it would certainly have been added that its colour was white or black. Now the colour was the usual one, therefore they merely say that it was a deer. A deer is hornless <sup>2</sup>. Since the deer in question was different from the ordinary ones in this respect, it is said that it had a horn. In this manner the unicorn caught in *Lu* was shaped like a deer.

During the time of *Wu Ti* a hunting party in the west caught a white unicorn with one horn and five feet. The horn was then as in other cases, but the reference to the five feet shows that it had not the same number of legs. The unicorn found in *Lu* is described as a deer. The colour not being mentioned, it must have been a deer of no unusual colour. *Wu Ti* is reported to have got a white unicorn. White colour does not agree with a unicorn. The statement that a unicorn is a deer, means therefore that it is an ordinary one, whereas the allegation that it is a white unicorn, shows that its colour is unusual.

Under the reign of *Hsiao Hsüan Ti* the *Chiu-chên* <sup>3</sup> sent as a tribute a unicorn shaped like a deer, but with two horns. It thus differed from the

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<sup>1</sup> *Shiking* Pt. III, Bk. II, Ode VIII ([Legge Vol. IV, Pt. II, p. 494](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> China possesses several varieties of hornless deer.

<sup>3</sup> A tribe in *Annam*.



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unicorn of *Hsiao Wu Ti*, to which one horn is ascribed. During the Spring and Autumn Period the unicorn was like a deer, that of the emperor *Hsüan Ti* is described as resembling a stag. A stag is double the size of a deer, and differently shaped. The unicorns which appeared under the reigns of those three emperors vary very much, as regards the colour of their hair, the horn, the feet, and the size of the body. If we infer the future from these instances, it is quite evident that the unicorns eventually appearing at the present time will not be like those of former generations. In this respect the unicorn is like the phoenix. The unicorns varied at different periods in shape and colour. If we were to start from the phoenix seen at the time of *Hsüan Ti*, measuring five feet and being multicoloured, and to foretell the future from the past, it would be a mistake to maintain that a phoenix appearing later on must be like that one. There can be no doubt that phoenixes and unicorns, which will appear later on, will not resemble those observed formerly. How can the scholars assert that on seeing them they would know them ?

When the people of *Lu* caught the unicorn, they dared not straightway call it a unicorn, but said that it was a horned deer. <sup>p1.371</sup> At that time in fact they did not know it. *Wu Ti* called upon the censor *Chung Chün* to give his opinion about the unicorn. *Chung Chün* replied that it was a wild animal with joined horns, showing that the whole empire had grown from the same root. He did not at once style it a unicorn, but declared it to be a wild animal. *Chung Chün* had his doubts as well, and did not know it. The knowledge of the scholars of our age does not exceed that of the people of *Lu* or of *Chung Chün*. Should they see a phoenix or a unicorn, they would certainly have the same doubts as the latter.

How is it possible to find out a phoenix and a unicorn among uncommon birds and animals ? If shape and colour be taken as a criterion, they are not always alike. If there be a big train of birds and animals following them, this is not always a proof of their excellence. If their rarity be regarded as a characteristic, there is the 'mainah' also, and if importance be attached to peculiarities, then sages as well as wise men have strange physical features. Both sages and wise men are abnormal, and there is no means to distinguish between them.

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Taking wisdom and sageness as a starting point, we find that sage birds and sage animals do not possess more peculiarities than ordinary birds or common animals. The wisdom of sage or wise men may be quite extraordinary, whereas their bones show no anomaly. Thus sage and wise birds and animals can be endowed with benevolence, honesty, unselfishness, and purity, though there be nothing remarkable in their physical constitution. Sometimes there are rich and noble persons who have not the body of a sage, and the osseous structure of many points to wealth and honour, who do not prove to be sage or wise. Accordingly some birds are multicolour, and some animals have a horn, but are devoid of benevolence or sageness. How do we know then but that the phœnixes and unicorns, seen in olden days, were common birds or animals, and the magpies and deer seen at present are phœnixes and unicorns ? The present holy age is the result of the reforms emanating from *Yao* and *Shun*, why should no benevolent or wise creatures be born ?

It may happen that phœnixes and unicorns are mixed with snow-geese, magpies, deer or stags, so that our people cannot distinguish them. When precious jade was hidden in a stone, the governor of the king of *Ch'u* did not know it, which distressed the owner so much, that he wept tears of blood <sup>1</sup>. Perhaps p1.372 now-a-days the phœnixes and unicorns also hide their benevolent and wise heart under a common plumage and ordinary fur, and have neither a single horn nor five colours as a distinctive mark, so that our people know them no more, than the jade in the stone was known. How can we prove that ? By a reference to the plants, which at the commencement of the *Yung-p'ing* period <sup>2</sup> were always presenting omens. When the emperor *Hsiao Ming Ti* was manifesting his kindness, all sorts of omens happened at the same time. At the *Yuan-ho* and *Chang-ho* epochs <sup>3</sup>, when *Hsiao Chang Ti*'s virtue was shining, perfect harmony pervaded the world, and auspicious omens and strange things corresponded. Phœnixes and unicorns came forth one after the other, and were observed on many occasions, much more than

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.113.

<sup>2</sup> Style of the reign of the Emperor *Ming Ti*, 58-76 A. D.

<sup>3</sup> Styles of the Emperor *Chang Ti*, 84-87 and 87-89.

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at the time of the Five Emperors. This chapter was already completed, therefore I could not mention it then <sup>1</sup>.

It might be objected that arguing on omens, I have declared that the phœnix and the unicorn are hard to know, and that the omens of our age cannot be distinguished, whether, therefore, the phœnixes and the unicorns attracted now by *Hsiao Chang Ti* could not be known? — I say that according to the 'Records on the Five Birds' <sup>2</sup> there are big birds in the four regions and the centre which, when they roam about, are accompanied by all the other birds. In size, and the colour of the plumage they resemble a phœnix, but are difficult to know indeed.

Since the omens of our age do not allow of distinction, how can we find them out? By the government of the empire. Unless the virtue of the reigning emperor equalled that of *Yü*, we would not perceive phœnixes and unicorns with our own eyes. The omens of *Yü* were undoubtedly genuine, and *Yao's* excellence is evident. Under *Hsiao Hsüan Ti* the world enjoyed a still more universal peace than at the time of *Yao* and *Shun*, as far as ten <sup>p1.373</sup> thousand Li, people were anxious for reforms and progress, and the moral laws found an echo everywhere. Affected by this state of things, the benevolent birds and animals made their appearance, only the size, the colour of the hair, the feet and the wings of those auspicious creatures were not always the same. Taking the mode of government and the intelligence of the rulers as a criterion for the various omens, we find them all to be genuine. That means that they are hard to know, but easy to understand.

The sweet dew may also serve us as a key. The sweet dew is produced by the harmonious fluid, it has no cause in itself which could make it sweet; this can only be done by the intervention of the harmonious fluid. When the

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter must have been written prior to 84 A. D., so that the auspicious reign of the Emperor *Chang Ti* could not yet be referred to. The author made this addition later *i.e.* after 89, for it was not before this year that the emperor received his posthumous title *Hsiao Chang Ti*.

<sup>2</sup> By the Five Birds perhaps the Five Phœnixes '*Wu Fêng*', five different kinds of phœnixes, which differ by their colours, are meant. The '*Fêng*' is red, the '*Yuan chu*' yellow, the '*Luan*' blue, the '*Yü tsu*' purple, and the '*Ku*' white. Whereas '*Fêng*' and '*Luan*' are still used as names for the phœnix, one understands by '*Yuan chu*' a kind of peacock or pheasant, by '*Yü tsu*' a kind of duck, and by '*Ku*' the snow-goose or swan.

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harmonious fluid appears, the sweet dew pours down, virtue permeates everything, and the various omens come forth together. From the *Yung-p'ing* down to the *Chang-ho* period the sweet dew has continually been falling. Hence we know that the omens are all true, and that phœnixes and unicorns are likewise all genuine.

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## 51. Book XVII, Chap. I

### *Chih-juì.* Thoughts on Omens

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p2.306 The Literati hold that the phoenix and the unicorn appear for the sake of a holy emperor <sup>1</sup>. They consider the phoenix and the unicorn as being kind-hearted and sage animals, which have deep thoughts and keep aloof from all danger. When virtue reigns in China, they appear, when there is no virtue, they abscond. Extolling the goodness and intelligence of the two animals, they at the same time wish to compliment the sages, there being nothing but their virtue to attract the phoenix and the unicorn. This statement is untenable :

If the phoenix and the unicorn are sage, sages are no less so. Sages toil and trouble for the world's sake, and phoenixes and unicorns ought likewise to teach and admonish <sup>2</sup>. Sages wander about in the world, and phoenixes and unicorns should also join birds and beasts. Why must they leave China behind, to sojourn beyond the frontier ? Are the sages defiled, and the phoenix and the unicorn pure ? Why is their sagehood the same, and their practice so different ?

Provided that sages must hide, then the Twelve Sages <sup>3</sup> ought to have hidden, but if sages must show themselves, the phoenix and the unicorn ought to do so as well. If these kind-hearted sage animals are cautious, and keep away from dangers, the arrest of *Wên Wang* in *Yu-li* <sup>4</sup>, and the straits of *Confucius* in *Ch'ên* and *T'sai* <sup>5</sup> are wrong. *Wên Wang* and *Confucius* were benevolent sages, who in their efforts for the world, and their compassion of

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<sup>1</sup> See Vol. I, chap. 50.

<sup>2</sup> Here again our author falls into his old error of exaggerating analogies. Two things may well be similar without agreeing in every feature. A sage animal must not necessarily adopt human ways, but might practise its sagehood in its own manner.

<sup>3</sup> Their names are given in p. 1.304.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 1.142, Note 2.

<sup>5</sup> See p. 1.155, Note 2.

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the people paid no heed to dangers ; so in spite of possessing the wisdom of benevolent sages they could not avoid imprisonment and troubles.

p2.307 Everybody, in his conduct, may cultivate his character and rectify his principles, but he cannot prevent others from doing him wrong. The dealings of sages are unequalled, still sages cannot eschew vexations. If the phœnix and the unicorn alone are apt to remain unscathed in the turmoil, the doings of brutes must be better than those of sages.

Besides, between birds, beasts, and man there cannot be any intellectual intercourse ; how can the former know then whether a State is well ordered or not ? <sup>1</sup> Men are similarly organized, and their moral qualities are the same, yet they do not know each other. How should birds and beasts endowed with a nature quite different from the human, know man ? Man does not understand birds and beasts, and the latter do not know man either. Both are aliens to one another. Birds and beasts are less intelligent than man ; how can they know him all the same ?

The scholars all make much of the excellence of phœnixes, with a view to illustrating the government of an enlightened monarch, but incidentally they proclaim the inferiority of man to beasts and birds. Their arguments strain the point and deviate from truth.

Furthermore, do phœnixes appear for sage emperors only ? Under the reign of *Hsiao Hsüan Ti*, phœnixes appeared five times and a unicorn once. Spiritual birds, yellow dragons, sweet dew, and wine springs all became visible <sup>2</sup>, whence we have the year titles : *Five Phœnixes*, *Spiritual Bird*, *Sweet Dew*, and *Yellow Dragon* <sup>3</sup>. If the phœnix and the unicorn really appear for a sage emperor, *Hsiao Hsüan Ti* must have been a sage, in the case, however, that he was not a sage, then both appear for a worthy <sup>4</sup> too. Should

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<sup>1</sup> As has been said above, the phœnix and the unicorn are supposed to make their appearance in China, when there is a wise ruler, and the State is well governed. But then they must have intercourse with men, to learn what is going on among them.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 1.366.

<sup>3</sup> All titles of the reign of the *Han* emperor *Hsüan Ti*, 73-49 B. C. Perhaps just these names have given rise to all the fables about the appearance of these omens under the said emperor's reign.

<sup>4</sup> A degree less than a sage, cf. chap. 71.

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they come for worthies, then the dicta of the literati respecting phœnixes and unicorns are mistaken. The phœnix and the unicorn came for *Yao* and *Shun*, and they also came for *Hsüan Ti*, consequently they came for sages and worthies as well. As what the scholars say of p2.308 sages is exaggerated, so their arguments on phœnixes overshoot the mark.

The *Ch'un-ch'iu* relates that hunters in the west captured a dead unicorn <sup>1</sup>. Some one informed *Confucius*, who exclaimed,

[— Why has it come, why has it come ?,

and with the back of his sleeve wiped his face, while his tears were wetting the lapel of his coat.] <sup>2</sup>

The scholars recording this, opine that Heaven invested *Confucius* through a unicorn, for *Confucius* was a sage without the imperial dignity. Now, a unicorn makes its appearance for a sage emperor. *Confucius* did not take himself for an emperor, and neither the then reigning monarch, nor the prince of *Lu* <sup>3</sup> possessed sufficient virtue to move the unicorn. Whence *Confucius'* amazement at its arrival, of which he did not know the purpose. Therefore he asked, 'Why has it come ? Why has it come ?' He was aware that it had not come in view of the peaceful government, but because the prospects of his doctrine were on the wane. His hopes having failed, he was disheartened, and his tears dropped down on the lapel of his coat.

From the question of *Confucius* 'Wherefore has it come' the inference is drawn that the unicorn comes for a wise emperor. I say that this view was already current among the *literati* of the time of *Confucius*, who, also, had heard of it, but was not well acquainted with the animal. Seeing the unicorn, he wondered why it had come. As a matter of fact, the arrival of a unicorn has no special reason. It is a common animal, which chanced to enter the marshes of *Lu*. There it was discovered by the people of *Lu*, who happened to capture it. *Confucius* beholding the captured unicorn, which was not only

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<sup>1</sup> Duke *Ai*, 14th year, the last paragraph of the *Ch'un-ch'iu* [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> Quotation from the [] '*Family Sayings of Confucius*' chap. 4, p. 8v., perhaps from the original work which existed prior to the Christian era, but the quotation agrees with the later work written in the 3rd century A. D. and generally regarded as spurious.

<sup>3</sup> Duke *Ai*, mentioned above in Note 5.

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captured, but dead, compared himself with this unicorn, thinking that his doctrine was lost and would not be revived, and that unworthy persons would do away with it. If, therefore, *Confucius*, on perceiving the unicorn, shed tears, it was with reference to its capture and death, and not owing to the cause of its appearance <sup>1</sup>.

p2.309 However, when the unicorn arrives, it is accompanied by multitudes of animals, and it dies killed by man. Supposing it to be intelligent, and to arrive for a wise emperor, why does it come, when there is no such ruler? The unicorn is supposed to be very cautious and to avoid injuries, but why was it caught and slain in *Lu*? Since it arrived at a time when there was no wise emperor, we know that it does not come for the sake of a holy ruler, and from the fact that it was captured and killed in *Lu*, we surmise that its endeavours to shun hostile attacks are unsuccessful. As holy animals are unfit to escape from all troubles, so sages are also unable to eschew misfortune. Misfortune and troubles being unavoidable things for sages, the affirmation that the phoenix and the unicorn, by their cautiousness, can keep free from perils, is unfounded.

Besides, phoenixes and unicorns do not live in foreign lands, nor come to China when there is a holy emperor. They live in China and are born in mountain forests. Their nature being very pure, they are seldom seen, and men have no occasion to destroy them. Therefore, they are spoken of as exceedingly cautious and keeping aloof from all perils. If they live simultaneously with a holy emperor, and their rambles just fall in a time of peaceful government, the public looks upon them as omens of a sage emperor, which appear for the sake of a sage.

Although its nest be destroyed and its eggs be broken, the phoenix does not fly away, and though people burn the woods for hunting, or drain the ponds for fishing, the tortoise and the dragon do not emigrate <sup>2</sup>. The phoenix

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<sup>1</sup> In the '*Family Sayings*' *Confucius*, upon being asked why he wept, says, 'The *lin* comes only when there is an intelligent king. Now it has appeared when it is not the time for it to do so, and it has been injured. This is why I was so much affected'. (*Legge, Classics Vol. V, Part II, p. 834.*) This reply seems to intimate that the times were so bad, that a unicorn arriving by mistake lost its life. The badness of the time and the consequent death of the sage animal elicited the tears of the Sage.

<sup>2</sup> This passage is cited in the *Pei-wên-yün-fu*.



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is related to the tortoise and the dragon. They all live in China, and near to man. Their nests being destroyed, and their eggs broken, they seek shelter, but do not fly away, and after the burning of the wood, and the drying up of the pond they abscond, but do not roam about ; nor is anything mentioned about their going far away.

How do we know that they live in foreign countries ? The tortoise, the dragon, and the phoenix belong to the same species. If, because it is seldom seen and not killed, the phoenix be supposed to be a foreign bird, the tortoise and the dragon, which, too, but seldom appear, would, likewise, be of foreign origin <sup>1</sup>.

p2.310 In the time of the emperor *Hsiao Hsüan Ti*, the phoenix, the unicorn, the yellow dragon, and the spiritual bird all made their appearance. Since they all came forth at the same time, their nature must be alike, consequently their birth-place must also be in the same region <sup>2</sup>.

The dragon is not born abroad, but foreign countries, also, have their dragons, nor are the phoenix and the unicorn exotic, but foreign countries have phoenixes and unicorns too. Thus China possesses phoenixes and unicorns as well, and they need not come from abroad. Noticing the rarity of these animals, people believe them to be exotic, and beholding them just in times of universal peace, they suppose them to appear for a sage emperor.

The appearance of phoenixes and unicorns is like the coming forth of wine springs, and the growth of vermilion grass. If the phoenix is said to come to China from abroad, upon hearing that virtue reigns there, how do wine springs and vermilion grass learn this, that they just come forth in times of universal peace ?

Wine springs and vermilion grass are produced by the harmonious fluid <sup>3</sup>, and so are the phoenix and the unicorn. The harmonious fluid, likewise, procreates the sage. When he is born in times of decay, ominous things are produced. So it is with all men that become sages : grown up, they fall in with

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<sup>1</sup> Again a wrong analogy.

<sup>2</sup> That this conclusion is likewise wrong needs no proof.

<sup>3</sup> The original fluid, the source of every life in the world. See p. 1.471.

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these omens. Times of decay, also, have their harmonious fluid, which always engenders sages. As sages are born in times of decay, such times may produce phoenixes as well.

*Confucius* was born towards the end of the *Chou* dynasty, and a unicorn appeared in the western marshes of *Lu*. The emperor *Kuang Wu Ti* saw the light <sup>1</sup> in the time intervening between the reigns of *Ch'êng Ti* and *Ai Ti* <sup>2</sup>, and a phoenix alighted in *Chi-yang* <sup>3</sup>. Sages and sage animals are produced in periods of prosperity as well as in such of decline. A holy emperor meets with a sage animal just as a man blessed with happiness meets with auspicious auguries. As a matter of fact, he falls in with them, but they do not come out for his sake.

p2.311 The appearance of a unicorn does not differ from that of the white fish, and the red crow <sup>4</sup>. The fish happened to jump of its own accord, when the emperor's boat met it, and the fire by accident took the shape of a crow, which was perceived by the emperor who happened to be looking up. The fish had not heard of the virtue of *Wu Wang*, and therefore jumped into his boat, nor was the crow cognisant of the future rise of the house of *Chou*, and for that reason alighted on the emperor's house. To say that the phoenix and the unicorn arrive for a holy emperor, is like asserting that the fish and the crow came for *Wu Wang's* sake.

An emperor is predetermined for wealth and honour, consequently he sees propitious miracles, when setting out on a journey. These things, when seen, are called omens. There are large and small omens, and by the appearance of each the amount of virtue of the monarch may be ascertained. The white fish and the red crow are small animals and presages of some tranquillity, whereas the phoenix and the unicorn are large ones and signs of universal peace. Therefore *Confucius* said,

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.180.

<sup>2</sup> That must be in the year 6 B. C., for *Ch'êng Ti* reigned from B. C. 32-6 and *Ai Ti* from B. C. 6 to A. D. 1.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 1.323 and 365.

<sup>4</sup> Propitious animals said to have appeared to *Wên Wang* and *Wu Wang*. Cf. p. 1.130.

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— The phoenix does not come ; the River sends forth no Plan : it is all over with me <sup>1</sup>.

Not seeing these marks of universal peace, he knew that he did not live in such a period.

Why are the phoenix and the unicorn indicative of universal peace ? Because both are kind and sage animals. When such kind and sage animals arrive, the world is going to show benevolence and wisdom in its transactions.

In the 'Great Record' of the *Shuking* <sup>2</sup> we read that, when *Kao Tsung* was sacrificing in the temple of *Ch'êng T'ang*, a pheasant perched upon the handle of the tripod and crowed. *Kao Tsung* asked *Tou Yi*, who replied that probably a superior man from afar was about to arrive <sup>3</sup>. Observing that, in its movements, the pheasant bore some resemblance to a superior man just arriving from abroad, he rejoined that a superior man from abroad was about to come. The phoenix and the unicorn are like the pheasant, and their arrival must be a presage similar to that of the pheasant.

p2.312 When the emperor *Hsiao Wu Ti* was making a tour of inspection in the west, he found a white unicorn with one horn and five feet <sup>4</sup>, and there was, moreover, a tree whose boughs, after sprouting, again grew together with the root. *Wu Ti* consulted all his officers ; the (gentleman usher) *Chung Chün* <sup>5</sup> replied,

— A wild animal with joined horns shows that there is the same root, and all the branches turning inside mean that there is no outside. According to these omens, some outside people are likely to submit. If the presages prove true, they are probably going to

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 1.405.

<sup>2</sup> A work of *Fu Shêng*, 3rd cent. B. C., who preserved the *Shuking*. Cf. p. 1.447.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Shuking*, Preface, 29 (*Legge, Classics* Vol. III, Part I, p. 7) and *Shi-chi* chap. 3, p. 9r. (*Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 196*) where *Tsu Yi* is called *Tsu Chi*. Both texts differ in that *Tsu Chi* gives another explanation of the arrival of the pheasant.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 1.370. [] has been translated by 'five feet', but it might also mean 'five toes' in one hoof, as the commentator of the *Han-shu* explains the expression [] in that work.

<sup>5</sup> In p. 1.371 I have translated [] by 'censor'. It is better to render it by 'gentleman usher'. (Cf. *Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 516*) In the *Han-shu*, *Chung Chün* is also called a [], which means a censor.

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open their plaited hair, to cut off the left lapel of their coats <sup>1</sup>, to wear caps and girdles <sup>2</sup>, and to accept civilisation.

Some months later, the country of the *Yüeh* <sup>3</sup> offered its allegiance, and a celebrated king of the *Hsiung-nu* appeared with several thousand men to make his submission, just as *Chung Chün* had predicted <sup>4</sup>. His explanation was correct, since the omens turned out true.

Reasoning by analogy we find that the white fish and the red crow belong to the same class of portents. The essence of the fish is wood <sup>5</sup>, and its whiteness is the colour of the *Yin* dynasty. The crow is a filial bird, and its red colour corresponds to the fluid of the *Chou* dynasty <sup>6</sup>. First, the white fish was caught, afterwards the red crow, that meant to say that the sway of the *Yin* was broken, and their glory transferred upon the *Chou*. Prognosticating *Wu Wang's* fate from the appearance of the fish and the crow, we see that the *Chou* were destined to obtain the control of the empire.

People noticing that when *Wu Wang* punished *Chou* he met with a fish and a crow, surmised that by means of these animals Heaven enjoined upon *Wu Wang* to chastise *Chou*. The thing may seem so, <sup>p2.313</sup> but it is not a fact : In the 'Spring and Autumn' period a *mainah* arrived and built its nest. The diviners considered it an ill omen, for a wild bird coming and building its nest indicated that the capital of *Lu* was going to be treated like a mountain and waste land, and Duke *Chao* himself would have to leave his country. Subsequently, the duke was attacked by the *Chi* family and fled to *Ch'i*, where he died, without having returned to *Lu* <sup>7</sup>.

When *Chia Yi* <sup>8</sup> was privy councillor in *Chang-sha* <sup>1</sup>, a screeching-owl

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<sup>1</sup> The Chinese button their coats on the right side.

<sup>2</sup> As the Chinese do.

<sup>3</sup> Aborigines in *Chekiang*.

<sup>4</sup> All the above is quoted almost literally from the biography of *Chung Chün* in the *Han-shu* chap. 64 b, p. 4v. seq.

<sup>5</sup> According to ancient symbolism.

<sup>6</sup> The old dynasties had each their own element with a corresponding colour by which they were believed to reign. All these ideas have sprung from the mystic theory about the elements. See p. 218 Note 3 and [Appendix](#).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. p. 2.162.

<sup>8</sup> A famous author of the 2nd cent. B. C. See p. 1.148, Note 1.

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perched in his house. He opened his books and divined as follows :

When a screeching-owl enters the house, the landlord must quit it.

Afterwards *Chia Yi*, in fact, went away <sup>2</sup>.

Notwithstanding the discrepancy between the various wild birds, the interpretation remains the same. The arrival of the phoenix and the unicorn does not differ from the wild bird's roosting or the perching of the screeching-owl. The mainah happened to build its nest, and it was by chance that the owl alighted in the house. Because they were animals from the wilds and the marshes which took their abode in a city and a palace, the diviners foresaw the catastrophe of the *Lu* State and declared the omen to be unlucky for the owner of the house. The mainah and the owl did not know the impending disaster of the two States nor roost or perch on purpose.

Emperors regard the whole world as their house. When happiness or misfortune is in store for house-owners, lucky or unlucky signs are seen among men beforehand. Experts can explain them and know whether good or evil is impending. Not that <sup>p2.314</sup>ominous creatures possess knowledge, and therefore arrive for the sake of these fortunate or unlucky people.

There are the signs of the tortoises and also the lots of milfoil. These signs and lots always portend some good or bad luck. A lucky man consulting the tortoise or milfoil, meets with an auspicious augury, whereas the ill-fated find unpropitious signs. The milfoil and the tortoise do not possess supernatural powers, that they could know human fate and accordingly might put forward their signs or lots, to tell the persons in question.

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<sup>1</sup> In *Hunan*, already a circuit under the *Ch'in* dynasty.

<sup>2</sup> This incident has been described by *Chia Yi* himself in his celebrated poem in irregular verse [] of which we have a partial translation by W. A. P. *Martin*, *Chinese Legends and other Poems*, 1894, p. 32. The translator points out the remarkable parallels of this poem with the *Raven* of *Edgar Allan Poe*. The words of our text are culled from *Chia Yi's* poem, notably the oracle... He tells us in the preface that he was living in exile as tutor to the Prince of *Chang-sha*. The ill omen had troubled him, for the place was low and damp, and he thought that he would not have long to live. In order to soothe his feelings, he composed the poem. The *Hsi-ching tsa-chi*, quoted in the *P'ien-tse-lei-pien* chap. 209, informs us that it was the popular belief in *Chang-sha* that the chief of the house visited by a screeching-owl was going to die. We have a similar superstition in Europe. In Germany the screeching-owl is a bird of ill omen likewise, whence its name 'Toteneule'.

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Should somebody divine by the tortoise or milfoil only for fun, and no other person appear, he would obtain good or bad omens all the same <sup>1</sup>. Between Heaven and Earth there is always good and bad fortune, and ominous things arriving must fall in with lucky and unlucky people.

Some hold that these presages are caused by Heaven's command, but if immense Heaven were to give its orders to those tiny things, they would not understand its language nor comprehend its meaning ; how could it employ them ? These things would not do Heaven's behests either, but their arrival appearing strange, it is, as if they were sent by Heaven, whence the idea that they are heavenly messengers.

When the *Hsia* emperor *K'ung Chia* was hunting on Mount *Shou* <sup>2</sup>, it began to rain, the sky turned dark, and he entered the house of a citizen, where the mistress was just nursing a baby. Some said that a child to which an emperor came must needs rise to high honours, but others were of opinion that a child unfit for such an honour would become ill-fated <sup>3</sup>. *K'ung Chia* entered the house, because he was caught in a rain-shower and sought shelter. He did not know that a subject would have a son who was doomed to misfortune, nor did he come for his sake. But, when he arrived, people explained his arrival either as lucky or unlucky.

Propitious and adverse portents appear in the court of the emperor, and when the latter enters the house of a citizen, it is like *K'ung Chia* entering the cottage during the rain. He was unaware of the birth of a child and did not come for its sake. Consequently it is an error to pretend that the phoenix and other ominous creatures are endowed with intelligence and arrive in response to an auspicious destiny.

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<sup>1</sup> Divination would give certain results, but they would not come to pass, there being no person fit to be affected by the omens thus playfully obtained.

<sup>2</sup> A mountain in *Shansi*.

<sup>3</sup> The child became unlucky. For further details vid. p. 2.258, Note 3.

## 52. Book XVII, Chap. II

### *Shih-ying. Auguries Verified*

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p2.315 The learned say in regard to the auguries of times of universal peace that they are things formed of a strange fluid, such as vermilion grass, wine springs, the flying phoenix, sweet dew <sup>1</sup>, the brilliant star, auspicious grain, the 'meat fan', the monthly plant, the 'indicator', and the like. Moreover they add that in these times mountains produce chariots and lakes, boats ; that men and women each have their own way, and that in the markets there are not two different prices. Peasants yield their fieldmark and travellers, the road. Hoary heads have not to carry burdens in their hands <sup>2</sup>, gates and bridges are never closed, no robberies committed on the roads. The wind does not howl in the boughs <sup>3</sup>, the rain does not wash away the clods, every five days it is windy but one day, and every ten days there is one rainy day. This prosperity attracts the yellow dragon, the unicorn, and the phoenix.

These assertions of the *literati* are highly coloured and overdrawn. The ominous things partly exist and partly do not exist. The phoenix and the unicorn, &c. referred to are great auguries, and their description is more or less correct, but there should be no exaggeration. As for the smaller auguries and the less important correspondences, however, there is much wrong about them, I am afraid.

p2.316 Wind, air, rain, and dew must be sympathetic <sup>4</sup>, the statement about the flying phoenix and the sweet dew, the wind not howling in the boughs, and the rain not washing the clods of earth away, is admissible

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<sup>1</sup> On these omens see p. 1.366.

<sup>2</sup> Quotation from *Liki* III, 31r. ([Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 244](#)) [[Couvreur](#)]. We further learn from the *Liki* that in ancient times men took the right side, and women the left side of the roads.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from a passage in *Tung Chung Shu* referring to the time of universal peace, mentioned in the *Pei-wên-yün-fu*.

<sup>4</sup> There must be some harmony, some sympathy between these phenomena and certain events.

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therefore, but what has been said about the wind every five days, and the rain every ten, is nothing but a rodomontade. Though wind and rain must be in proper time, there can be no question of five and ten days or exactly fixed periods.

That men and women have no intercourse, and that one is not cheated with the market-price may be, but to speak of different roads, and that there are not two prices, is an exaggeration. How could in times of universal peace extra roads be constructed for the male and female sexes ? No special roads are built, they walk on the same road ; how could there be different ones <sup>1</sup>.

Provided that in times of universal peace there are no merchants, very well, but if there are, they will see their principal aim in seeking their advantage. How should they not affect cheapness in purchasing goods, or how should they not attempt to obtain high prices in selling ? There being this instinct for low and high prices according to circumstances, we cannot avoid speaking of two prices.

All these things exist, but are magnified and puffed up. As to the 'meat fans', the 'monthly plants', and the 'indicators', however, there are no such things, most likely for the following reasons : To tell the truth, there never were such things, not even in times of perfect peace.

Scholars pretend that 'meat fans' grow in cook-houses. In kitchens, they say, collops grow of their own accord, as thin as fans. Moved they make wind <sup>2</sup>, and fanning eatables, they cause them not to spoil.

However genial the breeze of the time of universal peace may be, it cannot make 'meat fans' grow in kitchens, to be used for cooling purposes. If it could do this, it could cause the Five Grains to grow without any human help as well. In case it could make these 'meat fans' grow in kitchens spontaneously, why does it not <sub>p2,317</sub> cause rice to boil in the pot of itself, or fire to burn in the oven of its own accord ? The purport of producing fans

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<sup>1</sup> The *Liki* does not speak of different roads, but of different sides of the roads.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from the *Ti-wang-shi-chi* (*Pei-wên-yün-fu*). The chief authority of the *T'ai p'ing-yü-lan* chap. 873 informs us that these 'meat fans' grow like lotus, have many leaves and very thin stalks. Not only do they cool food and drinks, but also drive away or kill flies and other insects. They appeared in the times of *Yao* and *Shun*.



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being to blow wind upon eatables, why are these eatables not caused not to spoil spontaneously, and why must special fans be produced to fan them? Provided that fans can grow in kitchens of themselves, what is the use of ice-houses <sup>1</sup>, and of cutting ice for the purpose of refrigerating things?

In the summer months people use their fans, but, in order to cause wind, they must move them with their hands. Grasped by the hand, fans act like strong wind, but do not stir of themselves. If 'meat fans' possessed a spontaneous motion, it would be different, but they require wind to be moved, and without wind they remain motionless. Only after the hand has furnished the wind, they are fit to refrigerate the things in the kitchen. How are 'meat fans' required for this?

There is a tradition that *Tan*, heir-presumptive of *Yen*, caused the sun to revert to the meridian, Heaven to rain grain, crows to get white heads, horses to grow horns, and the wooden elephants on the kitchen door to get legs of flesh <sup>2</sup>. Since this is a fiction, the statement about the 'meat fans' being like the fulfilment of the five vows <sup>3</sup>, is an untruth too, I dare say.

The Literati, moreover, narrate that, of yore, a 'monthly plant' grew among the steps leading up to the side-buildings of the palace. On the first day of the month one capsule came out, and up to the fifteenth fifteen capsules had grown. From the sixteenth onward one capsule fell down every day <sup>4</sup>, until on the thirteenth all the seeds had dropped. On the first day of the following month, one capsule grew again. The emperor, facing the south, could learn the number of days from observing the growing and dropping p<sub>2.318</sub> capsules, and needed not take the trouble of consulting the almanac <sup>5</sup> for that.

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<sup>1</sup> The use of ice and of ice-houses is very old in China. The *Liki* alludes to it several times. (Cf. [Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 261](#) [[Couvreur](#), § 15] and [308](#) [[Couvreur](#), § 50], [Vol. XXVIII, p. 423](#) [[Couvreur](#), § 38].)

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 1.115, Note 4.

<sup>3</sup> The five vows of the king of *Ch'in* who promised to liberate Prince *Tan* in case the afore-mentioned miracles took place.

<sup>4</sup> The same description is given by the historian *Pan Ku* in his '*Po-hu-t'ung* (*Pei-wên-yün-fu*). Another writer relates that this plant had round leaves and was multicoloured. He makes these leaves grow and drop instead of the capsules. In a short month of 29 days one leaf shrinks, but does not fall. (*T'ai p'ing-yü-lan* chap. 873.)

<sup>5</sup> [], expression used by *Pan Ku* who seems to have believed in the monthly plant.

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Now, if Heaven could produce these capsules to represent the number of days, wherefore did it not make them show the name of the day <sup>1</sup>, so that the emperor, on seeing the character on the capsule, might know it? Knowing merely the number of the day, but not its name, he would still have to consult the almanac for information. Thus his beholding the number of days would not spare him any trouble, on the contrary. How then could the growth of the monthly plant be deemed a great luck?

The grains of the monthly plant are like the pods of peas. They do not yet grow in spring and summer, and do not ripen before the end of autumn. When November is bitter cold, and frost and snow come drizzling down, all plants wither. Would the scholars dare to contend that the monthly plant, on reaching winter, alone does not die? Provided that it lives and dies like all other plants, its capsules must grow about the end of autumn. Then they might be examined in autumn, but during the other three seasons, spring, summer, and winter it would be impossible.

Moreover, if, on fifteen days of a month, fifteen capsules are produced, and, on the sixteenth, one capsule falls down, on the twenty-first day, six must have dropped. These dropped capsules would be lost and could no more be counted. Therefore it would become necessary to count the remaining ones, in order to find out the number of days. That would be most irksome and annoying and by no means a blessing <sup>2</sup>.

Supposing that the capsules grew upon the reception hall, and that the monarch, seated between the door and the window, by a look on their growth could know the number of days, this could not be considered a great advantage. Now, they say that the plant grows on the steps of the side-buildings *i. e.*, below the outer hall. As regards the imperial hall, *Mê Tse* says of that of *Yao* and *Shun* that it was raised three feet above the ground, p2.319 whereas the houses of the Literati are quite low. Should this be the case, and the monthly plant grow below the steps of a hall three feet high, the emperor

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<sup>1</sup> The name expressed by the sexagenary cycle, the usual way of counting days.

<sup>2</sup> It would require a simple calculation, of which Chinese scholars are not fond. To find out the date, the difference of the remaining capsules with fifteen must be added to fifteen.

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desirous of seeing the capsules, could not do so from his seat between the door and the window, but in order to know their number, he would be compelled to enter the outer hall, and look at them from there. Rather than to rise for the purpose of viewing the capsules below the hall, the emperor might have hung up the calendar day on the screen near his seat, whence one glance would have been sufficient <sup>1</sup>.

Heaven, by engendering omens, wishes to please the emperor, yet, if the latter be obliged to rise and examine the seeds to learn the number of days, it would have produced a most awkward thing, which proved a source of mortification to the emperor.

Besides, the monthly plant is a herb : the imperial hall being inhabited day and night, even the ancients, in spite of their simplicity, would have weeded out any plants growing in the rooms of the palace. How could capsules grow there, and people count them month after month ?

Whenever days are counted one by one, it is with a view to recording events. Of old, there were the astrologers who regulated the calendar and fixed the days. Wherefore, then, should the emperor himself have counted the seeds ? In *Yao's* time *Hsi* and *Ho* were charged with examining the Four Stars <sup>2</sup> during the four seasons, in order to foretell the weather <sup>3</sup>. These stars were very important, yet the emperor did not observe them personally, and he examined the capsules himself to number the days ?

The learned further relate that in times of perfect peace the 'indicator' grows in a corner of the palace, shaped like a plant, which points out cunning persons <sup>4</sup>. When such a one enters the palace, the indicator in its corner points at him, so that the monarch <sub>p2.320</sub> knows where the cunning person is. Accordingly, Heaven created this plant on purpose, with the object of indicating cunning people, and it did not make the nature of the holy emperors such that they could know it themselves. Perhaps no cunning

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<sup>1</sup> See the plan of the imperial palace in *Couvreur's* dictionary p. 173.

<sup>2</sup> The sun, the moon, the stars, and the zodiacal signs, cf. *Shuking* as quoted below.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Shuking* Part I, chap. II, 3 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 18](#)) [*Couvreur*].

<sup>4</sup> The *Po-wu-chih* (*Kanghi's* Dict.) says : 'In the time of *Yao* there grew a plant in the court, which when a cunning person approached curbed itself and pointed at him'. *Couvreur* omits to translate the pointing.

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people came forth originally. If Heaven created the plant, nevertheless, to point them out, did it not fear the trouble ?

No sage emperor ever had a better government than *Yao* and *Shun*, which was most peaceful, so that the 'indicator' grew in a corner of their palace of its own accord. When cunning persons arrived it made them known, and *Shun* had no difficulty in finding them out. Albeit yet he employed *Kao Yao* to exhibit his knowledge of men.

The Classic <sup>1</sup> says,

To know a man one must be wise, but it is difficult for an emperor <sup>2</sup>.

Though men are imbued with the Five Virtues and communicate together through their voices, yet they do not know each other. How could the 'indicator', being a plant, know the cunning ? According to the view of the Literati, plants and trees of the time of universal peace would outshine worthies and sages.

In law-suits there is right and wrong, and human character may be straight or crooked. Why not, at the same time, cause the 'indicator' to point out injustice and crookedness too ? Why must one take the trouble to hear the cases, three men being required to give judgment ?

Perhaps this 'indicator' plant never existed, and is nothing but an invention, or it really existed, but its indicating power is fictitious. Provided that it really could point, then perhaps the plant's nature was affected by the aspect of men. The ancients, observing the movements of the plant, in their simplicity then imagined that it could point, and from this pointing the ability of indicating cunning people was evolved in their minds <sup>3</sup>. When a ladle which

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<sup>1</sup> The *Shuking*.

<sup>2</sup> *Shuking* (*Kao-Yao mo*) Part II, Book III, 2 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 70](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>3</sup> Supposing this plant to be more than a mere freak of fancy I should suggest that the *Mimosa pudica* has been the archetype. The Chinese name as well as the nature of this peculiar plant seem to countenance such a supposition. [] may be used as a synonym for [] 'repeatedly', the compound [][] therefore might denote a plant repeatedly bending down and contracting itself. That is what the Mimosa does when touched. The feathered, digitated leaves first close, then bend down. After a while, they rise and open again. That may have been the pointing.

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turns southwards is thrown on the ground, its handle p2.321 points to the south. Worms from fish and meat, placed on the ground, creep northward <sup>1</sup>. This is the nature of these worms. The indicating power of the plants would, also, be its original nature.

Because this plant could point, the Sage <sup>2</sup> propagated the statement that the 'indicator' grew in a corner of the palace and could point out cunning people. All officers and functionaries cherishing wicked designs, thereupon, changed their minds, and reformed their conduct, adopting loyal and honest proceedings.

At present, in the court-yards of public buildings, *Kao Yao* and the *monoceros* <sup>3</sup> are painted, and scholars declare that the monoceros is a goat with one horn which, by instinct, knows the guilty. When *Kao Yao*, administering justice, was doubtful about the guilt of a culprit, he ordered this goat to butt it. It would butt the guilty, but spare the innocent. Accordingly, it was a sage animal born with one horn, a most efficient assistant in judicial proceedings. Therefore did *Kao Yao* hold it in high respect, using it on all occasions. Consequently, it belonged to the class of supernatural ominous creatures.

I say, the remarks concerning the 'indicator' apply to the monoceros as well : A goat must have two horns, the monoceros had one. When compared with its kindred, it had a bodily defect, and did not come up with its species ; why, then, must it be looked upon as a miracle ? A turtle with three legs is called a *nêng*, and a tortoise with three legs, a *fên*. Since neither a *nêng* nor a *fên* p2.322 are considered more wonderful than turtles and tortoises with four

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. *Yao Pao Ming*, Chinese teacher at the *Orientalische Seminar*, Berlin, has assured me that some worms have this peculiarity that, though turned round, they will always creep in one direction. When he was first told he did not believe it, but found by experience that it was an undeniable fact. I could not convince him of his error.

<sup>2</sup> *Yao*.

<sup>3</sup> *Hsieh-chai*. *Kanghi* quotes this passage. The figure of this fabulous animal is used as official embroidery of censors and Taotais. The name seems to be first mentioned in the *Tso-chuan* in connexion with a cap worn by southerners. *Sse-Ma Hsiang-Ju*, 2nd cent. B. C. alludes to the animal in a poem. We learn from the *Hou Han-shu* that it was hunted in the kingdom of *Ch'u*, where the aforesaid caps were first worn. The *Shuo-wên* says it was like an ox, the *Kuang-po-wu-chih* that it existed in the time of *Yao* and that its hair was woven into a curtain or a tent for the emperor (*P'ien-tse lei-pien* chap. 211).

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legs, wherefore should a goat with one horn be wiser than others with two horns ?

The *rhinopithecus* knows the past, the magpie, the future, and parrots can talk <sup>1</sup>. Their original nature enables them to do one thing, but not two. Perhaps the monoceros was so organised that it merely could gore a man, but there is no necessity why it should have known whether he was guilty. *Kao Yao*, from a desire to give more weight to his administration by the supernatural, lest those suffering punishment should be recalcitrant, availed himself of the monoceros, and when it gored somebody he punished him, in order that people might be afraid of doing wrong, and that culprits, up to their old age, should never complain of injustice.

All animals are endowed with some special knowledge ; if the monoceros, in view of its faculty of butting be held to be supernatural, the rhinopithecus and the like would all be supernatural,

Wizards know good and ill luck, and predetermine happiness and adversity. There is no doubt about that ; however, if the monoceros be said to possess similar faculties, wizards can no more be regarded as exceptional or remarkable men.

There is a general tendency to make use of the supernatural as an incentive. When *Shih Shang Fu* <sup>2</sup> was minister of war to the *Chou* sovereign and leading an army to defeat *Chou*, they arrived at *Mêng* Ford. There leaning on his halberd and grasping a standard, he shouted to his men the word 't'sang-kuang' <sup>3</sup>. A t'sang-kuang is a water animal which is in the habit of subverting boats. Therefore he used this monster to impress his men, inducing them promptly to cross the water, since otherwise the t'sang-kuang would injure them. Consequently it bears some resemblance to the monoceros.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.358.

<sup>2</sup> A surname of *Lü Shang* (p. 1.238). Cf. [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 225, Note 3.](#)

<sup>3</sup> In a corresponding passage of the *Shi-chi* chap. 32, p. 3r. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. IV, p. 37](#)) these two words are replaced by [] 'green rhinoceros' which *Sse-Ma Chêng* explains as the title of boat-officers and not the name of any monster. Cf. *Chavannes* as quoted in Note 3.

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p2.323 This strange creature lives in the river, and at times comes swimming to the surface. It has one body with nine heads. People dread and loathe it, but it does not follow that it must subvert ships. Since there was such a strange animal in the river, *Fu* used it to overawe his warriors. The monoceros goring culprits is like the *t'sang-kuang* subverting boats. All these are empty stories without any foundation. Man is afraid of the marvellous, therefore he magnifies and embellishes it.

It has, also, been said that in times of universal peace the 'brilliant star' appears. We learn from the 'Middle Period of the *Shuking*'<sup>1</sup> that in the time of Yao the brilliant star became visible in *Corvus*<sup>2</sup>. Now the brilliant star may have been one of the Five Planets of which the biggest are *Jupiter* and *Venus*. At that time, *Jupiter* or *Venus* may have come into the latitude of *Corvus*. The ancients in their simplicity could not follow up the courses of the Five Planets, and did not know the exact shape of *Jupiter* and *Venus*. On perceiving a big star, they styled it 'brilliant star'<sup>3</sup>.

The *Shiking*, moreover, states<sup>4</sup> that in the east there was *Lucifer* and in the west *Hesperus*. These, again, were perhaps no p2.324 other stars than *Jupiter* and *Venus*<sup>5</sup>. It may be that they appeared at dusk in the west, and at dawn in the east. The poets of the *Shiking* did not know them, and thus gave

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<sup>1</sup> A work on the *Shuking*, in 5 chapters, still existing and mentioned by *Chang Chih Tung* in his bibliography.

<sup>2</sup> The *T'ai p'ing-yü-lan* quoting the same passage from the *Shang-shu-chung-hou* says in *Crater*.

<sup>3</sup> [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. III](#), p. 675 takes it for a meteor. The *Po-hu-t'ung* (*Pei-wên-yün-fu*) declares it to be a big star shining even, when there is no moonshine, and enabling people to work at night. The *Shi-chi* chap. 27, p. 32r. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. III, p. 392](#)) says that it appears when the sky is clear. It is the star of virtue, has no constant form, and becomes visible in a State endowed with wisdom. Elsewhere it is stated by the same writer that the 'brilliant star' appeared in the time of *Huang Ti* shaped like a crescent, shining so vividly that one could work at night. The last fact is corroborated by another author, who adds that this star shines during new moon to assist the moon, and it comes for a wise ruler. It is formed of the clear essence of heaven. *Wên Tse* concurs with this mystic view, saying that when sincere feelings fill the heart, the fluid affects heaven, so that the 'brilliant star' appears. (*T'ai p'ing-yü-lan* chap. 7.).

It is doubtful whether we have to do with a real star of great brilliancy or with some meteorological phenomenon.

<sup>4</sup> *Shiking* Part II, Book V, Ode IX, 6 ([Legge, Classics Vol. IV, Part II, p. 356](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>5</sup> Of course they are both the planet *Venus*.

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them the names of *Lucifer* and *Hesperus*. *Hesperus* as well as the brilliant star belongs to the Five Planets.

In times of universal peace, the lustre of the sun and the moon are peculiarly brilliant. The Five Planets are akin to the sun and the moon. If in such blessed times there appears a 'brilliant star' extra, would there be a new sun and another moon likewise? The authors of the *Shiking* are common people, and the middle period is an age of simplicity, when nobody was well versed in astronomy.

Under the *régime* of *Wang Mang*, *Venus* traversed the sky as effulgent as a crescent. If persons ignorant of stars had seen it, they would again have called it a 'brilliant star'.

The *Erh-ya* <sup>1</sup> in its chapter on the four seasons says that in spring plants begin growing, in summer they develop and ripen, in autumn they are harvested, and in winter there is complete stillness <sup>2</sup>. The four fluids combined produce the 'brilliant star' <sup>3</sup>. According to this explanation of the *Erh-ya*, 'brilliant star' would be but another name of the blending of the fluids of the four seasons, and I am afraid that it cannot be a big star attached to the sky. The *Erh-ya* is a book commenting upon the antiquities of the Five Classics; all students have recourse to it, but they do not follow it, insomuch as they hold the 'brilliant star' to be a big star in the skies. Why is the assertion of the *Erh-ya* about the 'brilliant star' so divergent from the view of the scholars?

The *Erh-ya* further says that when 'sweet dew' descends the whole vegetation is blessed <sup>4</sup>, and that it is called 'wine spring' <sup>5</sup>. p2.325

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<sup>1</sup> The well known dictionary of classical terms ascribed to the disciple of *Confucius*, *Tse Hsia*, 5th cent. B. C.

<sup>2</sup> So far quoted from the *Erh-ya* chap. 9.

<sup>3</sup> This passage is not to be found in our text of the *Erh-ya*. Something like the words cited by *Wang Ch'ung* may originally have stood in this place, for the '*Wên-hsüan*' about A. D. 530 likewise quotes from the *Erh-ya*: [...].

<sup>4</sup> Our text of the *Erh-ya* writes 'Sweet rain' instead of 'sweet dew'.

<sup>5</sup> This clause is wanting in the modern text of the *Erh-ya*, but incorporated in the old commentary. The *Liki* (*Li-yün*) [Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 392](#) [[Couvreur](#)] does not support *Wang Ch'ung's* view. There we read: 'Heaven sent down its fattening dews; Earth sent forth its 'wine springs'.' *Legge, loc. cit.* gives a very reasonable explanation, that the phrase means nothing but that the dews were



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Consequently wine springs mean sweet dew. But the *savants* of today urge that these springs flow from within the earth, and that their taste is as sweet as wine, whence the name 'wine spring' is derived. There is a considerable discrepancy between these two statements, and it is difficult to know the truth.

In the chapter of the *Erh-ya* treating of water and springs <sup>1</sup> we read that a spring which at times is visible, at others not, is called intermittent. A fountain comes straight out ; to come straight out means welling up. A cascade falls down ; to fall down means flowing downward <sup>2</sup>. Consequently, springs are given different names according to their different modes of flowing forth. Provided that in times of general peace there be still wine springs issuing from the earth, they ought to be mentioned in this chapter, wherefore are they inserted into the chapter on the four seasons, where it is laid that 'sweet dew' is equivalent to 'wine spring' ? Therefore the affirmation of the Literati to the effect that wine springs rise from earth, and their contention that the taste of sweet dew is very sweet cannot be accepted as correct.

Scholars maintain that when the highest principles prevail the radiance of the sun and the moon is most brilliant, the stars do not deviate from their courses, a whirl-wind arises, sweet dew falls down, the rain is well apportioned, and the *Yin* uniform. Respecting this sweet dew they do not contend that the taste of the rain water is sweet. Accordingly they mean to say that this sweet dew descending moistens and nourishes the whole vegetation, but it must not taste sweet.

However, there is also a sort of dew as luscious as lollypops and honey, and always a presage of universal peace, but it is not the sweet dew nourishing all plants. How so ? This dew as sweet as lollypops and honey cleaves to trees, and not to the Five Grains. When the other dew without a sweet taste falls down, it saturates <sup>p2.326</sup> the soil and irrigates the vegetation, infiltrating and soaking everything.

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abundant and the springs delicious.

<sup>1</sup> *Erh-ya* chap. 13.

<sup>2</sup> This clause now forms part of the old commentary, but not of the text of the *Erh-ya*.

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Thus the *Erh-ya* comes near the truth, for its statement may be verified by experience. When the sweet tasting dew falls down and adheres to a tree, the tree to which it sticks does not become more luxuriant than others to which it does not stick. Yet the sweet dew of our time is different from that described by the *Erh-ya*, I should say. The sweet dew of the *Erh-ya* has the peculiarity that all plants touched by it will flourish and come to maturity, no natural calamity intervening. This is a characteristic of a fall of sweet dew. Sweet dew, therefore, is nothing else than wine springs.

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53. Book XVII, Chap. III

*Chih-ch'i*. Periods of Government

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p2.009 The world is convinced that, when in ancient times the monarch was wise, truth and virtue were practised, and that when they were practised success was achieved and the government well ordered. When the ruler of men was degenerate, truth and virtue declined, and, in consequence of this decline, all success was lost and government thrown into confusion. All thinkers of ancient and modern times hold this view, for they notice that the wisdom of *Yao* and *Shun* brought about universal peace, whereas the lawlessness of *Chieh* and *Chou* resulted in rebellion and in their destruction. But if we thoroughly go into the question we find that fate has its proper time, which comes spontaneously, and that virtue has no influence upon it <sup>1</sup>.

All officials, those with an income of more than a hundred piculs as well as those living on less than a pint <sup>2</sup>, while in office, govern the people. They exercise their authority, instruct, and admonish, but whether these instructions have any effect, and whether the people are well governed or in revolution, depends on fate.

Some persons may have great talents and lead a pure life, but when called to office, they soon are cashiered, whereas others with very little knowledge and a scandalous conduct govern the people and remain in office. In remote antiquity promotion and degradation of able and incompetent men was merely based on success. Rewards were bestowed on the successful, and penalties inflicted on the unsuccessful. Much consideration was shown for fate, and a great partiality to fortune, but neither were talents investigated

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<sup>1</sup> *Wang Ch'ung's* view that fate is not affected by human activity is as one-sided as that which he impugns *viz.* that virtue can do everything. Human energy is but one of the many circumstances co-operating in what we call fate, but a very important one which cannot be neglected.

<sup>2</sup> In former times Chinese officials were paid in grain instead of money, a system not quite abolished even at present.

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nor capacities much appreciated.

Dialecticians use this method of inquiring into the achievements, and determine people's virtue by their success. Thus they hold that the tranquillity of the people, and the peace of the State are p2.010 due to a wise ruler, and that rebellions and other dangers of a country are the upshot of his depravity. Therefore, when revolutions and other calamities unexpectedly break out, these critics bring them home to the sovereign, charging him with misrule. The prince acquiesces and takes the guilt upon himself. Sorrow and pain shake his body, but the difficulties are not removed thereby. Without reason they harass the mind of the ruler, and overwhelm an enlightened monarch with undeserved reproaches. These ideas are being transmitted and universally accepted <sup>1</sup>.

A wise ruler may govern a people who are to live in peace, but he cannot reform an age destined to revolt. A physician clever in using his needles <sup>2</sup> and medicines, is successful with his methods, if he happens to find a patient whose end has not yet arrived, and comes across a disease which is not mortal. If the man's life is ended and his sickness fatal, he can do nothing even though he be a second *Pien Ch'io* <sup>3</sup>. A worn-out life and a fatal disease are incurable as a people in rebellion cannot be pacified. The action of the drugs cures a disease as admonitions serve to pacify the people. Both cases are subject to destiny and time, and cannot be forced at all cost.

[The *Kung-po Liao*, having slandered *Tse Lu* to *Chi Sun*, *Tse Fu Ching Po* informed *Confucius* of it . . . . *Confucius* said,

— If my principles are to advance, it is so ordered. If they are to fall to the ground, it is so ordered.] <sup>4</sup>

Consequently, the advance of the doctrine no less than the peace of the

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<sup>1</sup> Up to the present day, the Emperor feels himself responsible for the happiness of his State and looks upon an unlucky war or other misfortunes as punishments inflicted upon him by Heaven for his sins. On the other side, he and the manes of his ancestors get the credit for all success.

<sup>2</sup> Needles for acupuncture, not for sewing, for there is no cutting in Chinese medicine.

<sup>3</sup> A celebrated physician of the 5th cent. B. C. Cf. p. 1.223, Note 2 and *Giles, Biogr. Dict.* No. 396.

<sup>4</sup> [Analects XIV, 38 \[Couvreur\]](#).

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people depend on fate and time, and not on human force. Revolutions, the opposition of the citizens, and the danger of the State are commonly caused by calamities which come down from Heaven above. The virtue of a wise ruler is unfit to cope with, and disperse them.

It is mentioned in the *Shiking* <sup>1</sup> that King *Hsüan* met with a great drought. The words are, '[Of the remnant of *Chou*, among the black-haired people, there will not be half a man left.]' That means that not a single person was left, but was affected by this p2.011 disaster. King *Hsüan* <sup>2</sup> was a wise man who regretted the insufficiency of his virtue.

There has never been anybody more benevolent and kind-hearted than *Yao* and *T'ang*. But *Yao* met with the Great Flood, and *T'ang* fell in with a great drought <sup>3</sup>. Inundations and droughts are the worst calamities. Since the two Sages were visited with them, were they brought about by their administration ? No, the fixed periods of Heaven and Earth made it so.

From the inundation and the drought of *Yao* and *T'ang* we draw the conclusion that the calamities of other kings are not caused by their virtue. That being the case, their happiness and felicity cannot be the result of their virtue either.

A wise ruler's government of his State is like a kind father's administration of his family. The latter gives his instructions to all equally and issues his commands, thus making his sons and grandsons dutiful and virtuous. His descendants being dutiful and virtuous, the family flourishes. When all the citizens live in peace, the State prospers. But prosperity is always succeeded by a decay, and progress, attended by a decline. As prosperity and progress are not brought about by virtue, decline and decay cannot be due to virtue either. Prosperity and progress, decay and decline are all dependent on Heaven and time.

This is the real nature of goodness and badness, but we have not yet spoken of the manifestations of joy and sorrow. A family is not at peace, nor

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<sup>1</sup> *Shiking* III, Bk. III, Ode IV, 3 ([Legge, Classics Vol. IV, Part II, p. 530](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> King *Hsüan* of the *Chou* dynasty, 827-781 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 2.016.

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are its members cheerful unless there be sufficient wealth, and ample means to supply its wants. Affluence is the outcome of a generous fate and not to be obtained through wisdom and benevolence. Everybody knows that affluence, peace, and contentment are consequences of a happy destiny, but ignores that the tranquillity of a State, and the success of its institutions are but lucky circumstances.

Consequently good government is not the work of worthies and sages ; and decay and disorder, not the result of viciousness. When a State is doomed to fall to pieces, worthies and sages cannot make it thrive, and when an age is to be well governed, no wicked people can throw it into disorder. Order and disorder depend on time, and not on government ; the tranquillity and the troubles of a State are determined by its destiny, and not by its culture. Neither a wise nor an unwise ruler, neither an enlightened nor an unenlightened government can be beneficial or deleterious.

p2.012 The world praises the era of the Five Rulers, when the whole empire was enjoying peace, people had provisions for ten years, and every one behaved like a man of honour. It may be that this was not the case and merely an exaggeration of the time, or it was really the effect of the then government, but how can we know ?

What are the causes of disorder ? Are they not the predominance of robbery, fighting, and bloodshed, the disregard of the moral obligations by the people, and their rebellion against their ruler ? All these difficulties arise from a want of grain and food, in so far as people are unable to bear hunger and cold. When hunger and cold combine, there are few but violate the laws, and when they enjoy both warmth and food, there are few but behave properly <sup>1</sup>.

It has been said that, when the granaries and store-houses are full, people know the rules of propriety, and when clothes and food suffice, people are sensible of honour and disgrace. Altruism grows from opulence, and strife springs from indigence. There being abundance of grain and plenty of food,

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<sup>1</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* here anticipates the theory of many modern historians who ascribe great political changes not to the preponderating influence of some individuals, the great men of history, but to the economical conditions of the people.

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moral feelings emanate, and by paying due consideration to propriety and justice, the foundations of peace and happiness are laid. Thus, in the spring of a year of dearth, not even relatives are fed, whereas in the autumn of a year of plenty, even neighbours are invited to take their share. Not to feed one's own relations is wicked, and to invite even one's neighbours, a great kindness. Good and bad actions are not the upshot of human character, but of the state of the year, its dearth and affluence.

From this point of view, moral conduct is conditioned by the grain supply, and the grain produce depends on the year. When a year is conspicuous by floods or droughts, the Five Grains do not grow. Not the government is responsible for this, but time and circumstances. If inundations and dryness be held to be the result of government, there were never worse rulers than *Chieh* and *Chou*. In their time there ought to have been constant floods and droughts, but their reigns were not visited with famines or dearth. Calamities such as these have their periods which sometimes, contrariwise, just fall in the reigns of wise sovereigns.

On mature consideration it will be admitted that the Great Flood of *Yao* and the Great Drought of *T'ang* were both accidents <sup>p2.013</sup> and not occasioned by bad government. If, however, the disasters of all the other kings be taken for echoes of their wickedness, it would be an exaltation of the excellence of *Yao* and *T'ang* and a depreciation of the other princes. One case gives us a key to a hundred, and the knowledge of wickedness enlightens us upon virtue. *Yao* and *T'ang* may serve us as guides *vis-à-vis* of other rulers. The extraordinary calamities of the latter cannot be caused by their administration. Looking upon them as natural calamities, we get a clearer conception of happiness and misfortune, and it becomes evident that, if the Five Rulers bring about universal peace, they do not do it through their administration.

People about to die from plague show a lugubrious expression, boding ill, in their features beforehand. Their disease arises from contagion by miasms, and unless it be cured they die, their span thus coming to an end. The convulsions, and the final catastrophe of a State show similar symptoms. Extraordinary changes appear in Heaven and on Earth just as in the case of

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persons dying from plague the mark of death is visible on their faces. Floods, droughts, and other disasters are like the miasms engendering sickness, and unless these calamities be removed, they conduce to the ruin of the State as the disease not cured leads to the death of the individual.

Would those who maintain that phenomenal changes are a test of government, admit that, if worthies catch the plague and have that lugubrious look, it is all caused by their dealings ? If floods and droughts be looked upon as sequences of lawlessness, can worthies, attacked by a disease, be said to have contracted it through their disorderly conduct ? Death is regarded as the greatest evil, but when worthies die of sickness, must this be considered the heaviest possible punishment inflicted upon them ?

Worthies are taken ill and die early, and wicked people may be strong and robust and become very old. Human diseases and death are not a retribution for evil doing, and so the disorder and the ruin of a State have nothing to do with the goodness or the badness of its government. Bad characters are strong and become old, and iniquitous governments enjoy peace and remain unharmed. Consequently, it is plain that misfortunes and disasters are not sufficient indications of depravity, and happiness and lucky auguries are inadequate proofs of virtue.

p2.014 Amongst the celestial phenomena there are partial eclipses of the sun and the moon. Every forty-two months there is an eclipse of the sun, and every fifty-six months, one of the moon <sup>1</sup>. These eclipses occur at fixed intervals and have no connexion with the government. The hundred phenomena and the thousand disasters manifest themselves in a similar way, and are not brought about by the ruler of men or any administrative measures.

When *Jupiter* injured the tail of the 'Bird', *Chou* and *Ch'u* suffered misfortune, and a disaster was sent down on *Sung*, *Wei*, *Ch'ên* and *Chêng*, when a featherlike air put in an appearance <sup>2</sup>. It does not follow that, at this

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<sup>1</sup> In p. 1.270 *Wang Ch'ung* says that, on an average, an eclipse of the sun occurs every 41 or 42 months and of the moon every 180 days.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 1.118.



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juncture, the policy of these six States was mistaken. The city of *Li-yang* sank during one night, and was turned into a lake <sup>1</sup>. At that time, the high officers of *Li-yang* must not have been deceitful and perverse.

Success and discomfiture emanate from Heaven, and good and bad luck are governed by time. Ere man sets to work the heavenly fluid is already apparent ; if this is not time, what else is it ?

The Five Grains grow on earth, sometimes in abundance, and sometimes in insufficient quantities. The grain is sold in the market, sometimes dear and sometimes cheap. Rich harvests are not of necessity attended by low prices, nor does a scarcity of production lead to a rising of the prices. Abundance and scarcity have their years, dearness and cheapness, their time. When there is to be dearness and abundance simultaneously, the grain price rises, and when there is to be cheapness and scarcity, it falls. The price of grain does not depend on the state of the harvest, no more than the conditions of a State turn on moral qualities <sup>2</sup>.

If a wise ruler happens to rise in an era pre-ordained for order, virtue of itself shines above, and the people behave well below. The age is tranquil, the people at ease, and bliss and felicity never cease. The world then imagines all this to be the work of the wise ruler. If an unprincipled sovereign happens to be born during a period fraught with disturbances, the age is stirred up, the citizens revolt, and there is no end of calamities. In consequence whereof the State is ruined, the sovereign destroyed, and his descendants p2.015 extinguished. The world invariably sees in this the effect of wickedness. They understand the outward appearances of goodness and badness, but are ignorant of the intrinsic nature of happiness and misfortune.

Happiness and misfortune do not hinge on goodness or badness, and goodness or badness cannot be called to witness in case of happiness and misfortune. Sometimes high functionaries, having taken over a new office, have not yet been active, or the administration, following old precedents, has

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.136.

<sup>2</sup> Neither of these two statements will be unreservedly admitted : The prices, to a great extent, depend on the harvest, and the welfare of a State, on the moral qualities of its citizens, although there may be still other causes at work.

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not been changed. Yet robbery is either rampant or not, and calamities may happen, or may not happen. What is the reason of this ?

Great officers, destined to high honours, use a time of general peace as a stepping stone for their advancement, whereas those doomed to baseness and loss of office, begin their career in times of troubles, and thus are degraded and cashiered. From our actual high officers we may draw an inference on the ancient monarchs, and thus discourse on safety and danger, prosperity and decay.

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## 54. Book XVIII, Chap. I

### *Tse-jan. Spontaneity*

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p1.092 By the fusion of the fluids of Heaven and Earth all things of the world are produced spontaneously, just as by the mixture of the fluids of husband and wife children are born spontaneously. Among the things thus produced, creatures with blood in their veins are sensitive of hunger and cold. Seeing that grain can be eaten, they use it as food, and discovering that silk and hemp can be worn, they take it as raiment. Some people are of opinion that Heaven produces grain for the purpose of feeding mankind, and silk and hemp to cloth them. That would be tantamount to making Heaven the farmer of man or his mulberry girl <sup>1</sup>, it would not be in accordance with spontaneity, therefore this opinion is very questionable and unacceptable.

Reasoning on Taoist principles we find that Heaven emits its fluid everywhere. Among the many things of this world grain dispels hunger, and silk and hemp protect from cold. For that reason man eats grain, and wears silk and hemp. That Heaven does not produce grain, silk, and hemp purposely, in order to feed and cloth mankind, follows from the fact that by calamitous changes it does not intend to reprove man. Things are produced spontaneously, and man wears and eats them; the fluid changes spontaneously, and man is frightened by it, for the usual theory is disheartening. Where would be spontaneity, if the heavenly signs were intentional, and where inaction ? <sup>2</sup>

Why must we assume that Heaven acts spontaneously ? Because it has neither mouth nor eyes. Activity is connected with the mouth and the eyes : the mouth wishes to eat, and the eyes to see. These desires within manifest themselves without. That the mouth and the eyes are craving for something,

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<sup>1</sup>Who feeds the silkworms.

<sup>2</sup> Inaction does not mean motionlessness, but spontaneous action without any aim or purpose. It is more or less mechanical, and not inspired by a conscious spirit.

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which is considered an advantage, is due to those desires. Now, provided that the mouth and the eye do not affect things, there is nothing which they might long for, why should there be activity then ?

p1.093 How do we know that Heaven possesses neither mouth nor eyes ? From Earth. The body of the Earth is formed of earth, and earth has neither mouth nor eyes. Heaven and Earth are like husband and wife. Since the body of the Earth is not provided with a mouth or eyes, we know that Heaven has no mouth or eyes neither. Supposing that Heaven has a body, then it must be like that of the Earth, and should it be air only, this air would be like clouds and fog. How can a cloudy or nebular substance have a mouth or an eye ?

Some one might argue that every movement is originally inaction. There is desire provoking the movement, and, as soon as there is motion, there is action. The movements of Heaven are similar to those of man, how could they be inactive ? I reply that, when Heaven moves, it emits its fluid. Its body moves, the fluid comes forth, and things are produced. When man moves his fluid, his body moves, his fluid then comes forth, and a child is produced. Man emitting his fluid does not intend to beget a child, yet the fluid being emitted, the child is born of itself. When Heaven is moving, it does not desire to produce things thereby, but things are produced of their own accord. That is spontaneity. Letting out its fluid it does not desire to create things, but things are created of themselves. That is inaction.

But how is the fluid of Heaven, which we credit with spontaneity and inaction ? It is placid, tranquil, desireless, inactive, and unbusied. *Lao Tse* acquired long life by it. He obtained it from Heaven. If Heaven did not possess this fluid, how could *Lao Tse* have obtained this nature ? For it does not happen that the disciples alone speak of something, which their master never mentioned.

Somebody made a reply to Duke *Huan* <sup>1</sup>, who was wont to say,

— Let *Kuan Chung* <sup>2</sup> know.

His attendants replied,

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<sup>1</sup> Duke *Huan* of *Ch'i*, 683-641 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> Duke *Huan's* famous minister. Cf. p. 1.176.

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— Is it so easy to rule, if *Kuan Chung* is always the first and second word ?

The duke rejoined,

— Before I had secured the services of *Kuan Chung*, I was in the greatest difficulties, now, after I have got him, I find everything easy.

When Duke *Huan* had taken *Kuan Chung* into his service, he left the affairs to him, entrusted him with the administration, and did not trouble any more about it. Should high Heaven, which in its exalted virtue confers the government upon an emperor, reprove man, its virtue would be inferior to that of <sup>p1.094</sup> Duke *Huan*, and the conduct of a feudatory prince surpass that of great Heaven.

Somebody might object that Duke *Huan* knew *Kuan Chung* to be a wise man, and therefore appointed him, and that but for *Kuan Chung* he would also have given vent to his displeasure. Meeting with men like *Yao* and *Shun* Heaven would certainly not have reprimanded people either.

I beg to reply, that, if Heaven can reprimand, it might as well purposely appoint a wise prince, select a genius like *Yao* and *Shun*, confer the imperial dignity upon him, and leave the affairs of the empire to him without taking further notice of them. Now it is different. Heaven creates very inferior princes, who have no principles, and neglect virtue, and therefore has to reprove them every now and then. Would it not be afraid of the trouble ?

*Ts'ao Ts'an* <sup>1</sup>, a minister of the *Han*, was given to wine, songs, and music, and did not care about government. When his son remonstrated with him, he gave him two hundred blows with the bamboo. At that period there was no insurrection in the empire. In *Huai-yang* <sup>2</sup> people coined counterfeit money, and the officials were powerless to check the abuse. *Chi Yen* <sup>3</sup> was prefect

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<sup>1</sup> One of the counsellors and supporters of *Han Kao Tsu*, died 190 B. C.. On his *laissez faire* policy, vid. his biography in the *Shi-chi* chap. 54.

<sup>2</sup> A State in *Honan*.

<sup>3</sup> A minister of the emperor *Wu Ti*, like *Ts'ao Ts'an* a follower of the doctrine of inaction inculcated by *Lao Tse*. His policy of governing consisted in letting things alone.

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then. He did not destroy a single furnace, or punish a single individual. Quite indifferent, he was comfortably reclining on his couch, and the conditions of *Huai-yang* became well ordered again. *Ts'ao Ts'an* behaved himself, as though he were not a minister, and *Chi Yen* administered his prefecture, as if nobody were living in it. Albeit yet the empire of the *Han* had no troubles, and in *Huai-yang* the punishments could be discontinued. So perfect was the virtue of *Ts'ao Ts'an*, and so imposing *Chi Yen* dignity. The majesty of Heaven and its virtue are quite something else than those of *Ts'ao Ts'an* and *Chi Yen*, but to affirm that Heaven entrusts an emperor with the government, and then reproves him, would amount to nothing less than that Heaven's virtue is not as exalted as that of *Ts'ao Ts'an*, and its majesty not as imposing as that of *Chi Yen*.

p1.095 When *Chü Po Yü* <sup>1</sup> was governing *Wei*, *Tse Kung* asked him through somebody, how he governed *Wei*. The reply was,

— I govern it by not governing.

Government by not governing is inaction as a principle.

Some opponent might say that as a sequel of universal peace a plan came forth from the *Yellow River*, and a scroll from the *Lo* <sup>2</sup>. Without drawing no plan can be made, and without action nothing is completed. The fact that Heaven and Earth produced the plan and the scroll shows that they are active, they think. — When *Chang Liang* was walking on the banks of the river *Sse*, he met the 'Yellow Stone Genius' <sup>3</sup>, who gave him the 'minister's book' <sup>4</sup>. Heaven was supporting the *Han* and destroying the *Ch'in*, therefore he ordered a spiritual stone to change into a ghost. That a book was handed to somebody is again considered a proof of activity.

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<sup>1</sup> A disciple of *Confucius*, cf. Chap. 28. The Taoists also claim him as one of theirs. *Chuang Tse*, chap. XXV, 33, informs us that

« when *Chü Po Yü* reached his sixtieth year, he changed his opinions. What he had previously regarded as right, he now came to regard as wrong',  
*i. e.* from a Confucianist he became a Taoist, and as such upheld the principle of quietism.

<sup>2</sup> *Vid.* Chap. 23.

<sup>3</sup> *Huang Shih*, cf. Chap. 50.

<sup>4</sup> From this mysterious book *Chang Liang* is believed to have derived his plans consolidating the power of the *Han* dynasty.

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I am of opinion that all this was spontaneous, for how could Heaven take a brush and ink, and draw the plan, or write the scroll ? The principle of Heaven is spontaneity, consequently the plan and the book must have been produced of themselves.

*T'ang Shu Yü* of *Chin* <sup>1</sup> and *Ch'êng Chi Yo* of *Lu* <sup>2</sup> had a character in their hands, when they were born, therefore one was called *Yü*, the other *Yo*. When *Chung Tse* of *Sung* <sup>3</sup> was born, the characters 'Duchess of *Lu*' were written on her palm. These letters must have been written, while the three persons were still in their mother's womb. If we say that Heaven wrote them, while they were in their mother's womb, did Heaven perhaps send a spirit with a style, a brush, and ink to engrave and write the characters p1.096 on their bodies ? The spontaneity of these processes seems dubious, and is difficult to understand. Externally there seemed to be activity, but as a matter of fact, there was spontaneity internally. Thus the Grand Annalist recording the story of the yellow stone, has his doubts, but cannot find the truth <sup>4</sup>. Viscount *Chien* of *Chao* <sup>5</sup> had a dream that he was ascending to heaven. There he saw a lad by the side of the Ruler of Heaven. When he went out subsequently, he perceived a young man in the street, who was the one whom he had seen previously in his dream by the side of the Ruler of Heaven. This must be regarded as a lucky augury the future flourishing of the *Chao* State, as the transmission of the book by the 'yellow stone' was a sign of the rise of the *Han* dynasty. That the supernatural fluid becomes a ghost, and that the ghost is shaped like a man, is spontaneous, and not the work of anybody. When plants and trees grow, their flowers and leaves are onion green and have

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<sup>1</sup> *T'ang Shu*, the younger prince of *T'ang*, was a son of King *Wu Wang* and younger brother of King *Ch'êng* (1115-1078). He became the founder of the princely house of *Chin*. Cf. *Shi-chi* chap. 39 p. 1v [[Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. IV, p. 249](#)] where the character of his palm is likewise referred to.

<sup>2</sup> *Ch'êng Chi* was a younger son of Duke *Huan* of *Lu* (711-693). We read in the *Shi-chi* chap. 33 p. 13v the story of his having been born with the character *Yo* in his hand [[Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. IV, p. 114](#)].

<sup>3</sup> A daughter of Duke *Wu* of *Sung* (765-747 B. C.) who became married to Duke *Hui* of *Lu*. Cf. Chap. 23.

<sup>4</sup> In his remarks added to the biography of *Chang Liang* (*Shi-chi* chap. 55 p. 13) *Sse Ma Ch'ien* says that many scholars deny the existence of ghosts, but that the story of the yellow stone is very strange.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Chap. 64.

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crooked and broken veins like ornaments. If Heaven is credited with having written the above mentioned characters, does it make these flowers and leaves also ?

In the State of *Sung* a man carved a mulberry-leaf of wood, and it took him three years to complete it. *Confucius* said

— If the Earth required three years to complete one leaf, few plants would have leaves <sup>1</sup>.

According to this dictum of *Confucius* the leaves of plants grow spontaneously, and for that reason they can grow simultaneously. If Heaven made them, their growth would be as much delayed as the carving of the mulberry-leaf by the man of the *Sung* State.

Let us look at the hair and feathers of animals and birds, and their various colours. Can they all have been made ? If so, animals and birds would never be quite finished. In spring we see the plants growing, and in autumn we see them full-grown. Can Heaven and Earth have done this, or do things grow spontaneously ? If we may say that Heaven and Earth have done it, they must have used hands for the purpose. Do Heaven and Earth possess many thousand or many ten thousand hands to produce thousands and ten thousands of things at the same time ?

p1.097 The things between Heaven and Earth are like a child in his mother's womb. After ten months pregnancy the mother gives birth to the child. Are his nose, his mouth, his ears, his hair, his eyes, his skin with down, the arteries, the fat, the bones, the joints, the nails, and the teeth grown of themselves in the womb, or has the mother made them ?

Why is a dummy never called a man ? Because it has a nose, a mouth, ears, and eyes, but not a spontaneous nature. *Wu Ti* was very fond of his consort *Wang*. When she had died, he pondered, whether he could not see her figure again. The Taoists made an artificial figure of the lady <sup>2</sup>. When it

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<sup>1</sup> We find this same story in *Lieh Tse* VIII, 2 [[Wieger](#)] and in *Huai Nan Tse* XX, 2, but both authors ascribe the words put in the mouth of *Confucius* here to *Lieh Tse*. *Huai Nan Tse* makes the mulberry-leaf to be made of ivory, *Lieh Tse*, of jade.

<sup>2</sup> The apparition of the lady was evoked by the court magician *Shao Wêng* in 121 B. C. (Cf. *Shi-chi* chap. 28 p. 23 [[Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. III, p. 470](#)].)



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was ready, it passed through the palace gate. *Wu Ti* greatly alarmed rose to meet her, but, all of a sudden, she was not seen any more. Since it was not a real, spontaneous being, but a semblance, artificially made by jugglers, it became diffuse at first sight, dispersed, and vanished. Everything that has been made does not last long, like the image of the empress, which appeared only for a short while.

The Taoist school argues on spontaneity, but it does not know how to substantiate its cause by evidence. Therefore their theory of spontaneity has not yet found credence. However, in spite of spontaneity there may be activity for a while in support of it. Ploughing, tilling, weeding, and sowing in Spring are human actions. But as soon as the grain has entered the soil, it begins growing by day and night. Man can do nothing for it, or if he does, he spoils the thing.

A man of *Sung* was sorry that his sprouts were not high enough, therefore he pulled them out, but, on the following day, they were dry, and died. He who wishes to do what is spontaneous, is on a par with this man of *Sung*.

The following question may be raised :

Man is born from Heaven and Earth. Since Heaven and Earth are inactive, man who has received the fluid of Heaven, ought to be inactive likewise, wherefore does he act nevertheless ?

For the following reason. A man with the highest, purest, and fullest virtue has been endowed with a large quantity of the heavenly fluid, therefore he can follow the example of Heaven, and be spontaneous and inactive like it. He who has received but a small quota of the fluid, does not live in accordance with righteousness and virtue, and does not resemble Heaven and Earth. p1.098 Hence he is called unlike, which means that he does not resemble Heaven and Earth. Not resembling Heaven and Earth he cannot be accounted a wise man or a sage. Therefore he is active.

Heaven and Earth are the furnace, and the creating is the melting process. How can all be wise, since the fluid of which they are formed is not the same ? *Huang* and *Lao* were truly wise. *Huang* is *Huang Ti*, and *Lao* is *Lao Tse*. *Huang* and *Lao's* conduct was such, that their bodies were in a state of

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quietude and indifference. Their government consisted in inaction. They took care of their persons, and behaved with reverence, hence *Yin* and *Yang* were in harmony. They did not long for action, and things were produced of themselves ; they did not think of creating anything, and things were completed spontaneously.

The *Yi-king* says that *Huang Ti*, *Yao*, and *Shun* let their robes fall, and the empire was governed <sup>1</sup>. That they let their robes fall means that their robes fell down, and that they folded their arms, doing nothing. *Confucius* said,

— Grand indeed was *Yao* as a sovereign ! Heaven alone is great, and *Yao* alone emulated it ! <sup>2</sup>

and,

— How imposing was the way in which *Shun* and *Yü* swayed the empire, but did not much care for it. <sup>3</sup>

The Duke of *Chou* makes the remark that the supreme ruler enjoyed his ease <sup>4</sup>. By the supreme ruler *Shun* and *Yü* are meant <sup>5</sup>.

*Shun* and *Yü* took over the peaceful government, which they continued, appointing wise men and men of talent. They respected themselves, and did no work themselves, and the empire was governed. *Shun* and *Yü* received the peaceful government from *Yao*. *Yao* imitated Heaven ; he did not do meritorious deeds or strive for a name, and reforms, for which nothing was done, were completed of themselves. Hence it was said, 'Excellent indeed', but the people did not find the right name for it. Those aged 50 years were beating clods of earth together on their land, but they did not understand *Yao's* virtue, because the reforms were spontaneous. The *Yi-king* says,

The great man equals Heaven and Earth in virtue <sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *Yiking, Chi-ts'e* II (*Legge's* transl. p. 383).

<sup>2</sup> [Analects VIII, 19 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>3</sup> [Analects VIII, 18 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>4</sup> *Shuking, To-shih*, Pt. V, Bk. XIV, 5 (*Legge* Vol. III, Pt. II, p. 455).

<sup>5</sup> All other commentators take the 'supreme ruler' as a synonym for God, and I think that they are right, and that *Wang Ch'ung's* interpretation is forced for the purpose of supporting his theory.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. p. 1.128.

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*Huang Ti, Yao, and Shun* were such great men. Their <sup>p1.099</sup> virtue was on a level with that of Heaven and Earth, therefore they knew inaction. The principle of Heaven is inaction. Accordingly in spring it does not do the germinating, in summer the growing, in autumn the ripening, or in winter the hiding of the seeds. When the *Yang* fluid comes forth spontaneously, plants will germinate and grow of themselves, and, when the *Yin* fluid rises, they ripen and disappear of their own accord.

When we irrigate garden land with water drawn from wells or drained from ponds, plants germinate and grow also, but, when showers of rain come down, the stalks, leaves, and roots are all abundantly soaked. Natural moisture is much more copious than artificial irrigation from wells and ponds. Thus inactive action brings the greatest results. By not seeking it, merit is acquired, and by not affecting it, fame is obtained. Rain-showers, merit, and fame are something great, yet Heaven and Earth do not work for them. When the fluid harmonises, rain gathers spontaneously.

The literati in speaking of the relation of husband and wife establish similarities with Heaven and Earth. For husband and wife they find similarities with Heaven and Earth, but in so far as they are unable to make use of the relation of husband and wife, when discussing the nature of Heaven and Earth, they show a regrettable lack of acumen.

Heaven expands above, and Earth below. When the fluid from below rises, and the fluid on high descends, all things are created in the middle. While they are growing, it is not necessary that Heaven should still care for them, just as the father does not know the embryo, after it is in the mother's womb. Things grow spontaneously, and the child is formed of itself. Heaven and Earth, and father and mother can take no further cognisance of it. But after birth, the way of man is instruction and teaching, the way of Heaven, inaction and yielding to nature. Therefore Heaven allows the fish to swim in the rivers, and the wild beasts to roam in the mountains, following their natural propensities. It does not drive the fish up the hills, or the wild beasts into the water. Why? Because that would be an outrage upon their nature, and a complete disregard of what suits them. The people resemble fish and beasts. High virtue governs them as easily, as one fries small fish, and as Heaven and

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Earth would act.

*Shang Yang* <sup>1</sup> changed the laws of *Ch'in* wishing to acquire extraordinary merit. He did not hear the advice of *Chao Liang*, p1.100 consequently he incurred the horrible penalty of being torn asunder by carts. If the virtue be poor, and the desires many, prince and minister hate one another. The Taoists possess real virtue : the inferiors agree with the superiors, and the superiors are at peace with their inferiors. Being genuinely ignorant, they do nothing, and there is no reason, why they should be reproved. This is what they call a well balanced government. Prince and minister forget one another in governing, the fish forget each other in the water, <sup>2</sup> and so do the beasts in the forests, and men in life. That is Heaven.

*Confucius* said to *Yen Yuan*,

— When I deferred to you, I did not think of it, and when you deferred to me, you likewise did not think of it <sup>3</sup>.

Although *Confucius* was like a prince, and *Yen Yuan* like a minister, he could not make up his mind to reprimand *Yen Yuan*, how much less would *Lao Tse* have been able to do so, if we consider him as a prince and *Wên Tse* <sup>4</sup> as his minister ? *Lao Tse* and *Wên Tse* were like Heaven and Earth.

Generous wine tastes sweet. When those who drink it, become drunk, they do not know each other. Bad wine is sour and bitter. Hosts and guests knit the brows. Now, reprimands are a proof of the badness of one's principles <sup>5</sup>. To say that Heaven reprimands would be like pretending that Heaven's excellence is inferior to that of generous wine.

Ceremonies originate from a want of loyalty and good faith, and are the beginning of confusion <sup>6</sup>. On that score people find fault with one another,

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.171 Note 2.

<sup>2</sup> 'The fish forget each other in the rivers and lakes', says [Huai Nan Tse II, 4r.](#)

<sup>3</sup> Both were in a state of blissful forgetfulness and purposelessness. The passage is quoted from *Huai Nan Tse XI, 5r.*

<sup>4</sup> A Taoist philosopher, disciple of *Lao Tse*.

<sup>5</sup> Reprimands tell against the system by which they are required, perfect virtue pervading the universe necessitates no recriminations, for all are filled with it as with generous wine.

<sup>6</sup> This argument is quite Taoist and borrowed from the *Tao-tê-king*, chap. XXXVIII.

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which leads to reproof. At the time of the Three Rulers people were sitting down self-satisfied, and walking about at perfect ease. Sometimes they took themselves for horses, and sometimes for oxen. Virtuous actions were out of the question, and the people were dull and beclouded. Knowledge and wisdom did not yet make their appearance. Originally, there happened no calamities or catastrophes either, or, if they did, they were not denoted as reprimands. Why ? Because at that time people were feeble-minded, and did not restrain or reproach one another. <sup>p1.101</sup> Later generations have gradually declined : superiors and inferiors recriminate, and calamitous events continually happen. Hence the hypothesis of reprimands has been developed. The Heaven of today is the Heaven of old, and it is not the case that the Heaven of old was benign, whereas now Heaven is harsh. The hypothesis of reprimands has been put forward at present, as a surmise made by men from their own feelings.

Declarations and oaths do not reach up to the Five Emperors, agreements and covenants to the Three Rulers, and the giving of hostages to the Five Princes <sup>1</sup>. The more people's virtue declined, the more faith began to fail them. In their guile and treachery they broke treaties, and were deaf to admonitions. Treaties and admonitions being of no avail, they reproached one another, and if no change was brought about by these reproaches, they took up arms, and fought, till one was exterminated. Consequently reprimands point to a state of decay and disorder. Therefore it appears very dubious that Heaven should make reprimands.

Those who believe in reprimands, refer to human ways as a proof. Among men a sovereign reprimands his minister, and high Heaven reprimands the sovereign. It does so by means of calamitous events, they say. However, among men it also happens that the minister remonstrates with his sovereign. When Heaven reprimands an emperor by visiting him with calamities, and the latter wishes at that time to remonstrate with high Heaven, how can he do it ? If they say that Heaven's virtue is so perfect, that man cannot remonstrate with it, then Heaven possessed of such virtue, ought

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<sup>1</sup> The five leading feudal princes during the later *Chou* epoch, to wit : Duke *Huan* of *Ch'i* D. B. C. 643, Duke *Wên* of *Chin* D. B. C. 626, Duke *Hsiang* of *Sung* D. B. C. 637, King *Chuang* of *Ch'u* D. B. C. 591, and Duke *Mu* of *Ch'in* D. B. C. 621.

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likewise to keep quiet, and ought not to reprimand. When the sovereign of *Wan Shih* did wrong, the latter did not say a word, but at table he did not eat, which showed his perfection. An excellent man can remain silent, and august Heaven with his sublime virtue should reprimand? Heaven does not act, therefore it does not speak. The disasters, which so frequently occur, are the work of the spontaneous fluid.

Heaven and Earth cannot act, nor do they possess any knowledge. When there is a cold in the stomach, it aches. This is not caused by man, but the spontaneous working of the fluid. The space between Heaven and Earth is like that between the back and the stomach <sup>1</sup>.

p1.102 If Heaven is regarded as the author of every calamity, are all abnormalities, great and small, complicated and simple, caused by Heaven also? A cow may give birth to a horse, and on a cherry-tree a plum may grow. Does, according to the theory under discussion, the spirit of Heaven enter the belly of the cow to create the horse, or stick a plum upon a cherry-tree?

*Lao* <sup>2</sup> said,  
— The Master said,  
‘Having no official employment, I acquired many arts’,  
and he said,  
‘When I was young, my condition was low, and therefore I acquired my ability in many things, but they were mean matters <sup>3</sup>.

What is low in people, such as ability and skilfulness, is not practised by the great ones. How could Heaven, which is so majestic and sublime, choose to bring about catastrophes with a view to reprimanding people?

Moreover, auspicious and inauspicious events are like the flushed colour appearing on the face. Man cannot produce it, the colour comes out of itself. Heaven and Earth are like the human body, the transformation of their fluid, like the flushed colour. How can Heaven and Earth cause the sudden change

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<sup>1</sup> And it is likewise filled with the spontaneous fluid.

<sup>2</sup> *Ch'in Chang*, styled *Tse K'ai*, a disciple of *Confucius*.

<sup>3</sup> [Analects IX, 6 \[Couvreur\]](#).

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of their fluid, since man cannot produce the flushed colour ? The change of the fluid is spontaneous, it appears of itself, as the colour comes out of itself. The soothsayers rely on this, when they foretell the future.

Heat and cold, reprimands, phenomenal changes, and attraction, all these four errors have already been treated <sup>1</sup>. Reprimands are more contrary to the ways of Heaven than anything else, therefore I have discussed them twice, explaining where the difficulties in the way of the two antagonistic views lie. The one is in accordance with human affairs, but does not fall in with Taoism, the other agrees with Taoism, but is not in harmony with human affairs. But though opposed to the belief of the Confucianists, it corresponds to the ideas of *Huang Ti* and *Lao Tse*.

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<sup>1</sup> In the preceding chapters of the *Lun-hêng*.

## 55. Book XVIII, Chap. II

### *Kan-lei*. Sympathetic Emotions

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p2.016 When the *Yin* and the *Yang* are at variance, calamitous changes supervene. Either they arise from the unexpiated guilt of former generations <sup>1</sup>, or it is the spontaneous action of the fluids. Worthies and sages feel an emotion by sympathy <sup>2</sup>, and, in their agitation, think out for themselves the reason for the calamity, implying some wickedness, having happened. They incriminate themselves, and from fear that they themselves are culpable take every precaution. It does not follow that this apprehension is based on facts <sup>3</sup>, as the following reflection will prove :

*T'ang* being visited by a drought, impeached himself of five faults. Now, a sage is perfect, and his dealings without blemish ; why then must he accuse himself of five faults ? But, as the *Shuking* has it, *T'ang* inculpated himself, and Heaven responded with rain. Originally *T'ang* was innocent, but he brought the five charges against himself <sup>4</sup>. Why then did Heaven send the

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<sup>1</sup> This is not in accordance with *Wang Ch'ung's* system advocating spontaneity and must be taken merely hypothetically as one of two possibilities, either .... or.

<sup>2</sup> Sages have many affinities with Heaven which manifests itself by them. Therefore Heaven being agitated, they are agitated too.

<sup>3</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* goes on to prove that all these apprehensions and self-reproaches are baseless.

<sup>4</sup> No such passage is to be found in our text of the *Shuking*, but in the *Ti-wang-shi-chi* of the 3d cent. A. D. quoted in the *T'ai-p'ing yü-lan* chap. 83, p. 2r. we read,  
« After *T'ang* had destroyed *Chieh* there was a great drought for seven years, so that the *Lo* dried up. He ordered tripods to be brought and thus prayed to the Mountains and Rivers :

— Have my desires been dissolute ? Have I caused pain to the people ? Has there been bribery ? Have calumniators been predominant ? Has there been too much building of palaces ? Has the society of women been sought too much ? What is the cause of this absolute want of rain ?'

The historiographer of *Yin* divined and said that a man ought to be sacrificed.

— It is for the people that I pray for rain, replied *T'ang*. If a man is to be immolated I wish to be the one.

Then he fasted, cut his hair, and pared his nails to take the place of the victim. At an altar in a mulberry grove he prayed,

— I, the young man, have come and dare to offer myself as a black victim. I here declare before august Heaven and Earth, *if the ten thousand regions have any*



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rain ? p2.017 If the drought was caused by innocence, it is obvious that rain cannot be obtained by self-accusation. From this point of view, the drought did not happen for *T'ang's* sake, and the rain was not a response to his self-indictment, but the previous drought and the subsequent rain were the effect of the spontaneous fluid. So much about this passage of the *Shuking*.

But other difficulties arise : At the great rain sacrifice of the Spring and Autumn period, *Tung Chung Shu* put up a clay dragon. All are agreed that this refers but to a limited space of time <sup>1</sup>. No rain having fallen for awhile, out of fear they made the offering, imploring the *Yin* and praying for happiness, full of sympathy for the distress of the people.

*T'ang* having met with a drought lasting seven years, accused himself of the five faults. Which time was this ? Did he impeach himself at once, on falling in with the drought, or did he but do so after the drought had lasted seven years ? If we say that he did so at once, and it rained but seven years later, why did Heaven responding to his sincerity, put him off so long at first ? And if we hold that he impeached himself after seven years, why was his compassion with his people so much delayed ? The story neither tallies with the ceremony of the rain sacrifice, nor does it show any affection for the people, therefore we cannot believe the words of the *Shuking*.

Thunder and rain overtaking King *Ch'êng* of the *Chou* dynasty fall under the same head. We learn from the chapter 'The Metal-Bound Coffin' <sup>2</sup> that, [in autumn, before the big crop was harvested Heaven hurled down tremendous thunders and lightnings, and that, owing to the storm, all the grain lay down, and huge trees were up-rooted, so that all inhabitants were exceedingly

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*sins, may they fall upon my person, and if I have any guilt, may it not involve the ten thousand regions. May not the imprudence of one single man induce God and the Spirits to injure the life of the people.*

He had not yet finished these words, when a mighty rain poured down over several thousand miles'.

Here *T'ang* impeaches himself with six, not with five faults. Only the words in Italics occur in the *Shuking*, *T'ang-ka'o*, with some variations. The gist of the above quotation is also given by *Legge*, *Chinese Classics* Vol. III, Part I, p. 190, Concluding Note. [[Couvreur](#)]

<sup>1</sup> With the object of attracting rain. Cf. chap. 47.

<sup>2</sup> Part V, Book VI of the *Shuking* [[Legge](#)] [[Couvreur](#)].

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frightened.] <sup>1</sup> At this time the duke of *Chou* died <sup>2</sup>. The Literati contend that King <sub>p2.018</sub> *Ch'êng* was in doubt about the duke of *Chou*, whether he should bury him with imperial honours, the duke being but a minister, or whether he should follow the rites prescribed for a minister, the deserts of the duke being equal to those of an emperor. While he was thus wavering with regard to the funeral of the duke, Heaven sent a big thunder-storm with rain, manifesting its anger by this phenomenon, in order to illustrate the achievements of the sage.

The archæologists maintain that at the decease of *Wu Wang*, when the Duke of *Chou* had become regent, evil reports were spread about him in *Kuan* and *Ts'ai* <sup>3</sup>. The king mistrusted him, and the duke fled to *Ch'u* <sup>4</sup>. Thereupon, Heaven sent a tempest with rain to undeceive King *Ch'êng*. Thus, the phenomenon of thunder and rain was either due to the king's misgivings about the burial or to his belief in those slanderous reports. The two schools could not make it out.

If we accept the statement about the funeral we find that in autumn and summer the *Yang* fluid is at its cynosure, and there is any amount of rain and thunder-storms, and, as regards the up-rooting of trees and the lying down of the corn, they are, likewise, of frequent occurrence.

During the tempest King *Ch'êng* took alarm. He opened the book in the metal-bound coffer, and learned the merits of *Chou Kung*. Holding the book in his hands, he bewailed his error and reproached himself most severely <sup>5</sup>. This self-impeachment took place when, accidentally, Heaven sent a contrary wind. The scholiasts of the *Shuking* then fancied that Heaven was indignant on account of the Duke of *Chou*.

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<sup>1</sup> Quotation from *Shuking* Part V, Book VI, 16 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part II, p. 359](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> This is in accordance with the *Shi-chi* chap. 33, p. 6r. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. IV, p. 100, Note 1](#)), but not with the *Shuking*, where the Duke of *Chou* is supposed to be banished, but still alive.

<sup>3</sup> Territories in modern *Honan* which were given as fiefs to the two younger brothers of *Wu Wang*, who spread the reports about the Duke of *Chou*. Cf. *Shi-chi* chap. 4, p. 15v. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 245, Note 2](#)).

<sup>4</sup> The *Shuking* only says that for two years *Chou Kung* resided in the east. According to the *Shi-chi loc. cit.* the calumnies had no effect.

<sup>5</sup> See *Shuking loc. cit.* Book VI, 18 [[Legge](#)] [[Couvreur](#), § 18].

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During a thousand autumns, and ten thousand summers there is never a cessation of tempests and rain. If both be regarded as manifestations of Heaven's anger, is august Heaven irate year after year ? In the first month, the *Yang* fluid pours out, and the sound of thunder is first heard. In summer and autumn, the *Yang* reaches its climax, and there is crashing of thunder. Provided that the thunder of summer and autumn be deemed an expression of Heaven's great wrath, is the thunder in the first month a manifestation of its minor irritation ?

p2.019 Thunder being expressive of Heaven's anger, rain must be accounted a blessing. Now flying into a passion on account of the Duke of *Chou*, Heaven ought to have thundered, but not to have rained. Since rain fell simultaneously, was Heaven pleased and angry at the same time ?

*Confucius* did not cry and ring on the same day <sup>1</sup>, and according to the Rites of the *Chou* <sup>2</sup> on the *tse mao* days <sup>3</sup>, when millet and vegetable soup were eaten, sorrow and joy were not uttered simultaneously. Sorrow and joy were not uttered simultaneously, and cheerfulness and anger should be combined ?

When *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* sacrificed in the east on Mount *T'ai*, a tempest with rain broke loose <sup>4</sup>, and when dame *Liu* reposed on the banks of a big pond, a tempest and rain darkened the sky <sup>5</sup>. *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti*, in spite of his villainy, would rank with the former sages, and looked upon his own outrageous reign as a time of universal peace. It may be that this roused the indignation of Heaven. When dame *Liu* reposed near the big pond, she dreamed that she met with a spirit. At that time she begot *Kao Tsu*. Why was Heaven so furious at the birth of a sage, that it sent thunder and rain ?

In *Yao's* time a storm caused great havoc, and *Yao* had this big storm fettered in the wilds of *Ch'ing-ch'iu* <sup>6</sup>. When *Shun* entered a big mountain

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects VII, 9 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> The *Liki*.

<sup>3</sup> Days designated by these cyclical signs in the calendar.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Shi-chi* chap. 28, p. 11v. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. III, p. 439](#)), and p. 1.334, Note 4.

<sup>5</sup> See p. 1.177.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted from [Huai Nan Tse VIII, 6v](#). *Yao's* assistant *Yi* bound the storm, which must

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forest, there was a fearful wind, thunder, and rain <sup>1</sup>. Yao and Shun were the exalted rulers of their age ; how have they sinned against Heaven, that it caused wind and rain ?

At a time of great dryness, in the *Ch'un-ch'iu* epoch, the rain-sacrifice was performed. *Tung Chung Shu*, moreover, put up a clay-dragon to attract the fluid by sympathy <sup>2</sup>. If Heaven responded to the rain dragon, it must have produced a tempest with rain, because the rain of summer and autumn always comes accompanied by thunderstorms. In case this method of the *Ch'un-ch'iu* epoch p2.020 of *Tung Chung Shu* be followed, does the dragon at the great rain-sacrifice attract Heaven's anger ?

When the music-master *K'uang* played the song 'White Snow', a flash of lightning was seen, and when he thrummed a tune in A major, a violent storm with rain broke loose <sup>3</sup>. Provided that a tempest and rain be indicative of Heaven's wrath, why did it dislike 'White Snow' and A major so much as to resent the music-master's playing them ? This is a difficulty about thunder and rain.

Another question may be asked : Because King *Ch'êng* would not grant *Chou Kung* imperial funeral honours, Heaven sent thunder and storm, curbed down the corn, and up-rooted trees. The king took the hint, and holding the book, deplored his fault, when Heaven sent a contrary wind, and the lying grain rose up again. Wherefore did it not stop the storm at once and thereby uplift the big trees again, and why were the inhabitants expected to raise them up and replace them ? <sup>4</sup>

*Reply* : Heaven could not do it.

*Question* : Then, are there things which Heaven is unable to do ?

*Reply* : Yes.

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be conceived as the storm-god, *Fêng-po*.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from *Shuking* Part II, Book I, chap. 3 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 32](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> See above p. 2.017.

<sup>3</sup> For this story see p. 1.222 where all the details are given.

<sup>4</sup> As is related in the *Shuking loc. cit.*

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*Objection* : When *Mêng Pên* <sup>1</sup> pushed a man he fell down, and when he took hold of him, he rose again. He took a man, and made him stand upright. If Heaven could merely pull out trees, but not uplift them again, its strength would be inferior to that of *Mêng Pên*.

During the *Ch'in* time three mountains disappeared <sup>2</sup>. They, also, say that they were transferred by Heaven. Now, how can the weight of trees be compared with that of three mountains ? That Heaven could transfer the three mountains, and was incapable of raising big trees, is not what we should expect from its strength. If the three mountains are believed not to have vanished by Heaven's instrumentality, does it produce but thunder and rain ?

*Reply* : Heaven wished to induce King *Ch'êng* to bury the Duke of *Chou* in accordance with imperial rites, for the duke was possessed of the virtue of a sage, and he had the deserts of an emperor. The Classic says, [Then the king found the words spoken by *Chou Kung*, at his death, about his meritorious deed of taking <sup>p2.021</sup> the place of King *Wu*... and that now Heaven had moved its terrors to display the virtue of the Duke of *Chou*] <sup>3</sup>.

*Objection* : *Yi Yin* as prime minister to *T'ang* defeated the *Hsia* dynasty. He promoted the welfare of the people and kept off distress, so that universal peace reigned all over the world. After *T'ang's* death, he again became minister to *T'ai Chia*. Because the latter was lazy and dissolute, he banished him into the *T'ung* <sup>4</sup> palace, and conducted the government for three years <sup>5</sup>. Then he retired, after having restored the king to his dignity. *Chou Kung* said, 'Yi Yin followed the example of august Heaven' <sup>6</sup>. Heaven should have made it public. Why did Heaven not cause thunder and rain at *Yi Yin's* death ?

*Reply* : According to the 'Hundred Chapters on Rain', when *Yi Yin* died

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<sup>1</sup> A man celebrated for his strength. Cf. p. 1.380, Note 4.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 1.276.

<sup>3</sup> *Shuking* Part V, Book VI, 16 and 18. ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part II, p. 359](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>4</sup> A place said to have been situated in *P'u-chou-fu* (*Shansi*).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Shuking* Part IV, Book V, 9 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 203](#)) [[Couvreur](#)] and *Shi-chi* chap. 3, p. 6r. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 189](#)).

<sup>6</sup> *Shuking* Part V, Book XVI, 7 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part II, p. 477](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

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there was a great mist for three days.

(*Objection*) : A great mist for three days is an abnormal fluid and not a phenomenon expressive of Heaven's anger. *Chang Pa* of *Tung-hai*<sup>1</sup> is the author of this 'Rain Book'. Although his statement be not trustworthy, yet we shall use it as the basis of our inquiry :

Heaven produced thunder and rain for the purpose of rousing King *Ch'êng*. Did the thunder cease before the king had opened the metal-bound trunk, or after he had opened it ?

*Reply* : Thunder ceased before he had opened the trunk. It was in the trunk that he found the book wherefrom he learned the merits of the duke. Having become aware of his mistake, he deplored it and resolved to bury the duke with imperial honours. When he went out into the suburbs and saw the phenomenal changes, Heaven had already stopped the rain and blown a contrary wind, and all the grain had risen up again<sup>2</sup>. Consequently, p2.022 thunder and rain had already stopped before King *Ch'êng* was sensible of his fault.

*Objection* : If for *Yi Yin's* sake there were three foggy days, why did not Heaven send thunder and rain for three days, and had not the king to become enlightened first before they ceased ?

Under the *régime* of *T'ai Mou* a mulberry and a paper-mulberry grew together in the court, which after seven days showed a circumference of a span. *T'ai Mou* meditated on government, when the two trees faded away<sup>3</sup>. In the time of Duke *Ching* of *Sung*, *Mars* occupied the place of the 'Heart' constellation. The duke uttered three excellent maxims, whereupon *Mars* passed through several mansions<sup>4</sup>. Had *T'ai Mou* not reflected on

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<sup>1</sup> A scholar of the 1st cent. B. C. *Vid.* p. 1.448.

<sup>2</sup> See *Shuking loc. cit.* Book VI, 19 [*Legge*] [*Couvreur*, §19], where we have a different reading : [] 'Heaven sent down rain' instead of [] 'Heaven stopped the rain', of our text, which latter is preferable.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 1.328, where the same story is told of the *Shang* emperor *Kao Tsung* = *Wu Ting*, 1324-1266 B. C. and p. 161 Note 4 where it is likewise ascribed to *Kao Tsung*. *T'ai Mou* reigned from 1637-1563 B. C. According to the *Shi-chi* chap. 3, p. 7r. (*Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 190*) this prodigy happened under *T'ai Mou*, not *Kao Tsung*.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 1.328, Note 5 and p. 2.153.

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government, and Duke *Ching* not made the three utterances, the mulberry and the paper-mulberry would not have vanished, nor would *Mars* have shifted its place, for it was by means of these calamitous changes that Heaven made its admonitions. That these calamities should not be removed before its admonitions had been taken notice of, was wisely ordained by Heaven <sup>1</sup>. Now Heaven in its anger caused thunder and rain to reprove King *Ch'êng*, but thunder and rain stopped before the king had caught the intimation. What is the reason of this haste ?

*Another objection* : It is customary to style the sons of princes : 'Son of a Lord' and their grandsons : 'Grandson of a Lord'. All of them live on fiefs, and distinguish themselves from common folk. The sons as well as the grandsons of lords are nearly related to the chief of the house and noble. They are called lords with full right, and live on their domains. Their title agrees with the real state of affairs, and there is conformity of essence and outward appearance. Heaven exhibited the virtue of *Chou Kung*, and ordered King *Ch'êng* to bury him in imperial style. Why then did it not command the king to call *Chou Kung* King *Chou*, to be in accordance with imperial honours ?

*Reply* : King is the title of the highest nobility to which a minister has no right.

p2.023 *Objection* : But do not ministers, also, obtain the title of king ? When King *Wu* had defeated *Chou*, and returned from his expedition he carried back the title of king <sup>2</sup> to *T'ai Wang*, *Wang Chi*, and *Wên Wang*, all three of them feudal lords and ministers to boot, but the title of king was conferred upon them. Why could this only be done in the case of these three personages, but not for the Duke of *Chou* ? If Heaven intended to make the Duke illustrious, how could it manifest it ? Did these three men bear the marks of royalty ? However, royal merits were also achieved by *Chou Kung*.

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<sup>1</sup> An argument merely used rhetorically to combat the view that thunder and rain stopped before King *Ch'êng* had repented, for *Wang Ch'ung* holds that Heaven never acts on purpose.

<sup>2</sup> Expression quoted from the *Chung-yung* XVIII, 3 (*Legge, Classics* Vol. I, p. 401). The three persons raised to royal dignity after their death are the father and the ancestors of the founder of the *Chou* dynasty. A similar practice has been followed by later dynasties, the reigning *Manchu* dynasty included.

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The *Yangtse* rises from the *Min*<sup>1</sup> mountains, and in its course forms currents and rapids. But can these currents and rapids be placed on a par with the source from which it flows ? For whom did the aromatic liquor arrive, and who was presented with the white pheasants, the three kings<sup>2</sup> or the Duke of *Chou* ?<sup>3</sup>

The merits and the virtue of the duke of *Chou* eclipsed those of the three kings, yet the title of king was not bestowed upon him. Was Heaven displeased with the inconsiderate use men made of this title ? At the decline of the *Chou* dynasty, the rulers of six States styled themselves kings, those of *Ch'i* and *Ch'in* became even emperors. At that time Heaven did not prevent it nor cause any change displaying its anger, however, when *Chou Kung* was not interred with imperial rites, it sent thunder and rain to reprimand King *Ch'êng*. Why was there such a lack of uniformity concerning the pleasure and displeasure of Heaven ?

*Another objection* : *Chi Sun* of *Lu* had presented *Tsêng Tse* with a fine mat. When *Tsêng Tse* fell sick he slept upon it. His attendant observed, 'How beautifully figured and lustrous is this mat ! It is the mat of a great officer. *Tsêng Tse* felt ashamed and bade *Yuan* change the mat, for, according to custom, a scholar should not sleep on a mat of a great officer<sup>4</sup>. Now, *Chou Kung*, a minister, being buried like an emperor, would his soul, provided it still possessed consciousness, feel at ease ?

p2.024 *Reply* : Why should it not acquiesce in what King *Ch'êng* did, and Heaven admitted ?

*Objection* : Was the mat of a great officer presented by *Chi Sun* woven by *Tsêng Tse* himself ?<sup>5</sup> Why did he alone not feel at ease ?

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<sup>1</sup> A range of mountains in the north of *Szechuan*.

<sup>2</sup> The Ancestral King, King *Chi*, and King *Wên*, mentioned above.

<sup>3</sup> White pheasants and aromatic plants were presented as tribute to the Duke of *Chou* by the *Yüeh-shang* and the *Japanese*. Cf. p. 1.505.

<sup>4</sup> This episode is found in the *Liki* Book II, Sect. I, Part I, 18 ([Legge, Liki Vol. I, p. 128](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>5</sup> *Tsêng Tse* was not directly responsible for the mat, the *soi-disant* too great honour was conferred upon him by the chief of the *Chi* family, just as the excessive funeral rites were performed by King *Ch'êng* for *Chou Kung*.



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[The Master being very ill, *Tse Lu* sent the disciples to act as officers to him. During a remission of his illness, he said,

— Long has the conduct of *Yu* been deceitful ! By pretending to have officers when I have them not, whom should I impose upon ? Should I impose upon Heaven ?] <sup>1</sup>

*Confucius* blamed *Tse Lu* for calling upon the disciples to act as officers to him, although he was not a sovereign. To do something recklessly and contrary to the wish of Heaven is imposing upon Heaven. *Chou Kung* was not a son of Heaven either. If we credit him with the same feelings as *Confucius*, he certainly cannot have felt at ease.

[The chief of the *Chi* family was about to sacrifice to the *T'ai* mountain . . .  
. <sup>2</sup> *Confucius* said,

— Does *Tsêng* say that the *T'ai* mountain is not so discerning as *Lin Fang* ? <sup>3</sup> ] <sup>4</sup>

He was of opinion that even *Tsêng Tse* with his small abilities would repudiate such an idea as improper. *Chou Kung* was a sage of first order, how could he have acquiesced in an imperial burial ? Should the Duke of *Chou* be held to be less critical than *Tsêng Tse* ? From this point of view, *Chou Kung* could not feel at ease. A great man equals Heaven and Earth in virtue <sup>5</sup>. If *Chou Kung* was dissatisfied, Heaven would have been dissatisfied too, why then should it have caused thunder and rain to reprove King *Ch'êng* ?

*Another question* may be asked : 'Life and death depend on destiny ; wealth and honour proceed from Heaven' <sup>6</sup>. How could there be a substitution for *Wu Wang's* life ?

*Reply* : When *Wu Wang* dreamed of the nine twelve-months, Heaven took

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from [Analects IX, 11](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> It was improper for a nobleman to offer a sacrifice reserved for the king.

<sup>3</sup> A man of *Lu* who once asked *Confucius* about ceremonies.

<sup>4</sup> Quotation from [Analects III, 6](#) [[Couvreur](#)]. There is a great discrepancy in *Legge's* translation, who takes [ ] for a particle, whereas *Wang Ch'ung* explains it as a name viz. that of *Confucius's* disciple *Tsêng Tse*.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. p. 1.128.

<sup>6</sup> See p. 1.136.

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several years from *Wên Wang* which it added to p2.025 *Wu Wang*'s span <sup>1</sup>. In the second year after the destruction of the *Yin* dynasty, the term of these nine twelve-months was not yet up. *Wu Wang* was suffering, therefore *Chou Kung* prayed for him. As a rule, man's life cannot be prayed for, only in the case of *Wu Wang* it was possible. But it was an unusual device, and, for that reason, preserved in the metal-bound trunk. It could not be repeated, and therefore was concealed and stored away.

*Objection* : — Did *Wu Wang* obtain the years of *Wên Wang* already during the dream on the nine twelve-months, or not yet ?

*Reply* : He did obtain them.

*Objection* : If he had already received the years of *Wên Wang*, his life ought to have been prolonged of itself, and, in the second year after the overthrow of the *Yin*, he was not going to die, in spite of his sickness. Why, then, did the Duke of *Chou* still need pray, and take his place ?

*Reply* : When a sovereign raises somebody to a high post, he does not forthwith give it him though it be already resolved upon, for the clerks must first have made the necessary entries into the archives, before the monarch can give his formal sanction. Although Heaven had taken away the years from *Wên Wang* to add them to those of *Wu Wang*, the Duke of *Chou* had to pray for him before he definitely obtained them.

*(Objection)* : Fate regulating the length of life is a very subtle essence, and not to be obtained in a dream.

*Reply* : By the dream of the nine twelve-months it could be obtained.

*Objection* : As regards this dream of the nine twelve-months, *Wên Wang* dreamed that he gave nine twelve-months to *Wu Wang* <sup>2</sup>, and *Wu Wang*, that God granted him nine twelve-months. Consequently, Heaven had already granted, and *Wu Wang* obtained them ; what need was there for a further prayer ?

A person going to be called to office receives his new dignity in a dream,

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 1.316, Note 3.

<sup>2</sup> Only the dream of *Wu Wang* is mentioned in the *Liki*, not that of *Wên Wang*.

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beforehand, and afterwards is appointed without further recommendation, for a presage is seen in advance and necessarily followed by its realisation.

The ancients called a year a twelve-month <sup>1</sup>. The acquisition of nine twelve-months is like a man's dream of promotion. If the p2.026 Duke of *Chou* relying on the dream that was bound to be realised, invoked Heaven, how could his merit be reputed very great ?

*Another question* : People admire him to whom they must look up to and in whom they trust, irrespective of the greatness of his achievements or the number of his perfections. Had *Chou Kung* not become the substitute of King *Wu*, and King *Wu* died of his illness, would *Chou Kung*, conjointly with King *Ch'êng*, have been qualified to bring about universal peace all over the empire ?

*Reply* : Indeed, *Chou Kung* supporting King *Ch'êng*, there would' have been no troubles in the empire. If *Wu Wang* had not found a substitute, and subsequently had died of his disease, *Chou Kung*, no doubt, would have been able to secure a general peace.

*Objection* : Under these circumstances, the life of King *Wu* was of no advantage, and his death, no great loss, since to achieve success the Duke of *Chou* was required.

When the *Chou* dynasty was on the decline, and the princes in open revolt, *Kuan Chung* <sup>2</sup> united them, and rectified the empire. *Confucius* said,

[— But for *Kuan Chung*, we should now be wearing our hair unbound, and the lappets of our coats buttoned on the left side <sup>3</sup> ] <sup>4</sup>.

If it had not been for *Kuan Chung* who united the princes, the *I* and the *Ti* would have continued their incursions into China until they had extinguished it. This disgrace threatened if it had not been for *Kuan Chung*.

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<sup>1</sup> [ ] *ling*. This explanation is also taken from the *Liki loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Famous minister of Duke *Huan* of *Ch'i*, 7th cent. B. C.

<sup>3</sup> *i. e.*, we would be savages, following their customs.

<sup>4</sup> Quotation from [Analects XIV, 18](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

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*Ch'êng Liang* magnifying the accomplishments of *Kuan Chung*, placed him on a level with the Duke of *Chou*. When *Kuan Chung* expired, Duke *Huan* did not bury him with the ceremonies customary for a prince. Heaven ought to have been angry as in the case of the Duke of *Chou* ; why did it not produce a faint sound of thunder, and send down a little rain at least ? Did it regard *Chou Kung* as a sage, and *Kuan Chung* not as a wise man ?

*Kuan Chung* possessed a stand for inverted cups, and the *San-kuei* tower <sup>1</sup>. *Confucius* censured him, and did not take him for a wise man <sup>2</sup>. Such stands, and the *San-kuei* tower were privilege of princes as a burial, according to the ritual of the son of Heaven, is a royal prerogative. Both were ministers, and in this capacity not entitled to such honours.

p2.027 A great man agrees with Heaven and Earth in virtue <sup>3</sup>. *Confucius* is such a great man. He criticized *Kuan Chung* for claiming rites not belonging to him. If Heaven desired *Chou Kung* to encroach upon the royal institutions, this would not prove the conformity of its virtue with that of *Confucius*. The statement of the commentators of the *Shuking*, therefore, cannot be correct.

The observation of the foot-prints of birds gave rise to the invention of writing, and the aspect of creeping plants flying about led to the construction of carts. Heaven did not convey its commands to *Ts'ang Hsieh* <sup>4</sup> by the foot-prints of birds nor impress *Hsi Chung* <sup>5</sup> with the flying creepers, but these creepers deeply affected *Hsi Chung*, and *Ts'ang Hsieh* was struck at the foot-prints.

When Duke *Wên* of *Chin* returned to his country <sup>6</sup> he gave orders for the removal of *Mi Mê* (?) <sup>7</sup> This made such an impression upon his uncle *Fan*, that

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<sup>1</sup> The name of an extravagant tower built by *Kuan Chang*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. [Analects III, 22 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>3</sup> See above p. 2.024, Note 6.

<sup>4</sup> The inventor of writing, cf. p. 1.087, Note 4.

<sup>5</sup> The inventor of carriages, cf. p. 1.087, Note 5.

<sup>6</sup> In B. C. 636 after nineteen years of exile.

<sup>7</sup> I could not find any reference to this in the *Tso-chuan* or the *Shi-chi*, nor do the encyclopedias know a man of the name of *Mi Mê*. Both words are family names, and *Mi* is also an old State in *Hupei* and *Hunan*. If we take *Mê* to be the surname of the person, *Mi* might be his country. The two historical works only inform us that *Fan* proposed leaving his nephew, but was reconciled. *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Hsi* 24th year [[Couvreur](#)].

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he quitted his post and returned home. Duke *Wên*, having *Mi Mê* dismissed, did not intend to expel his uncle *Fan*, but *Fan* felt abashed, likening himself to *Mi Mê*.

*Hua Ch'ên*<sup>1</sup> of *Sung*, despising the weakness of his clan, employed six ruffians, attached to his family, to murder *Hua Wu*<sup>2</sup> in *Sung* with a long spear. They had been ordered to do the deed behind the house of *Ho*, Master of the Left. The Master of the Left was afraid, and said to them,

— The old man has committed no crime.

Subsequently, the Master of the Left bore a grudge to *Hua Ch'ên*, who took his precautions. The people pursued a mad dog, which entered the premises of *Hua Ch'ên*. The latter, under the delusion that the Master of the Left was coming to attack him, climbed over the wall and made his escape<sup>3</sup>.

p2.028 *Hua Ch'ên*, of himself, killed *Hua Wu*, and the Master of the Left became afraid ; the people, of themselves, pursued the mad dog, and *Hua Ch'ên*, of himself, ran away. The fright of King *Ch'êng* was of this kind. He had misgivings about his not burying the duke with imperial honours, and when he met with thunder and rain his fears knew no bounds. It is by no means evident that by way of thunder and rain, Heaven intimated its disapproval to the king, but when they came King *Ch'êng* took alarm and impeached himself. His emotion is like the feeling of *Ts'ang Hsieh* and *Hsi Chung* ; and his alarm, like the agitation of the Master of the Left and of *Hua Ch'ên*.

Harbouring thoughts of distrust and discomfort, and falling in with a vehement outburst of the elements, one sees in it the proof of some affinity, and Heaven's wrath becomes a well established fact. Noticing such an affinity of events, one is affected even in silence and solitude, and how could King *Ch'êng* be expected to have remained free of terror, being already afraid and, in addition, hearing the noise of thunder and rain shaking the roof of his

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<sup>1</sup> A minister in *Sung*.

<sup>2</sup> The steward of *Hua Ch'ên*'s nephew.

<sup>3</sup> The gist of this account is contained in the *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Hsiang* 17th year (*Legge, Classics Vol. V, Part II, p. 473*) [[Couvreur](#)], but the two versions differ in some details. In the Classic the Master of the Left does not menace *Hua Ch'ên* and even intercedes for him with the duke. Nothing is said about his climbing over a wall.

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carriage ?

When there were incessant thunderclaps and the storm was raging, *Confucius* would change countenance. According to the Rites a superior man, hearing thunder, must sit up in full dress and with his hat on, though it be night <sup>1</sup>, out of respect for the thunder and in awe of the elements.

A sage is a superior man with untarnished virtue, and yet, conforming to Heaven, he is agitated. How, then, should King *Ch'êng* already troubled with doubts about *Chou Kung*, not tremble with fear, upon hearing the sudden outburst of thunder and rain ?

Thunder and rain would seem to be produced by the heavenly fluid, and the fright of King *Ch'êng*, to result from the influence of similar objects upon his mind. The principle of Heaven is inaction. If Heaven by thunder and rain did scold at, and vent its anger against mankind, then it might, as well, kill the vicious by thunder and rain. In ancient times, there were a great many wicked people, why were they not exterminated with thunder and rain ? Why had sages to be called upon to raise troops and move armies <sup>2</sup>, and to take the trouble of blunting their swords in killing their adversaries, whereas it would have been so easy to destroy <sup>p2.029</sup> them with one flash of lightning ? Would Heaven not have shunned the difficulty of crushing the enemies by force of arms ?

Some narrate of the emperor *Ti Yi* <sup>3</sup>, the father of *Chou*, that he was in the habit of shooting at Heaven <sup>4</sup>, and flogging the Earth. On an excursion between the *Ching* and the *Wei* <sup>5</sup>, he was struck by lightning and killed <sup>6</sup>. Thus Heaven destroys depraved characters by a thunderbolt.

However, how could the wickedness of *Ti Yi* be compared with that of

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<sup>1</sup> *Vid.* p. 1.295 seq.

<sup>2</sup> Like *T'ang* who overthrew the *Hsia* and *Wên Wang* who destroyed the *Shang* dynasty, both reputed great sages.

<sup>3</sup> 1191-1155 B. C.

<sup>4</sup> *Yi* hung up a sack filled with blood and shooting at it, declared that he was shooting at Heaven.

<sup>5</sup> Two rivers in *Shensi*.

<sup>6</sup> The passage seems to be culled from the *Shi-chi* chap. 3, p. 10r. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 198](#)) where, however, the flogging of the Earth is not mentioned.

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*Chieh* and *Chou* ? *Tsou Po Ch'i* <sup>1</sup> discoursing on the depravity of *Chieh* and *Chou*, says that it fell short of doomed *Ch'in*, and doomed *Ch'in*'s fell short of *Wang Mang*'s. Nevertheless, the territories of *Chieh* and *Chou*, of *Ch'in* and *Wang Mang* were spared by thunder and lightning.

*Confucius* wrote the *Ch'un-ch'iu* in such a way, that he recommended the slightest good thing, and blamed the smallest evil, but in recommending goodness, he did not exaggerate its excellence, and in blaming evil, he did not magnify its wickedness. A man like him would never have made great reproaches for a small offence. In view of the slight doubts of King *Ch'êng*, Heaven caused a big tempest. If he had made up his mind to bury the duke like an official, why should the phenomenal change be so excessive ? According to the 'Examination of Doubts' in the 'Great Plan' <sup>2</sup> it is owing to the weakness of their intellect that people often do not understand the meaning of calamities, yet Heaven does not reprove them for their doubts. The doubts of King *Ch'êng* were not yet settled, when Heaven reprimanded him by the big tempest. This cannot have been the intention of august Heaven, I should say, and I am afraid that the writers on the *Shuking* have missed the truth.

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<sup>1</sup> An author of the *Han* time, cf. p. 1.087.

<sup>2</sup> A chapter of the *Shuking* Part V, Book IV, 20 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part II, p. 334](#)) [[Couvreur](#)] where different methods of solving doubts are given.

56. Book XVIII, Chap. III

*Ch'i-shih*. The Equality of the Ages

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p1.471 There is a saying that in ancient times people were tall, good-looking, and strong, and lived to become about a hundred years old, whereas in modern times they are short, ugly, cut off in their prime, and short-lived. The following cause is given : In ancient times the harmonious fluid was in abundance. People married at the proper time. At their birth they received this good fluid, and therefore suffered no injuries afterwards. Their bones and joints being strong and solid, they grew tall, and reached a high age, and their outward appearance was beautiful. In later generations all this was reversed, therefore they were small, died young, and looked nasty.

This statement is preposterous. In olden days the rulers were sages, and so they are in modern times. The virtue of the sages then and now does not differ, therefore their government in ancient and modern times cannot be different. The Heaven of antiquity is the Heaven of later ages. Heaven does not change, and its fluid has not been altered. The people of former ages are the same as those of modern times. They all are filled with the original fluid. This fluid is genuine and harmonious now as well as in days of yore, why then should their bodies, which are made of it, not be the same ? Being imbued with the same fluid, they have the same nature, and their nature being the same, their physical frames must be alike. Their physical frames being alike, their outward appearance must be similar, and this being the case, their length of life cannot but be equal. One Heaven and one Earth conjointly produce all beings. When they are created, they all receive the same fluid. Its scarcity and abundance varies in all ages equally. Emperors and kings reign over successive generations, and all the different ages have the same principles. People marry at the same time and with similar ceremonies, for although p1.472 it has been recorded that men married at the age of thirty, and women at that of twenty, and though there has been such a rule for



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marriages <sup>1</sup>, it is not certain that it really has been observed. We can infer this from the fact that it is not observed now either. The rules for ceremonies and music have been preserved up to our days, but are the people of to-day willing to comply with them ? Since they do not like to practise them, people of old have not done so either. From the people of to-day we learn to know the people of old.

Creatures are creatures. Man can live up to one hundred years, but very often we see boys who only reach the age of ten years. The lives of the creatures living on earth and their transformations at the utmost last one hundred years. When they approach this period, they die, which can always be observed. Between all these creatures and those who do not become older than ten years is no fundamental difference. If people of ancient and modern times do not differ, it must be possible to predetermine the length of their lives within the limit of one hundred years by means of divination.

In the height of the domestic animals, the size of the various kinds of grain, the reptiles, plants, trees, metals, stones, pearls, and jewels as well as in the creeping, wriggling, crawling, and panting of the various animals there is no difference, which means that their shape is identical. The water and the fire in olden days are the present water and fire. Now, the fluid changes into water or fire. Provided that there be a difference in the fluids, was the water pellucid, and the fire hot formerly, and is now the water opaque, and the fire, cold ?

Man grows six to seven feet high, measures three to four spans in circumference, his face has five colours <sup>2</sup>, and his greatest age is one hundred years. During thousands and thousands of generations there is no change. Let us suppose that in ancient times men were tall, good-looking, strong, and long-lived, and that in later generations all this was reversed. Then, when Heaven and Earth were first established, and the first men were created, could they be as tall as the Prince of *Fang-fêng* <sup>3</sup>, as handsome as

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<sup>1</sup> This seems to have been the rule under the *Chou* dynasty. Cf. *Liki, Nei-Tse* Sect. II ([Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 478](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> The complexion is yellowish, the lips are red, the teeth white, the hair black, and the veins are bluish.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 1.486.

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p1.473 Prince *Chao* of *Sung* <sup>1</sup>, and as long-lived as *Pêng Tsu* <sup>2</sup> ? And after thousand generations hence, will they be as small as flower-seeds, as ill-favoured as *Mu Mu* <sup>3</sup>, and as short-lived as an ephemeral fly ?

Under the reign of *Wang Mang* <sup>4</sup> there was a giant ten feet high, called *Pa Ch'u*, and during the *Chien-wu* <sup>5</sup> period *Chang Chung Shih* in *Ying-ch'uan* <sup>6</sup> measured ten feet, two inches, and *Chang Tang* over eight feet, whereas his father was not quite five feet high. They all belong to the present generation, and were either tall or small. The assertion of the Literati is wrong therefore and a mistake.

They say that in times of yore people were employed, as befitted them. Hunchbacks were used as gate-keepers, and dwarfs as actors. But, if all were tall and good-looking, where did the hunchbacks and the dwarfs come from ?

It is further alleged that the natures of the people of the past were honest and easily reformed, whereas the culture of later ages is superficial, so that they are difficult to be governed. Thus the *Yiking* says that in the remote past, cords were knotted as a means of governing the people, which knots in later ages were replaced by books <sup>7</sup>. First knots were used, because reforms were easy, the books afterwards prove the difficulty of government. Prior to *Fu Hsi* <sup>8</sup>, the characters of the people were of the plainest kind : They lay down self-satisfied, and sat up perfectly pleased. They congregated, and flocked together, and knew their mothers, but not their fathers <sup>9</sup>. At *Fu Hsi's* time people had attained such a degree of refinement, that the shrewd attempted to deceive the simple-minded, the courageous would frighten the timid, the strong insult the weak, and the many oppress the few. Therefore

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<sup>1</sup> A contemporary of *Confucius*, famous for his beauty (cf. [Analects VI, 14 \[Couvreur\]](#)), but of a perverse character. He committed incest with his half-sister *Nan Tse*, the wife of Duke *Ling* of *Wei*.

<sup>2</sup> The Chinese Methuselah.

<sup>3</sup> The fourth wife of *Huang Ti*, an intelligent, but very ill-favoured woman.

<sup>4</sup> 9-23 A. D.

<sup>5</sup> 25-56 A. D.

<sup>6</sup> A circuit in *Anhui*.

<sup>7</sup> *Yiking*, *Chi-t'se* II (*Legge's* translation p. 385).

<sup>8</sup> The most ancient mythical emperor.

<sup>9</sup> Does that mean that the pre-historic Chinese lived in a state of matriarchate or in polyandry like the Tibetans ? We find the same notice in *Chuang Tse* chap.29, p. 22 v.

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*Fu Hsi* invented the eight diagrams for the purpose of restraining them. At the *Chou* epoch, the state of the people had <sup>p1.474</sup> become very degenerate, and it was difficult to raise the eight diagrams to their former importance. Therefore King *Wên* increased their number to sixty-four. The changes were the principal thing, and the people were not allowed to flag. When, during the *Chou* epoch, they had been down for a long while, *Confucius* wrote the 'Spring and Autumn', extolling the smallest good, and criticizing the slightest wrong. He also said,

— *Chou* <sup>1</sup> had the advantage of viewing the two past dynasties. How complete and elegant are its regulations. I follow *Chou* <sup>2</sup>.

*Confucius* knowing that the age was steeped in sin, ill-bred, and hard to govern, made the strictest rules, and took the minutest preventive measures to repress the disrespectful, and everything was done in the way of restrictions.

This is absurd. Of old, people were imbued with the Five Virtues, and later generations were so likewise. They all had the principle of the Five Virtues in their hearts, and at birth were endowed with the same fluid. Why shall the natures of the former have been plain and honest, and the latter unmannerly? The opponents have noted that in olden times people drank blood, and ate herbs, as they had no grain for food. In later ages they dug up the earth for wells, tilled the ground, and sowed grain. They drank from the wells, and ate grain, which they had prepared with water and fire. They also note that in remote antiquity people were living high up in caverns, and wrapt themselves in skins of wild beasts and birds. Later generations changed the caverns into houses and palaces, and bedecked themselves with cloth and silk fabrics. It is for this reason that they regard the natures of the former as plain and honest, and the later as ill-bred. The tools and the methods have undergone a change, but nature and its manifestations have continued the same. In spite of that, they speak of plainness of nature and the poorness of culture.

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<sup>1</sup> The *Chou* dynasty.

<sup>2</sup> [Analects III, 14](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

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In every age prosperity alternates with decay, and, when the latter has gone on for a long time, it begets vices. That is what happens with raiment and food used by man. When a garment has just been made, it is fresh and intact, and food just cooked is clean and smells good. After a while, the garment becomes worn out, and after some days, the food begins to smell bad. The laws by which nature and culture were governed in the past and at the present, are the same. There is nature, and there is culture, sometimes there is prosperity, and sometimes decay. So it has been of yore, not only now. How shall we prove that ?

p1.475 It has been put on record that the kings of the house of *Hsia* <sup>1</sup> taught faithfulness. The sovereign teaching faithfulness, good men were faithful, but, when the decline set in, common people became rude. To combat rudeness nothing is better than politeness. Therefore the kings of the *Yin* dynasty <sup>2</sup> taught politeness. The sovereign inculcating politeness, good men were polite, but when the decline began, common people became rogues. To repress roguishness nothing is better than education. Therefore the kings of *Chou* <sup>3</sup> taught science. The sovereign teaching science, good men were scholarly, but then came the decline, and common people became narrow-minded. The best antidote against narrow-mindedness is faithfulness, therefore the rulers succeeding the *Chou* dynasty ought to have recourse to faithfulness. The reforms of *Yü* continued by the *Hsia* dynasty, were labouring under narrow-mindedness, therefore it inculcated faithfulness. Since *Yü* based his reforms on science, roguishness must have been the defect of the people under his predecessors. Our contemporaries viewing the narrow-mindedness of our present culture, despise and condemn it, and therefore they say that in old times the natures of people were plain and honest, whereas the culture of later ages is narrow-minded. In the same manner, when the members of one family are not zealous, people will say that the members of other families are diligent and honest <sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> 2205-1766 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> 1766-1122 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> 1122-249 B. C.

<sup>4</sup> People like to contrast, even though there be little difference between the things thus contrasted.

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It has been asserted that the ancients set high store in righteousness, and slighted their bodies. When an event happened that appealed to their sense of loyalty and justice, so that they felt it their duty to suffer death, they would jump into boiling water, or rush into the points of swords, and die without lament. Such was the devotion of *Hung Yen* <sup>1</sup>, and the honesty of *Pu Chan* of *Ch'ên* <sup>2</sup>, who acted like this. Similar instances have been recorded in books. The cases of voluntary deaths, and self-sacrifices are very numerous, and not scarce. The people now-a-days, they believe, are struggling for gain only, and leading a wild life. They have discarded justice, and are not scrupulous as to the means <sup>p1.476</sup> they employ in obtaining their ends. They do not restrain one another by righteousness, or vie in doing good. The disregard of justice they do not consider a source of danger, nor are they afraid of the consequences of their wrong doing.

This is nonsense. The heroes of ancient times are the heroes of the present age. Their hearts are equally sensible to benevolence and justice, and in case of any emergency they will be roused. In the past, there have been unprincipled characters, and at present there are persons with the keenest sense of honour. Goodness and badness are mixed, why should one age be devoid of either ? The story-tellers like to extol the past, and disparage the present time. They make much of what they know by hearsay, and despise what they see with their own eyes. The disputants will discourse on what is long ago, and the literati write on what is far away. The curious things near at hand, the speakers do not mention, and the extraordinary events of our own time are not committed to writing.

When during a famine starved people were going to eat the elder brother of *Tse Ming*, a young man of *Lang-yeh* <sup>3</sup>, he bound and prostrated himself, and asked to be eaten in lieu of his brother. The hungry people so much admired his generosity, that they set them both free, and did not eat them. After the elder brother had died, he took his orphan son, and brought him up, and loved him as much as his own son. At a time of scarcity, when no grain

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<sup>1</sup> A faithful minister of Duke *I* of *Wei*. Cf. p. 1.496.

<sup>2</sup> When in 546 B. C. *Chuang*, Duke of *Ch'i*, was murdered, *Pu Chan* drove to his palace and on hearing the affray, died of fright.

<sup>3</sup> A place in *Shantung*.

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was left, so that both boys could not be kept alive, he killed his own son by starvation, and preserved the life of the son of his elder brother. *Hsü Shu* of *Lin-huai* <sup>1</sup> also brought up the orphan son of his elder brother, and at a time of dearth allowed his own son to die of hunger in order to keep his brother's son alive. His magnanimity was like that of *Tse Ming*.

The father of *Mêng Chang* in *K'uei-chi* <sup>2</sup>, *Ying*, was judicial secretary of the prefecture. When the general of the prefecture had beaten an innocent man to death, and the case came up for revision, *Ying* took the guilt upon himself, offered himself for punishment, and at last suffered death for the general. *Mêng Chang* later on became civil secretary of a prefecture. He took part in a campaign against insurgents, but the soldiers were routed, and shot by the rebels. Thereupon he took the place of the commander, which he did not leave, until he was killed. Is there any difference from <sup>p1.477</sup> the faithfulness of *Hung Yen* or the righteousness of *Pu Chan* of *Ch'ên* ? But would the writers of our own time deign to use these cases as examples ? For illustrations in proof of their views they go up to *Yü* and the *Hsia* period, and down as far as the *Yin* and *Chou* dynasties. The exploits and remarkable feats of the *Ch'in* and *Han* epoch are already too modern for them, and fancy our own time, which comes after all the other ages, and what the narrators have seen with their own eyes ! The painters like to paint men of ancient dynasties, and reject heroes of the *Ch'in* and *Han* epoch, however wonderful their deeds may have been. The scholars of the present age prize antiquity, and scorn the present. They value the snow-goose and disdain the fowl, because the snow-goose is from afar, and the fowl is near.

Provided that there were a moralist now more profound than either *Confucius* or *Mê Ti*, yet his name would not rank as high as theirs, and, if in his conduct he should surpass even *Tsêng Tse* and *Yen Hui*, he would not be as famous as they. Why ? Because the masses think nothing of what they see, but esteem what they know only by hearsay. Should there be a man now, just and generous to the highest degree, and should an inquiry into his actions prove that he is not outvied by anybody in the past, would the writers

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<sup>1</sup> A circuit in *Anhui* province.

<sup>2</sup> A city in *Chekiang*.

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mention him in their works, showing that they give him credit for what he has done ? Narrating marvellous stories, they would not wrong the ancients by taking their subjects from modern times, but would those who are fond of these stories put aside those books on antique lore and things far off, and take an interest in modern writings ? *Yang Tse Yün* wrote the *T'ai-hsüan*, and composed the *Fa-yen* <sup>1</sup>, but *Chang Po Sung* did not deign to cast a look upon these books. As he was living with *Yang Tse Yün* shoulder to shoulder, he had a poor opinion of what he said. Had *Yang Tse Yün* lived prior to him, *Chang Po Sung* would have looked upon him as a gold safe.

One hears people say that the sages of old possessed most brilliant qualities, and accomplished wonderful works. Hence *Confucius* said,

— Great indeed was *Yao* as a sovereign ! How majestic was he ! It is only Heaven that is grand, and only *Yao* corresponded to it. How vast was his virtue ! The people could find no name for it. How majestic was he in the works which he accomplished ! How glorious in the elegant regulations which he <sup>p1.478</sup> instituted ! <sup>2</sup>

*Shun* followed *Yao*, and did not impair his grand institutions, and *Yü* succeeded *Shun*, and did not mar his great works. Subsequently we come to *T'ang*. He rose in arms, and defeated *Chieh*, and *Wu Wang* took the battle-axe, and punished *Chou* <sup>3</sup>. Nothing is said about majesty or glory, we hear only of fighting and defeating. The qualities of these princes were bad, therefore they appealed to arms. They waged war, and neglected the arts of peace. That explains why they could not get along together. When the *Ch'in* and *Han* period arrived, swords were drawn, and conclusions tried everywhere. Thus *Ch'in* conquered the empire. When *Ch'in* was in possession of it, no felicitous omen appeared as the phoenix *e. g.*, which comes, when all the States are at peace. Does that not show their moral impotence and the

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<sup>1</sup> These two works of the philosopher *Yang Tse Yün* have come down to us. The more celebrated of the two is the *Fa-yen*, the *T'ai-hsüan*, *soi-disant* an elucidation of the *Yiking*, is very obscure.

<sup>2</sup> [Analects VIII, 19 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>3</sup> When *Chou* was defeated, he burned himself on the 'Deer Terrace'. Afterwards *Wu Wang* shot three arrows at the corpse, struck at it with his sword, and with his battle-axe severed the head from the body. Cf. *Shi-chi* chap. 3, p. 11 [[Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 207](#)].

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poorness of their achievements ?

This statement is unreasonable. A sage is born by a fusion of the fluids of Heaven and Earth ; he does great things, when he takes the reins of government. But this fusion of the fluids does not only take place in the past and formerly in few instances ; why then should a sage alone be good ? The masses are inclined to cherish the past, and decry the present, to think nothing of what they behold, and very much of what they have heard. Besides, they see that in the Classics and other works the excellence of sages and wise men is painted in the most vivid colours, and that *Confucius* extols the works of *Yao* and *Shun* still more. Then they have been told that *Yao* and *Yü* abdicated, and declined the throne, whereas *T'ang* and *Wu* fought for it, and snatched it from their predecessors. Consequently they think that in olden times the sages were better than now, and that their works, and their civilizing influence was greater than in later times. The Classics contain highly coloured reports, and extravagant and exaggerated stories are current among the people. Those who study the Classics and read books all know this.

*Confucius* said,

— Chou's wickedness was not so very great. Therefore the superior man hates to consort with base persons, for the faults of the whole world are laid to their charge <sup>1</sup>.

People always will contrast *Chieh* and *Chou* with *Yao* and *Shun*. When they have any praise to bestow, they give it to *Yao* and *Shun*, p1.479 and, when they speak of any wickedness, they impute it to *Chou* and *Chieh*. Since *Confucius* says that the wickedness of *Chou* was not so very great, we conclude that the virtue of *Yao* and *Shun* was not so extraordinary either. The resignation of *Yao* and *Shun* and the overthrow of the preceding dynasties by *T'ang* and *Wu* were predetermined by the fate of Heaven. It could not be achieved by goodness or badness, or be brought about by human actions. If *T'ang* and *Wu* had lived in the time of *Yao* and *Shun*, they would also have abdicated the throne instead of defeating their predecessors, and had *Yao* and *Shun* lived in the *Yin* and *Chou* dynasties, they would likewise have

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects XIX, 20 \[Couvreur\]](#).



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overthrown their opponents, and not have declined the throne. What has really been fate, is by people thoughtlessly described as goodness or wickedness. At the period, when according to the Classics all the States were living in harmony, there was also *Tan Chu* <sup>1</sup>, and when the phoenix made its appearance, there were at the same time the *Yu Miao* <sup>2</sup>, against whom every one had to take up arms and fight continually. How did goodness and wickedness or great and small virtue come in ?

They say that the wickedness of *Chieh* and *Chou* was worse than that of doomed *Ch'in*, but, as a matter of fact, we must admit that as for wickedness doomed *Ch'in* was ahead of *Chieh* and *Chou* <sup>3</sup>. There is the same contrast between the excellence of the *Han* and the depravity of the *Ch'in* dynasty as between *Yao* and *Shun* on the one, and *Chieh* and *Chou* on the other side. Doomed *Ch'in* and *Han* belong both to the later generations. Since the wickedness of doomed *Ch'in* is worse than that of *Chieh* and *Chou*, we may infer that in virtue the great *Han* are not outrivalled by *Yao* and *Shun*. *Yao* consolidated the various States, but his work did not last. The phoenix which appeared under the reign of *Shun* was five times attracted by *Hsüan Ti* <sup>4</sup>. Under the reign of *Ming Ti* lucky omens and portents were seen in great numbers <sup>5</sup>. Omens appear, because there is high virtue. When the omens are equal, the achievements must be on a level too. Should *Hsüan Ti* and *Hsiao Ming Ti* be inferior and not come up to *Yao* and *Shun*, how could they evoke the omens of *Yao* and *Shun* ?

p1.480 Under *Kuang Wu Ti* <sup>6</sup> dragons rose, and phoenixes came forth. If, when he got the empire, things left in the street were picked up, did he not equal *T'ang* of the *Yin* and *Wu* of the *Chou* dynasty at least ?

People say that *Ch'êng* <sup>7</sup> and *K'ang* of *Chou* did not impair the imposing

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<sup>1</sup> The degenerate son of virtuous *Yao*.

<sup>2</sup> Aboriginal tribes, against which *Shun* had to fight. *Vid.* p. 1.494.

<sup>3</sup> The hatred of the scholars of the *Han* time towards *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* was still fresher and therefore more intense than their aversion to *Chieh* and *Chou*.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 1.359.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. p. 1.372.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. p. 1.365.

<sup>7</sup> The Emperor *Ch'êng* reigned from 1115 to 1078, *K'ang* from 1078 to 1052.

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works of *Wên Wang*, and that *Shun* in his glory did not mar the brilliant achievements of *Yao*. Our present sage and enlightened sovereign is continuing the blessings and the prosperity of the reigns of *Kuang Wu Ti* and *Hsiao Ming Ti* <sup>1</sup>, without the slightest symptom of a decline <sup>2</sup>. Why should he not rank with *Shun* and *Yü* in remote antiquity, and be on a par with *Ch'êng* and *K'ang* later on ? It is because the Five Emperors and the Three Rulers lived previous to the classical writings, that the chronicles of the *Han* time look up to them, and that the writers imagine that in ancient times there were sages and excellent men, who accomplished great works, whereas later generations have declined, and that their culture is low.

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<sup>1</sup> The Emperor *Chang Ti*, 76-89 A. D., who succeeded *Ming Ti*. Under his reign the *Lun-hêng* seems to have been written. *Vid.* p. 1.372 Note 3.

<sup>2</sup> The reigns of these three first sovereigns of the later *Han* dynasty were prosperous indeed.

## 57. Book XIX, Chap. I

### *Hsüan Han. Praise of the Han Dynasty*

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p2.192 The Literati contend that the Five Emperors and the Three Rulers brought the empire the blessings of universal peace, and that since the accession of the *Han* dynasty there has not yet been general peace. By saying that the Five Emperors and Three Rulers brought about a time of uninterrupted tranquillity, and that the *Han* have not yet enjoyed such a state, they imply that the Five Emperors and Three Rulers were sages, for only the virtue of sages can have such an effect, and the allegation that the *Han* have not had such a peaceful time means to say that there were no sage emperors, because the influence of worthies is not sufficient <sup>1</sup>.

Furthermore, they remember the words of *Confucius* saying :

— The phœnix does not come ; the River sends forth no Plan : it is all over with me ! <sup>2</sup>

At present, we have no phœnix and no Plan of the River, and numerous are the omens that persist in not coming. Wherefore they say that we are not living in a period of general peace. This view is preposterous.

Universal peace manifests itself by the establishment of government, when the people respond, by being cheerful and at ease. *Confucius* teaches that one renders the people happy by cultivating one's own self <sup>3</sup>. The fact that *Yao* and *Shun* were toiling for the welfare of their people proves that at that time there was universal peace. For governing others the individual must be the starting point. The people being at ease, the *Yin* and the *Yang* are in harmony, and when they harmonize all things grow and develop ; such being the case, strange omens come forth. How about our empire ? Is it at ease or

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<sup>1</sup> *Viz.* to bring about universal peace.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 1.405, Note 1.

<sup>3</sup> [Analects XIV, 45 \[Couvreur\]](#).

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in jeopardy ?

Being at ease, it is at peace, and then even the absence of omens would not be hurtful to the peaceful state. The style of government becomes manifest from its institutions and appears from the real state of affairs. When these manifestations are not visible the true conditions cannot be ascertained. Sometimes all may be p2.193 in perfect order, but there are no witnesses to prove it. Therefore, as regards the principles of government, provided that its institutions be true and real, it is not requisite that they should all be manifest. A wise ruler in his administration aims at universal peace, and it is not indispensable that there should be corresponding omens.

The omens of universal peace are like the features of sage sovereigns. Since the physiognomies of sage rulers must not of necessity be similar, wherefore should those portents always be of the same type ? The scholars know that in the time of *Yao* and *Shun* a phoenix as well as a 'brilliant star' <sup>1</sup> became visible, and there were issued the Plan of the River and the Scroll of the *Lo*. Do they imagine that future monarchs, ruling the empire, must again have this kind of thing, in order to bring about universal peace ? If they go so far, they likewise ought to require of *Yao* again to possess joined teeth <sup>2</sup> and of *Shun* again to have eight eyebrows <sup>3</sup>.

The holy features of emperors and rulers have not been the same at various times, consequently there is no reason why the portents obtained of yore and at present should be identical, and it is erroneous to assert that we have no period of general peace, because the present sovereigns have no phoenix and no Plan of the River. *Confucius* speaking of the phoenix and the Plan merely used former prodigies for exemplification, but does not intend to say that every age must again have its phoenix and its Plan.

The omens of the emperors and rulers were manifold and not only a single one, either a phoenix and a unicorn, or the Plan of the *Yellow River* and the Scroll of the *Lo*, or sweet dew and wine springs, or the harmonious blending

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 323 seq.

<sup>2</sup> As the emperor *Ti K'u* had, p. 1.304.

<sup>3</sup> We read *loc. cit.* that the eyebrows of *Yao* had eight colours, not that he had eight eyebrows.

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of the *Yin* and the *Yang*, or the excellent order and the tranquillity of the people. The present omens must not agree with the old ones, nor must the latter be conformable to the former. It is not necessary that there should be an unbroken chain of the portents met with, and this will become evident from the following :

When emperors and rulers arose, their fate and luck were by no means the same. The *Chou* encountered a crow and a p2.194 fish <sup>1</sup>, the *Han* destroyed a big snake <sup>2</sup>, and we may be sure that the sovereigns of *T'ang* and *Yü* were in a similar position as those of *Chou* and *Han*. The events and circumstances of their rise and accession to the throne were not homogeneous ; why then should the presages of universal peace be identical ? To infer future auguries from those omens which happened would be like watching the trunk of a tree in wait for a hare and hiding oneself, after having destroyed the nets <sup>3</sup>.

When peace reigns throughout the empire, the omens and presages may be very different ; as when a man is wealthy his goods are not the same. Some hoard up rice and grain, others collect silks and others, fabrics, others breed cattle and horses, or they acquire landed property and houses. Those partial to rice and grain do not care for silks and fabrics, and the cattle and horse-breeders do not appreciate land and buildings. Therefore they will say that rice and grain are better than fabrics, or that cattle and horses have a greater value than lots of land and houses. Now, provided that the people live at peace and there are omens, those who object that the old omens *viz.* the Plan of the River and the phoenix did not appear, and that therefore there cannot be peace, those who say so are like rice-eaters that, upon arriving in a country where everybody eats millet, and no rice is to be seen, declare millet not to be any grain.

As a matter of fact, the empire enjoys universal peace. But unless there

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.130, Note 1.

<sup>2</sup> About the event see p. 1.234, Note 1.

<sup>3</sup> *I. e.*, it would be foolish. The story here alluded to of a peasant of *Sung* who having seen a hare running against the trunk of a tree and breaking its crown, fancied this to be an easy way of catching hares, and therefore settled down near the tree in wait for one, has been told by *Han Fei Tse* XIX, 1v. See *Pétillon, Allusions* p. 175.

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be sages, how could this be effected ? And how can the truth of this assertion be borne out in the absence of a phoenix ? If we ask the scholars of our age they do not know a sage ; then how do they know whether there are no sages at present ? How could our contemporaries, on perceiving a phoenix, recognise it as such ? Since they do not know it, how can they be sure that there are no phoenixes now ? They really ignore whether there are sages or not, nor are they able to distinguish a genuine phoenix <sup>p2.195</sup> from a false one. Consequently they are unqualified to ascertain whether the present time may boast of universal peace or not.

*Confucius* said,

[— If there is a true emperor it would still require a generation, and then virtue would prevail] <sup>1</sup> ;

after thirty years, the world is at peace. From the beginning of the *Han* dynasty up to *Wên Ti* there were upwards of twenty years <sup>2</sup>. Then *Chia Yi* was the first to suggest that, in view of the harmony pervading the empire, the first day of the first moon, the colour of dresses, and several customs should be changed. The official titles should be fixed, and rites and music receive a new impetus. When *Wên Ti* ascended the throne he was ever yielding and accommodating <sup>3</sup>. According to *Chia Yi's* proposals, in the time of *Wên Ti*, there was already general peace.

These more than twenty years after the rise of the *Han* would agree with the dictum of *Confucius* that a generation would be required before virtue prevailed. The number of years making up one generation being already completed, universal peace must have been established. *Chia Yi* was aware of it, and fancy now nearly three hundred years later <sup>4</sup> to say that there is not yet general peace ! A big mistake, indeed.

The generation alluded to by *Confucius* is thirty years. The house of *Han*

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects XIII, 12 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> From 206 to 179 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in an abridged form from the biography of *Chia Yi* in the *Shi-chi* chap. 84, p. 8r.

<sup>4</sup> The *Lun-hêng* was written in 82 or 83 A. D. Cf. p. 1.207 and p. 1.009.

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has reigned three hundred years, ten emperors <sup>1</sup> have become illustrious by their virtues, and should not the time of universal peace have already come ?

The era of *Wên Ti* was, no doubt, perfectly peaceful already. The following ages kept up the peace, until under *P'ing Ti* the former *Han* dynasty was extinguished <sup>2</sup>. *Kuang Wu Ti* restored it <sup>3</sup>, and again it arrived at universal peace.

The following question might be put : *Wên Ti* had omens, and his reign deserves to be termed a time of universal peace. But *Kuang Wu Ti* had no such omens, how then could he be credited with universal peace ?

p2.196 My answer is that omens and auguries of emperors and rulers are dissimilar at different periods. Even though there should be no ominous things at all, yet the peaceful gathering of the people and the harmonious blending of wind and air would likewise be ominous. How can we show this to be the case ?

When emperors and rulers had pacified the empire they were in the habit of ascending Mount *T'ai*, to offer the hill-sacrifice and announce the peace. *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* also did so, but encountered a violent thunderstorm with rain, because his government was anything but peaceful, and the air by no means harmoniously mixed. When *Kuang Wu Ti*, however, went up the mountain to sacrifice, the sky was bright and cloudless <sup>4</sup>, a phenomenon attending universal peace. His government was peaceful and the air corresponding. Under *Kuang Wu Ti's* reign the air was harmonious, the people at peace, and ominous creatures appeared of various kinds. But, notwithstanding these proofs afforded by the people and the air, those critics still cherish their doubts.

In the second year of *Yuan-k'ang* <sup>5</sup> of *Hsiao Hsüan Ti's* time, a phoenix

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<sup>1</sup> From *Han Kao Tsu* down to *Chang Ti*, under whom the *Lun-hêng* was completed, there are ten emperors altogether, the empress *Lü Hou* excepted.

<sup>2</sup> In 5 A. D. *Ju Tse Ying*, 6-8 A. D., was a child and reigned only nominally till in 9 A. D. *Wang Mang* snatched the empire from him.

<sup>3</sup> In 25 A. D.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 2.206.

<sup>5</sup> 64 B. C.

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alighted on Mount *T'ai* and subsequently, also, in *Hsin-p'ing* <sup>1</sup>. In the fourth year <sup>2</sup>, spiritual birds perched on the *Ch'ang-lo* palace and some in the *Shang-lin* park, and the *Chiu-chên* <sup>3</sup> brought a unicorn as a present. In the second year of *Shên-chio* <sup>4</sup>, a phoenix and sweet dew descended on the capital, in the fourth year <sup>5</sup> a phoenix alighted in *Tu-ling* <sup>6</sup> and in the *Shang-lin* park. In the third year of *Wu fêng* <sup>7</sup>, when the emperor was offering sacrifice in the southern suburb, a divine splendour appeared simultaneously, or it rose in a valley and illuminated the feasting hall for at least ten days <sup>8</sup>. In the following year, when the emperor was sacrificing to the manes of *Hou Tu*, the glamour appeared again in the same manner as when he went to the southern suburb. Sweet <sup>p2.197</sup> dew and a spiritual bird descended on the *Yen-shou* and the *Wan-sui* palaces. In the third month of the same year, a *luan* and a phoenix alighted on a tree within the eastern gate of the *Chang-lo* palace. In the first year of *Kan-lu* <sup>9</sup>, a yellow dragon arrived and was seen in *Hsin fêng* <sup>10</sup>, and wine springs flowed abundantly <sup>11</sup>.

Those phoenixes arrived five or six times, and either it was the same bird appearing several times, or each time it was a different bird coming independently. The unicorn, the spiritual birds, the yellow dragon, the *luan* bird, the sweet dew, the wine springs, the divine splendour and supernatural light occurring at the sacrifices to *Hou Tu* and to Heaven and Earth, all these omens must be admitted to be very numerous, nay superabundant. Though the reign of *Hsiao Ming Ti* <sup>12</sup> could not boast of a phoenix, yet it was distinguished by a unicorn, sweet dew, wine springs, spiritual birds, white

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<sup>1</sup> The modern *Pin-chou* in *Shensi*.

<sup>2</sup> 62 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> An *Annamese* tribe. See p. 1.370, Note 2.

<sup>4</sup> 60 B. C.

<sup>5</sup> 58 B. C.

<sup>6</sup> East of *Hsi-an-fu* in *Shensi*, the modern *Hsien-ning-hsien*.

<sup>7</sup> 55 B. C.

<sup>8</sup> The *Han-shu* has [] instead of [] 'ten odd quarters of an hour' *i. e.*, about two hours and a half.

<sup>9</sup> 53 B. C.

<sup>10</sup> A place in *Shensi*. Cf. p. 1.364, Note 2.

<sup>11</sup> All these portents are mentioned in the *Han-shu* chap. 8, p. 21v. seq. also.

<sup>12</sup> 58-75 A. D.



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pheasants, purple boletus, and auspicious grain. Gold was found, and tripods turned up. Separated trees again grew together.

The presages of the Five Emperors and Three Rulers mentioned in the Classics and the Records are not more numerous than those of *Hsiao Ming Ti*. If universal peace be measured by presages, the years of *Hsiao Ming Ti* must have been twice as peaceful as those of the Five Emperors and Three Rulers. Accordingly, the eras of *Hsiao Hsüan Ti* and *Hsiao Ming Ti* deserve to be called ages of universal peace.

Those apt to bring about general peace are sages. Why do the scholars of the present time contend that our age has no sages? Was the fluid derived from Heaven so copious during former generations and is it so scanty in later times?

The *Chou* had three sages: *Wên Wang*, *Wu Wang*, and *Chou Kung* all flourishing simultaneously. Why must the *Han*, being a dynasty as well, rank below the *Chou* in this respect, and why must the wise emperors of the *Chou* be more numerous than those of the *Han*? The *Han* emperors *Kao Tsu* and *Kuang Wu Ti* would correspond to *Wên Wang* and *Wu Wang* of the *Chou* dynasty, and *Wên Ti*, *Wu Ti*, *Hsüan Ti*, *Hsiao Ming Ti* and the reigning emperor <sup>1</sup> surpass the *Chou* kings *Ch'êng*, *K'ang*, and *Hsüan*. Not that, because I am personally living in the *Han* epoch, I am prone unduly to p2.198 extol and eulogize them, trying to coax and flatter, my only aim being to explain how matters stand, and how far the views held by scholars are justified.

Usually people incline to praise what is distant and belaud antiquity. In regard to omens they admire those of remote ages, and as to government they regard the old kings as worthies. Noticing something wonderful at the present time, they do not believe in it. Should *Yao* and *Shun* be re-born now, I am afraid that they would not be styled sages.

When hunters are chasing wild animals, lookers-on take a keen interest in the hunt, but do not care for fishing, which they have not seen. Thus those people look to *Ch'i*, but are indifferent to *Lu*, or they ramble through *Ch'u* and

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<sup>1</sup> *Chang Ti*, 76-88 A. D.

## Lun-hêng

have no regard for *Sung* <sup>1</sup>. Of *Yao* and *Shun*, the *Hsia*, and the *Yin* dynasty there are records on tablets of two feet four inches <sup>2</sup>. It is those that the Literati pore on, studying from morning till night, whereas they do not look at the books of the *Han* time, saying that the productions of the *Han* are worthless and not up to those of the ancients. Just so the spectators of the hunt do not care for fishing, and those roaming over *Ch'i* and *Ch'u* pay no heed to *Sung* and *Lu*. If a great literary genius should arise and put on record the history of the *Han* time, his work would become a *Shuking* or a *Ch'un-ch'iu*. The scholars would take it up and study it most carefully, and, by adding it to the six old Classics, they would have seven <sup>3</sup>.

From our most illustrious sovereign up to *Kao Tsu* all were sage emperors. According to the panegyrics on the *Han*, presented by *Tu Fu* and *Pan Ku* <sup>4</sup>, their achievements, virtues, and omens flowed forth as a mighty stream whose waters rushing on are immeasurable. When we pass *Yao* and *Shun* and enter the sphere of the first emperors, the three dynasties are like remote narrow gorges with very deep waters. The *Yin* era is not so very far from the time of the *Hsia* dynasty. But leaving alone *Yao* and <sup>p2.199</sup> *Shun*, the *Hsia* and the *Yin* and solely comparing the merits and accomplishments of the *Han* with those of the house of *Chou*, being the nearest to us, by weighing the *pros* and *cons*, we find that the *Chou* come short of the *Han* for the following reason :

The rulers of the *Chou* dynasty who received Heaven's command are *Wên Wang* and *Wu Wang*, in the *Han* time there are *Kao Tsu* and *Kuang Wu Ti*, but the miracles happening at the investiture of *Wên Wang* and *Wu Wang* are inferior to the auguries attendant on the accession of *Kao Tsu* and *Kuang Wu Ti*, and the omens of *Hsiao Hsüan Ti* and *Hsiao Ming Ti* are more conspicuous than those of the *Chou* sovereigns *Ch'êng*, *K'ang*, and *Hsüan Wang*. The portents of *Hsiao Hsüan Ti* and *Hsiao Ming Ti* may be said to have been the finest since the days of *Yao* and *Shun*.

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<sup>1</sup> The States *Ch'i* and *Lu* are of about equal importance, and so are *Ch'u* and *Sung*.

<sup>2</sup> Said of the length of the tablets. Cf. p. 1.456.

<sup>3</sup> Apart from the *Shi-chi* of *Sse-Ma Ch'ien* who describes only the beginning of the *Han* period, the history of the Former *Han* dynasty was written in the *Ch'ien Han-shu* by *Pan Ku* and that of the After *Han* in the *Hou Han-shu* by *Fan Yeh*, but though much esteemed, their works have not been raised to the rank of classics.

<sup>4</sup> *Pan Ku* wrote two poems descriptive of the eastern and western capitals of the *Han*.

## Lun-hêng

When our present emperor came to power he took over the State in perfect order with everything in abundance : The Four Seas <sup>1</sup> were united, the empire well settled, the omens were of the highest order, and mankind submitted to the glorious institutions. The black-haired people of the time of *Tang* lived in harmony, and at present, likewise, benevolence is practised throughout the empire. When the year is not prosperous and the crop fails, yet we do not see the principles of morality trodden down in distant regions, or out-of-the-way places infested by bands of desperadoes. Under the *Chou* dynasty the *Yüeh-ch'ang* presented a white pheasant <sup>2</sup>, in our time the *Hsiung-nu*, the *Shan-shan* <sup>3</sup>, and the *Ai-lao* <sup>4</sup> bring cattle and horses as tribute. The domain of the *Chou* was confined to less than five thousand Li, the *Han* territory is so vast, that it extends beyond the uncultivated dependencies.

Cattle and horses are more valuable than white pheasants, and things near at hand not like the productions of distant countries. The territory of the ancient *Jung* and the *Ti* now forms part of China, the former Naked People now use court dress, the bare-headed people put on the caps, and the bare-footed people wear the shoes of the *Shang* dynasty. Barren and stony ground has been transformed into fertile soil, and truculent bandits have become law-abiding citizens. The roughness of the savages has been p2.200 smoothed down, and rebels have become peaceful people. If this is not universal peace, what else is it ?

As far as the transformations effected by virtue are concerned, the *Chou* do not outvie the *Han*, in the matter of omens and presages, however, the *Han* surpass the *Chou* dynasty. If their respective territories be measured, that of the *Chou* is much more limited than that of the *Han* ; why then should the *Han* not be equal to the *Chou* ? They pretend that the *Chou* had more sages, and that their administration brought about universal peace. The Literati in speaking of sages go much too far, placing them so high, that they

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<sup>1</sup> Figuratively for the border lands of China with their people.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 2.208.

<sup>3</sup> A people south of the *Lobnor*, said to be identical with the *Lou-lan* between *Hami* and *Turfan*.

<sup>4</sup> A people in *Yünnan*, in the present prefecture of *Yung-ch'ang*.

## Lun-hêng

leave no traces behind. They, likewise, make too much of government, so that they cut off universal peace, a continuation of which thus becomes an impossibility.

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## 58. Book XIX, Chap. II

### *Hui-kuo*. Further Remarks on the State

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p2.201 [*Yen Yuan*, in admiration of the Master's doctrine, sighed and said,

— The more I looked up to it, the higher it appeared to me, and the deeper I penetrated into it, the harder it became. ] <sup>1</sup>

This means that *Yen Yuan* having studied with *Confucius* month after month and year after year, found the doctrine becoming deeper and deeper. In the chapter entitled 'Praise of the *Han* Dynasty' <sup>2</sup> we have given the *Han* precedence over the *Chou* and endeavoured to show that the *Han* outrivalled the *Chou*, but our investigations were not yet exhaustive. If we expand them to the utmost limit, we shall acquire a still clearer conception of the greatness of the *Han* dynasty.

When a Classic is most thoroughly explained, all its remarkable beauties become visible. So an exhaustive treatise on a State brings out all its admirable features. From these additional remarks on the *Han* era it will become plain that it ranks above all other ages. My reasons are the following :

*Huang Ti* had to fight at *Cho-lu* <sup>3</sup>, and *Yao* led his troops to *Tan-shui*. In *Shun's* time the *Yu Miao* <sup>4</sup> did not submit ; at the commencement of the *Hsia* dynasty the *Hu* rebelled. *Kao Tsung* invested the 'Devil country' <sup>5</sup> and destroyed its people after three years. Under the régime of King *Ch'êng* of *Chou* there was an insurrection in *Kuan* and *T'sai* <sup>6</sup>, and *Chou Kung* had to

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects IX, 10](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> On p. 2.192.

<sup>3</sup> The capital of *Huang Ti* in *Chili*.

<sup>4</sup> On *Tan-shui* and the *Yu Miao* see p. 1.494, Notes 3 and 4.

<sup>5</sup> An allusion to the [Yiking, 63th hexagram](#) (*Legge, Sacred Books* Vol. XVI, p. 205), The 'devil country' or 'demon region' means the barbarous hordes in the north of China.

<sup>6</sup> See p. 2.018.

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undertake an expedition to the east. All this happened under the former dynasties.

p2.202 We do not hear of similar occurrences during the *Han* time. During the reign of *Kao Tsu*, *Ch'ên Hsi* <sup>1</sup> revolted and *P'êng Yüeh* <sup>2</sup> rebelled, but then peace was secured. When in the time of *Hsiao Ching Ti*, *Wu* and *Ch'u* levied troops against him, the emperor vented his resentment against *Ch'ao Ts'o* <sup>3</sup>. The *Hsiung-nu* were constantly making trouble and the calendar did not reach them <sup>4</sup>, but the emperor did not infest their naturally barren country with his soldiers. At present they all tender their allegiance and offer oxen and horses as tribute, because the power of the *Han* is so imposing, that they do not venture any opposition.

When *Chou* committed the greatest atrocities, the whole empire took up arms against him. King *Wu* enlisted troops all anxious to fight forthwith, and eight hundred feudatory princes appeared uninvited <sup>5</sup>.

*Hsiang Yü* displeased with the inferiority of his title, collected troops and rose simultaneously with *Kao Tsu*. Their power had not yet been balanced. As to the strength of *Hsiang Yü*, the breaking iron is much more difficult than breaking wood. *Kao Tsu* destroyed *Hsiang Yü* and broke his iron. *Wu Wang* in defeating *Chou* merely broke wood. Consequently, the strength of the *Han* surpassed that of the *Chou* by far.

The annihilation of one foe is comparatively easy, that of two, an arduous task, however. *T'ang* and *Wu* defeated *Chieh* and *Chou*, one enemy each. *Kao Tsu*, on the other hand, destroyed *Ch'in* and killed *Hsiang Yü*, vanquishing the two houses at the same time. His strength therefore must have been double

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<sup>1</sup> *Ch'ên Hsi* was a counsellor to the king of *Chao*. He caused an insurrection against *Kao Tsu* in 197 B. C. and was decapitated in 196. Cf. [Chavannes, \*Mém. Hist.\* Vol. II, p. 393 seq.](#) and 399.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 1.218, Note 5.

<sup>3</sup> *Ch'ao T'so* eked on five States to rebel against the *Han*. The plot failed, and *Ch'ao T'so* was put to death by order of the emperor in 154 B. C. Cf. [Chavannes \*loc. cit.\* p. 499](#) and [509](#).

<sup>4</sup> The acceptance of the Chinese calendar has always been regarded as a sign of submission.

<sup>5</sup> A fact mentioned in the *Shi-chi* ([Chavannes, \*Mém. Hist.\* Vol. I, p. 226](#)).

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that of *T'ang* and *Wu* <sup>1</sup>.

*Wu Wang* was chief of the west to *Yin*. He served *Chou* as a subject, and as a subject attacked his sovereign. Such was the p2.203 disgust of *Po Yi* and *Shu Ch'i* at this conduct, that, leading their homes behind them, they made remonstrances. But *Wu Wang* declined to hear them. Lest they should eat the millet of *Chou*, they died of starvation at *Shou-yang* <sup>2</sup>. *Kao Tsu* was not a minister of *Ch'in*, nor was *Kuang Wu Ti* an officer of *Wang Mang*. The punishment of a depraved sovereign and the annihilation of a vicious ruler do not call for the criticisms of *Po Yi*, and, in this respect, the moral standard of the two emperors may be declared higher than that of their *Chou* predecessors <sup>3</sup>.

It is easy to rise high from hills and mountains and easy to dive deep in abysses and gullies, but it is an arduous task to rise from low and humble spheres without any stepping-stone. Contrariwise, it is very convenient to inherit a title and succeed to an estate, noble ancestors having laid the foundation of one's fortune.

*Yao* came to the throne as a marquis of *T'ang*, and *Shun* succeeded to *Yao* as minister of finance when the latter abdicated. *Yü* followed *Shun*, on account of his merits, as minister of works. *T'ang* was in possession of an estate of seventy Li, *Wên Wang* had a hundred Li, and *Wu Wang* was margrave of the west and heir to *Wên Wang's* dignity in the metropolitan district <sup>4</sup>. The rise of these Five Monarchs and territorial lords had its good reasons and was easy because they had the necessary power.

*Kao Tsu* began his career as a headborough. Brandishing his sword three feet long, he conquered the empire. *Kuang Wu Ti* started from *Po-shui* <sup>5</sup> and exerted his prowess within the four seas. He did not call one foot of land his own, or hold any position, but immediately received Heaven's decree and

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<sup>1</sup> This inference is wrong, of course, for we do not know whether the power of *Ch'in* and *Hsiang Yü* was, each of them, equal to that of *Chieh* or *Chou*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 1.168, Note 2 and p. 1.430, Notes 1 and 2.

<sup>3</sup> Who killed their rightful lieges.

<sup>4</sup> Lit. the 'three zones' round the capital. Cf. *Couvreur* Dict.

<sup>5</sup> A district in *Shensi*.

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merely followed the trend of events. This was like rising from an abyss or a gully, or like diving from a hill or a mountain. Whose reigns were more remarkable, those of the Five Monarchs or those of these two sovereigns ?

We learn from several historical works that when *Wu Wang* was going to supersede *Chou*, *T'ai Kung* had devised a secret plan. He gave a small boy cinnabar to eat, so that his body turned red, and when he had grown up he taught him to say : The *Yin* are ruined'. The people of *Yin* beholding the red body of the small <sup>p2.204</sup> boy, took him for a heavenly spirit <sup>1</sup>, and, when he said that the *Yin* were ruined, they all believed that the *Shang* would perish.

When the soldiers arrived at the plain of *Mu*, at dawn they carried tallow-candles <sup>2</sup>. These artful devices deceived the people, and *Wu Wang* availed himself of *Chou's* unpreparedness. The *Chou* conceal this, but the world calls it imposture. When the *Han* conquered the empire, they did not use such false pretences.

In the chapter 'Completion of the War' <sup>3</sup> it is related that when the *Chou* defeated *Chou*, pestles were swimming in blood. This being recorded in the aforesaid chapter, the story about feeding a boy with cinnabar and lifting tallow-candles at dawn is probably true also.

When the *Han* smote the doomed *Hsin Huang Ti* <sup>4</sup>, *Kuang Wu Ti* had five thousand men under his command. *Wang Mang* dispatched two dukes at the head of thirty thousand men. When they were fighting at *K'un-yang* <sup>5</sup> it thundered and rained, and all was wrapped in obscurity, so that the front and the rear-ranks could not see each other. The soldiers of *Han* issued from the city of *K'un-yang* and attacked the armies of the two dukes. One man stood for ten, and the troops of the two dukes were routed <sup>6</sup>. Heaven helped the

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<sup>1</sup> This passage is quoted in the *T'ai-p'ing-yü-lan* chap. 985, p. 3v., but the text differs. There the boy does not eat the cinnabar, but smears his body with it. See also p. 1.484 where the corresponding passage, which owing to the conciseness of the text was mistranslated, must be corrected. *Tan Chiao* is not a name.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in the *Pei-wên-yün-fu*.

<sup>3</sup> Chapter of the *Shuking* [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)], see p. 1.484, Notes 4 and 5.

<sup>4</sup> *I. e.* *Wang Mang* who assumed the title the 'New Emperor'.

<sup>5</sup> A district in the *Ying-chou* prefecture of *Anhui*.

<sup>6</sup> In 23 A. D.



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*Han* with thunder and rain to overpower their enemies ; was not that quite something different from carrying tallow-candles and taking in the *Yin* by human tricks ?

Some say that when *Wu Wang* had defeated *Chou*, the latter threw himself into a fire and died. *Wu Wang* personally with a halberd cut off his head and hung it up on a great white standard <sup>1</sup>. King *Hsüan* of *Ch'i* pitied an ox whose blood was to be smeared on a bell, because he saw it trembling <sup>2</sup>. King *Chuang* of *Ch'u* condoned the guilt of the viscount of *Chêng*, on beholding his bare <sup>p2.205</sup> flesh and his emaciated body <sup>3</sup>. A superior man hates the wicked, but not his body. The sight of the corpse of *Chou* in the flames must have been a dismal one, much worse than the trembling of the ox or the emaciated person. How could *Wu Wang* bear to sever the head with a halberd and hang it up ?

When *Kao Tsu* entered *Hsien-yang*, *Yen Yüeh* had executed *Erh Shih Huang Ti*, and *Hsiang Yü* had killed *Tse Ying* <sup>4</sup>. *Kao Tsu* entered *Ch'in* with a placid look and did not mutilate the two corpses. At the arrival of *Kuang Wu Ti* in *Ch'ang-an*, *Liu Shêng Kung* <sup>5</sup> had already killed *Wang Mang*, but although he had his soldiers in readiness to punish the guilty, he did not lift his sword against the dead body. Which is greater, the barbarity of him who cut off the head of a corpse burned in fire or the clemency of sparing a body already cut to pieces ? Was this *Wu Wang's* revenge for *Yu-li* <sup>6</sup> ?

The imprisonment of a subject by his lord was not as blamable as the dethronement of the *Chou* by the *Ch'in* dynasty or the poisoning of *P'ing Ti* <sup>7</sup> by *Wang Mang*. In regard to the depravity of *Chieh* and *Chou*, *Tsou Po Ch'i* <sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 235](#).

<sup>2</sup> The story is related by *Mencius* Book I, Part I, chap. VII, 4 ([Legge, Classics Vol. II, p. 139](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>3</sup> In the year 596 B. C. the capital of *Chêng* was taken by *Ch'u* after a long siege. Then the scene alluded to took place. The narrative is found in the *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Hsüan*, 12th year [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>4</sup> See p. 1.319, Notes 4 to 7.

<sup>5</sup> Generally known as *Liu Hsüan*, a cousin to *Kuang Wu Ti*.

<sup>6</sup> The place where *Wên Wang*, the father of *Wu Wang*, was imprisoned by order of King *Chou*.

<sup>7</sup> The last emperor of the Former *Han* dynasty.

<sup>8</sup> An author, see p. 1.469, Note 3.

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is of opinion that it was not as bad as that of doomed *Ch'in*, and that doomed *Ch'in* was not as bad as *Wang Mang*. Yet in spite of his minor guilt the *Chou* punished King *Chou* so cruelly, and in spite of the more serious nature of their crimes the *Han* dealt so leniently with *Ch'in* and *Wang Mang*. Where was the greater generosity and where the greater narrow mindedness ?

When the mother of *Kao Tsu* was *enceinte*, a scaly dragon appeared above her, and in her dreams she met with a spirit. Her son was very fond of wine and would drink it on credit in a wine-shop. Forgetting to pay, he drank till he was intoxicated and fell asleep. Then always some portent would appear above him. Walking at night, he killed a snake, and the mother of the snake cried most lamentably. Together with *Lü Hou* he often repaired to a field-cottage and used to hide. Then a brilliant fluid would shine forth, so that *Lü Hou* knew his whereabouts. *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* p2.206 perceived the fluid of a son of heaven in the south-east <sup>1</sup>, and the Five Planets rose and assembled at the Eastern Well <sup>2</sup>. When the people of *Ch'in* looked out for the army of *Han* the clouds showed all sorts of tints.

At the birth of *Kuang Wu Ti* a phoenix alighted on the city, and a blade of auspicious grain grew in an apartment. At midnight, when no candles were burning, his deceased mother appeared floating in the air in a stream of light <sup>3</sup>. At first *Su Po A* observed that the air at *Ch'un-ling* was condensed and concentrated <sup>4</sup>, and when *Kuang Wu Ti*, on his progress, passed an old cottage, he beheld a wavering fluid going up to the sky.

No such phenomena have been recorded in connexion with the birth and the rise of the Five Emperors and the Three Rulers. The mother of *Yao* was moved by a red dragon, but no miraculous signs are reported attending his accession. The mother of *Yü* swallowed pearl-barley, and before she gave birth to her son obtained a black jade *bâton*. The mother of *Hsieh* consumed a swallow's egg, and when *T'ang* put in an appearance, a white wolf carried a

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 1.177 seq.

<sup>2</sup> A solar mansion corresponding to *Gemini*.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 1.180.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 1.181, where the reading *Ch'uang-ling* (ed. B.) must be corrected into *Ch'un-ling*.

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hook in its mouth. The mother of *Hou Chi* stepped into the foot-prints of a giant <sup>1</sup>. When *Wên Wang* came to the front he obtained a red bird, *Wu Wang* got a fish and a crow <sup>2</sup>, but in no case could they compete with the prodigies indicative of universal peace under the *Han* emperors.

In the times of *Huang Ti*, *Yao* and *Shun*, a phoenix was seen once, but very few were those of the numerous portents which became visible twice. *Han Wên Ti* had a yellow dragon and a jade staff, *Wu Ti*, a yellow dragon, a unicorn, and joined trees, under *Hsüan Ti* a phoenix came five times, besides there were a unicorn, spiritual birds, sweet dew, wine springs, a yellow dragon, and a supernatural glamour. *P'ing Ti* could boast of a white and black pheasant, *Hsiao Ming Ti* had a unicorn, spiritual birds, sweet dew, wine springs, a white and a black pheasant, felicitous boletus, joined trees, and auspicious grain, signs as wonderful as those of *Hsüan Ti* <sup>3</sup>. Then there was a supernatural tripod and gold found p2.207 in a miraculous manner <sup>4</sup>. So numerous and unceasing were the omens corresponding to the emperor's accomplishments. In view of the illustrious virtue of the *Han* dynasty, these auspicious auguries were so numerous.

After the demise of *Hsiao Ming Ti* our present Lord <sup>5</sup> ascended the throne. In the time between the first and second year <sup>6</sup> of his reign, the blessings of his virtue were felt everywhere. In his third year, five felicitous boletuses grew in *Ling-ling* <sup>7</sup>; in his fourth year, sweet dew fell in five districts, and in his fifth year boletuses grew again. In the sixth year, yellow dragons made their appearance, altogether eight, big and small ones <sup>8</sup>. When in former ages dragons had shown themselves, they never came in pairs, and two boletuses never grew together. Sweet dew did not fall but in one place. At present, eight dragons came forth simultaneously, and of boletuses there grew as

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<sup>1</sup> On these various miracles compare p. 1.318 seq.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 2.311.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 2.196.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 2.213.

<sup>5</sup> *Chang Ti*.

<sup>6</sup> 76-77 A. D.

<sup>7</sup> In the prefecture of *Yung-chou*, *Hunan*.

<sup>8</sup> More details on these eight dragons are given on p. 2.216.

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many as eleven, and sweet dew poured down on five districts <sup>1</sup>. The excellence of the *Han* was so abundant and conspicuous, that auguries happened in such numbers. Which of the ancient emperors and rulers ever attained to this ?

The Literati urge that sovereigns, after having developed their virtue, receive the decree of Heaven. In the chapter 'Heaven's Original Gift' <sup>2</sup> of the *Lun-hêng* we have maintained that rulers are already endowed with the heavenly fate at their birth, but it is difficult to know life.

In case we assume two endowments, then wine and food given twice are more abundant than given once. As the scholars say, the Five Monarchs received the decree of Heaven but once each, only the *Han* received it twice, consequently the fate granted them must be richer than that of their predecessors. If the statement of the *Lun-hêng* be correct, and the spontaneous fluid be received at birth, then likewise the quantity received by the house of *Han* must be greater. Having been cut off <sup>3</sup>, they were again restored, and having died, they revived again. In the world, persons that after death come to life again, are usually looked upon as <sup>p2.208</sup> genii. The reign of the *Han* had been cut off and was renewed. The fact that *Kuang Wu Ti* regained the lost throne is something very remarkable.

*Wu Wang* defeating *Chou* availed himself of the savages of *Shu* <sup>4</sup>, who helped him in the battle of *Mu-yeh*. In the time of *Ch'êng Wang*, the *Yüeh-ch'ang* <sup>5</sup> presented a pheasant, and the *Japanese* brought odoriferous plants as tribute. When the power of *Yu* and *Li* <sup>6</sup> was shattered, the *Jung* and the *Ti* made an attack on the capital of *Chou*, and King *P'ing* proceeded eastward <sup>7</sup>, in order to avoid their aggressions, but under the *Han* dynasty the four kinds

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<sup>1</sup> All these portents are faithfully chronicled in the *Hou Han-shu* chap. 3, p. 6r. seq., only in the numbers and the years there are slight differences.

<sup>2</sup> P. 1.130.

<sup>3</sup> By the usurper *Wang Mang* who ousted the Former *Han* dynasty.

<sup>4</sup> The aborigines of *Ssechuan*.

<sup>5</sup> In p. 1.505 where the same statement is made.

<sup>6</sup> The two *Chou* emperors reigning from 878-828 B. C. (*Li*) and from 781 to 771 (*Yu*).

<sup>7</sup> He left the old capital *Hao-ching* in *Shensi*, and took up his residence farther eastward in *Lo-yi* (*Honan*).

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of savages <sup>1</sup> all appeared at court with tributes. In the first year of *Yuan-shih* <sup>2</sup> of the emperor *P'ing Ti*, the *Yüeh-ch'ang* appeared with interpreters for two languages <sup>3</sup> and offered one white pheasant and two black ones. Owing to the excellence of *Ch'êng Wang* and *Chou Kung's* assistance, they had presented one pheasant, but *P'ing Ti* received three.

Subsequently, in his fourth year, the *Ch'iang* tribes <sup>4</sup>, *Liang Ch'iao*, *Ch'iao Chung*, and *Liang Yuan* <sup>5</sup> and others outside the fortifications of *Chin-ch'êng* <sup>6</sup> offered their fish-ponds and their salt-land, and desired to become subjects of the *Han*. Afterwards, the *Han* even got possession of the stone house of *Hsi Wang Mu*, and established there the circuit of the 'Western Sea' <sup>7</sup>. In the *Chou* era <sup>p2.209</sup> the *Jung* and the *Ti* attacked the king, in the *Han* period they became subjects of the empire, and offered their valuable land. The State of *Hsi Wang Mu* lies outside the farthest limits of the world, yet the *Han* annexed it. Whose virtue is greater and whose territory larger, that of the *Han* or the *Chou* ?

At present the *Ai-lao* and the *Shan-shan* are willing to tender their allegiance and to revert to virtue. Owing to the constant disturbances of the *Hsiung-nu*, generals were sent to chastise them, who captured thousands and ten thousands of their cattle.

*Yü*, the *Hsia* emperor, went naked into the country of the people of *Wu*, and *T'ai Po*, gathering medicinal herbs, cut off his hair and tattooed his

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<sup>1</sup> The savages from the four quarters.

<sup>2</sup> In 1 A. D.

<sup>3</sup> They could not converse with the Chinese through one interpreter, finding nobody who could understand their language and Chinese, and therefore required one more to translate their speech into a language from which it could be rendered into Chinese.

<sup>4</sup> Tribes in the west of China.

<sup>5</sup> Of these tribes only the *Liang Yuan* are mentioned in the *Han-shu*, Biography of *Wang Mang* (*Pei-wên-yün-fu*).

<sup>6</sup> A place in *Kansu*.

<sup>7</sup> The geographical part of the *Sui-shu* (quoted in the *Pei-wên-yün-fu*) informs us that the circuit of the 'Western Sea' includes the old city of *Fu-sse*, wherever that may be, and embraces the kingdom of *T'u-yü-hun*. There is the stone grotto of *Hsi Wang Mu* and the salt lake *Kukunor*. [Chavannes, Les Tou Kiue Occidentaux](#) p. 280 likewise places *T'u-yü-hun* on the banks of this lake. The *Hsi-yü-chuan*, on the other side, states that *T'iao-chih* which I take to be Syria, is conterminous with *Hsi-hai*, and that there are big birds whose eggs are like jugs (ostriches). It is impossible that the *Han* carried their conquests so far.

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body <sup>1</sup>. With reference to the territory of *Yao* and *Shun*, *Wu* ranked as an uncultivated dependency. The *Yüeh* were counted among the Nine Savages <sup>2</sup>. They wore woollen cloth and wrapped a sash round their heads <sup>3</sup>. Now they are all Chinese subjects wearing long dresses and using shoes. The people of *Pa*, *Shu* <sup>4</sup>, *Yüeh-sui* <sup>5</sup>, *Yü-lin* <sup>6</sup>, *Annam*, *Liaotung*, and *Yo-lang*, in the *Chou* time, wore their hair long and in tufts with hair-pins, now they wear fur-caps. In the *Chou* era they required two interpreters, now they chant the *Shiking* and the *Shuking*.

The *Ch'un-ch'iu* puts forward the principle that [the relations of sovereigns ought not to harbour wicked designs, and that if they do they deserve death.] <sup>7</sup> The king of *Kuang-ling*, *Ching* was led astray by a mischievous magician, and *Ying*, king of *Ch'u*, was beguiled by a mean fellow. Several times their plans became manifest, but *Hsiao Ming Ti* pardoned them three times. The two kings then swallowed poison <sup>8</sup>. *Chou Kung* executing *Kuan* and *T'sai* went much farther than this.

p2.210 The relations of King *Ch'u* from his mother's side, the *Hsü* family, conspired with him. *Hsiao Ming Ti* said,

— The *Hsü* family is related to the king, that they should wish him honour and glory is but human.

Thus his holy heart forgave them and did not treat them according to law.

The marquis *Fu* of *Yin Chiang* posted a letter in the market and in the villages, slandering the holy government. Our Lord regretting his treachery, deprived him of his title and his territory. Hating a man one dislikes his adherents left behind. Yet the emperor raised the sons of the two kings and thus pacified *Ch'u* and *Kuang-ling*, and allowed the younger brother of

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.131, Notes 1 and 2.

<sup>2</sup> See [Analects IX, 13 \[Couvreur\]](#) and p. 1.406, Note 6.

<sup>3</sup> An expression not found elsewhere.

<sup>4</sup> Two ancient States in *Ssechuan*.

<sup>5</sup> The modern *Ch'u-hsiung-fu* in *Yünnan*.

<sup>6</sup> The present *Kuei-lin-fu*, *Kuangsi*.

<sup>7</sup> *Kung Yang*, Duke *Chuang* 32nd year.

<sup>8</sup> The king of *Kuang-ling* committed suicide in 67 A. D., the king of *Ch'u* in 70 A. D. See *Hou Han-shu* chap. 2, p. 13v. and p. 16v.

## Lun-hêng

*Chiang, Yuan* to continue the sacrifices to the *Yin* family <sup>1</sup>. The two kings were of imperial blood, and as feudatory princes, and kings, the equals of *Kuan* and *Ts'ai*. Yet the descendants of the latter were extinguished, whereas for the two kings their posterity was reinstated into all their honours, an act of clemency deserving the highest praise. *Yin Chiang* had another family name than the emperor, but out of respect for his ancestors the sacrifices were preserved.

The righteousness shown by raising *Wu Kêng* <sup>2</sup> and the kindness displayed in allowing *Lu Fu* to continue the sacrificial rites is not so very great, for the *Yin* <sup>3</sup> were emperors as well as the *Chou*, who levied troops to fight them, coveting the grandeur of the empire, and thus cut off the reign of *Ch'êng Tang*. This was not an act of justice worthy of a holy sovereign, nor in accordance with Heaven's command. *Yin Chiang*, on the other side, was but a subject, and the reign of the *Han* was firmly established. The extinction of the *Yin* family would not have been contrary to justice, and its preservation, nevertheless, was due to the boundless kindness of *Hsiao Ming Ti*. His favours showered down on his own kindred within and on other families without. How could the liberality of *Yao* or the generosity of *Shun* exceed this ?

The dealings of *Huan Tou* were such, that he was at home with glib-tongued people and employed the perverse. *Kung Kung* <sup>p2.211</sup> intrigued with him and was, therefore, recommended to *Yao*. San Miao was an artful and cunning man, or as some say it was a guilty country. *Kun* could not regulate the waters, being at his wits' end. All were personally guilty and could not shift their guilt upon the emperor. Therefore *Yao* and *Shun* banished them, and they died in regions devoid of vegetation <sup>4</sup>. All those who maliciously plotted against the emperor, who resenting the strong hand of government revolted, who having to investigate something did not speak the truth, who injured the State or killed its officers, and whose offences were much graver

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<sup>1</sup> The family of *Yin Chiang*.

<sup>2</sup> The son of the last emperor of the *Yin* dynasty, also called *Lu Fu*. See [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 207, Note 4](#). But here two different persons seem to be meant.

<sup>3</sup> The *Yin* dynasty.

<sup>4</sup> On the banishment of these four criminals see the *Shuking* Part II, Book I, 12 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 39](#)) [[Couvreur](#)] and [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 67](#).

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than those of the above-named four criminals, all those were by *Hsiao Ming Ti* most graciously merely sentenced to banishment into the border-lands. Our present Lord in his utmost kindness caused them to return to their native places. Since the dawn of civilisation no similar mercy was ever shown.

*Yen Tse* said that, the Hook Star being between the House and the Heart, the earth would be moved <sup>1</sup>. An earthquake is naturally determined by time and not the result of government, but the emperor was terror-stricken <sup>2</sup> and attributed the event to his administration all the same, minutely investigating its merits and good qualities, and inquiring into its defects and shortcomings. *Kao Tsung* stooped down <sup>3</sup>, and *Ch'êng* of *Chou* opened the trunk <sup>4</sup>. Thus far did their zeal lead them. When grain grows and the year is normal, even a common ruler, by merely following his fate, is able to establish a virtuous government, but when calamities and dangers abound, only the sagest and wisest are successful in their efforts to reform. Thus every ordinary doctor knows how to deal with a small disease, but none but a *Pien Ch'io* can cope with a virulent attack <sup>5</sup>.

In the first year of the *Chien-ch'u* period <sup>6</sup>, a pernicious current arrived, causing all the diseases of the year, which was much worse than a drought and a want of rain, when the cattle die and the people are driven from their homes. The emperor exhibited his <sup>p2.212</sup> virtue : the best and worthiest men were in office, and the five presidents of the board of work supported the State in its troubles, sending about grain and giving relief. Although those left starving were not a few, yet the empire admired the emperor's virtue, and in spite of all those difficulties it did not revolt. The people were destitute of grain, but replete with principles and virtue, their bodies were roving about on the roads, but their hearts, returning to their native villages. Therefore no traces of robbery were to be found on the highways, and in hidden and out-of-the-way places no acts of violence were committed. Danger was changed

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 2.160, Note 1.

<sup>2</sup> This seems to refer to an earthquake which happened in *Wang Ch'ung's* time.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 2.161.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 2.018.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. p. 2.134, Note 1.

<sup>6</sup> 76 A. D.



## Lun-hêng

into security, and distress into comfort. Which of the Five Emperors and Three Rulers would have been fit to bring about such a state of things ?

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59. Book XIX, Chap. III

*Yen-fu. Ominous Signs Investigated*

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p2.213 It was in the eleventh year of *Yung-p'ing* <sup>1</sup>. The inhabitants of the *Huan* marquisate <sup>2</sup> in *Lü-chiang* <sup>3</sup> were then in possession of a lake. There were two small boys in *Huan*, named *Ch'ên Chüo* and *Ch'ên T'ing*, both over ten years old, who together went angling on the banks of the lake. *Ch'ên T'ing* was the first to go. *Ch'ên Chüo* arrived later, and asked his comrade whether he had caught anything. Upon *Ch'ên T'ing* replying in the affirmative, he went home to fetch his rod and fishing-line. At a distance of 40 stops from *Ch'ên T'ing* he beheld a wine amphora of a bright yellow colour that had fallen into the water near the edge of the lake. *Ch'ên Chüo* mistook it for copper. He waded through the water to get hold of it, but it was so slippery and heavy, that he was unable to lift it. — *T'ing* seeing this from afar shouted,

— What have you got ?

*Chüo* rejoined,

— It is copper, but I cannot lift it.

*T'ing* came to his assistance and entered the water, but before he had seized the amphora it quite suddenly was transformed into a covenant vessel, sank into the deep through the movement, and again became invisible. But *T'ing* and *Chüo* who kept their eyes on it perceived something of bright yellow colour like so many coins, hundreds and thousands of pieces. They pushed and raised it, and with their hands full they went home and told their families.

The father of *Ch'ên Chüo* was a retired official of the State whose style was *Chün Hsien*. He inquired, full of amazement, where he had found this, and *Chüo* gave a description. 'It is gold', quoth *Chün Hsien* and forthwith,

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<sup>1</sup> 68 A. D.

<sup>2</sup> The *Huan* district corresponding to the prefecture of *An-ch'ing*, the capital of the province of *Anhui*.

<sup>3</sup> Now *Lü-chou-fu*, 120 Li west of the present *Lü-chiang-hsien*.

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along with *Chüo*, he hastened to the place of discovery, where there was still much left in the water. He himself entered the water and seized it. When the neighbours of *Chüo* and *T'ing* had heard the news, there was a general rush, and they together obtained upwards of ten pounds. *Chün Hsien* personally acquainted a minister who advised the prefect, and the prefect <sup>p2.214</sup> sent his officers to receive the gold and instructed his private official *Ch'êng Kung* to take it over and present it to the throne, stating how he had got the gold. An imperial edict was issued to the effect that, if it was, as stated in the memorial, all was right, but if it was not, then capital punishment would be meted out. With this edict *Ch'êng Kung* returned to the prefect, who with his subordinates took cognisance of it. They had the impression that the emperor doubted the veracity and believed that something had been concealed and that the report had been unduly embellished. For this reason the prefect sent in a new report, stating that the gold had been discovered exactly as reported previously. Therewith the matter closed.

In the 12th year, *Chün Hsien* and his associates addressed the emperor stating how they had found the gold in the water of the lake, that the chief of the circuit had presented it to the throne, and that as yet no compensation had been received. In the imperial rescript to the authorities of *Lü-chiang* it seemed as if His Majesty was not willing to grant *Chün Hsien* and his associates the price of the gold, for the prefect had reported that the gold found by *Chün Hsien* and others came from a public lake, and not from the private waters of these persons. Consequently no compensation was given. In the 12th year, however, an edict appeared commanding the payment of the value of the gold to *Chün Hsien* and the others according to the actual market price of gold <sup>1</sup>.

The auspicious portents of the *Han* were manifold. The discovery of gold being very strange, it was put on record. The precious things, gold and jewels are divine, therefore their appearance is something extraordinary <sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> This *soi-disant* lucky augury is shortly mentioned in the *Hou Han shu* chap. 2, p. 14r. where the lake in which the gold was found is called *Ch'ao-hu*, a lake in *Ho-fei-hsien* (*Anhui*) now famous for its gold-fish. As further portents which appeared in the same year are enumerated : a unicorn, a white pheasant, a wine spring, and auspicious grain.

<sup>2</sup> Extraordinary only for persons prejudiced and desirous to discover omens at all costs.

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Something of a golden colour first appeared in the shape of a wine amphora and afterwards became a covenant vessel and, being moved, sank into the deep. Was not this a miracle ? <sup>1</sup>

p2.215 When the *Hsia* dynasty was flourishing distant countries made pictures of their produce, and the nine tribes offered gold as tribute. *Yü* regarded it as propitious and cast it into tripods. The Nine Tripods of the *Chou* <sup>2</sup> were the gold of these distant countries. No matter whether it was brought by people as tribute or whether it issued spontaneously from the water, it was the same after all and in both cases the upshot of conspicuous virtue and an omen for a sage emperor.

A golden and peerless age is accompanied with gold and gems. In the time of *Wên Ti* there appeared a gem flail. Gold and gems are the choicest omens. The sound of gold and the colour of gems are most appreciated by mankind.

In the *Yung-ch'ang* circuit <sup>3</sup> there was gold as well. The smallest lumps were as big as a grain of millet. In the sand of the banks of rivers people found five *shu* <sup>4</sup> of gold every day. Its colour was a uniform yellow. Earth produces gold, and the colour of earth is yellow. The ruling element of the *Han* dynasty is earth, which accounts for the production of gold <sup>5</sup>. Of metal there are three kinds <sup>6</sup>.

When yellow is continually seen it becomes a lucky augury. The old man of the *Ch'i* bridge transmitted to *Chang Liang* <sup>7</sup> a book which turned into a

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<sup>1</sup> No. The event was very simple and harmless and only construed into a miracle. Small boys, whose testimony is not worth much, saw some vessel in the water, which they first took for a wine amphora, then for something else. When they stirred up the water it disappeared for some time, but at last they succeeded in raising it.

<sup>2</sup> The history of these tripods, the insignia of imperial power, is related in p. 1.506 seq. *Wang Ch'ung* here assumes that they were made of gold, the general opinion is that they were made of bronze or copper.

<sup>3</sup> In *Talifu, Yünnan*.

<sup>4</sup> The twenty-fourth part of a Tael or a 1/24 ounce. In many Chinese rivers gold is found, but in such small quantities as mentioned here, so that the washing does not pay.

<sup>5</sup> It is needless to say that under all the other dynasties gold was found as well.

<sup>6</sup> The yellow metal = gold, the white metal = silver, and the red metal = copper. Cf. *Shuking, Yükung* (*Legge, Classics* Vol. III, Part I, p. 110, Note 43).

<sup>7</sup> See p. 1.095 and 1.368.

## Lun-hêng

yellow stone. This essence of the yellow stone became a charm. Stones belong to the same category as gold, their substance is different, but their colour the same, both are presages of earth.

In the third year of *Chien-ch'u* <sup>1</sup>, suddenly five stalks of boletus grew in the soil of the house of a woman from *Ch'üan-ling* in *Ling-ling* <sup>2</sup> of the name of *Fu Ning*. The longest measured a foot and <sub>p2.216</sub> 4 to 5 inches, the shortest 7 to 8 inches. Stalks and leaves were of a purple colour ; it was, in fact, the purple boletus. The prefect *Shên Fêng* deputed his private officer *Yen Shêng* to present these plants to the emperor, who was exceedingly pleased and gave him money, dresses, and food in return. He then summoned all the presidents, ministers, governors, *shang-chi* <sup>3</sup>, officers, and people and made known the boletus to the empire. When the empire heard the news, officialdom and citizens rejoiced, well knowing that, the excellence of the *Han* being so perfect and universally acknowledged, felicitous omens were sure to happen.

In the fourth year, sweet dew fell in the five districts of *Ch'üan-ling*, *Ling-ling*, *T'ao-yang* <sup>4</sup>, *Shih-an* <sup>5</sup>, and *Lêng-tao* <sup>6</sup> soaking all the leaves of the elm, cypress, cherry, and plum trees, which bending under its weight, caused it to trickle down. The people drank it and found that it tasted like sweets and honey.

In the fifth year, boletus — viz. six — grew again on the house of a man of *Ch'üan-ling*, *Chou Fu*. In colour and shape they resembled those of the third year. Together with the former ones there were eleven in all <sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> In 78 A. D.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 2.207, Note 4. *Ch'üan-ling* lies north of the modern *Ling-Ling-hsien* in *Hunan*. The *Hou Han shu* chap. 3, p. 6r. speaks only of *Ling-ling*, whence in the 3rd year of the emperor *Chang Ti's* reign purple boletus was sent as a present.

<sup>3</sup> These seem to have been comptrollers or revenue officers.

<sup>4</sup> Northwest of the present *Hsiang-yuan-hsien* in *Kuangsi*. The *Hou Han shu loc. cit.* mentions only these three places.

<sup>5</sup> In *Kuei-lin-fu*, *Kuangsi*.

<sup>6</sup> Under the *Han* dynasty a part of the *Ling-ling* circuit in *Hunan*.

<sup>7</sup> The *Hou Han shu loc. cit.* merely reports that in the 5th year of the emperor (80 A. D.) purple boletus was sent from *Ling-ling*.

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Where the river *Hsiang* <sup>1</sup> is 7 Li distant from the city of *Ch'üan-ling* there are masses of rocks above the river bearing the name of *Yen-shih* mountain. The mountain approaches the river from both sides, narrowing its passage. Under a protruding cliff the water disappears and forms an unfathomable abyss. There two yellow dragons put in an appearance. They had a length of over 16 feet <sup>2</sup> and were bigger than horses. To those who looked sharply at them they appeared like those dragons painted in pictures. The people of *Yen-shih-ch'iu* all saw them at a distance of some ten steps. They further perceived some animals shaped like colts, bigger and smaller ones, six altogether. They issued from the water and roamed about and played on the shore, being, no doubt, <sup>p2.217</sup> the children of the two dragons. Along with these they were eight in all. After they had stayed out of the water for some time, they again returned to it <sup>3</sup>.

Under the reign of *Hsüan Ti*, a phoenix alighted on the city of *P'êng* <sup>4</sup>, which gave notice of it. *Hsüan Ti* summoned the *shih-chung* <sup>5</sup> *Sung Wêng Yi* who said,

— A phoenix comes down on the capital and alights in the precincts of the son of Heaven. This phoenix having alighted far away in *P'êng-ch'êng* cannot be admitted <sup>6</sup>, for one must not have dealings with second-class birds.

The emperor replied,

— At present the empire forms one family, and there is no difference whether the phoenix alights in *P'êng-ch'êng* or in the

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<sup>1</sup> The main river of the province of *Hunan* which falls into the *Tungting* Lake.

<sup>2</sup> All the editions here write 160 feet. I suppose that 尺 should be written, for else the sequel that the dragons were bigger than horses would give no sense.

<sup>3</sup> The *Hou Han shu* contents itself with the short statement that eight yellow dragons were seen in *Ch'üan-ling*, A commentator adds that the two big dragons playing in the *Hsiang* were of the size of horses and had horns, and that the six young ones were as big as colts, but hornless.

<sup>4</sup> A city in *Hsü-chou-fu*, *Kiangsu*. Cf. p. 1.507.

<sup>5</sup> On this function see [Chavannes, \*Mém. Hist.\* Vol. II, p. 526.](#)

<sup>6</sup> *I. e.*, as a genuine phoenix, and a lucky omen.

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capital <sup>1</sup>. Why do you say that one must have nothing to do with second-class birds ?

And he called upon his attendants who were versed in the Classics to argue the point with *Sung Wêng Yi*. The latter, pressed very hard, took off his cap, made obeisance and excused himself.

The time of *Hsüan Ti* does not differ from the present, and the alighting of the phoenix, and the appearance of the yellow dragons is similar. The distance of *P'êng-ch'êng* and *Ling-ling* is the same <sup>2</sup>, for, as regards the extension of the emperor's mansions, the four frontiers of the empire form the boundary lines within which *Ling-ling* is situated, so that it even may be considered near <sup>3</sup>.

*Kung-Sun Ch'ên* of *Lu* declared, in the time of *Hsiao Wên Ti*, that, the ruling element of the *Han* being earth, a yellow dragon should appear as corresponding omen. Subsequently, it was seen <sup>4</sup> in *Ch'êng-chi* <sup>5</sup> whose distance from the capital equalled that of *Ling-ling*. Under the régime of *Hsiao Wu Ti* as well as of *Hsiao Hsüan Ti* dragons made their appearance, and four times yellow dragons become visible in this place, which proves that earth <sup>p2.218</sup> was indeed the element of the *Han* dynasty <sup>6</sup>. *Chia Yi* was the first who in the court of *Wên Ti* proposed that as the colour of the *Han* yellow should be adopted, and that they should choose five as their number. From this circumstance that *Chia Yi*, an official of extensive erudition, declared himself in favour of the yellow colour and of number five <sup>7</sup>, it is evident that earth is the element of the *Han* <sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> In *Hsüan Ti's* time, 73-49 B. C. the capital was *Chang-an* in *Shensi*.

<sup>2</sup> The distance from the capital.

<sup>3</sup> The whole empire is, as it were, the emperor's home, wherefore it is unnecessary to calculate the distance of cities from the capital.

<sup>4</sup> In 165 B. C. For further details on *Kung-Sun Ch'ên* cf. [Chavannes, \*Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 479.\*](#)

<sup>5</sup> 30 Li north from *Ch'in-an-hsien* in the province of *Kansu*.

<sup>6</sup> The colour of earth, according to Chinese ideas, is yellow like that of the yellow dragons which are supposed to have indicated it.

<sup>7</sup> Earth being the fifth of the Five Elements in the series of the *Shuking* : water, fire, metal, wood, earth, its number is five.

<sup>8</sup> The colour of the *Hsia* dynasty was black. In war they used black horses and for sacrifices black victims. The *Yin* dynasty adopted white as its colour, and the *Chou*

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Boletus grows in earth. The fluid of earth being congenial, the boletus grows in it. Earth produces cereals ; cereals are sweet, therefore sweet dew descended <sup>1</sup>.

In former ages, dragons were not seen in pairs, only when the *Hsia* dynasty was at its height two dragons appeared in the court <sup>2</sup>. Since the two dragons which came forth in the present time agree with those of the *Hsia* dynasty in number, the present government must also be conformable to that of the *Hsia*.

When, formerly, dragons came out, very seldom their children were seen. Now six young dragons came out simultaneously, roaming about and playing like the six children of Heaven and Earth <sup>3</sup>, a sign of a numerous progeny.

In the era of *Yao* and *Shun* all the animals danced, at present the eight dragons likewise played and gambolled for a long while. Boletus is eaten by immortals, in order to prolong their lives. In former ages only one or two grew, now there are altogether eleven pieces indicating a longer duration of life ; and grain as high as a fir-tree was produced. When formerly sweet dew came down, it did so but in one place, now it poured down in five districts conformably to the number of earth, the power of which prevails everywhere.

The frequent occurrence of imperial omens is not in vain ; they always are illustrative of something, and correspond to some p2.219 virtue. *Confucius* said,

[— The knowing are cheerful, and the benevolent live long.] <sup>4</sup>

Our emperor is a holy man, consequently the boletus pointed to long life. If yellow things be produced they have the colour of earth, and its place is the centre <sup>5</sup>. Therefore did *Hsien Yuan* <sup>1</sup>, whose virtue was excellent, use yellow

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dynasty red. See [Liki, Legge Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 125 \[Couvreur\]](#). The *Ch'in* dynasty again selected black ([Chavannes Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 130](#)). The colour of the present *Manchu* dynasty is yellow again.

<sup>1</sup> Again the shallow symbolism. Sweetness is the taste corresponding to earth.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 2.163.

<sup>3</sup> The names of the first and the last of the Eight Diagrams from which the other six, the children, were evolved.

<sup>4</sup> [Analects VI, 21 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>5</sup> Earth is placed in the centre, whereas the four other elements correspond to the four



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as his epithet. Our emperor is so kind and merciful, that his virtue approaches that of the 'Yellow Emperor', whence the colour of the dragons was yellow to show the identity of their virtue.

The east is called benevolent, and the dragon is the animal of the eastern region <sup>2</sup>. The emperor being a sage, benevolent omens appeared. Benevolence implies a taste for feeding and nursing. The emperor in his benevolence and kind-heartedness loved the black-haired people, therefore the sweet dew poured down <sup>3</sup> and dragons, that like to conceal themselves, publicly appeared, attracted from their rocks and caverns by the emperor's sagehood.

When portents appear they usually follow an excellent man, and lucky auguries always adhere to some fortunate person. The principle of Heaven being spontaneity, there must be some coincidence. The omens obtained by a holy sovereign surpass those of common worthies. The ruler being enlightened, and his minister judicious, everything prospers. When *Wên Ti* and *Wu Ti* received their decree, their strength was like that of the Dukes of *Chou* and *Shao*.

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cardinal points.

<sup>1</sup> Personal name of the 'Yellow Emperor' *Huang Ti*.

<sup>2</sup> The green dragon is the animal of the East, the scarlet bird that of the South, the white tiger that of the West, and the black tortoise that of the North.

<sup>3</sup> There is a supposed correspondence between the centre, earth, yellow, sweet, the heart, and *Huang Ti*. See Appendix to *Couvreur's* Dictionary.

## 60. Book XX, Chap. I

### *Hsü-sung*. The Necessity of Eulogies

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p2.220 The rulers and sovereigns of antiquity having accomplished memorable deeds, wanted some able pen to eulogise and chronicle their achievements. Thus their deeds were made public, and all ages heard of them. If we ask the commentators of the *Shuking* who said the words following the passage ['He was reverential, intelligent, accomplished, and thoughtful'] <sup>1</sup>, they will reply : the editor, and who is the editor ? *Confucius*. Consequently the able writer is *Confucius* <sup>2</sup>. [It was after his return from *Wei* to *Lu* <sup>3</sup> that he arranged the Odes, when the festive songs and panegyrics got their places.] <sup>4</sup> His great literary activity falls in this time.

Some maintain concerning the *Shang-shu* (*Shuking*) that *shang* means superior <sup>5</sup> : — what the superiors have done is written down by the inferiors. And who are these inferiors ? The officers. Ergo the officers commit to writing the actions of the superiors.

If we inquire of the scholars why rites are said to be instituted and songs to be composed, their reply will probably be that the rites are instituted by the superiors and therefore called institutions, whereas songs being composed by the inferiors are, on that account, termed compositions. When the empire enjoys perfect peace, panegyrics and tunes are composed. At present there is universal peace throughout the empire ; might panegyrics,

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the *Shuking*, *Yao-tien 1* ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 15](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> The words following the above passage are generally regarded as forming part of the original merely edited by *Confucius*. But we find nearly the same words [...] in the Preface to the *Shuking* which is attributed to *Confucius*.

<sup>3</sup> In 483 B. C. when *Confucius* was already 69 years of age.

<sup>4</sup> Quotation from the [Analects IX, 14](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>5</sup> Various explanations of the term *shang* in *Shang-shu* have been proposed by Chinese critics. It is said to mean the 'highest' *i. e.*, the most venerable book or the book of the 'highest antiquity' (cf. *Legge, loc. cit.* Note). *Wang Ch'ung* here takes it to signify the book treating of sovereigns.

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odes, songs, and tunes be composed ? The scholiasts would not know it and deserve to be called pedants.

In view of the inscription on the tripod of *K'ung K'ui*<sup>1</sup> of *Wei* the officers of *Chou* admonished one another, and because the emperor *Hsiao Hsüan Ti* praised the prefect of *Ying-ch'uan*<sup>2</sup>, *Huang Pa*<sup>3</sup> for his excellent service and bestowed a hundred pounds of gold on him, the *Han* officers exerted themselves in the administration. Thus a ruler of men praises his officers, and the officers should extol their sovereign. That is in accordance with propriety.

When under *Shun* the empire was at peace, *K'üei*<sup>4</sup> sang the virtue of *Shun*. The kindness of King *Hsüan*<sup>5</sup> was so perfect, that the *Shiking* extols his doings. Lord *Shao*<sup>6</sup> performed his duties in such a way, that in *Chou* they sang the song on the sweet-pear tree<sup>7</sup>. Thus there are 31 eulogies of *Chou*, 5 of *Yin*, and 4 of *Lu*, 40 in all in which the poets sing the praises of exalted persons<sup>8</sup>. Whence it is plain that subjects should eulogise their sovereigns.

The scholars contend that the *Han* have no sage emperors, and that their administration has not brought about universal peace. In our chapter entitled 'Praise of the *Han* Dynasty'<sup>9</sup> we have shown that the *Han* have holy emperors, and that their government has led to perfect peace, and in the chapter 'Further Remarks on the State'<sup>10</sup> we have investigated into the excellence of the *Han* and found out that it is extraordinary and far surpassing

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<sup>1</sup> A noble of the *Wei* State, 5th cent. B. C., who took a leading part in a revolution in *Wei*, which cost *Tse Lu* his life. The tripod with the inscription was conferred upon him by the duke. The encomiastic inscription, eulogising the ancestors of the recipient, is given in the *Liki*, *Chi-t'ung* p. 66r. ([Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVIII, p. 252](#)) [[Couvreur](#), § 28].

<sup>2</sup> A circuit in *Anhui*.

<sup>3</sup> *Huang Pa* was first thrown into prison by the emperor, but then re-instated and highly honoured. He died in B. C. 51. See *Giles, Bibl. Dict.* No. 865.

<sup>4</sup> A minister of *Shun* and director of State music. Cf. p. 2.257.

<sup>5</sup> 827-782 B. C.

<sup>6</sup> The duke of *Shao*, *Wu Wang's* brother.

<sup>7</sup> *Shiking*, Part I, Book II, Ode 5 ([Legge, Classics Vol. IV, Part I, p. 26](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>8</sup> These 40 odes form Part IV of the *Shiking* [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)]. The term [] eulogy is given a different meaning by modern commentators viz. 'songs for the ancestral temple' or 'sacrificial odes'. See *Legge, Shiking* Part II, p. 569, Notes.

<sup>9</sup> Chap. 57.

<sup>10</sup> Chap. 58.

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that of all the other dynasties.

To illustrate virtue, and praise merits, and to extol and panegyriserulers, is nothing more than the eulogistic allusions of the *Shiking* and a duty of noble officers. It cannot be accounted virtue, should somebody forget his own family and look to other people's houses, or despise his own father, and speak in high terms p2.222 of the old gentlemen of strangers. The *Han* are the family now embracing the whole world, and compared to the present sovereign, people and officers, the former emperors are like the old gentlemen. To know the virtue of a monarch and praise his excellence, to see the greatness of a State and glorify its deserts is much better than to doubt and suspect them of incapacity.

[*Confucius* said,

— Great indeed was *Yao* as a sovereign ; it is only Heaven that is grand, and only *Yao* corresponded to it. The people could find no name for it. ] <sup>1</sup>

Some one of fifty was beating clods of earth on the road. An observer remarked,

— Grand indeed is the virtue of *Yao* !

The man who was playing with earth replied,

— At sunrise I begin my work, and at sunset I take my rest. I dig a well to drink, and labour my field to eat. What sort of energy does *Yao* display ? <sup>2</sup>

*Confucius* by saying 'Great indeed was the virtue of *Yao*' showed that he knew him. To be coeval with a sage and not to know the holy ruler, is like being blind and incapable of distinguishing between green and yellow, and to know such a holy ruler, but not to praise him, is like being dumb and unfit to discourse on right and wrong.

The present blind and dumb literati are no more gifted than the people of

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects VIII, 19 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 2.187. *Legge* in his Prolegomena to the *Shiking* p. 13 adduces the words of the peasant as the 'song of the peasants in the time of *Yao*'.

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*T'ang* beating the earth. *Confucius* and the man of *T'ang* who spoke of *Yao's* greatness were both aware of his virtue. It was paramount, and by inquiring how *Yao's* capacity was, the peasant beating the earth proved his ignorance of his virtue <sup>1</sup> ?

When at night a candle is lifted the space illuminated by its light may be measured, but when the sun shines over the world the places near and far, big and small reached by its rays are hard to be limited. Navigating on the *Huai* and the *Chi* <sup>2</sup>, all people know their windings and turnings, but on the eastern Sea they cannot make out north and south. The square-mensuration of very great planes offers many difficulties, and great depths are hard to be fathomed by wading through with tucked-up clothes. The excellence of the *Han* is as extensive as the sunlight reaching p2.223 beyond the ocean. The knowing know it, whereas the unintelligent have no idea of their grandeur.

The *Han* writers mostly go back as far as the *Yin* and *Chou* dynasties, and the various scholars working together all treat of other matters and have not a word of praise for the *Han* dynasty, which the *Lun-hêng* has. The State eulogies in the *Shiking* are called eulogies of *Chou* ; they bear a resemblance to the *Han* eulogies offered by *Tu Fu* and *Pan Ku* <sup>3</sup>.

Under the reign of *Hsüan Ti* portraits were painted of the entire body of *Han* officers. If some were left out, their descendants, later on, felt abashed that their ancestors had not been found worthy to be painted. A eulogy is much more than a simple picture. If after many generations people conversant with classical literature will find there nothing in praise of the *Han* dynasty, later ages must wonder at this omission. Formerly, officers well versed in the Classics were in the habit of recording the glorious feats of their rulers on bamboo and silk and of engraving encomiastic inscriptions regarding their illustrious virtue on tripods. Contemporaries of literary abilities would exert themselves on this behalf. If the fame of the *Han* falls short of that of

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<sup>1</sup> I think that the question of the peasant has not this purport. He only means to say that he does not care for *Yao* in the least. In the 'song of the peasants' this idea is more clearly brought out [ ].

<sup>2</sup> Rivers in *Honan* and *Shantung*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 2.198.

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the Six Reigns, it is owing to the incompetence of those writers.

The earth has elevations and depressions, whence there are high and low places. But by means of picks and spades one may level the ground. All generations reading the Classics dealing merely with the Five Emperors and the Three Rulers, no notice being taken of the events of the *Han* era, must imagine that these sovereigns are far superior to those of the *Han* dynasty. But one may use arguments as picks and spades and, by diminishing the grandeur of the Five Emperors and Three Rulers, fill up the baseness of the house of *Han*, which is more than levelling, for the *Han* thus will become exalted and those rulers abased.

Ponds and lakes there are of various kinds and of different sites, and their depths may be measured by immersing poles. The *Han* have swayed the empire no less than all the other dynasties, and by a thorough investigation their respective merits and demerits may be ascertained. In default of long poles the depths cannot be measured, and without the arguments of the *Lun-hêng* we do not learn to know the real state of these dynasties. If the *Han*, being the last of all these dynasties, be contrasted <sup>p2.224</sup> with their predecessors in point of virtue, they can be compare ponds and lakes, but unless there be a clever writer, it is inevitable that a mediocre scribbler takes his place who admires antiquity and disparages the present, and we may expect that the *Han* will not barely not come up to the other dynasties, but be ranked below them.

A posthumous title is a trace left by a man's actions. Good titles are *Ch'êng* and *Hsüan*, bad ones, *Ling* and *Li* <sup>1</sup>. *Ch'êng T'ang* met with a drought and King *Hsüan* of *Chou* likewise, yet *Ch'êng T'ang* got the epithet *Ch'êng* and King *Hsüan* was called *Hsüan* <sup>2</sup>. These pernicious calamities could not affect their government, and the officials in appending the posthumous designations did not depart from truth. From this point of view *Yao* is also a good title <sup>3</sup>. In his time there was also the Great Flood, and the people were not at ease, still

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<sup>1</sup> On posthumous titles see p. 1.162, 1.208.

<sup>2</sup> [] means 'to expand, to propagate' scl. civilisation, consequently *Hsüan-wang* is the Civilising King.

<sup>3</sup> [] signifies 'high, eminent, lofty'.

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his case having been thoroughly examined, he was given the name of Yao. Even the one word of a posthumous title should be illustrative of its bearer, how much more ought this to be required of discourses containing many hundred words, or of eulogies numbering many thousands. Ships and carts carry people, but how can they equal the number of pedestrians, and how can simple carts and unadorned ships compete with those covered with polish and beautifully painted ? Excellent writers are the polish and adornments of the State-ship and the State-cart <sup>1</sup>.

Without strong husbandmen the crops do not grow, and unless a State possess vigorous writers its virtual remain hidden and are not made public. The ever-flowing virtue of the *Han* is lost among the many generations, because the vigorous writers among the literati do not record it. It is true that from *Kao Tsu* downward the books written discuss this subject :

*Sse-Ma Hsiang-Ju* of the *Han* time published a work on the hill sacrifice, but this book is very short and incomplete. *Sse-Ma Ch'ien* wrote on the time from *Huang Ti* till *Hsiao Wu Ti* <sup>2</sup>, *Yang Tse Yün* described the period from *Hsüan Ti* to *Ai Ti* and *P'ing Ti* <sup>3</sup>, p2.225 *Ch'ên P'ing Chung* wrote on *Kuang Wu Ti*, and *Pan Ku* composed a eulogy on *Hsiao Ming Ti*. The merits and achievements of the house of *Han* may well be learned therefrom. Our reigning Lord, after his accession, has not yet found a panegyrist, therefore the author of the *Lun-hêng* has done his best for this purpose, whence originated the chapters : Equality of the Ages, Praise of the *Han* Dynasty, Further Remarks on the State, and Ominous Signs Investigated <sup>4</sup>.

Without clouds and rain, a dragon cannot soar to heaven. Great writers are the clouds and the rain of a State ; they carry in their records the virtue of the State, and transmit its fame, that it is still illustrious after numberless generations. Does this greatness not rise even higher than the sky ?

The earth of the city-wall is nothing but common soil which men have

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<sup>1</sup> The people are the pedestrians, the rulers, those riding in the State-cart, and their panegyrists are compared to the adornments of this cart.

<sup>2</sup> In the *Shi-chi*.

<sup>3</sup> 73 B. C.- 1 A. D. The work alluded to was perhaps the *Yang Hsiung fu shih êrh p'ien* mentioned in the Catalogue of the *Han-chu* chap. 30, p. 32v.

<sup>4</sup> Chap. 56 and 57-59.

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used their strength to ram down and raise near the moat. The great achievements of a State are loftier than a city-wall, and the strength of the gentlemen of the pen is greater than that of the rammers.

The brilliant virtue and the success of a holy ruler should, at all events, be praised and put on record ; how can the current of these records suddenly be drained and exhausted ?

When somebody has won laurels, either those who extol him hit the truth, or they would fain praise him, but cannot express themselves, or what they say is bad, and they are reluctant to speak their mind freely. Which of these three classes of people deserves the prize ? The epoch of the Five Emperors and the Three Rulers was particularly prosperous in this respect. During the time of *Hsiao Ming Ti*, plenty of lucky presages appeared together, and there was no lack of officers and functionaries, but of all encomiasts of the State only men like *Pan Ku* may be said to have praised it properly. Should we not rather use high-flown panegyrics, to make the virtue of the *Han* illustrious among all generations, that its emperors shine like sun and moon, than be ineloquent or speak badly and improperly ? <sup>1</sup>

When *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* travelled to the south-east and ascended Mount *Kuei-chi*, *Li Sse* composed a laudatory stone-inscription recording the excellent deeds of the emperor, and when the latter reached *Lang-yeh* he did the same <sup>2</sup>. *Ch'in* was a depraved State, but p2.226 in these stone-inscriptions the era was so embellished, that the readers must have taken it for the age of *Yao* and *Shun*, whence the necessity of eulogies becomes obvious. At present, we are not short of talents like *Li Sse* who might take part in the ascent of Mount *Kuei-chi* and pass over the terraces of *Lang-yeh*.

When musicians play beautiful airs on the guitar, and the audience does not applaud, the musicians become apathetic and lose their enthusiasm, because exquisite music is very difficult to play, and yet the spectators do not appreciate it. When a wise State keeps an excellent administration, and

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<sup>1</sup> We do not appreciate panegyrists and their bombastic and coloured descriptions, but want true historians.

<sup>2</sup> See the reproductions and translations of *Ch'in* inscriptions in [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 544 seq.](#)



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officialdom withholds its praise, but hopes to benefit by it, it will not be carried on. Now we possess many recipe books written on bamboo and silk which do not give the name of the inventor by whom the recipes were issued. The public does not use and overlooks them. If, however, it is stated in the headings that a recipe is that of Mr. So-and-so, and that it has already been tested, then those willing to try it will compete in copying the recipes and carving them in wood, and will regard them as a hidden treasure.

In the capital memorials are written, and in the provinces reports are drafted in order to recommend officials, praising them for their skill and their abilities. The publication of these memorials and reports induces the officials to virtue and honesty, because in the memorials their conduct is divulged, and through the reports their talents are exhibited. If the virtue of the State, in spite of its gloriousness, does not meet with applause, so that the holy State of the Great *Han* enjoys but scanty fame, the fault lies with the common scholars who do not make correct statements.

In ancient and modern times there has been no want of holy emperors, and the corresponding auspicious signs have also been very numerous. These signs must not, of necessity, be identical with former ones, and sometimes they had already appeared, but people ignored it. The ordinary scholars explaining omens are prone to magnify antiquity and detract from the present, and in speaking of omens they over-estimate the past and depreciate later ages. This should be changed. and the *Han* no more be slighted. When the *Han* have some real good things, those scholars do not mention them, conversely, they fervently believe in every imaginary excellent quality of antiquity. They trust in falsehoods, provided they be old and far away, and they despise truth, in case it be near and modern. This is the reason why the three chapters on p2.227 Exaggerations and the nine on Falsehoods <sup>1</sup> were written and those 'How to become a Sage' and on 'True Sagehood' <sup>2</sup> originated.

The Literati in their praise of the sages overshoot the mark, and when they contrast them with those of the *Han*, the latter do not come up with

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<sup>1</sup> Books IV-VIII of the *Lun-hêng* (Chinese text).

<sup>2</sup> Both chapters are lost.

## Lun-hêng

them, not because they do not equal them, but in consequence of the statements of the Literati which make it impossible. As a matter of fact, the *Han* are difficult to be equalled, under whom the crops ripen and the years pass in peace, owing to the influence of holy emperors thus successful in their efforts.

The chapter 'Periods of Government' <sup>1</sup> is an effusion for the *Han*. Order has its fixed time, and disorder has its period. To be able to change disorder into order, is excellent, and only an excellent man possesses this faculty. In the first year of *Chien-ch'u* <sup>2</sup>, a pernicious air arrived just at the time of a sage. The emperor through his virtue succeeded in averting the calamity <sup>3</sup>. Therefore in the chapters 'On the Rain Sacrifice' and 'Gentle Drums' <sup>4</sup> the sudden changes referred to are brought about by the good auguries of the *Han* dynasty.

Calamitous changes sometimes take place during the age of a sage, there being either a drought or an inundation. These calamities have been discussed with reference to the *Han*. The *Ch'un-ch'iu* period left a method for them which the *Lun-hêng* has explained.

If a person be turned from the gate to the court and listen to what is spoken in the hall and the inner rooms, he will miss nine words out of ten. If, however, he ascend the hall and peep into the rooms, he will not lose one word out of a hundred. The author of the *Lun-hêng* is living in an old desolate place at a greater distance (from the capital) than that between the gate and the courtyard <sup>5</sup>. In a quarter of an hour the sun traverses several thousand Li, yet people do not consider it far by reason of the great distance. When, on the fifteenth, there is much rain during the night, the light of the moon is not extinguished, but its splendour is not seen, being overshadowed. The holy emperor sheds the light of the sun and moon, but since he lives in the central province, and is concealed within a hundred Li, the reports about him

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<sup>1</sup> Chap. 53.

<sup>2</sup> 76 A. D.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 2.211.

<sup>4</sup> Chap. 45 and 46.

<sup>5</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* probably refers to some place in *Chekiang* province of which he was a native.

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that transpire and are heard afar, are not reliable. His glorious appearance not being well known, it is hard to discourse on it. Only when imperial edicts are issued, or a *chi-li*<sup>1</sup> arrives, one learns something about his holy government. These are the reasons why the difference between the encomiums of his merits and reality are mountain high, and the eulogies on his excellence lack profusion and elegance. Only those at the foot of the throne who walk in the steps of *Pan Ku* and *Chia Yi*, can properly chaunt the praise of the emperor's attainments without omitting any smaller detail.

*Wu Wang* erected a tumulus for *Pi Kan*, and *Confucius* illustrated the three ways of amassing merit. The excellence of the great *Han* dynasty is not merely like that of *Pi Kan* or that acquired in the three ways. When on a highway a sign-post indicating the State is put up under which the road passes, all those looking at this post know their way exactly. The virtue of the *Han* is conspicuous, but nothing has as yet been said equivalent to such a sign-post, therefore their extensive virtue does not yet shed its lustre on the ages.

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<sup>1</sup> This seems to have been an official charged with the annual revision of the archives.

## 61. Book XX, Chap. II

### *Yi-wên*. Lost Texts

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p2.272 The emperor *Hsiao Wu Ti* conferred upon his younger brother the title of Prince *Kung* of *Lu*. Prince *Kung*, while demolishing the house of *Confucius*, for the purpose of building a palace, discovered there a *Shuking* in a hundred chapters, a *Li(ki)* in three hundred, a *Ch'un-ch'iu* in thirty <sup>1</sup>, and a *Lun-yü* in twenty-one. When the wall was opened sounds of singing and guitar-playing were heard. The prince alarmed caused the hole again to be closed and plastered, and sent word to *Wu Ti*, who despatched an official, to fetch the old Canons and the *Lun-yü*. At this time they all were brought to light <sup>2</sup>. When the Classics were taken out from the hole, there were sounds of singing, and playing of guitars. The texts were to be recovered by the *Han*, and the gay music was a portent accompanying the happy event. They had to be transmitted to the *Han*, and therefore lay concealed in the wall. Prince *Kung* pierced it, and the holy emperor occasioned the magical music, for the old texts were not to remain hidden, and the *Han* were expecting them as felicitous signs.

The emperor *Hsiao Ch'êng Ti* wishing to read the hundred chapters of the *Shuking*, and none of the professors and secretaries understanding it, an invitation was issued to every one in the empire who could adjust the *Shuking*. *Chang Pa* of *Tung-hai* was well versed in the *Ch'un-ch'iu* of *Tso Ch'iu Ming*. Following the order of the hundred chapters, he elucidated them with the help of the *Tso-chuan*, and thus produced one hundred and two chapters, which he presented to the emperor, when they were completed. *Ch'êng Ti* took the *Shuking* that had been stored away, to compare and examine the new book, but not one character was the same. Then he handed *Chang Pa* over to the judges, who investigated his offence and pronounced it to be a

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<sup>1</sup> Ed. A and C write 300 books (pien).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 1.448, Note 6 and p. 1.462, Note 1.

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case of great disrespect and irreverence. But *Ch'êng Ti* being a great admirer of *Chang Pa's* <sup>p2.273</sup> talents, pardoned him, nor did he destroy his work. Consequently the one hundred and two chapters became current among the people <sup>1</sup>.

*Confucius* said that [talents are difficult to find.] <sup>2</sup> He whom his genius and his imagination enabled to write a Classic in one hundred chapters, must have been endowed with quite remarkable gifts, and been an exceptional man, such as is seldom met with. *Ch'êng Ti* forgave him in appreciation of his writings, for although they were spurious and not true, yet, by following the order of the chapters and sections and adhering to the subjects, they made the impression of being genuine, and therefore were not burned.

In a box of memorials a book is often circulated consisting of ten and more documents, memorials and reports to the throne, the productions of high officials and well worth reading. Their reading gives great pleasure, and not one out of a hundred officials is able to write such documents <sup>3</sup>. *Chang Pa* was so ingenious, that he composed a hundred chapters. The *Han* era is in fact so like antiquity, that *Ch'êng Ti* did well to forgive *Chang Pa*.

When *Yang Tse Shan* <sup>4</sup> was *chi-li* <sup>5</sup> in a circuit, he saw that the *san-fu* were unable to write a record on the *Ai-lao* <sup>6</sup>. He transmitted a report to his chief, who sent it up to the emperor. *Hsiao Ming Ti* <sup>7</sup> was struck with it and summoned him to the imperial library <sup>8</sup>. The officers of the *san-fu*, in spite of the great amount of their united talents, could not complete a single chapter, so that *Yang Tse Shan* wrote it, of which the emperor took cognisance. But was this record quite correct? *Yang Tse Shan* wrote it, according to his informations, which the officers of the *san-fu* were incapable of, with all the

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 1.448.

<sup>2</sup> [Analects VIII, 20 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>3</sup> This passage is very doubtful, and my translation not much more than a guess.

<sup>4</sup> Alias *Yung Chang*, a native of *Ch'êng-tu-fu* in *Ssechuan*, possessing great literary talents.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. p. 2.228, Note 1.

<sup>6</sup> A tribe in *Yünnan*, see p. 2.199, Note 4.

<sup>7</sup> 58-75 A. D.

<sup>8</sup> *Yang Tse Shan* was attached to the library.

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documents at their disposal. Since *Yang Tse Shan* could do it, the thing must not have been very difficult for him. Was, therefore, *Ch'êng Ti* not justified in pardoning *Chang Pa* ?

Under the reign of *Hsiao Wu Ti* <sup>1</sup>, all the officials were convoked to a literary competition, when the essay of *Tung Chung Shu* won the prize. In the time of *Wang Mang* the secretaries of the various p<sub>2.274</sub> boards were called upon to send in reports, and the memorial of *Liu Tse Chün* <sup>2</sup> was the best. An elegant form, provided it be not a cover for emptiness, reveals great talent and profound knowledge. The *Yiking* says that the feelings of a sage appear from his expressions <sup>3</sup>. From his good or bad style we may make an inference on a man's talent.

In the *Yung-p'ing* period <sup>4</sup>, flocks of spiritual birds alighted. *Hsiao Ming Ti* issued instructions that panegyrics on these birds be presented to him. All the officials sent in their productions, but they were no better than stones and tiles, only the five eulogies of *Pan Ku*, *Chia K'uei* <sup>5</sup>, *Fu Yi* <sup>6</sup>, *Yang Chung* <sup>7</sup>, and *Hou Fêng* <sup>8</sup> were gold and gems. *Hsiao Ming Ti* read them. Must it not have been a matter of surprise for him that among the great host of officials, the numerous secretaries included, five men only produced good compositions ?

*Hsiao Wu Ti* <sup>9</sup> was partial to works of fiction and poetry and therefore invited *Sse-Ma Hsiang-Ju* <sup>10</sup>, *Hsiao Ch'êng Ti* <sup>11</sup> delighted in voluminous

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<sup>1</sup> 140-87 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> *Liu Hsin*, 1st cent. B. C. and A. D., son of the famous *Liu Hsiang*, an author like his father and protégé of *Wang Mang*.

<sup>3</sup> *Chou Yi Ch'êng-chuan* 1883, chap. 7, p. 12r.

<sup>4</sup> 58-75 A. D.

<sup>5</sup> An eminent scholar, 30-101 A. D., who together with the historian *Pan Ku* was appointed historiographer.

<sup>6</sup> A savant who by *Hsiao Ming Ti* was given a post at the Imperial Library, where, conjointly with *Pan Ku* and *Chia K'uei*, he supervised the edition of books. He wrote himself 28 chapters of various poetry and died young.

<sup>7</sup> See above p. 2.273, Note 4.

<sup>8</sup> *Hou Fêng* seems to be unknown to other writers. The *Pei-wên-yün-fu* merely quotes this passage.

<sup>9</sup> 140-87 B. C.

<sup>10</sup> The well known scholar and poet. Cf. p. 1.123, Note 5.

<sup>11</sup> 32-7 B. C.

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writings and favoured *Yang Tse Yün*. Even at his hunting parties *Yang Tse Yün* followed in a carriage. Had *Sse-Ma Hsiang-Ju*, *Huan Chün Shan*, and *Yang Tse Yün* <sup>1</sup> been officers unable to fill up their documents or to connect their words to phrases, how would *Wu Ti* have liked, or *Ch'êng Ti* have appreciated them ? Therefore I say that to read *Yang Tse Yün's* chapters affords a greater pleasure than to be an official with a thousand piculs a year, and holding the book of *Huan Chün Shan* in one's hands, one is richer than having heaped up treasures.

p2.275 The work of *Han Fei Tse* was current in the court of *Ch'in*, and *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* said with a sigh :

— Alas ! that I cannot live together with this man ! <sup>2</sup>

Each time that *Lu Chia* <sup>3</sup> presented a new chapter of his 'New Words', the attendants of *Kao Tsu* exclaimed

— Ten thousand years ! <sup>4</sup>

Can this passionate remembrance of a man and the enthusiastic exclamation 'Ten thousand years' have been for nothing ? They were outbursts of joy from the innermost heart, upon clearly seeing the excellence of these persons.

Meteorologists look up to the sky, but not on the earth, for they derive their information from the heavenly signs. Upper and lower garments cover the body, but the embroidery is on the upper, not on the lower ones. So far dresses resemble heaven. Palmisters examine the left palm, and do not look at the right one, because the lines on the left are decisive. Contrariwise, diviners turn to the right side, and neglect the left, for the signs at the right are conclusive. The *Yiking* says :

[ The great man changes as the tiger (changing its stripes), his signs are brilliant, the superior man changes as the panther (changing its spots), his signs are elegant.] <sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> On the last two named scholars see p. 1.361, Notes 1 and 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Vid.* p. 1.072, Note 1.

<sup>3</sup> P. 1.388, Note 3.

<sup>4</sup> That is, 'may he live ten thousand years'.

<sup>5</sup> [Diagram Ko, No. 49](#). *Legge, Sacred Books* Vol. XVI, p. 168, Nos. 5 and 6.

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And further :

[ We look at the signs of Heaven, and look at the signs of man.] <sup>1</sup>

That means : Heaven and man are to be judged by their signs, and the actions of the great man and the superior man depend on their signs.

When *Kao Tsu* was still in his mother's womb, she reposed on the banks of a lake. Then a scaly dragon appeared on high, emitting a glare of brilliant light. When *Kao Tsu* started from *Ch'u*, to meet the army of *Han*, a fluid formed five colours, and when he was about to enter *Hsien-yang*, five stars united near the 'Eastern Well' <sup>2</sup>, and these stars had five different colours <sup>3</sup>. Perhaps Heaven was indignant at the destruction of literature by *Ch'in* and p.276 wished the *Han* to renew it, and therefore first invested *Kao Tsu* and used those signs as omens <sup>4</sup>.

The designs of wicked people, at different periods, are in-consistent. *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* first sighed over the work of *Han Fei Tse* and afterwards, at the instigation of *Li Sse*, caused the text of the Five Classics to be burned, and enacted a law restricting the use of books. The scholars of the Five Canons took the Classics and concealed them ; men like *Fu Shêng* stealthily buried them in the earth <sup>5</sup>. Wiping out the texts of sages and worthies is a most heinous crime, and the descendancy of the culprit was already cut off with his grandsons <sup>6</sup>. *Li Sse* who devised this plan, had to suffer one of the Five Punishments <sup>7</sup>. The *Han* dynasty, after its accession, changed the rules of doomed *Ch'in* and obliterated the traces of *Li Sse*. *Kao Tsu* first ordered *Lu Chia* to write books, but the Five Canons did not yet come to light at that time. From *Hui Ti* and *Ching Ti* <sup>8</sup> downward to *Yuan Ti* and *Ch'êng Ti* <sup>1</sup> the

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<sup>1</sup> [Diagram Pi, No. 22](#). Legge, loc. cit. p. 231, No. 4.

<sup>2</sup> The 22nd of the Twenty-eight Solar Mansions, consisting of eight stars in *Gemini*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 1.177 and 1.178.

<sup>4</sup> This supposition is incompatible with *Wang Ch'ung's* principle of spontaneity which he proclaims for Heaven. He sometimes falls back into the inveterate ideas of his countrymen which he combats elsewhere.

<sup>5</sup> P. 1.447.

<sup>6</sup> The son of *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* lost the throne, and his family was destroyed.

<sup>7</sup> On the Five ancient Punishments in use under the *Chou* and *Han* dynasties see p. 2.081. *Li Sse* was torn to pieces by carts. See p. 1.171.

<sup>8</sup> 194-188, and 156-141 B. C.



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Canons and the books were simultaneously revised. The glory of the *Han* dynasty and what we hear of its declarations are quite something else than those of doomed *Ch'in*.

Owing to the perversity of *Wang Mang* <sup>2</sup>, the armies of the *Han* began swarming about. Halls and palaces fell into ruin, and books and manuscripts were scattered about. After *Kuang Wu Ti* arose <sup>3</sup>, the preservation of old books was not yet very careful. The era of *Hsiao Ming Ti* <sup>4</sup> was very favourable for men of letters, officers were appointed to the imperial library, and the heroes of literature assembled. When our present sovereign had taken the reins of government <sup>5</sup>, the search for lost antiquities was authorised by edict, and they were bought with gold. Can this age not lay a claim to the fame of being a literary one ?

p2.275 The period of *Yao* and *Shun* being so remote <sup>6</sup>, the books of that time which existed are lost <sup>7</sup>. The *Yin* and the *Chou* dynasties <sup>8</sup>, however, are so near, that their writers have been preserved <sup>9</sup>. The works handed down since the commencement of the *Han* <sup>10</sup> do not reach very far, but the experiences made are five times as many as those of *Yao* and *Shun*, and ten times those of the *Yin* and *Chou* dynasties. There has never been a more delightful and a more glorious time than the present. The sky is bright and clear, the stars glow with brilliant light <sup>11</sup>, the characters of the people are excellent, and they handle literature with a sublime elegance. The *Han* are now at their acme, whence the profuseness of literary productions.

*Confucius* said,

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<sup>1</sup> 48-33, and 32-7 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> 9-22 A. D.

<sup>3</sup> In 25 A. D.

<sup>4</sup> 58-75 A. D.

<sup>5</sup> In 76 A. D.

<sup>6</sup> According to tradition which has not yet been historically tested, this period would last from 2357 to 2205 B. C.

<sup>7</sup> It is more than doubtful whether there have been books at all at that time.

<sup>8</sup> 1766-1123, and 1122-255 B. C.

<sup>9</sup> Whether the *Han* had any books dating as far back as the *Yin* dynasty is open to doubt.

<sup>10</sup> 206 B. C.

<sup>11</sup> This brightness of the sky and the stars is regarded as a lucky augury.

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[— *Wên Wang* is no more, but have we not here his writings ?] <sup>1</sup>

The writings of *Wên Wang* were transmitted to *Confucius*. He composed his works for the *Han*, to whom they came down.

Literary men receive their writings from Heaven and should, therefore, be held in respect. The Five Canons and the Six Arts form one class of literature, the records of the various writers are another, essays and treatises are one class, memorials and reports are one, and so are the descriptions of generous and virtuous actions. The representatives of these five classes of literature are all worthies. The composition of essays and the writing of discourses requires the greatest efforts, for to give expression to the thoughts of one's heart and to discuss the events of life, is a more arduous task than to comment upon old Classics, or to supplement old texts. Arguments are one's own ideas, for which the signs are formulated by the hand. That exceeds the faculties of the expositors of the Classics and arts.

In the periods of the *Chou* and *Ch'in*, a great many philosophical writers were busy, but they all took up other subjects, neither praising the sovereign nor profiting the State nor promoting civilisation. The essayists eulogise the emperor and exalt the State, p2.278 so that its dignity is upheld for a thousand years, and the sovereign's virtue equals sun and moon. That is what the writings of the philosophers cannot accomplish <sup>2</sup>.

Memorials suggest practical measures, and reports recommend officers, the first are in one's own interest, the second in that of others <sup>3</sup>. The style may be rich and refined, but the memorials do not mention meritorious deeds. He who cultivates his moral self has his own interests in view and not those of the ruler. Consequently, among the five classes of literature, essays have the highest value and should be estimated accordingly <sup>4</sup>.

*Confucius* remarked respecting the *Chou*,

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 2.302, Note 6.

<sup>2</sup> And we are glad of it.

<sup>3</sup> At present these terms are not restricted in this way, and I doubt whether they really were so in the *Han* time.

<sup>4</sup> The reasoning of this paragraph is not very convincing.

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[— The time of the dynasties of *T'ang* and *Yü* is outshone now ; the virtue of the house of *Chou* may be said to have reached the highest point indeed.] <sup>1</sup>

*Confucius* was a literary man of the *Chou* epoch. Had he lived in the *Han* time, he would also have pronounced the virtue of the *Han* to have reached the highest point.

*Chao T'o* as king of the southern *Yüeh* revolted from his lord, disregarded his commands, and did not observe the institutions of the *Han*. He would squat down, his hair bound into a tuft, and completely abandon himself to the customs of the savages. *Lu Chia* spoke to him of the virtue of the *Han* and so overawed him with the emperor's majesty, that his conscience awoke, he felt remorse, and suddenly rose up from his seat <sup>2</sup>.

The narrow-minded scholars of our age live under the same delusion as *Chao T'o*, and the remonstrances of great writers are like the reproofs of *Lu Chia*, which rouse those who hear them from their lethargy.

*Chao T'o's* conversion was not owing to extraordinary reports about the glory of the house of *Han*, but the placid serenity of a man of letters <sup>3</sup> were signs of the prosperity of the State. From their magnificent buildings we recognise noble families, and high <sup>p2.279</sup> trees indicate an old capital. The fact that eminent literary men live in a State proves that it is the age of a sage.

*Mencius* would judge people from the pupils of their eyes <sup>4</sup> : the heart being pure, the pupils are bright, *viz.* the colour of the eyes is bright. The prognostics for a State and the divination for an individual give the same result : when the ruler of a State is a sage, men of letters assemble, and when the heart is kind, the eyes are brilliant.

An exquisite silk embroidery being dragged through the mire every spectator feels shocked. To be able to pity a piece of embroidery, and to have no idea of the worth of a man of letters, discloses a great ignorance of

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects VIII, 20 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 1.124 and 1.382.

<sup>3</sup> *Lu Chia*.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 1.385, Note 4.

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analogies.

As regards the signs of Heaven and the signs of man, does their writing merely consist in mixing the ink and plying the pen, with the object of producing beautiful and elegant pictures? No, these signs record men's actions and give publicity to their names. Honest men desire to be taken notice of and strive for virtue; wicked once, on the other side, dislike publicity and do all they can to frustrate it. Thus the pencil of men of letters encourages the good and censures the depraved. This is the manner in which posthumous titles illustrate virtue and stigmatise crime.

Even by the addition of a posthumous name in one character, people may be praised or censured, and knowing this, every one is on his guard. Much greater still is the power of pen and ink, which determines goodness and badness. All the sayings and doings are put on record, perhaps in thousands of words, handed down from generation to generation, and giving a picture of the deceased, therefore not to be despised.

When *Yang Tse Yün* was writing his *Fa-yen* <sup>1</sup>, a rich man of *Shu* sent him an enormous sum of money, to the end that he might be mentioned in the book, but *Yang Tse Yün* refused, for a rich man neither benevolent nor righteous, is but like a stag in a fence, or an ox in a hurdle; why should he be mentioned without reason?

*Pan Shu P'i* <sup>2</sup>, in continuing the work of the Grand Annalist, also mentioned his fellow-citizens as a warning for wicked people, p2.280 for the iniquitous and unprincipled thus clearly marked out and signalised, could not eschew the shame. As *Yang Tse Yün* did not belaud for wealth, so *Pan Shu P'i* was not disturbed by sympathies, for the pen of a writer cares for nothing but justice. Worthies and sages having confided their thoughts to the pen, many strokes of the pen form a word, and a number of words bring out a sentiment, the reading of which enables later ages to distinguish between right and wrong, for why should a false statement be made?

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<sup>1</sup> This work embodies the philosophical views of *Yang Tse Yün* = *Yang Hsiung*, emphasising the value of the *Analects*, whereas his *T'ai-hsüan-ching* is especially devoted to the elucidation of the *Yiking*.

<sup>2</sup> *Pan Piao*, the teacher of *Wang Ch'ung* and father to *Pan Ku*.

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Feet walking on the ground leave prints that may be nice or ugly, and the words formed of strokes may indicate a good or a bad character. Therefore, by explaining the foot-prints, one gets an idea of the feet, and from reading the words, one learns to know the character of the person described. [Should one sentence express the purport of all the 300 Odes of the *Shiking* it would be :

Do not harbour wicked thoughts,] <sup>1</sup>

and for ten and more chapters of the *Lun-hêng* one device might be chosen, viz.

Hate fictions and falsehoods.

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects II, 2 \[Couvreur\]](#).

62. Book XX, Chap. III

*Lun-sse. On Death*

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p1.191 People say that the dead become ghosts, are conscious, and can hurt men. Let us examine this by comparing men with other beings :

The dead do not become ghosts, have no consciousness, and cannot injure others. How do we know this ? We know it from other beings. Man is a being, and other creatures are likewise beings. When a creature dies, it does not become a ghost, for what reason then must man alone become a ghost, when he expires ? In this world you can separate man from other creatures, but not on the ground that he becomes a ghost. The faculty to become a ghost cannot be a distinctive mark. If, on the other hand, there is no difference between man and other creatures, we have no reason either to suppose that man may become a ghost.

Man lives by the vital fluid. When he dies, this vital fluid is exhausted. It resides in the arteries. At death the pulse stops, and the vital fluid ceases to work ; then the body decays, and turns into earth and clay. By what could it become a ghost ?

Without ears or eyes men have no perceptions. In this respect the deaf and the blind resemble plants and trees. But are men, whose vital fluid is gone, merely as if they had no eyes, or no ears ? No, their decay means complete dissolution.

That which is diffuse and invisible, is called a ghost, or a spirit. When people perceive the shape of a ghost or a spirit, it cannot be the vital fluid of a dead man, because ghost and spirit are only designations for something diffuse and invisible. When a man dies, his spirit ascends to heaven, and his bones return to the earth, therefore they are called *Kwei* (ghost) which means 'to return'. A spirit (*Shên*) is something diffuse and shapeless.

Some say that ghost and spirit are names of activity and passivity. The passive principle opposes things and returns, hence its name *Kuei* (ghost).

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The active principle fosters and produces <sup>p1.192</sup> things, and therefore is called *Shên* (spirit), which means 'to extend'. This is re-iterated without end. When it finishes, it begins again.

Man lives by the spiritual fluid. When he dies, he again returns this spiritual fluid. Activity and passivity are spoken of as spirit and ghost. When man dies, one speaks likewise of his spirit and his ghost.

The fluid becomes man, just as water turns into ice. The water crystallises to ice, and the fluid coagulates, and forms man. The ice melting becomes water, and man dying becomes spirit again. It is called spirit, just as molten ice resumes the name water. When we have a man before us, we use another name. Hence there are no proofs for the assertion that the dead possess knowledge, or that they can take a form, and injure people.

When men see ghosts, they appear like living men. Just from the fact that they have the shape of living men we can infer that they cannot be the essence of the dead, as will be seen from the following :

Fill a bag with rice, and a sack with millet. The rice in the bag is like the millet in the sack. Full, they look strong, stand upright, and can be seen. Looking at them from afar, people know that they are a bag of rice, and a sack of millet, because their forms correspond to their contents, and thus become perceptible. If the bag has a hole, the rice runs out, and if the sack is damaged, the millet is spilt. Then the bag and the sack collapse, and are no more visible, when looked at from afar.

Man's vital fluid resides in the body, as the millet and the rice do in the bag and the sack. At death the body decays, and the vital fluid disperses, just as the millet and the rice escape from the pierced or damaged bag, or sack. When the millet or the rice are gone, the bag and the sack do not take a form again. How then could there be a visible body again, after the vital fluid has been scattered and lost ?

When animals die, their flesh decomposes, but their skin and their hair still remain, and can be worked into a fur, which appears still to have the shape of an animal. Therefore dog thieves will don dog skins. People then do not discover them, because disguised in a dog's fur-skin, they do not rouse

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any suspicion.

Now, when a man dies, his skin and hair are destroyed. Provided that his vital force did still exist, how could the spirit <sup>p1.193</sup> again enter the same body, and become visible ? The dead cannot borrow the body of a living man to re-appear, neither can the living borrow the soul of the dead to disappear.

The Six Animals <sup>1</sup> can only be transformed into a human shape as long as their bodies and their vital fluid are still unimpaired. When they die, their bodies putrefy, and even, if they possess the courage and the audacity of a tiger or a rhinoceros, they can no more be metamorphosed. *Niu Ai*, duke of *Lu* <sup>2</sup> during an illness could be transformed into a tiger, because he was not yet dead. It happens that a living body is transformed into another living body, but not that a dead body is changed into a living one.

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From the time, when heaven and earth were set in order, and the reign of the 'Human Emperors' <sup>3</sup> downward people died at their allotted time. Of those, who expired in their middle age, or quite young, millions and millions might be counted. The number of the persons actually living would be less than that of those who died. If we suppose that after death a man becomes a ghost, there would be a ghost on every road, and at every step. Should men appear as ghosts after death, then tens of thousands of ghosts ought to be seen. They would fill the halls, throng the courts, and block the streets and alleys, instead of the one or two which are occasionally met with.

When a man has died on a battle-field, they say that his blood becomes a will-o'-the-wisp. The blood is the vital force of the living. The will-o'-the-wisp seen by people, while walking at night, has no human form, it is desultory and concentrated like a light. Though being the blood of a dead man, it does not resemble a human shape in form, how then could a man, whose vital force is gone, still appear with a human body ?

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<sup>1</sup> The Six Domestic Animals are : the horse, the ox, the goat, the pig, the dog, and the fowl.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Chap. 7.

<sup>3</sup> A series of mythical rulers of remotest antiquity.



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If the ghosts seen all looked like dead men, there might be some doubt left that the dead become ghosts, and sometimes even assume human form.

p1.194 Sick people see ghosts, and say that So-and-So has come to them. At that time So-and-So was not yet dead, but the fluid perceived resembled him. If the dead become ghosts, how is it that sick people see the bodies of the living ?

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The nature of heaven and earth is such, that a new fire can be lighted, but an extinguished fire cannot be set ablaze again. A new man can be born, but a dead one cannot be resurrected. If burnt-out ashes could be kindled again into a blazing fire, I would be very much of opinion that the dead might take a bodily form again. Since, however, an extinguished fire cannot burn again, we are led to the conclusion that the dead cannot become ghosts.

Ghosts are considered to be the vital spirits of the dead. If this were really the case, people seeing ghosts ought to see their bodies naked only, but not wearing dresses, or covered with garments, because garments have no vital spirits. When men die, their clothes become decomposed together with their bodies, how could they be put on again ?

The vital spirits have their original seat in the blood fluid, and this fluid always adheres to the body. If notwithstanding the decay of the body the vital spirits were still extant, they might become ghosts. Now garments are made of silk stuffs and other fabrics. During man's life-time his blood fluid does not permeate them, nor have they any blood of their own. When the body is destroyed, they share its fate, how could they of themselves reassume the shape of garments. Consequently, if ghosts are seen which bear a resemblance to dresses, they must also be like bodies, and if they are, we know that they cannot be the vital spirits of the dead.

Since the dead cannot become ghosts, they cannot have any consciousness either. We infer this from the fact that before their birth men have no consciousness. Before they are born, they form part of the primogenial fluid, and when they die, they revert to it. This primogenial fluid is vague and diffuse, and the human fluid, a part of it. Anterior to his birth,

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man is devoid of consciousness, and at his death he returns to this original state of unconsciousness, for how should he be conscious ?

Man is intelligent and sagacious, because he has in himself the fluid of the Five Virtues, which is in him, because the Five <sup>p1.195</sup> Organs <sup>1</sup> are in his body. As long as the five parts are uninjured, man is bright and clever, but, when they become diseased, his intellect is dimmed and confused, which is tantamount to stupidity and dullness.

After death the five inward parts putrefy, and, when they do so, the five virtues lose their substratum. That which harbours intelligence is destroyed, and that which is called intelligence disappears. The body requires the fluid for its maintenance, and the fluid, the body to become conscious. There is no fire in the world burning quite of itself, how could there be an essence without body, but conscious of itself ?

Man's death is like sleep, and sleep comes next to a trance <sup>2</sup>, which resembles death. If a man does not wake up again from a trance, he dies. If he awakes, he returns from death, as though he had been asleep. Thus sleep, a trance, and death are essentially the same. A sleeper cannot know what he did, when he was awake, as a dead man is unaware of his doings during his life-time. People may talk or do anything by the side of a sleeping man, he does not know, and so the dead man has no consciousness of the good or bad actions performed in front of his coffin. When a man is asleep, his vital fluid is still there, and his body intact, and yet he is unconscious. How much more must this be the case with a dead man, whose vital spirit is scattered and gone, and whose body is in a state of decay ?

When a man has been beaten and hurt by another, he goes to the magistrate, and makes his complaint, because he can talk to people, and is conscious. But, when a person is slain by somebody, the murderer is unknown, his family perhaps not knowing even the place, where his corpse is

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<sup>1</sup> The Five Virtues are : Benevolence, Justice, Propriety, Knowledge, and Truth ; the Five Organs : the Heart, the Liver, the Stomach, the Lungs, and the Kidneys.

<sup>2</sup> No dictionary gives this meaning for *t'ien*, which usually means 'to exterminate, to cut off, to cease'. But it cannot be anything else here. The Chinese of to-day will likewise rail a faint 'death', or small death', *hsiao-sse*.

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lying. If under such circumstances the murdered man was conscious, he would assuredly be filled with the greatest wrath against his murderer. He ought to be able to speak into the magistrate's ear, and give him the name of the miscreant, and, if he were able to go home, and speak to his people, he would inform them, where the body was. But all that he cannot do. That shows that he has no consciousness.

p1.196 Now-a-days, living persons in a trance will sometimes as mediums speak for those who have died, and diviners, striking black chords, will call down the dead, whose souls then will talk through the diviner's mouth. All that is brag and wild talk. If it be not mere gossip, then we have a manifestation of the vital fluid of some being.

Some say that the spirit cannot speak. If it cannot speak, it cannot have any knowledge either. Knowledge requires a force, just as speech does.

Anterior to man's death, his mental faculties and vital spirit are all in order. When he falls sick, he becomes giddy, and his vital spirit is affected. Death is the climax of sickness. If even during a sickness, which is only a small beginning of death, a man feels confused and giddy, how will it be, when the climax is reached? When the vital spirit is seriously affected, it loses its consciousness, and when it is scattered altogether?

Human death is like the extinction of fire. When a fire is extinguished, its light does not shine any more, and when man dies, his intellect does not perceive any more. The nature of both is the same. If people nevertheless pretend that the dead have knowledge, they are mistaken. What is the difference between a sick man about to die and a light about to go out? When a light is extinguished, its radiation is dispersed, and only the candle remains. When man has died, his vital force is gone, and the body alone remains. To assert that a person after death is still conscious is like saying that an extinguished light shines again.

During the chilly winter months the cold air prevails, and water turns into ice. At the approach of spring, the air becomes warm, and the ice melts to water. Man is born in the universe, as ice is produced, so to say. The *Yang* and the *Yin* fluids crystallise, and produce man. When his years are completed, and his span of life comes to its end, he dies, and reverts to those

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fluids. As spring water cannot freeze again, so the soul of a dead man cannot become a body again.

Let us suppose that a jealous husband and a jealous wife are living together. The debauchery and the disreputable conduct of one party is the cause of constant outbursts of anger, fighting, and quarrelling. Now, if the husband dies, the wife will marry again, and if the wife dies, the husband will do the same. If the other knew of it, he would undoubtedly fly into a rage. But husband and wife, when dead, keep perfectly quiet, and give no sound. The other may marry again, they take no heed, and it has no evil consequences. That proves that they are unconscious.

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p1.197 *Confucius* buried his mother at *Fang* <sup>1</sup>. Subsequently such heavy rain fell, that the tomb at *Fang* collapsed. When *Confucius* heard of it, he wept bitterly and said :

— The ancients did not repair graves <sup>2</sup>.

Therefore he did not repair it. Provided the dead are conscious, they ought to be angry with those who do not keep their tombs in repair. Knowing this, *Confucius* would have repaired the grave to please the departed soul, but he did not do so. His intelligence as a Sage was of the highest order, but he knew that spirits are unconscious.

When dried bones are lying about in lonely places, it may happen that some mournful cries are heard there. If such a wail is heard at night-time, people believe that it is the voice of a dead man, but they are wrong. When a living man talks, he breathes. His breath is kept in his mouth and his throat. He moves his tongue, opens and shuts his mouth, and thus produces words. It is like playing a flute. When the flute is broken, the air escapes, and does not keep inside, and the hands have nothing to touch. Consequently no sound is produced. The tubes of the flute correspond to the human mouth and

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<sup>1</sup> A place in Lu (*Shantung*).

<sup>2</sup> A quotation abridged from the *Li-ki*, *T'an Kung*. Cf. [Legge, Li-ki Vol. I, p. 123](#). Modern commentators explain the passage quite differently. The dictum of *Confucius* would mean that the ancients did not repair tombs, because they built them so well, that they could not collapse. *Wang Ch'ung's* interpretation is more natural.

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throat. The hands touch the holes in the tubes in the same manner, as man moves his tongue. When he is dead, his mouth and throat decay, and the tongue moves no more. How should words be articulated then ? If, while dried bones are lying about, wails and laments are heard, they come from men, for bones cannot produce them.

Others imagine that it is the autumn (which produces these sounds). This statement is not much different from the other that ghosts cry at night. If the autumn air causes these extraordinary moans and wails, it must have some substratum. Because this has happened near the bones of a dead man, people have presumed that these bones are still conscious, and utter these mournful cries in the wilderness. There are thousands and thousands of skeletons bleaching in the grass and in the swamps, therefore we ought to be haunted by their laments at every step.

It is possible to make somebody speak, who usually does not speak, but impossible that somebody who speaks, should be induced to speak again after death. Even he who spoke before, cannot be caused to speak again. Similarly, when a plant comes <sup>p1.198</sup> forth, its fluid is green, which is, as it were, given it. When the same plant dies, the green colour disappears, or is taken away. Endowed with the fluid, the plant is green, deprived of it, it loses the green colour. After the latter is gone, it cannot be added again, nor can the plant grow green again of its own accord. Sound and colour correspond to one another, and are both derived from Heaven. The brilliant green colour is like a lugubrious cry. The colour of a faded plant cannot become green again, it would, therefore, be a mistake to assume that a dead man's cry could still be produced of itself.

Man is able to talk, because he possesses vital energy. As long as he can eat and drink, the vital energy is well fed, but no sooner do eating and drinking cease, than the energy is destroyed. After this destruction there are no more sounds possible. When the person is worn out, and cannot eat any more, the mouth cannot speak any further. Death is exhaustion in the highest degree, how could man still speak then ?

There are those who say that the dead smell the sacrificed meat, and eat the air, and that they are thus enabled to speak. The vital force of the dead is

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that of the living. Let a living being neither eat nor drink, and only inhale the smell of offerings, and feed upon air, and he will die of starvation after no more than three days.

Another opinion is that the vital force of the dead is more powerful than that of the living, and that for this reason it can smell the air, and produce sounds.

The vital force of the living is in their body, that of the dead, out of it. In what do the dead and the living differ, and what difference does it make that the vital fluid is within the body, or outside of it ? Take water, and fill it into a big jug. When the jug breaks, the water flows to the earth, but can the water on the floor be different from that in the jug ? The water on the floor is not different from that in the jug, then why should the vital force outside the body be different from that within ?

Since a man, when dead, does not become a ghost, has no knowledge, and cannot speak, he cannot hurt others either for the following reason. In his anger, a man uses breath, but in order to injure others, he requires strength. To make use of it, his sinews and bones must be strong, then he can hurt others. An angry man may breathe heavily so near to others, that his breath shoots forth against their faces, but though he possess the <sup>p1.199</sup>valour of *Mêng Pên* <sup>1</sup>, it does them no harm. However, when he stretches out his hand, and strikes, or lifts the foot and kicks, he breaks whatever he hits. The bones of the dead decay, the strength of his muscles is lost, and he does not lift hand or foot. Although the vital fluid be still existent, it is, as if it were, only breathing, and nothing else follows. How then should it do harm to anybody ?

Men and other creatures hurt others by means of knives, which they grasp with their hands and arms, and with their strong and sharp nails or teeth. Now, when a man is dead, his hands and arms waste away, and cannot lift a blade any more, and nails and teeth fall out, and cannot bite any more. How should they do harm to others then ?

When a child is just born, his hands and feet are quite complete, yet the

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chap. 8.

## Lun-hêng

hands cannot grasp, and the feet cannot kick. The fluid has just concreted, but has no strength. Hence it is evident that the vital fluid possesses no strength. The fluid forms the body. As long as the body is still feeble and weak, it cannot do harm to any one, and how much less still, when through death the fluid becomes lost, and the vital spirit is dissolved. Something feeble and weak is incapable of injuring people, and one asserts that cold bones can do it? Is the fluid of the dead not lost? How should it injure anybody?

Before a hen's egg is hatched, there is a formless mass in the egg-shell, which, on leaking out, looks like water. After a good hen has covered the egg, the body of the chicken is formed, and when it has been completed, the young bird can pick the shell, and kick. Human death resembles the time of the formless mass. How could a formless fluid hurt anybody?

A man becomes bold and fierce, so that he can assault others, by eating and drinking. Eating and drinking his fill, he grows stout and strong, bold and fierce, and can do harm to others. While a man is sick, he can neither eat nor drink, and his body becomes worn out and weak. When this weariness and languor reach the highest degree, death ensues. During that time of sickness and languor his enemy may stand by his side, he cannot revile him, and a thief may take his things away, he has no means to prevent him, all on account of his debility and lassitude. Death is the debility and languor in the extreme, how then could a man after death still injure any one?

p1.200 If chickens or dogs, which somebody keeps, are stolen, he will, at all events, wax angry, though he be timid, and not very strong, and his anger may be so violent, that he tries conclusions with the robber, and is slain by him. During the time of great anarchy people will use one another as food. Now, provided that the spirit was conscious, it ought to be able to destroy its enemies <sup>1</sup>. A human body is worth more than a chicken or a dog, and one's own death is of greater consequence than a robbery. The fact that a man is excited over a chicken or a dog, but has no bad feeling against the individual

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<sup>1</sup> Those who used its body as food.

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who devoured him, shows that he <sup>1</sup> has not the power to hurt any one.

Prior to its casting off its exuviae, a cicada is a chrysalis. When it casts them off, it leaves the pupa state, and is transformed into a cicada. The vital spirit of a dead man leaving the body may be compared to the cicada emerging from the chrysalides. As cicada it cannot hurt the chrysalides. Since it cannot do so, why should the vital spirit of a dead man hurt living bodies ?

The real nature of dreams is very doubtful. Some say that, while people are dreaming, their vital spirits remain in their bodies, and produce lucky or unlucky visions. Others hold that the vital spirit communicates with men and other creatures. Now, if it really remains in the body, the vital spirit of the dead must do the same. If, however, the spirit mixes with men, people may dream that they have killed somebody. Having killed somebody, they are perhaps themselves murdered by somebody else. But if, on the following day, they look at the body of that person, or examine their own, they will find no trace whatever of a wound inflicted by a sword. Dreams are caused by the vital spirit, and this spirit is identical with the vital spirit of the dead. The vital spirit of dreams cannot injure people, therefore the spirit of the dead cannot do so either.

When the fire burns, the caldron boils, and when the boiling stops, the steam ceases. All depends on the fire. When the vital spirit is incensed, it can do harm, not being angry, it cannot injure people. The fire blazing in the stove, the kettle bubbles, and the steam rises. When the vital force is enraged in the bosom, there is an innervation of strength, and the body is hot. Now, when a man is about to die, his body is cold and chilly. The cold and chilliness increase, until at last he expires. At the time p1.201 of death, the vital spirit is not irritated, and after the death of the body it is like the hot water taken from the caldron, how should it hurt people ?

Things have a certain relation to man. When a man becomes insane, and one knows the proper thing, his malady may be cured by applying this thing as a remedy. As long as a thing is alive, its vital spirit adheres to its body, and consequently can change its form, and enter into close connection with

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<sup>1</sup> His spirit.



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man. After it has died, its body rots, and the vital spirit is dispersed. In default of a substratum it cannot undergo any more changes. The human vital spirit is like that of things. While they are alive, their spirit may become sick, when they die, it evaporates and disappears. Men are like things in this respect, when they die, their vital spirit also becomes extinguished, how could it still do any mischief ?

Should anybody object by saying that men are much more precious than things, and that their vital spirit is different, we can reply that, as a matter of fact, things can be metamorphosed, but man cannot, and that so far his vital spirit is on the contrary inferior to that of things, whose essence surpasses that of man.

Water and fire drown and burn. All that can injure man must be a substance belonging to one of the five elements. Metal hurts man, wood beats him, earth crushes him, water drowns him, and fire burns him. Is the vital spirit of the dead a substance like the five elements ? Does it injure people, or is it not a substance ? It cannot injure people. Not being a substance, it must be a fluid. Of the fluids which injure man that of the sun is the most virulent. Does the fluid of a man, when he dies, become virulent ? Can it injure people or not ? It cannot injure people.

Thus we hold that the dead do not become ghosts, are not conscious, and cannot hurt people. Consequently, it is evident that the ghosts, which are seen, are not the vital force of dead men, and that, when men have been hurt, it cannot have been done through this vital force.

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## 63. Book XXI, Chap. I

### Sse-wei. False Reports about the Dead

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p1.202 King *Hsüan* of the *Chou* dynasty <sup>1</sup> is reported to have killed his minister, the Earl of *Tu*, who was innocent. When King *Hsüan* was going to hunt in his park, the Earl of *Tu* rose on the roadside with a red bow in his left hand. He shot an arrow at the king, who expired under the cover of his own bow-case <sup>2</sup>. — Duke *Chien* of *Chao* <sup>3</sup> put his minister *Chuang Tse Yi* to death, although he was innocent. When Duke *Chien* was about to pass through the *Huan* gate, *Chuang Tse Yi* appeared on the road, a red cudgel in his left hand, with which he struck the duke, that he died under his carriage. This is considered as proving that two dead persons became ghosts, and as showing that ghosts are conscious, and can hurt people, and that there is no help against it.

I say that man is created as one of the ten thousand creatures. When these creatures die, they do not become ghosts, why then must man alone become a ghost after death ? If it be owing to his superiority that man can become a ghost, then all the dead ought to be transformed into ghosts, wherefore then did the Earl of *Tu* and *Chuang Tse Yi* alone become ghosts ? If those who have innocently suffered can become ghosts, there have been a great many ministers thus wronged. Men like *Pi Kan* and *Tse Hsü* <sup>4</sup> did not become ghosts. Now, the Earl of *Tu* and *Chuang Tse Yi* were immoral. Full of spite and hate, they assassinated their sovereigns, out of revenge. There is no crime worse than the assassination of one's sovereign. Those who were deemed worthy to become ghosts, would again have to be executed.

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<sup>1</sup> 827-781 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> The story is given a little more in detail in the *Chou Ch'un-ch'iu*, which adds that the king broke his spine (cf. [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 278, Note 2](#)) and also by *Mê Ti* chap. 8, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> In the *Lun-hêng* Bk. IV, p. 5 (*Shu-hsü* [chap. 16]) he is called Viscount *Chien* of *Chao*. the same who is mentioned in chap. 64.

<sup>4</sup> On their fates cf. p. 1.140 and chap. 25.

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Therefore the Earl of *Tu* and *Chuang Tse Yi* would certainly not have dared to commit such a crime.

p1.203 When one man injures another, he does not wish him to live, and hates to see his person. Therefore he does away with him. Then not only the family of the murdered man goes to the magistrate, and lodges a complaint against their enemy, but the victim also must hate to see him. Life and death are different spheres, and men and ghosts live in different places. If, therefore, the Earl of *Tu* and *Chuang Tse Yi* were grieved at King *Hsüan* and Duke *Chien*, they should not have killed them, for then they would also have become ghosts, and again have been together with them.

Princes have great power, and their officers, guards, and underlings are very numerous. Had the two ministers killed the two princes, their deaths would have been avenged. Therefore no intelligent man would have made such a scheme, or committed such an act in his wrath. If the two ministers were spirits, they must have been aware that the deaths of the two princes would be avenged upon them, and, if they were not aware of it, then they were not spirits either, and not being spirits, how could they have injured anybody? In the world many things seem real, which are not, and there are many falsehoods, which are taken for truths. Thus the stories of the Earl of *Tu* and *Chuang Tse Yi* have been handed down.

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[Duke *Hui* of *Chin* removed the crown-prince *Shên Shêng*<sup>1</sup> from his grave, and had him re-interred. When in autumn his charioteer *Hu Tu* went to *Hsia-kuo*<sup>2</sup>, he met the crown-prince there. The crown prince stepped upon his carriage, and spoke to him saying,

— *I Wu*<sup>3</sup> is a brute. I have asked God. He will give *Chin* over to *Ch'in*, and *Chin* will offer sacrifice to me.

*Hu Tu* replied,

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<sup>1</sup> A brother of the Duke, who had been driven into death by court intrigues.

<sup>2</sup> The 'Lower Capital' of *Chin* i. e. *Ch'ü-wu* in modern *Ping-yang-fu* (*Shansi*).

<sup>3</sup> The personal name of Duke *Hui*.

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— I have been told that spirits enjoy only the offerings of their own kindred, and that people do not sacrifice but to their own clan. Would the sacrifice to Your Highness not be terminated then ? Besides the people of *Chin* are not responsible. Their punishment would be unjust, and there would be the cessation of the sacrifice. Your Highness should take this into consideration.

The crown-prince said,

— Well, I will pray again. Seven days hence, there will be a wizard west of the New City, through whom you shall have an interview with me.

After *Hu Tu* had agreed to it, he vanished. At the fixed time, *Hu Tu* went to the hut of a wizard on the west <sup>p1.204</sup> side of the New City, and had a second interview with *Shên Shêng*. *Shên Shêng* told him

— God has promised to punish the guilty one. He will slay him in *Han*.] <sup>1</sup>

Four years later Duke *Hui* fought with Duke *Mu* of *Ch'in* in the *Han* territory <sup>2</sup>, and was taken prisoner by Duke *Mu*, exactly as had been predicted. What else was this than the work of a spirit ?

This story bears a great resemblance to those of the Earl of *Tu* and *Chuang Tse Yi*. How can we show that ? The removal of a grave is a private grievance. God is a public spirit. Would a public spirit take heed of a complaint addressed to him on a private grievance ? God is said to have promised to give *Chin* over to *Ch'in*. *Hu Tu* thought that this could not be. *Shên Shêng* following *Hu Tu's* words, was quite right, and therefore God's promise to *Shên Shêng* was wrong. It is evident that a spirit which as God would be inferior to *Hu Tu*, cannot be God.

Furthermore, a subject dares not implore a sovereign to consider his private affairs. A sovereign has such an exalted position in comparison with a humble subject, that the latter does not venture to trouble him with things

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<sup>1</sup> Quotation from the *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Hsi* 10th year (649 B. C., *Legge, Classics Vol. V, Pt. I, p. 157*) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> In *Shansi*.

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that do not concern him. And was the distance between *Shên Shêng* and God not still greater than between a subject and his sovereign ? He would not have vented his anger against Duke *Hui* for having removed his grave in the august presence of God.

*Li Chi* <sup>1</sup> caused the death of *Shên Shêng* by her slander, and Duke *Hui* removed his corpse from his grave. The removal of a corpse is less wicked than a murder, and the guilt of Duke *Hui* less than that of *Li Chi*. If *Shên Shêng* prayed for the punishment of Duke *Hui*, and not for the death of *Li Chi*, then he resented the removal of his grave, but was not grieved at his own death.

By the advice of *Li Sse*, *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* burned the books of poetry and history, and subsequently buried the scholars alive. The grievances of the literati against him were not of a less serious character than those of *Shên Shêng*, and the misery of being buried alive, much more pitiful than the removal of a corpse. Yet the dead scholars of *Ch'in* did not implore God, nor appear in the shapes of ghosts, and those *savants* did not conjointly accuse *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* of viciousness, and *Li Sse* of depravity.

p1.205 When King *Wu* of the *Chou* dynasty was sick and low-spirited, the Duke of *Chou* asked for Heaven's commands. He erected three altars with one platform for sacrifices, and with the jade sceptre and the baton in his hands, addressed *T'ai Wang*, *Wang Chi* and *Wên Wang* <sup>2</sup>. The annalist composed the prayer. In his address he said,

— I am benevolent like my ancestors, have many talents and abilities, and can serve the spirits. The great-grandson so-and-so has not as many talents or abilities as *Tan*, and cannot serve the spirits <sup>3</sup>.

By spirits the three princes are meant. The dead are unconscious, and cannot

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<sup>1</sup> A wife of Duke *Hsien* of *Chin*, who, in order to secure the throne for her own son, removed the heir-apparent, *Shên Shêng*.

<sup>2</sup> The spirits of the father, the grandfather, and the great-grandfather of King *Wu* and his younger brother *Tan*, Duke of *Chou*.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in an abridged form from *Shuking*, *Chin-t'êng*, Pt. V, Bk. VI, 1 seq. *Legge* Vol. III, Pt. II, p. 351 seq.).

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become spirits, they say. However, the Duke of *Chou* was a sage ; the words of a sage are true, and he finds out the reality of things that seem dark. Such being the case, the three princes must have been spirits.

I ask, can men really become spirits or not ? Provided, they can, then one must know the opinions of the three princes, and not solely inquire, whether they were ghosts. The Duke of *Chou* asked for Heaven's commands, and the annalist composed the prayer. When the prayer was completed, and the address finished, the Duke of *Chou* did not know, whether the three princes gave their assent, and how. Upon this he consulted three tortoises. All three bearing lucky signs, he was pleased. He was able to know that the three princes were conscious and spirits, but not, whether they assented or not. To find out the truth, he was obliged to still consult the three tortoises. Yet in order to determine in an unmistakable way, whether they were spirits or not, it should have been possible to interrogate them. The question, whether the dead had knowledge or not, depended on the other, whether they could give their approval or not. If the Duke of *Chou* could know that the three princes did not grant his request, then the statement that they were ghosts is reliable, but if he could not, then his statement that the three princes were ghosts, would not have any more weight than one made by ordinary people. His knowledge would not reach further than that of the generality, and be inadequate to show us the real state of the dead.

Moreover, by what means did the Duke of *Chou* obtain Heaven's commands, by his perfect sincerity, or by the correctness of his address ? If it was by his perfect sincerity, then his prayer was said with sincerity, and he did not care, whether his address to p1.206 attract the spirits was correct or not. *Tung Chung Shu's* method of praying for rain consisted in putting up a dragon, made of earth, with a view to affecting the fluid. An earth dragon was not a real dragon, and could not attract rain. While making use of it, *Tung Chung Shu* showed perfect sincerity, and did not mind, whether the dragon was genuine or fictitious. The Duke of *Chou's* prayer for Heaven's commands was like *Tung Chung Shu's* prayer for rain. The three princes were not ghosts, as a heap of earth was not a dragon.

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*Hsün Yen of Chin* <sup>1</sup> invaded *Ch'i*, but had to return, before the campaign came to a close, for he was taken ill with ulcers, and a sore broke out on his head. When he reached the *Cho-yung* territory, his eyes protruded from their sockets, and when his death ensued, he went on staring, and his mouth could not receive anything. *Fan Hsüan Tse* washed him, and said by way of consolation,

— We shall certainly serve *Wu* as we did Your Lordship,

but he still continued staring. *Fan Hsüan Tse* observing that he did not close his eyes, fancied that he was grieved for his son *Wu*, for nothing gives greater pain to human feelings than the thought of the fate of one's children. Therefore, he spoke of *Wu* to comfort him, but this was not the cause of his resentment, for he went on staring. *Luan Huai Tse* remarked,

— Is it perhaps, because he did not complete his designs in *Ch'i* ?,

and he again comforted him by saying,

— Your Lordship died an untimely death. I swear by the *Yellow River* to carry out your designs in *Ch'i*.

Upon this, he closed his eyes, and received the gem into his mouth <sup>2</sup>. It was the incompleteness of his invasion of *Ch'i* which *Hsün Yen* regretted. *Luan Huai Tse* found it out, therefore the dead man closed his eyes, and received the gem into his mouth. *Fan Hsüan Tse* missed it, therefore his eyes remained wide open, and his mouth was locked.

I say that *Hsün Yen's* death by sickness was very painful, so that his eyes protruded. When his eyes came out, he firmly closed his mouth, and therefore could not receive anything in it. Immediately after death the fluid was still strong, and the eyes protruded owing to the pain caused by the disease. *Fan Hsüan Tse* soothed him too soon, therefore the eyes did not close, and the mouth not open. A short while afterwards, the fluid was weakened. p1.207  
Consequently, when *Luan Huai Tse* comforted him, his eyes closed, and his mouth received the gem. This was a sequence of *Hsün Yen's* sickness, and

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<sup>1</sup> An officer of the *Chin* State.

<sup>2</sup> As was customary. Thus far the story, with some additions and omissions, has been culled from the *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Hsiang* 19th year (553 B. C.) [[Couvreur](#)].

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the soul of the deceased did not manifest his resentment in his mouth and his eyes.

All people have something to regret, when they die. A generous character regrets that he could not accomplish all the good works he intended, a scholar that his researches had still so many *lacunæ*, a husbandman that he did not reap the grain he had sown, a merchant that he did not make a fortune, an official that he did not obtain the highest posts, and a brave that his attainments were not yet perfect. Every one on earth who has desires, has something to regret. If in every case regrets be considered the cause of the non-closing of the eyes, then all the dead on earth could not shut their eyes.

The souls of the dead are dissolved, and cannot hear any more what men say. This inability to hear what others say is called death. If after their separation from the body they became ghosts, and kept near to men, their connection with the body would already have been severed, and, though people addressed them, it would be impossible for them to again enter the body, and close the eyes, or open the mouth. If they could enter the body, and through the corpse express their dissatisfaction, then the inevitable consequence would be that they must have been preserved together with the body. Ordinary people hold that the spirits of the dead can, so to speak, re-animate the bodies, and show themselves so, that corpses would be like living men, which is a great mistake.

King *Ch'êng* of *Ch'u* <sup>1</sup> set aside the heir-apparent *Shang Chên*, and wished to put Prince *Chih* in his place. When *Shang Chên* heard of it, he surrounded the king with the palace guards, and made him prisoner. The king desired to eat bear's paws, before he was put to death, but *Shang Chên* did not grant this request, and the king died by strangulation. *Shang Chên* gave him the posthumous title *Ling*, but the king did not shut his eyes. Then he called him *Ch'êng*, and he closed his eyes <sup>2</sup>. This circumstance that he closed his eyes on being called *Ch'êng*, but not on being called *Ling*, proves that King *Ch'êng* had consciousness. The posthumous title *Ling* displeased him, therefore he

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<sup>1</sup> 670-624 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> Quotation from the *Tso-chuan* Duke *Wên* 1st year (625 B. C.) [[Couvreur](#)] (*Legge* Vol. V, Pt. I, p. 230).



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did not shut his eyes. When it was altered into *Ch'êng*, his hurt feelings were mollified, whereupon he closed his eyes. His spirit heard people consult, and saw p1.208 them change the title. This gave him such satisfaction, that he closed his eyes. They were not sick, and nobody soothed him. The eyes opened, and closed of their own accord ; if that was not spiritual, what else was it ?

I am of opinion that this story is like that of *Hsün Yen*. Although the eyes were not sick, they did not remain open for nothing. When King *Ch'êng* died by strangulation, his vital fluid was still strong, and, when his life was suddenly cut off, his eyes still opened. Owing to this the epithet *Ling*<sup>1</sup> was given him. After a short while, the fluid relaxed, and the eyes were just going to close, when simultaneously his title was changed into *Ch'êng*<sup>2</sup>. It was by chance that the staring and the shutting of the eyes coincided with the selection of *Ling* as a posthumous title. The people of that time, noticing that the king shut his eyes as if in response to the title *Ch'êng*, believed that it was the soul of King *Ch'êng*. If he was really conscious, he ought never to have closed his eyes, for the murder committed by the heir-apparent upon his person was a heinous crime, whereas the selection of the word *Ling* as a posthumous title was only a small fault. He did not resent the great crime, but took offence at the small fault. That does not make the existence of a spirit probable, and would not seem a reliable utterance of his feelings. Of improper posthumous titles we have not only *Ling* but also *Li*<sup>3</sup>. In the annals many princes bearing the epithets *Ling* and *Li* are mentioned. They did not all keep their eyes open, before their bodies were shrouded. Did the dead princes of the various ages not resent the name, and was it King *Ch'êng* alone who took umbrage ? How is it that there were so many of the name of *Ling*, and so few who did not close their eyes ?

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<sup>1</sup> *Ling* [] might mean : animated, alive, a spirit, but it has many other significations besides, as : intelligent, ingenious, clever, which might well be used as a posthumous title.

<sup>2</sup> This [] would mean : the completer, the perfect one.

<sup>3</sup> *Li* [] is in fact not a proper honorary epithet, its sense being : oppressive, cruel, malicious, ugly, terrible.

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*Po Yu* of *Chêng* was greedy and perverse, and his desires were many. *Tse Hsi* wished to rank before every one else. Both, of course, could not get on together. *Tse Hsi* assaulted *Po Yu*, who took to flight. *Sse Tai* led his countrymen against him, and defeated him. *Po Yu* died <sup>1</sup>. Nine years later [the people of *Chêng* took p1.209 alarm owing to *Po Yu*. They said that *Po Yu* was coming. Consequently, they all ran away, not knowing where to go. In the following year, some people saw *Po Yu* in their dreams walking about in armour, and saying,

— On the day *jên-tse*, I will slay *Sse Tai*, and next year on *jên-yin*, I will slay *Kung Sun Tuan*.

When the *jên-tse* day arrived, *Sse Tai* died, and the fright of the citizens still increased. Afterwards, when the *jên-yin* day came, *Kung Sun Tuan* died also, and the citizens felt still more alarmed. *Tse Ch'an* <sup>2</sup> promoted his descendant to soothe him, and he kept quiet ever since.] *Po Yu* appeared in dreams, and said,

— On the *jên-tse* day I will slay *Sse Tai*, and on *jên-yin* I will kill *Kung Sun Tuan*.

When the *jên-tse* day came, *Sse Tai* died, and when the *jên-yin* day arrived, *Kung Sun Tuan* breathed his last. [When subsequently *Tse Ch'an* betook himself to *Chin*, *Ching Tse* of *Chao* questioned him saying,

— Could *Po Yu* still become a ghost ?

*Tse Ch'an* rejoined,

— He could. When man is born, that which is first created, is called animal soul, and, when the animal soul has been formed, its *yang* becomes the mind. In case the substance and the elements are abundantly used, the soul and the mind grow very strong, and therefore show great energy, until they become spirits. Even the soul and the mind of an ordinary man, or an ordinary woman, who

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<sup>1</sup> According to the *Tso-chuan* in 542 B. C. [[Couvreur](#)]

<sup>2</sup> *Tse Ch'an* is the style of the celebrated statesman *Kung Sun Ch'iao* of *Chêng* 581-521 B. C.

## Lun-hêng

have met with a violent death, can attach themselves to men, as evil spirits, and fancy *Po Yu*, a descendant of a former sovereign of mine, Duke *Mu* <sup>1</sup>, the grandson of *Tse Liang*, and the son of *Tse Erh*, who was governor of a small territory, the third of his family who held this post ! Although *Chêng* is not a rich country, and, as a saying of *Chêng* is, a small and unimportant State, yet three successive generations have ruled over it. The stuff *Po Yu* was made of was copious and rich, and his family great and powerful. Is it not natural that having met with a violent death, he should be able to become a ghost ?] <sup>2</sup>

*Po Yu* killed both *Sse Tai* and *Kung Sun Tuan*, and did not miss the appointed time. That shows that he was really a spirit. When *Tse Ch'an* had raised his descendant, he kept quiet. *Tse Ch'an* understood the doings of ghosts, and therefore knew that they really existed. Since they are real, and not an illusion, *Tse Ch'an* answered the question addressed to him unhesitatingly. *Tse Ch'an* was a wise man who understood the nature of things. If *Po Yu* after <sup>p1.210</sup> death possessed no knowledge, how could he kill *Sse Tai* and *Kung Sun Tuan* ? And if he could not become a ghost, why had *Tse Ch'an* not the slightest doubt about it ?

My answer is, as follows. The man who lived at enmity with *Po Yu* was *Tse Hsi*. He attacked *Po Yu*, who fled. *Sse Tai* led his countrymen against *Po Yu*, and defeated him. *Kung Sun Tuan* merely followed *Sse Tai*, but did not settle his own dispute. His wrong was much smaller. *Po Yu* killed *Sse Tai*, but did not wreak his vengeance upon *Tse Hsi*. Since *Kung Sun Tuan* died along with *Sse Tai*, though his guilt was not worth speaking of, the soul of *Po Yu* was not conscious. Taking his revenge as a ghost, he did not make any distinction between a grave and a small offence, as he ought to have done.

Furthermore, *Tse Ch'an* asserted that he who dies a violent death can become a ghost. What does a violent death mean ? Does it mean that according to fate *Po Yu* ought not yet to have died, when he was killed ? Or

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<sup>1</sup> Duke *Mu* of *Chêng* 626-604 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> Quotation from the *Tso-chuan*, Duke Chao 7th year (534 B. C.) [[Couvreur](#)] (*Legge* Vol. V, Pt. II, p. 618).

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does it mean that *Po Yu* was guileless, but hardly dealt with ? If the idea is that he was slain, before the time of his death had arrived, there are many others who likewise died before their appointed time, and if it signifies that *Po Yu* was not guilty, but the victim of an outrage, then *Po Yu* was not alone outraged. If murdered men can become ghosts, *Pi Kan* and *Tse Hsü* did not.

During the 'Spring and Autumn' period thirty-six sovereigns in all were assassinated. Theirs were violent deaths *par excellence*. Their sway extended over entire States, the fine substance of which they were formed must have been very abundant, and they succeeded one another as lords of the soil, not only through three generations. The dignity of a reigning prince is not on a level with that of a governor. Their ancestors, who were first enfeoffed, were certainly the equals of *Tse Liang*, the son of Duke *Mu*. Since the sovereigns of States who suffered death at the hands of their treacherous subjects, were of the highest nobility, their souls as ghosts would have been more enlightened than *Po Yu*, who in taking his revenge and killing his enemies went so far as to destroy *Sse Tai* and *Kung Sun Tuan*. The thirty-six princes did not become ghosts, nor did their thirty-six subjects feel their vengeance. If the spirit of *Po Yu* possessed knowledge, because he was a reckless character, the world has never seen more desperate men than *Chieh* and *Chou*, yet, when *Chieh* and *Chou* were put to death, their souls did not become ghosts.

*Tse Ch'an's* reasoning is *a posteriori*. Noticing that *Po Yu* met with a violent death, he held that all people dying an unnatural <sup>p1.211</sup> death can become ghosts. Had *Po Yu* become a ghost without having met with a violent death, he would have maintained that all people can become ghosts, unless they have died an unnatural death. What difference was there between *Tse Hsi* and *Po Yu*, while both were living in *Chêng* ? Why should his death be otherwise than that of *Po Yu* ? Both were killed by their countrymen for lawlessness. *Po Yu* could become a ghost, and *Tse Hsi* could not : The argument on the violent death would suit in the case of *Po Yu*, but be inadmissible in that of *Tse Hsi*. The story of *Po Yu* is like the tale of the Earl of *Tu*. The tale of the Earl of *Tu* being unreliable, that of *Po Yu* cannot be regarded as true either.

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[Duke *Huan* of *Ch'in* <sup>1</sup> invaded *Chin*, and encamped himself at *Fu-shih* <sup>2</sup>. The Marquis of *Chin* had gathered his troops in *Chi* <sup>3</sup>, to seize the land of the *Ti* <sup>4</sup>, and restore the Marquis of *Li* <sup>5</sup>. When he came back from this expedition, *Wei K'o* defeated the army of *Ch'in* at *Fu-shih*, and made *Tu Hui* prisoner. *Tu Hui* was the strongest man in *Ch'in*. Previously *Wei Wu Tse* <sup>6</sup> had a favourite concubine, but no son by her. When he fell sick, he bade *Wei K'o* to give his concubine to somebody in marriage. Afterwards, when his case became more serious, he ordered *Wei K'o* again to bury the concubine with him, but, when *Wei Wu Tse's* death ensued, *Wei K'o* did not bury her. Some people found fault with him, but *Wei K'o* replied,

— During his delirium the mind of my father was deranged, therefore I followed the orders he gave, when he was in his senses.

At the battle of *Fu-shih*, *Wei K'o* perceived an old man plaiting grass with a view to ensnaring *Tu Hui*, who stumbled, and fell down, and thus was caught. In the night he beheld the old man in his dreams, who said to him,

— I am the father of the woman which you have given away. You have obeyed your father's orders of the time, when he was still in his right mind, therefore I have paid you my debt of gratitude.] <sup>7</sup>

The father of the favourite knew the virtue of *Wei K'o*, therefore he appeared in the shape of a ghost, plaited grass, and helped p1.212 him to win the battle. This clearly proves the enlightenment and the knowledge of the spirit.

I say that, provided that the father of the woman did know the virtue of *Wei K'o*, and appeared as a ghost to help him in battle, he should have been able to reward those whom he liked during his life-time, and to destroy whom he hated, while alive. Human intercourse is amicable or otherwise. Kindness

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<sup>1</sup> 603-575 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> Near *Hsi-an-fu* in *Shansi*.

<sup>3</sup> In the *Ping-yang* prefecture (*Shansi*).

<sup>4</sup> Aboriginal, non-Chinese tribes.

<sup>5</sup> The *Ti* had dethroned him, and conquered his territory.

<sup>6</sup> *Wei K'o's* father.

<sup>7</sup> Quotation from the *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Hsüan* 15th year [[Couvreur](#)] (593 B. C.)

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and unfriendliness must be requited, just as gratitude was to be shown for the sake of the woman. Now, the old man was unable to requite the kindness he had received, while alive, and only could show his gratitude for the goodness which he received after death. That is no proof of knowledge, or of the ability to become a ghost.

When *Chang Liang* walked on the banks of the river *Sse*, an old man presented him with a book <sup>1</sup>. *Kuang Wu Ti* <sup>2</sup> was sorely pressed in *Ho-pei* <sup>3</sup>, when an old man gave his advice. One's fate being grand, and the time lucky, one must meet with felicitous and pleasant auguries. *Wei K'o* was to take *Tu Hui* prisoner, and to distinguish himself in battle, consequently the phantom of an old man appeared plaiting grass, where the hosts were passing.

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*Wang Chi* <sup>4</sup> was buried at the foot of Mount *Hua*. The *Luan* river having undermined his tumulus, the front part of his coffin became visible. *Wên Wang* said,

— How pleasing ! Our old lord certainly wishes to see his officers and people once more, therefore he caused the *Luan* to bring his coffin to light.

Upon this, he held a court, and all the people could view him for three days. Then he had him buried again. — *Wên Wang* was a sage, who knew the true nature of things and principles. Seeing that *Wang Chi's* coffin was visible, he knew that his spirit was desirous of seeing the people, therefore he took him out, and showed him.

I fancy that all the kings and emperors who from ancient times were entombed in the earth after their deaths, must be counted by thousands. They did not desire to see their people again, wherefore should *Wang Chi* alone have done so ? On the banks of the *Yellow River* and the *Sse*, many tombs have been built, and the coffins which by an inundation and a land-slip

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.095.

<sup>2</sup> 25-57 A. D.

<sup>3</sup> In *Shansi*.

<sup>4</sup> The father of *Wên Wang*.

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have been uncovered are <sup>p1.213</sup> innumerable. Did all those persons wish to see their people again? The undermining of the foot of Mount *Hua* by the *Luan* is like the inundations and the ruptures caused by the waters of the *Yellow River* and the *Sse. Wên Wang* perceiving the front part of the coffin exposed, commiserated the old lord, and felt sorry for him, and imagined that he wished to come out again. This is the natural sentiment of a devoted and filial son, and a natural feeling for the other's well-being. As the wise man and the sage he was, he felt deeply touched, and did not take the time to reason and analyse his feelings. He treated a dead man, as though he were living, and therefore gave him a new tomb. The masses believe in the words of wise men and sages, hence they fancy that *Wang Chi* wished to see his people.

Duke *Ching* of *Ch'i* <sup>1</sup> was going to invade *Sung*. When his troops passed Mount *T'ai*, the duke saw two old gentlemen in his dream, who stood there in a fit of passion. The duke told *Yen Tse* <sup>2</sup>, who replied,

— They are *T'ang* <sup>3</sup> and *Yi Yin* <sup>4</sup>, former worthies of *Sung*.

The duke was incredulous, and thought that they were the spirits of Mount *T'ai*. *Yen Tse* said,

— Your Highness disbelieves me, allow me to describe the appearance of *T'ang* and *Yi Yin*. *T'ang* is pale and tall, and has a beard on the chin, which is pointed above, and full below. He keeps himself straight, and talks with a loud voice.

The duke said,

— Yes, so he is.

*Yen Tse* continued,

— *Yi Yin* is dark and short, and has dishevelled hair and whiskers, which are full above and pointed below. He has a stooping gait, and talks low.

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<sup>1</sup> 546-488 B.C.

<sup>2</sup> The Great Diviner of *Ch'i* (cf. p. 112) and reputed author of the *Yen Tse ch'un-ch'iu*.

<sup>3</sup> The founder of the *Shang* dynasty, 1766-1753 B.C.

<sup>4</sup> *T'ang's* prime minister.

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The duke said,

— Yes, so he is, but what is to be done now?

*Yen Tse* replied,

— *T'ang*, *T'ai Chia*, *Wu Ting*, and *Tsu Yi* <sup>1</sup> were excellent rulers of the empire. It is not right that they should have no offspring left. Now there remains only *Sung*, which Your Highness is going to invade <sup>2</sup>. Therefore *T'ang* and *Yi Yin* are enraged, and ask you to dismiss your army, and keep peace with *Sung* <sup>3</sup>.

The duke did not take heed, and invaded *Sung* <sub>p1.214</sub> after all, when his army was in fact beaten. *T'ang* and *Yi Yin* possessed knowledge, and resented the attack of Duke *Ching* upon *Sung*, therefore they appeared to him in his dreams enraged, for the purpose of checking him, but Duke *Ching* did not stop, and his army met with a reverse.

They say that previously Duke *Ching* had already seen a comet in his dreams. At the time in question, the comet did not appear, which was unlucky. It may be so, but all this were dreams. Duke *Ching* saw a comet, but it was not a real comet, and he dreamt of *T'ang* and *Yi Yin*, but they were not real. Perhaps they were inauspicious visions accompanying the defeat of his army. *Yen Tse* believed in the dream, and said that the figures were those of *T'ang* and *Yi Yin*. Duke *Ching* accepted *Yen Tse's* explanation as true. When the *Chin* united the empire, they destroyed the descendants of *Yi Yin*. From that time up to the present the sacrifices to *T'ang* and *Yi Yin* have been discontinued, why did they not resent it ?

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[*Tse Chan* of *Chêng* <sup>4</sup> was sent on a complimentary mission to *Chin*. The marquis of *Chin* <sup>5</sup> was sick. *Han Hsüan Tse* <sup>6</sup> went to meet the guest, and

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<sup>1</sup> All four were sovereigns of the *Shang* dynasty. *T'ai Chia* reigned from 1753-1720, *Wu Ting* 1324-1265, and *Tsu Yi* 1525-1506 B.C.

<sup>2</sup> The dukes of *Sung* derived their descent from the sovereigns of the *Shang* dynasty.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from *Yen Tse ch'un-ch'iu* (*T'ai p'ing-yü-lan*) with some variations.

<sup>4</sup> *Vid.* p. 1.209.

<sup>5</sup> His name was *P'ing* (556-530 B. C.).

<sup>6</sup> Prime minister of *Chin*.



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privately said to him,

— My prince is laid up three months already. Although we all have run about to sacrifice to the hills and streams, his sickness increases instead of improving. Now he has dreamt of a yellow bear passing through the door of his bedchamber. What devil can that be ?

*Tse Chan* replied,

— Since the prince is so enlightened, and your administration so grand, why should there be a malignant spirit ? Of yore *Yao* banished *Kun* <sup>1</sup> for perpetuity to Mount *Yü* <sup>2</sup>. His spirit became a yellow bear, which entered into the deep holes of the *Yü*. It eventually became an object of veneration to the *Hsia* <sup>3</sup>, and the Three Dynasties <sup>4</sup> sacrificed to it. The marquis of *Chin* is an allied prince <sup>5</sup>, has he perhaps not sacrificed to it ?

*Han Hsüan Tse* performed the sacrifice of the *Hsia*, and the marquis of *Chin* felt a relief.] <sup>6</sup> The yellow bear was p1.215 the spirit of *Kun*. The marquis of *Chin* had not sacrificed to it, therefore it passed through the door of his bedroom. When *Chin* knew it, and performed the sacrifice, the disease was interrupted. Does that not show that the dead are conscious ?

That *Kun* was left to die on Mount *Yü* every one knows, but wherefrom should people learn that his spirit became a yellow bear, and entered the depths of the *Yü* ? If it was like Duke *Niu Ai* of *Lu*, who during a disease was transformed into a tiger <sup>7</sup>, it could have been verified at the time of death. Now *Kun* died far away on Mount *Yü*, nobody was with him, where did the news come from then ? Moreover, it is expressly stated that his spirit became a bear, which implies that he died. That after death his spirit became a yellow

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<sup>1</sup> The father of the Emperor *Yü*.

<sup>2</sup> South of *I-chou* in *Shantung*.

<sup>3</sup> The *Hsia* dynasty.

<sup>4</sup> *Hsia*, *Shang*, and *Chou*.

<sup>5</sup> Allied to the reigning house of *Chou*.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted from the *Tso-chuan*, Duke Chao 7th year (534 B. C.) [[Couvreur](#)] (*Legge* Vol. V, Pt. II p. 617).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Chap. 7.

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bear, men had no means to ascertain.

People call a dead man a ghost. A ghost is like a living man in form, and does not look otherwise than a man, and yet it is not the spirit of the deceased. How much less a bear, which has no human form, and does not resemble man ! If really the spirit of *Kun* after death was transformed into a yellow bear, then the spirit of a dead bear might also eventually become a man. How could anybody dreaming of it know but that it was the spirit of a dead animal ? Those who believe that the bear was the spirit of *Kun* will also imagine that the ghosts which appear are the vital force of the dead. There is no proof that it is the vital force of human beings, and we cannot own that a yellow bear was the spirit of *Kun*.

Furthermore, dreams are visions. When good or bad luck are impending, the mind shapes these visions. Thus the sight of a bear will also admit of an interpretation <sup>1</sup>. Now, in case that the spirit of *Kun* really became a yellow bear after death, must the yellow bear which appeared in the dream at all events have been the spirit of *Kun* ? The feudal princes were wont to sacrifice to the mountains and streams. Should the marquis of *Chin* have viewed mountains and streams in his dreams, would it not have been, because he had offered sacrifice to them, that those mountains and streams appeared to him ? <sup>2</sup>

When people are sick, they often see their deceased ancestors arriving and standing by their side ; are we again to suppose that these deceased ancestors show themselves for the purpose of asking p1.216 for food ? What we see in our dreams is, moreover, being interpreted as having some other meaning, and is not real anyhow. How can we prove that ? When in a dream we have perceived a living man, this man, seen in our dream, does not meet us on the following day. Since the man seen in the dream, does not meet us, we know that the yellow bear of *Kun* did not pass through the bedroom door, as a matter of fact, and, since it did not, *Kun* did not ask for food either. *Kun* not having asked for food, the disease of the marquis of *Chin* was not a

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<sup>1</sup> Like other dreams. The visions have mostly a symbolical meaning, and must not be semblances of real beings.

<sup>2</sup> They would be evoked by his remembrance, but not be real.

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misfortune caused by his neglect of the *Hsia* sacrifice, and since it was not a calamity brought about by the non-observance of this ceremony, the relief of the marquis of *Chin* was not a lucky event caused by the performance of the sacrifice. There having been no real luck, it is evident that there was no consciousness on the part of *Kun*.

This is like the case of *Liu An*, Prince of *Huai-nan* <sup>1</sup>, who died charged with high-treason, and is nevertheless commonly reported to have ascended to heaven as an immortal <sup>2</sup>. Whether *Tse Ch'an* also had heard such a false rumour <sup>3</sup>, we cannot make out now. By chance the force of the sickness of the marquis of *Chin* was just going to be broken of itself, when *Tse Ch'an* happened to explain the appearance of the yellow bear. Thus the statement that the yellow bear was the spirit of *Kun* found credence.

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The Emperor *Kao Huang Ti* <sup>4</sup> intended to make *Ju Yi*, Prince of *Chao*, his successor, because he was like him. The Empress *Lü Hou* was furious, and afterwards poisoned the prince of *Chao*. When, later on, *Lü Hou* went out, she beheld a grey dog, which bit her under her left arm. She thought it strange, and by divination found out that it had been *Ju Yi*, prince of *Chao*, who had haunted her. She then began to suffer from the wound under her arm, which did not heal, and died <sup>5</sup>. People believe that the spirit of *Ju Yi* transformed itself into a grey dog to take his revenge.

I say that, when a valiant warrior fighting, flushed with anger, succumbs, sword in hand, and being hurt, sinks to the ground, and <sup>p1.217</sup> breathes his last, he sees with his eyes the adversary, who has hit him, yet, after death, his spirit is incapable of taking its vengeance. When *Lü Hou* poisoned *Ju Yi*, she did not step forward personally, but had instructed some one to administer the poison. First the prince was not aware of his being poisoned, and then in his anger did not know, who the murderer was. How then could he become a demon, and avenge himself upon *Lü Hou* ?

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<sup>1</sup> The Taoist philosopher *Huai Nan Tse*.

<sup>2</sup> *Vid.* chap. 24.

<sup>3</sup> With regard to the metamorphose of *Kun*.

<sup>4</sup> *Han Kao Tsu*, 206 -194 B. C.

<sup>5</sup> *Cf.* chap. 65.

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If the dead possessed knowledge, nobody had more reason to hate *Lü Hou* than the Emperor *Kao Tsu*. He loved *Ju Yi*, whom the empress killed. The soul of *Kao Tsu* ought to have been like a peal of thunder in his wrath, and not have waited one day, before he called *Lü Hou* to account. Why was the spirit of *Kao Tsu* not like that of *Ju Yi*, and why did he dislike *Ju Yi* after his death, and acquiesce in the murder of the empress ?

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When the report of a quarrel which the prime minister *T'ien Fên* <sup>1</sup>, Marquis of *Wu-an* <sup>2</sup>, had had with the former generalissimo *Kuan Fu* over a glass of wine reached the emperor, *Kuan Fu* was imprisoned. *Tou Ying* <sup>3</sup> attempted to rescue him, but could not save him, and the consequence was that *Kuan Fu* brought down capital punishment upon himself, and that *Tou Ying* had to suffer death likewise. Subsequently, *T'ien Fên* contracted a very painful disease, during which he cried, 'Yes, yes', and asked the by-standers to look. They beheld *Kuan Fu* and *Tou Ying* sitting by his side. *T'ien Fên*'s sickness did not release, until he died <sup>4</sup>.

I reply that he was not the only man who killed another. Other murderers have not seen their victims, when they fell sick afterwards, whereas *T'ien Fên* beheld the two men whose deaths he had brought about. *T'ien Fên* alone did so, because he felt their anger, and in his delirium had hallucinations. Or maybe he perceived some other ghost, and the necromancer having heard of his former dispute with *Kuan Fu* and *Tou Ying*, and of his wish to p1.218 learn the real name of the spirit, and seeing him crying, 'Yes, yes', at random, gave the answer that *Kuan Fu* and *Tou Ying* were sitting near him.

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The governor of *Huai-yang* <sup>5</sup>, *Yin Ch'i*, was a very cruel and oppressive magistrate. When he had passed away, the people whom he had wronged

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<sup>1</sup> Uncle of the Emperor *Han Wu Ti*.

<sup>2</sup> District in *Honan*.

<sup>3</sup> Commander-in-chief under the Emperor *Ching Ti*, 156-140 B. C., who was supplanted by *T'ien Fên*.

<sup>4</sup> We learn from the *Ch'ien Han-shu*, chap. 52, p. 12, Biography of *Kuan Fu*, that *T'ien Fên* felt pain all over the body, as if he were flogged, and cried for mercy. The emperor sent his visionist to look at him, who reported that the ghosts of *Kuan Fu* and *Tou Ying* were holding him, and beating him to death.

<sup>5</sup> The present *Ch'ên-Chou* in *Honan*.

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intended to burn his body, but it disappeared, and reverted to its grave. He was conscious, therefore the people were going to burn him, and he was a spirit, therefore he could disappear.

I presume that the vanished spirit of *Yin Ch'i* has his analogies. During the *Ch'in* epoch three mountains disappeared <sup>1</sup>, and about the end of the *Chou* dynasty the Nine Tripods were engulfed <sup>2</sup>. Provided that things which can disappear are spirits, then the three mountains and the Nine Tripods must have had consciousness. Perhaps the then magistrate, apprised of the design of the angry populace, stealthily removed the corpse, and pretended that it had disappeared, and for fear, lest the outraged people should vent their wrath upon himself, declared that it had done so of its own accord. All persons who can disappear must have their feet to walk upon. Now, the circulation of the blood of the deceased had been interrupted, and his feet could not move any more. How should he have managed his flight ?

In *Wu*, *Wu Tse Hsü* was cooked <sup>3</sup>, and in *Han*, *P'êng Yüeh* <sup>4</sup> was pickled. Burning and pickling is the same torture. *Wu Tse Hsü* and *P'êng Yüeh* were equally brave. They could not escape the cooking, or avoid the pickling, and *Yin Ch'i* alone is said to have been able to return to his tomb. That is an untruth and an unfounded assertion.

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Doomed <sup>5</sup> *Wang Mang* removed the empress *Fu Hou*, the wife of the emperor *Yuan Ti* <sup>6</sup>, from her tomb. He desecrated her coffin, and took from it boxes with jewels and seals. Afterwards he <sup>p1.219</sup> conveyed the corpse to *Ting-t'ao* <sup>7</sup>, where he had it buried again after the fashion of common people. When the coffin was taken out, a stench rose to heaven. The

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. chap. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. chap. 26.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 1.140.

<sup>4</sup> *P'êng Yüeh*, King of *Liang*, was executed by order of *Han Kao Tsu* in 196 B. C., when he had revolted against the emperor. All his relations to the third degree were put to death along with him. *Vid. Shi-chi* chap. 8, p. 33v.

<sup>5</sup> An epithet often given to *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* and *Wang Mang*, both equally detested by the literati.

<sup>6</sup> 48-32 B. C.

<sup>7</sup> In *Ts'ao-chou-fu* (*Shantung*).

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governor of *Loyang* on approaching the coffin smelled it, and dropped down dead. *Wang Mang* likewise disinterred the empress *Ting Hou*, wife to the emperor *Kung Wang* <sup>1</sup> in *Ting-t'ao*, but fire issued from her crypt, and burned several hundred officials and scholars to death. The re-interment was done in a low style, and the dead were robbed of their valuables. These two insults induced them to cause the stench, and send the fire to destroy the offenders.

I say that the stench rose to heaven, because many eatable things had been placed into the grave. It is not passing strange that men could not stand the mephetic vapours, when the smell of the putrid matter came forth in abundance, but it is strange that flames should have flashed from the crypt. At all events, it was not the spirit of the empress *Ting Hou*, for the following reason. Must he who breaks open, and despoils graves not be much more hated than he who merely changes the tombs? Yet, during a year of scarcity, those who dig up tombs for the purpose of appropriating the garments of the dead must be counted by thousands. Provided that the departed know, when others strip them of their clothes, and leave their bodies naked, they cannot hinder it at that time, and, later on, have no means to take their revenge.

But these are people of small account, not worth mentioning. *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* was buried near the *Li-shan* <sup>2</sup>. At the close of *Erh Shih Huang Ti's* reign <sup>1</sup> the robbers of the empire dug up his grave, and he could not send forth either stench or fire, nor kill a single man! He had been the Son of Heaven, and could not become a spirit. How then should *Fu Hou* and *Ting Hou*, two women, have been able to do miracles? They are believed to have become spirits, but not in the same way, and to have shown their powers in different places. People saw flames, and smelled bad odour. Consequently the assertion that both became spirits is erroneous.

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<sup>1</sup> 946-934 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> Near *Hsi-an-fu*, where the tumulus of the mighty emperor is still visible.

## 64. Book XXII, Chap. I

### *Chi-yao. Spook Stories*

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p1.220 Duke Ling of *Wei* <sup>2</sup> was proceeding to *Chin*. When he had arrived on the banks of the river *Pu* <sup>3</sup>, he heard at night-time a new tune played on the guitar, which pleased him so well, that he ordered somebody to ask his attendants about it. They all reported that they had heard nothing. Then he called for the music-master *Chüan*, and told him saying,

— There was some one playing a new melody, I gave orders to ask my followers about it, but they all stated that they had not heard anything. It is, as if a ghost made the music for me. Pray, listen to it and write it down for me.

The music-master *Chüan* acquiesced, sat quietly down, played the guitar, and wrote down the tune. On the following morning he reported that he had got it, but still required some practice. He therefore asked for one night more to practice. Duke *Ling* granted this request. *Chüan* practised one more night, and on the next morning he had mastered it. They then went on to *Chin*.

Duke *P'ing* of *Chin* <sup>4</sup> feasted him on the *Shi Yi* terrace <sup>5</sup>. When they were flushed with wine, Duke *Ling* rose and said,

— I have a new tune, which I would like to have played for Your Highness to hear.

The duke consented, and he called upon the music-master *Chüan* to sit down next to the music-master *K'uang*, to take the lute, and strike it, but, ere *Chüan* had finished, *K'uang* grasped the instrument, and stopped him

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<sup>1</sup> 209-206 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> 533-499 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> On the border of the provinces *Chili* and *Shantung*.

<sup>4</sup> 556-530 B. C.

<sup>5</sup> The *Shi-chi* chap. 24, p. 39 v. calls it the '*Shi-hui* terrace', which was situated on the *Fên* river in *Shansi*.

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saying,

— This is a song p<sub>1.221</sub> of a doomed State. You must not proceed.

Duke *P'ing* inquired,

— Where does it come from ?

The music-master *K'uang* replied,

— It is a licentious melody composed by the music-master *Yen*, who made this voluptuous music for *Chou*. *Wu Wang* executed *Chou*, hanging his head on a white banner <sup>1</sup>. *Yen* fled to the east, and, when he had reached the river *Pu*, he drowned himself. Therefore to hear this tune one must be on the banks of the *Pu*. If formerly any one heard it, his State was wiped out. It must not be continued.

Duke *P'ing* said,

— I am very partial to music. Let him go on.

*Chüan* then finished his tune.

Duke *P'ing* said,

— What do they call this air ?

The music-master replied,

— It is what they call G major <sup>2</sup>.

— Is not G major most plaintive ?, asked the duke.

— It does not come up to C major, replied *Kuang*.

— Could I not hear C major ?, inquired the duke.

The music-master rejoined,

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Shi-chi* chap. 4, p. 11 and Chap.XXXVIII.

<sup>2</sup> I am not quite certain, whether *G*, *C*, and *A major* are a correct rendering of Chinese *ch'ing* (clear) *Shang*, *chih* and *chio*. In the *Mémoires concernant les Chinois* Vol. VI, p. 115 these notes are identified with *sol*, *ut*, and *la*. At any rate *ch'ing* (clear) and its correlate *cho* (obscure) would be appropriate terms to designate sharp and flat notes. — The parallel passage of the *Shi-chi* omits to specify the airs, as is done here.



## Lun-hêng

— You cannot. Of old, only princes possessed of virtue and justice were allowed to hear C major. Now the virtue of Your Highness is small. You could not stand the hearing of it.

The duke retorted,

— I am very partial to music, and I would like to hear it.

*K'uang* could not help taking up the lute and thrumming it. When he played the first part, two times eight black cranes came from the south, and alighted on the top of the exterior gate. When he played again, they formed themselves into rows, and, when he played the third part, they began crowing, stretching their necks and dancing, flapping their wings. The notes F and G were struck with the greatest precision, and their sound rose to heaven. Duke *P'ing* was enraptured, and all the guests were enchanted. The duke lifted the goblet, and rose to drink the health of the music-master *K'uang*. Then he sat down again, and asked,

— Is there no more plaintive music than that in C major ?

*K'uang* replied,

— It falls short of A major.

— Could I not hear it ?, said the duke.

The music-master replied,

— You cannot. Of yore, *Huang Ti* assembled the ghosts and spirits on the Western Mount *T'ai* <sup>1</sup>. He rode in an ivory carriage, to which were yoked <sub>p1.222</sub> six black dragons. The *Pi-Fang* bird <sup>2</sup> came along with it, and *Ch'ih Yu* <sup>3</sup> was in front. The Spirit of the Wind came forward sweeping the ground, and the Spirit of Rain moistened the road. Tigers and wolves were in front, and ghosts and spirits in the rear, reptiles and snakes crawling on the ground,

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<sup>1</sup> The sacred Mount *T'ai* is in the East, in *Shantung*, not in the West.

<sup>2</sup> Some say that it is the spirit of wood. It is described as a bird with one wing, always carrying fire in its mouth, and portending fire in the house where it appears. According to the *Shan-hai-king* it would be a bird like a crane, but with one leg, a green plumage adorned with red, and a white beak.

<sup>3</sup> A legendary person said by some to have been a minister of *Huang Ti*. Cf. Chap. 29.

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and white clouds covering the empyrean. A great assembly of ghosts and spirits ! And then he began to play in A major <sup>1</sup>. Your virtue, Sire, is small and would not suffice to hear it. If you did, I am afraid, it would be your ruin.

Duke *P'ing* rejoined,

— I am an old man and very fond of music. I would like to hear it.

The music-master *K'uang* could not but play it. When he had struck the first notes, clouds rose from the north-west, and when he played again, a storm broke loose, followed by torrents of rain. The tents were rent to pieces, the plates and dishes smashed, and the tiles of the verandah hurled down. The guests fled in all directions, and Duke *P'ing* was so frightened, that he fell down under the porches. The *Chin* State was then visited with a drought. For three years the soil was scorched up. The duke's body began to suffer pain and to languish thereafter <sup>2</sup>.

What does that mean ? Since the State of Duke *Ling* of *Wei* was not going to ruin, whereas Duke *P'ing* of *Chin* fell sick, and his State suffered from a drought, it was not spook. The music-master *K'uang* had said that the States of those who had heard this tune before, were destroyed. Now the two States had both heard it before.

How do we know that the new tune was not played by the music-master *Yen* ? — When *Yen* had jumped into the *Pu*, his body decomposed in the water, and his vital essence dissolved in the mud. How could he still touch the lute ? *Ch'ü Yuan* flung himself into the river. He was as able a writer as *Yen* was a player of the guitar. If *Yen* could strike the lute again, then *Ch'ü Yuan* would <sup>p1.223</sup> have been able to write again. When *Yang Tse Yün* lamented *Ch'ü Yuan's* death, wherefore did he not show his gratitude ? While alive, *Ch'ü Yuan* was a very active writer, but he could not thank *Yang Tse*

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<sup>1</sup> All the details about the assembly of ghosts are omitted in the *Shi-chi*.

<sup>2</sup> The same story, illustrative of the magical force of music, is told in a parallel passage of the *Shi-chi*, chap. 24, on music, p. 39 seq. Since the text of the *Lun-hêng* is fuller, I presume that *Wang Ch'ung* did not quote the *Shi-chi*, but had an older source, probably the same, from which the *Shi-chi* his copied.

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*Yün*, because, when dead, he became mud and earth. His hand being rotten, he could not use it again to write. Since *Ch'ü Yuan* could not use his rotten hand to write, *Yen* could not thrum the guitar with his tainted thumb either.

When *Confucius* was buried opposite to the *Sse* river, the *Sse* flowed backwards. They say that it was the spirit of *Confucius* which cause the *Sse* to flow backwards. *Confucius* was very fond of teaching, just as *Yen* liked to play the lute. Provided that the music-master *Yen* could strike the lute on the banks of the *Pu*, why could not *Confucius* teach in the vicinity of the *Sse* ?

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Viscount *Chien* of *Chao* <sup>1</sup> was sick, and for five days did not know anybody. His high officers were alarmed, and then called *Pien Ch'io* <sup>2</sup>. He entered, inquired into the nature of the malady, and then went out again. *Tung An Yü* <sup>3</sup> asked him, and *Pien Ch'io* replied,

— His blood circulation is all right, but it is strange. Formerly Duke *Mu* of *Ch'in* <sup>4</sup> has been in such a state. After seven days he awoke, and, when he had recovered consciousness, he spoke to *Kung Sun Chih* and *Tse Yü* <sup>5</sup> saying, "I have been in God's abode. I was very happy, and I stayed away so long, because I was lucky enough to acquire some knowledge. God told me that the *Chin* State would be in convulsions for five generations and have no repose, and that the next powerful prince would die, before he was old. Owing to the son of this monarch no distinction between men and women would be made in my country.

*Kung Sun Chih* wrote it all down, and kept the paper in a trunk. Then ensued the revolution under Duke *Hsien* of *Chin* <sup>6</sup>, the

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<sup>1</sup> 516-457 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> *Pien Ch'io* is the honorary appellative of *Ch'in Yüeh Jen*, a celebrated physician who travelled from State to State.

<sup>3</sup> A minister of Viscount *Chien*.

<sup>4</sup> 658-620 B. C.

<sup>5</sup> Officers of *Ch'in*.

<sup>6</sup> 675-651 B. C.

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domination of Duke *Wên*<sup>1</sup>, the victory of Duke *Hsiang*<sup>2</sup> over the army of *Ch'in* p1.224 at *Yao*<sup>3</sup>, and his weakness towards his woman-folk on his march home<sup>4</sup>. The sickness of your prince is identical with this. Within three days it will cease, and then the patient will have something to say.

When two days and a half had elapsed, Viscount *Chien* became conscious again, and said to his high officers,

— I have been with God, and was very happy. With the spirits I roamed about heaven, and enjoyed the highest bliss. The music and the dances there were different from the music of the three dynasties, and the sound went to heart. There was a brown bear preparing to seize me. God bade me shoot it ; I hit the animal, and it died. Then a spotted bear attacked me ; I hit it also, and it died. God was very much pleased, and presented me with two caskets of the same contents. I then beheld a lad by God's side. God entrusted to me a *Ti*<sup>5</sup> dog and said, 'When your son has grown up, give it to him'.

God told me further, 'The *Chin* State is going to be destroyed ; after ten generations<sup>6</sup> it will have disappeared. Some one of the family name of *Ying*<sup>7</sup> will inflict a crushing defeat on the people of *Chou*<sup>8</sup> west of *Fan-kuei*, but he will not keep the country all the

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<sup>1</sup> 634-627 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> 626-620 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> A defile in *Honan*.

<sup>4</sup> On the battle of *Yao* which took place in 626 B. C. cf. *Tso-chuan* Duke *Hsi*, 33d year [[Couvreur](#)]. The weakness of Duke *Hsiang* consisted in releasing his prisoners at the request of his mother, a princess of *Ch'in*, which was deeply resented by his officers. *Vid.* Chap. 26.

<sup>5</sup> Northern barbarians. A *Ti* dog was probably a huge Mongolian dog, resembling a St. Bernard, much bigger than the common Chinese dog.

<sup>6</sup> We ought to read 'seven generations' as the *Shi-chi* does. The characters for seven and ten can be easily confounded. *Chien's* sickness took place in 500 B. C. under the reign of Duke *Ting* of *Chin*. From Duke *Ting* to the end of the *Chin* State, which in 375 broke up into the three marquises of *Wei*, *Chao*, and *Han*, there are only seven rulers, *Ting* included. Viscount *Chien* was a vassal of Duke *Ting* and ancestor of the later marquises and kings of *Chao*.

<sup>7</sup> *Ying* was the family name of the viscounts of *Chao*.

<sup>8</sup> This does not mean the people of the royal domain of *Chou*, but the people of *Wei*

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same. Now I think of the merits of *Shun*, therefore I will marry his descendant *Mêng Yao* to your grandson of the tenth generation'. <sup>1</sup>

*Tung An Yü* committed all these words to writing and kept the document. He informed Viscount *Chien* of what *Pien Ch'io* had p1.225 said. *Chien Tse* then made *Pien Ch'io* a grant of forty thousand mou of land.

When, one day, Viscount *Chien* went out, a man stood in his way. Though warned off, he did not go. The retinue were going to arrest him, when the man on the road said,

— I wish to have an audience with His Lordship.

The attendants informed *Chien Tse*, who called the man crying,

— How delightful ! I saw you in my rambles.

— Send your attendants away, said the man on the road, I would like to speak to you.

When *Chien Tse* had dismissed his men, the man on the road continued,

— Some time ago, when Your Lordship was sick, I was standing by God.

— That is true, said Viscount *Chien*, What did I do, when you saw me ?

— God bade Your Lordship, replied the man on the road, to shoot the brown and the spotted bears, which both were killed.

— What does that mean, asked *Chien Tse*.

— The *Chin* State, replied the man, will be in extremities, and Your Lordship will take the lead. God ordered you to destroy the two ministers, for the brown and the spotted bears were their forefathers.

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(*Honan*), whose princes were descended from a side branch of the royal house, their ancestor being *Kiang Shu*, a younger brother of the Emperor *Wu Wang*. After the extinction of *Chin*, the Marquis *Chêng* of *Chao* conquered seventy-three towns from *Wei*.

<sup>1</sup> It should be 'of the seventh generation', for King *Wu Ling*, who was married to *Mêng Yao*, was a descendant of Viscount *Chien* in the seventh degree.

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— What does it mean, inquired the Viscount, that God gave me two caskets both having the same contents ?

The man on the road said,

— Your Lordship's son will conquer two kingdoms in the *Ti* country, which will be named after him <sup>1</sup>.

— I perceived a lad near God, said *Chien Tse*, and God entrusted to me a *Ti* dog saying, 'When your son has grown up, give it to him'. Would my son be pleased to have such a dog ?

— That lad, rejoined the man, is your son, and the *Ti* dog is the ancestor of *Tai*. Your Lordship's son will get possession of *Tai*. Among your descendants there will be a change of government, they will wear Mongolian dress, and two States will be added to that of the *Ti*'.

*Chien Tse* asked the man's name and proposed to employ him in an official capacity, but the man on the road declined saying,

— I am but a rustic and have delivered God's message.

Then he disappeared. <sup>2</sup>

What does this mean ? It was all spook, they say. The explanation of the things seen in God's presence, as given by the man on the road was the correct interpretation, and the man on the road himself an apparition.

p1.226 Later on, the two ministers of *Chin*, *Fan Wên Tse* and *Chung Hang Chao Tse* mutinied. Viscount *Chien* attacked and routed them, and both fled to *Ch'i*.

At that time *Chien Tse* had his sons examined physiognomically by *Ku Pu Tse Ch'ing* <sup>3</sup>. None of them had any auspicious signs, but, when the physiognomist arrived at *Wu Hsü*, his son by his *Ti* wife, he declared him to

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<sup>1</sup> *Tai* and *Chih*.

<sup>2</sup> So far the story has been quoted from the *Shi-chi*, chap. 43, p. 7 seq. [[Chavannes, Mém. Hist.](#)]

<sup>3</sup> Comp. p. 1.307.

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be noble. *Chien Tse* conversed with him, and discovered that he was very intelligent. *Chien Tse* then called all his sons and said to them,

— I have hidden a precious charm on Mount *Ch'ang* <sup>1</sup>. He who first finds it, will be rewarded.

All the sons ascended the mountain, but did not find anything. When *Wu Hsü* returned, he said that he had found the charm. Viscount *Chien* asked, how.

— On Mount *Ch'ang*, replied *Wu Hsü*, one is near *Tai* <sup>2</sup>, which might be acquired.

*Chien Tse* thought him to be very clever, therefore he deposed the heir-apparent, and put *Wu Hsü* in his place. When *Chien Tse* died, *Wu Hsü* became his successor under the name of Viscount *Hsiang* <sup>3</sup>.

After Viscount *Hsiang* had come to power, he instigated somebody to assassinate the king of *Tai*, and annexed his territory, and likewise he seized the territory of the *Chih* family <sup>4</sup>. Later on, he married a *Jung* from *K'ung-t'ung* <sup>5</sup>. Ten generations after *Chien Tse* <sup>6</sup> came King *Wu Ling* <sup>7</sup>. *Wu Ching* <sup>8</sup> introduced to him his mother of the name of *Ying* and his daughter *Mêng Yao* <sup>9</sup>. Subsequently King *Wu Ling* seized *Chung shan* <sup>10</sup> and annexed the *Hu* territory <sup>11</sup>. In his nineteenth year King *Wu Ling* assumed the *Hu* dress, and his subjects adopted the *Hu* customs. Everything happened as predicted, p1.227 and nothing was wrong. The supernatural lucky signs manifested by

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<sup>1</sup> Another name for Mount *Mêng* in *Ta-tun-fu* in *North Shansi*.

<sup>2</sup> A *Ti* State occupying the confines of *North Shansi* and *Mongolia*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Shi-chi*, chap. 43, p. 11v [*Chavannes, Mém. Hist.*].

<sup>4</sup> An earldom in the south of the *Chin* State.

<sup>5</sup> Name of a mountain in *Kansu* and of an aboriginal tribe (*Jung*) settled there.

<sup>6</sup> It must be 'seven generations'.

<sup>7</sup> *Wu Ling's* reign lasted from 325-299 B. C.

<sup>8</sup> In the *Shi-chi*, chap. 43, p. 19 [*Chavannes, Mém. Hist.*]. *Wu Ching* is called *Wu Kuang*. He was a descendant of *Shun*.

<sup>9</sup> The passage seems to be corrupt. The *Shi-chi* says 'Wu Kuang through his wife introduced (to the king) his beautiful daughter *Ying Mêng Yao*' [*Chavannes, Mém. Hist.*]. First a palace girl, *Mêng Yao*, some years later, was raised to the rank of a queen. See on this passage *Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. V, p. 68 Note 7*.

<sup>10</sup> Originally a part of *Chin*, in the modern *Ting-Chou* of *Chili* province.

<sup>11</sup> These *Hu* tribes were settled in the northern provinces : *Chili, Shansi, Shensi, and Kansu*.

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portents all proved true ; so they say.

All these things are not true. The lucky and unlucky omens happening one after the other were like manifestations of Heaven, but how do we know that, as a matter of fact, Heaven did not send any message ? Because the man on the road was by God's side, for only spirits of the highest degree can keep near the Ruler of Heaven. Those who forward God's commands are the heavenly envoys. The envoys of human princes are provided with horses and carriages, and it would not be dignified for an envoy of the Ruler of Heaven to stand alone on the road. Of heavenly officials there are one hundred and twenty <sup>1</sup>, who do not differ from those of the kings of the earth. The kings of the earth have plenty of officials and attendants, who have received their power after the model of the heavenly officials. Since the officials of Heaven and Earth are alike, their envoys must resemble each other also, and, there being such a similarity, it is impossible that one man should have been so dissimilar.

How do we know that God, whom *Chien Tse* saw, was not the real God ? We know it from the interpretation of dreams. Towers, belvederes, hills, and mountains are images for an official post. When a man dreams of ascending a tower or a belvedere, or of mounting a hill or a mountain, he will get an office. In reality a tower, a belvedere, a hill, or a mountain are not an official post. Hence we know that God, whom Viscount *Chien* saw in his dream, was not the Ruler of Heaven. When an official dreams of a prince, this prince does not appear at all, nor does he give presents to the official. Therefore the interpretation of dreams teaches us that God who gave *Chien Tse* two caskets and a *Ti* dog, was not the Supreme Ruler. Since it was not the Ruler of Heaven, the heaven over which *Chien Tse* roamed with the other ghosts, as he says, was not heaven.

*Shu Sun Mu Tse* of *Lu* <sup>2</sup> dreamed that heaven fell down upon him <sup>3</sup>. If this had really been the case, heaven would have dropped upon the earth, and

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<sup>1</sup> The stars, considered as the officials of God, the Ruler of Heaven, and as divinities.

<sup>2</sup> Nobleman of the *Lu* State of the 6th cent. B. C.

<sup>3</sup> This dream is narrated in the *Tso-chuan*, Duke Chao 4th year (537 B. C.) [[Couvreur](#), p. 89].



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approaching the earth, it would not have reached *Shu Sun Mu Tse* owing to the resistance offered by towers and terraces. Had it reached him, then towers and terraces ought to have been demolished first. Towers and terraces were not <sup>p1.228</sup> demolished, therefore heaven did not descend upon the earth. Since it did not descend upon the earth, it could not reach him, and, since it did not reach him, that which fell down upon him was not heaven, but an effigy of heaven. As the heaven which fell down upon *Shu Sun Mu Tse* in his dream was not the real heaven, so the heaven through which *Chien Tse* had been roving was not heaven.

Some one might object that we also have direct dreams, insomuch as we dream of so-and-so, and on the next day see him or, as we dream of a gentleman, whom we see on the following day. I admit that we can have direct dreams, but these direct dreams are semblances, and only these semblances are direct, which will become evident from the following fact. Having a direct dream, we dream of so-and-so, or of any gentleman, and, on the following day, see Mr. So-and-so, or the gentleman in question. That is direct. But, when we ask so-and-so or that gentleman, they will reply that they have not appeared to us in our dreams. Since they did not appear, the persons we saw in our dreams were merely their likenesses. Since so-and-so and the said gentleman were likenesses, we know that God, as perceived by *Chien Tse*, was solely a semblance of God.

The oneirocritics say that, when a man dreams, his soul goes out. Accordingly, when he sees God in a dream, the soul ascends to heaven. Ascending to heaven is like going up a mountain. When we dream of ascending a mountain, our feet climb up the mountain, and our hand uses a stick ; then we rise. To mount up to heaven there are no steps, how should we rise then ? The distance from heaven to us amounts to upwards of ten thousand li. A man on a journey uses to travel one hundred li daily. As long as the soul is united to the body, it cannot move very rapidly, how much less, when it walks alone ! Had the soul moved with the same speed as the body, *Chien Tse* would have required several years for his ascension to heaven and his return. Now, he awoke after seven days, and became conscious again. How could the time be so short ?

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The soul is the vital fluid ; the movement of the vital fluid is like that of clouds and fog, and cannot be very quick. Even if the soul moved like a flying bird, it would not be very rapid. Sometimes people dream that they are flying ; the flying is done by the soul, but it could not be quicker than the flight of a bird. That fluid of heaven and earth which possesses the greatest speed is the storm, yet a storm does not blow a whole day. Provided that the soul were flying like the storm, its speed would not last longer than one day, and it would be unable to reach heaven.

p1.229 When a man dreams that he ascends to heaven, it is during the short span, while he lies down. At his awakening, he is perhaps still in heaven, and not yet descended, as a person, dreaming of having arrived at *Loyang*, still finds himself in *Loyang*, when roused. How can the flight of the soul be deemed quick ? Rapidity is not in its nature, consequently the ascension to heaven was not real. Not being real, it must have been a supernatural omen. The man on the road, perceived by Viscount *Chien* in his sickness by God's side and subsequently met on the road, speaking like a man, was the same with the one whom he had seen near God. Therefore the explanation that a dream during the sleep is a state of obscuration, which can be interpreted, when the sleeper awakes to light again, is quite correct.

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When Viscount *Hsiang* of *Chao* had been appointed <sup>1</sup>, the Earl of *Chih* became more and more arrogant. He asked land of *Han* and *Wei* <sup>2</sup>, which *Han* and *Wei* gave him. Then he made the same demand to *Chao*, but *Chao* refused. This roused his anger to such a degree, that with troops of *Han* and *Wei* he assaulted *Hsiang Tse* of *Chao*. Viscount *Hsiang* alarmed fled to *Chin-yang* <sup>3</sup>, and sought shelter there. *Yuan Kuo* followed him. When he had arrived at the post-town of *T'o p'ing* <sup>4</sup>, he beheld three men, who from the belt upwards were visible, but invisible from the belt downwards. They

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<sup>1</sup> In 456 B. C. (cf. above p. 226).

<sup>2</sup> *I. e.* the viscounts of *Han* and *Wei*, who together with those of *Chao* had usurped the power in *Chin*.

<sup>3</sup> Near *T'ai-yuan-fu* in *Shansi*.

<sup>4</sup> The *Shi-chi* calls this place *Wang-tsê*, which was situated in *Chiang-chou* (*Shansi*).

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handed two joints of bamboo, still unopened, to *Yuan Kuo* saying,

— Forward this for us to *Wu Hsü of Chao* <sup>1</sup>.

Upon this he told *Hsiang Tse*. *Hsiang Tse* first having fasted three days, personally cut open the bamboo, which contained a red letter reading as follows :

*Wu Hsü of Chao* ! We are the *Huo-T'ai* Mountain <sup>2</sup>, the Marquis of *Yang*, and the Son of Heaven <sup>3</sup>. On the *ping-hsü* day of the third moon, we will cause you to destroy *Chih*, and, provided that you sacrifice to us in a hundred cities, we will also give the <sup>p1.230</sup> territory of the *Lin Hu* <sup>4</sup> to you.

*Hsiang Tse* made obeisance again, and accepted the commands of the spirits.

What does that mean ? This was an augury of *Hsiang Tse's* future victory. The three States were beleaguering *Chin-yang* for over a year. They diverted the *Fên* <sup>5</sup> and flooded the town, so that only three blocks <sup>6</sup> of the city wall were not submerged. Viscount *Hsiang* frightened sent his minister *Chang Mêng T'an* to open secret negotiations with *Han* and *Wei*. They made an agreement with him, and on the *ping-hsü* day of the third month they completely annihilated *Chih*, and divided his country among them <sup>7</sup>. — Therefore the fluid of the supernatural portent was shaped like a man, and called itself the spirit of the *Huo-t'ai* Mountain, as the apparitions in the *Hsia* palace had the form of dragons, and called themselves Princes of *Pao* <sup>8</sup>. *Chien Tse's* omen had human shape, and pretended to be an envoy of God.

How do we know that it was not the spirit of the *Huo-t'ai* Mountain ?

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<sup>1</sup> The personal name of Viscount *Hsiang* (cf. p. 226).

<sup>2</sup> A mountain in *Yung-an-hsien* (*Shansi*) *Ho-tung* circuit.

<sup>3</sup> The reading of the *Shi-chi* : 'Marquis of Shan-yang (name of city) and Envoy of Heaven' seems preferable.

<sup>4</sup> A subdivision of the *Hu* tribes, probably Mongols.

<sup>5</sup> A tributary of the *Huang-ho*.

<sup>6</sup> One 'pan' block is said to measure 8 feet.

<sup>7</sup> So far the narration has been culled with some omissions and alterations from the *Shi-chi*, chap. 43, p. 12 v. seq.

<sup>8</sup> When the *Hsia* dynasty had begun to decline, two divine dragons made their appearance in the imperial palace, and said that they were two princes of *Pao*. Cf. *Shi-chi*, chap. 4, p. 25 ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 281](#)) which quotes the *Kuo-yü*.

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Because a high mountain is a formation of the earth just as bones and joints are of the human body. How can bones and joints be spiritual? If the high mountain had a spirit, it should be shaped like a high mountain. What people call ghosts is the essence of the departed, in appearance they are formed like living men. Now the high mountain was broad and long, and not at all like a man, but its spirit did not differ from a man. Such being the case, the ghost resembled a man, and since it was like a man, it must have been the fluid of a supernatural portent.

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In the 36th year of the reign of *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* <sup>1</sup> Mars offuscated the constellation of the Heart, and a star fell down.. When it reached the earth, it became a stone, on which were engraved the following words :

*Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* will die, and his land will be divided.

p1.231 When *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* heard of it, he ordered a censor to interrogate the people one by one, but nobody would confess. Whereupon the emperor had all the people living near the stone arrested and put to death. The weird stone he then caused to be destroyed by fire.

When his ambassador, coming from *Tung-kuan* <sup>2</sup>, had passed *Hua-yin* <sup>3</sup> at night-time, and come into the open country, a man with a jade badge in his bands happened to block his passage.

— Transmit this to the prince of the *Hao Lake* <sup>4</sup> for me', said the man,

and went on saying,

— This year the dragon ancestor will die.

The ambassador was just going to ask him for particulars, when the man disappeared, leaving his badge. This the ambassador took, and apprized the emperor of everything. *Ch'in Shih, Huang Ti* kept silent for a long while, then

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<sup>1</sup> 211 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> A place at the bend of the Yellow River in *Shensi*.

<sup>3</sup> A town half-way between *Tung-kuan* and *Hsi-an-fu*.

<sup>4</sup> The *Hao Lake* was near *Hsi-an fu*, the capital of *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti*, who is meant by the prince of the lake.

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he exclaimed,

— The spirit of the mountain knows only the affairs of one year. The dragon ancestor, of whom he speaks, must be a forefather, however.

He then gave orders to the imperial household to examine the badge. They ascertained that it was a badge which had been thrown into the *Yangtse*, while it was crossed in the 28th year of the emperor's reign <sup>1</sup>. The next year, the 37th of his reign, he had a dream that he was fighting with the spirit of the ocean, which was shaped like a man <sup>2</sup>.

What does this mean ? All these were auguries of *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti's* impending death. Having dreamt that he was trying conclusions with the spirit of the ocean, he entered into the sea in high dudgeon, waiting for the spirit, and shot at a huge fish. From *Lang-yeh* <sup>3</sup> to the *Lao* and *Ch'êng* Mountains <sup>4</sup> he did not perceive any, but having arrived at the *Chefoo* Mountain <sup>5</sup>, he again came p1.232 in view of enormous fishes, of which he killed one by a shot with his arrow <sup>6</sup>. Hence he proceeded along the sea-shore as far as *P'ing-yuan* <sup>7</sup> ford, where he was taken ill. When he had reached *Sha-ch'iu* <sup>8</sup>, he collapsed and breathed his last.

At the time of the falling star, Mars provoked the unlucky augury, therefore the people dwelling near the stone cut characters into it, as though they had done so purposely. The inscription was to the effect that *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* was going to die or to be killed. The queer sayings of children, of

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<sup>1</sup> 219 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> The foregoing are extracts from the *Shi-chi*, chap. 6, p. 24v. seq.

<sup>3</sup> On the south coast of *Shantung*.

<sup>4</sup> The *Shi-chi* writes *Yung-ch'êng* (*loc. cit.* p. 28). The *Lao shan* and the *Ch'êng shan* are two high mountain ranges in *Chi-mo* (*Kiao-chou*) reaching to the sea. The *Tu-shih fang yü chi yao*, chap. 36 rejects the reading *Yung-ch'êng*. The mountains must have been on the sea-shore, north of *Lang-yeh* and south of *Chefoo*, for this was the way taken by the emperor, as results from *Lun-hêng* Bk. IV, 9 (*Shu-hsü* [chap. 16]) and Bk. XXVI, 1 (*Shih-chih* [chap. 78])

<sup>5</sup> The *Chefoo* Promontory, forming the harbour of the treaty-port *Chefoo*.

<sup>6</sup> According to the *Shi-chi* the emperor shot those big fishes with a *repeating cross-bow* (*lien-nu*), (on which cf. my article on the Chinese Cross-bow in *Verhandlungen der Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie* 1896, p. 272).

<sup>7</sup> In the *Chi-nan-fu* préfecture, *Shantung*.

<sup>8</sup> In *Shun-té-fu* (*Chili*).

## Lun-hêng

which we hear sometimes, are likewise not of their own invention, but they have been inspired by some force. All such supernatural apparitions are either ghosts shaped like men, or men behaving like ghosts <sup>1</sup>. The principle is the same in both cases.

*Ch'ung Erh*, prince of *Chin* <sup>2</sup>, having lost his country, had nothing to eat on his journey <sup>3</sup>. He asked some labourers on the field for food, but they gave him a clod of earth <sup>4</sup>. The prince became angry, but *Chiu Fan* said to him,

— This is very auspicious. Heaven grants you earth and land <sup>5</sup>.

Subsequently the prince reconquered his country, and was re-instated upon his soil, as *Chiu Fan* <sup>6</sup> had predicted.

*T'ien Tan* of *Ch'i* <sup>7</sup>, defending the city of *Chi-mo* <sup>8</sup>, wished to deceive the army of *Yen*, therefore he said that the Spirit of Heaven had come down to help him. A man stepped forward and declared that he could act as the Spirit. *T'ien Tan* then went and still made obeisance before him. And, in fact, the rumour that a spirit had come down, spread among the soldiers of *Yen*. They believed in the spirit, and, when still further they had viewed the oxen shining in five colours, they became so alarmed by this belief, that the army <sup>p1.233</sup> was discomfited, and the soldiers routed <sup>9</sup>. *T'ien Tan* gained the victory, and could recover the lost territory. In these apparitions there were men resembling ghosts.

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<sup>1</sup> As though under a spell or a charm, which is the supernatural.

<sup>2</sup> Later Duke *Wên* of *Chin*, 634-627 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> Banished from *Chin*, he lived for many years in other States.

<sup>4</sup> This happened in *Wei*, whose prince had treated him discourteously.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Hsi* 23d year, where the incident is told, though with other words [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>6</sup> Called *Tse Fan* in the *Tso-chuan*.

<sup>7</sup> An official of *Ch'i*, who delivered his country from the invading army of *Yen*, in the 3rd cent. B. C.

<sup>8</sup> City in *Shantung*, near *Kiao-chou*.

<sup>9</sup> *T'ien Tan* used a similar stratagem as Hannibal. During the night he fantastically dressed 1000 oxen, tied sharp blades to the horns and greased rushes to their tails, and lighting these rushes let them loose against the enemy, who were taken by surprise and completely beaten by the men of *Yen* following in the rear. *Vid.* the biography of *T'ien Tan* in the *Shi-chi*, chap. 82, p. 3.

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When the ambassador passed *Hua-yin*, an individual, with a jade badge in his hands, blocked his passage, and went away, leaving him the badge. This was a ghost in human shape. The jade badge had been thrown into the *Yangtse* for the purpose of praying for happiness. Now, the badge was returned, which showed that the offer was not accepted, and that happiness could not be obtained.

The badge was like that which formerly had been submerged, but it was not really the same for the following reason. When a ghost appears in human shape, it is not a genuine man. If people, after having seen a ghost looking like a living man, thoroughly question other living men, they will find out that none of them have come to see them. Consequently a supernatural force has appeared to them in human form. Since this force has merely taken human shape, the things carried by the apparition cannot be real things either.

By the dragon ancestor, which was to die, *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* was designated. Ancestors are the root of mankind, and a dragon is an image of a sovereign. If there be a resemblance between man and other creatures, a disaster concerning one part likewise affects the other <sup>1</sup>.

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In the year of *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti's* death the Emperor *Han Kao Tsu* was a village-elder in *Sse-shang* <sup>2</sup>. As such he had to escort convicts to the *Li* <sup>3</sup> Mountain, but most of them escaped on the road. *Kao Tsu* then allowed those he had still in his power to run away, which they did never to return. *Kao Tsu*, who was under the influence of liquor, was continuing his journey through p1.234 a marsh at night, and had ordered a man to keep in front. This man came back and reported that there was a big snake in front, obstructing the way, and besought him to go back.

— What does a valiant warrior fear ?, asked *Kao Tsu* inebriated, and he went forward, drew his sword, and with one stroke cut the snake in

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<sup>1</sup> Therefore the death of the dragon implies the end of the emperor.

<sup>2</sup> The *Shi-chi* chap. 8, p. 2v. writes *Sse-shui*, which was a district in the present *Yen-chou-fu* (*Shantung*).

<sup>3</sup> A mountain near *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti's* mausoleum in *Shansi*, which was built by convicts.

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two. The path was free then. After he had proceeded still several miles, his intoxication caused him to fall asleep.

When *Kao Tsu's* companions arrived at the place, where the snake was lying, they found there an old woman crying over it in the silence of night. They asked her, wherefore she cried.

— A man has killed my son, replied the old woman.

— How was your son killed ?, asked the men.

— My son, said the woman, the son of the White Emperor, was transformed into a snake to keep watch on the path. Now the son of the Red Emperor has slain him, therefore I cry.

The men thought that the old woman was telling spook stories, and were going to give her a flogging, when the old woman suddenly disappeared <sup>1</sup>.

What does this signify ? It was a felicitous omen of *Kao Tsu's* rising to power. The old woman suddenly vanished. Since she became invisible, she cannot have been a human being, and not being human, she must have been a spectre. Since the old dame was not human, it is plain that the slain serpent was not a snake. The old woman spoke of it as the son of the White Emperor, but why did he become a snake, and block the road at night ? She asserted that the serpent was the son of the White Emperor and *Kao Tsu* that of the Red Emperor. Thus the son of the White Emperor would have become a snake, and the son of the Red Emperor, a man, whereas the Five Planetary Emperors <sup>2</sup> are all heavenly spirits. In one case the son would have grown a serpent, in the other, a man. Men and snakes are different creatures, whereas the Emperors all belong to the same class of beings. The human state of those sons would not be conformable to the laws of heaven.

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<sup>1</sup> The story is quoted from the *Shi-chi*, chap. 8, p. 5 [[Chavannes, Mém. Hist.](#)]. It is meant as a prophecy of the overthrow of the *Ch'in* dynasty by that of *Han*. The *Ch'in* used metal, to which the white colour corresponded, as the symbol of their power, whereas the *Han* relied on fire, which has a red colour. According to Chinese symbolism fire overcomes metal, ergo the *Ch'in* were doomed to be overpowered by the *Han*.

<sup>2</sup> The Five Planets which from ancient times were worshipped as deities. The Red Emperor is Mars, the White Emperor Venus.



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And further, if the snake was the son of the White Emperor, was the old woman the White Empress perhaps ? An empress must have her suite in front and behind, and an imperial prince, a large <sup>p1.235</sup> retinue of officials. Now, the snake died on the pathway, and an old woman cried on the road ! This makes it evident that her statement about the son of the White Emperor was not true. Not being a real prince, it was a semblance, and being a semblance, it was an apparition. Consequently, everything seen was not genuine and not being genuine, it was a fluid. The serpent slain by *Kao Tsu* was not a serpent.

When Duke *Li* of *Chêng* <sup>1</sup> was on the point of entering into his dukedom <sup>2</sup>, a snake in the city was fighting with one outside the city <sup>3</sup>, but they were not genuine snakes. It was a supernatural force marking Duke *Li's* entrance into *Chêng* under the form of contending snakes. The fighting serpents of the *Chêng* State were not snakes, hence we infer that the two dragons in the *Hsia* palace <sup>4</sup> were merely images of dragons likewise. Such being the case, we are convinced that the dragons, which were fighting during *Tse Ch'an* of *Chêng's* time <sup>5</sup>, have not been dragons.

The ways of Heaven are hard to understand. There are apparitions, when things are all right, and there are also some, when things go wrong.

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*Chang Liang*, Marquis of *Liu*, dealt a blow at *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* with a club, but by mistake hit one of the chariots of his retinue <sup>6</sup>. *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti*, infuriated, gave orders to search for *Chang Liang* everywhere, but he

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<sup>1</sup> 699-694 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> Duke *Li* had been forced to quit his country.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Chuang* 14th year [[Couvreur](#)]. The snake inside the city was killed.

<sup>4</sup> *Vid.* above p. 1.230.

<sup>5</sup> The *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Chao* 19th year (522 B. C.) relates :  
« There were great floods in *Ch'êng* ; and some dragons fought in the pool of *Wei*, outside the *Shi* gate. The people asked leave to sacrifice to them ; but *Tse Ch'an* refused it, saying, 'If we are fighting, the dragons do not look at us ; when dragons are fighting, why should we look at them ?' [[Couvreur](#), p. 302] (*Legge* Vol. V, P. II, p. 675).

<sup>6</sup> *Chang Liang* had engaged a bravo to deal the blow with an iron club or mallet weighing 120 pounds.

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changed his name and concealed himself in *Hsia-pei*<sup>1</sup>, where he had always leisure to stroll about at pleasure. Up the river *Sse*<sup>2</sup>, there was an old man in coarse clothes, who came to *Chang Liang's* place. He had just lost one shoe down the river, therefore he said to *Chang Liang*,

— Go down, and fetch me my shoe, my boy.

*Chang Liang* grew angry, and was going to give him a p1.236 beating, but noticing, how strong the old man looked, he repressed his feelings, and went down to fetch the shoe, which he offered him on his knees. The old man slipped it on his foot, and went away laughing. *Chang Liang* felt greatly excited.

When the old man had gone to about a Li's distance, he returned.

— You can be taught, my boy, he said. Five days hence, at sunrise, meet me here.

*Chang Liang* bewildered, knelt down and assented. After five days, at sunrise *Chang Liang* went, but the old gentleman had already arrived before him.

— Why must you come later, when you have an appointment with an old man ?, asked he angrily. Five days after my departure, very early, we will meet again.

After five days *Chang Liang* went again at cockcrow, but again the old man had arrived before, and repeated his angry question, wherefore he had arrived later.

— Five days after I have left, said he, come again very early.

On the fifth day *Chang Liang* went before midnight, and after a short while the old gentleman arrived.

— So you are right, said he, very pleased.

He then produced a pamphlet, which he gave him saying,

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<sup>1</sup> In the modern *P'ei-Chou* of *Kiangsu* province.

<sup>2</sup> Instead of *Sse* the *Shi-chi* writes : 'i', the 'bridge'.

## Lun-hêng

— Read it, and you will become preceptor to an emperor. After thirteen years you will see me. A yellow stone at the foot of Mount *Ku-ch'êng* in *Ch'i-pei* <sup>1</sup> that is I.

Whereupon he went away, saying nothing further, and was not seen again. At dawn *Chang Liang* looked at the book. It was 'T'ai Kung's <sup>2</sup> Strategy'. *Chang Liang* amazed, studied it very thoroughly <sup>3</sup>.

What was this? An augury of *Kao Tsu's* elevation by *Chang Liang's* assistance. *Chang Liang* lived ten years at *Hsia-pei* as a knight and a hero. When *Ch'ên Shé* <sup>4</sup> and his confederates rose in revolt, and the Governor of *P'ei* <sup>5</sup> visited *Hsia-pei*, *Chang Liang* joined them. Subsequently, he was made a general and ennobled with the title Marquis of *Liu*. Thirteen years later, when with *Kao Tsu* he crossed the *Ch'i pei* territory, he found a yellow stone at the foot of Mount *Ku-ch'êng*. He took it, stored it away, and worshipped it, and, when he died, it was buried with him.

p1.237 This yellow stone was a supernatural transformation conveying an omen. The metamorphoses of heaven and earth are most ingenious, for is it not wonderful to make an old man take the form of a yellow stone, and a yellow stone the form of an old man?

Some one might ask, whether the yellow stone was really an old man, and the old man really a yellow stone. A yellow stone cannot become an old man, nor an old man a yellow stone. The appearance of a supernatural portent made it look so.

During the time of Duke *P'ing* of *Chin* <sup>6</sup> a stone spoke in *Wei-yü* <sup>7</sup>. The duke asked the music-master *K'uang*, why the stone had spoken.

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<sup>1</sup> In *Tung-o* district (*Shantung*).

<sup>2</sup> The helpmate of *Wên Wang*, who had been invested with the marquisate of *Ch'i* in *Shantung* (cf. p. 172).

<sup>3</sup> The story is quoted from *Chang Liang's* Biography in the *Shi-chi*, chap. 55, p. 1 v, but somewhat abridged.

<sup>4</sup> A simple soldier who in 209 B. C. brought about an insurrection against *Erh Shih Huang Ti*, and assumed the title of a king of *Ch'u*.

<sup>5</sup> *Liu Pang* = *Kao Tsu*, at that time still governor of *P'ei* in *Kiangsu*.

<sup>6</sup> 556-531 B. C.

<sup>7</sup> A city in modern *T'ai-yuan fu* (*Shansi*).

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— A stone cannot speak, was the reply. Perhaps it was possessed by a spirit, otherwise the people have heard wrong <sup>1</sup>.

A stone cannot utter human speech, and so it cannot take human shape. The speaking of the stone is not different from the falling down of the stone in *Tung-chün* <sup>2</sup> in *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti's* time, which was engraved by the people <sup>3</sup>. Engraving gives an inscription, and talking, speech. Script and speech fall under the same law. The people engraved the inscription, and a force made the speech. The nature of the people and the force is the same. A stone cannot engrave itself, nor can it talk, and not being able to talk, it cannot become a man either. '*T'ai Kung's Strategy*' was formed by the force. How do we know that it was not real? Be-cause the old man was not a man, whence we infer that the book was not *T'ai Kung's Strategy* either. Since the force could take the likeness of a living man, it could liken itself to *T'ai Kung's Strategy* too.

The question may be raised, how a force could write characters, having neither knife nor pencil. — When *Chung Tse*, wife to Duke *Hui* of *Lu*, was born, she had on her palm the words: 'Future princess of Lu'. *T'ang Shu Yü* of *Chin* bore on his hand the character *Yü*, and *Ch'êng Chi Yo* of *Lu* the character *Yo* <sup>4</sup>. These three inscriptions have been written by a spontaneous nature, and thus the force had composed the old man's book of itself. The spontaneous nature and the self-producing force must be classed together with the self-speaking queer sayings of children. When children utter such strange things, they do not know, where they got them <sup>p1.238</sup> from, their mouths speak of themselves. The self-speaking mouths and the self-produced writing are the active agents so to say. This argument may serve as a cue for the better understanding of other events.

*T'ai Kung* angling caught a big fish, and, when he cut it open, there was a letter in it reading,

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<sup>1</sup> *Tso-chuan*, Duke Chao 8th year [[Couvreur](#)] (*Legge* Vol. V, Pt. II, p. 622).

<sup>2</sup> Circuit comprising the northern part of *Honan*, north of *K'ai-fêng-fu*.

<sup>3</sup> See above p. 1.230.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 1.095.

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*Lü Shang* <sup>1</sup> will be invested with *Ch'i*.

At *Wu Wang's* time, one caught a white fish, marked under its throat with the words,

Give it to *Fa* <sup>2</sup>.

There was truth in all this. In fine, the 'Plan of the Yellow River' and the 'Scroll of the Lo' <sup>3</sup> indicated the rise and fall, the progress and the decline, and the opportunities of emperors and kings. There certainly have been such writings. They were apparitions caused by a supernatural force and lucky or unlucky omens.

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<sup>1</sup> The surname of *T'ai Kung*, *Wên Wang's* associate, who later on became prince of *Ch'i*.

<sup>2</sup> The personal name of *Wu Wang*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 1.295.

## 65. Book XXII, Chap. II

### *Ting-kuei. All about Ghosts*

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p1.239 The ghosts that are in the world are not the vital spirits of the dead, they are evoked by intense thinking and meditating. Where do they originate ? — With sick people. When people are sick, they are inclined to melancholy and easily frightened. In this state of mind they see ghosts appear. People who are not sick, are not apprehensive. Thus, when sick people lying on their pillows are haunted with fears, ghosts appear. Their fears set them pondering, and when they do so, their eyes have visions. How can we prove this ?

*Po Lo*<sup>1</sup> was learning to distinguish horses ; everything he saw, when sight-seeing, took the form of horses. A cook in *Sung* was learning to dissect an ox. For three years he did not perceive a living ox, those he saw were all dead ones<sup>2</sup>. These two men strained their mental powers to the utmost. By dint of thinking and pondering they came to have strange visions. Sick men seeing ghosts are like *Po Lo* seeing horses or the cook seeing oxen. What *Po Lo* and the cook saw, were not real horses or oxen. Hence we know that the visions of the sick are not real ghosts either.

When sick people have a severe attack, and feel much pain in their bodies, they believe that ghosts with bamboos and sticks beat them ; and have the impression that ghosts with hammers, locks, and cords are standing by their side, watching. These are empty visions caused by pain and fear. When they first feel ill, they become alarmed, and see ghosts coming. When their disease grows more violent, that they fear to die, they see the ghosts incensed, and, when they feel pain, they have the idea that the ghosts are beating them. It is nothing but the effect of too much pondering, but there is

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<sup>1</sup> A somewhat legendary character, mentioned by *Chuang Tse* chap. 9, p. 1 [[Wieger](#)].

<sup>2</sup> For more details on this famous cook or butcher see *Chuang Tse* chap. 3, p. 1 [[Wieger](#)].

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no reality.

When the vital fluid <sup>1</sup> is thinking or meditating, it flows into the eyes, the mouth, or the ears. When it flows into the eyes, the p1.240 eyes see shapes, when it flows into the ears, the ears hear sounds, and, when it flows into the mouth, the mouth speaks something. At day-time ghosts appear, at night, during sleep, they are heard in dreams. If a person sleeping quite alone in a lonely house is nervous, he will see ghosts in his dreams, and, if anybody puts his hands on him, he will scream. What we see, while awake, or hear, while asleep, is all the work of our spirit, of fears and thoughts, which amounts to the same.

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There is an opinion that, when people see ghosts, their vision and their sleep are disturbed. If during the day their vigour is worn out, and their vital force exhausted, they desire to sleep at night. While they are asleep, their vision is distorted, hence their spirit perceives the images of men and things. When a person is sick, his vigour is worn out, and his vital force exhausted likewise. Although his eyes may not be asleep, their seeing power is still more disturbed than if they were. Consequently they also behold the shapes of men and things.

The sick see things, as if they were asleep. If they were not like dreaming, they ought to know, when they see something, whether they are awake, or dreaming. Since they are unable to distinguish, whether, what they see, are ghosts or men, it is evident that their vital force is exhausted, and their vigour worn out. The following will corroborate this.

Madmen see ghosts. They are mentally deranged, speak to themselves, and keep away from sane people, all owing to the severe form of their disease, and the disturbance of their vital force. When people are sick, and about to die, they are very much like madmen. All the three states : sleep, sickness, and insanity are accompanied by a decay of the vital force and a disturbance of vision. Hence all those people have visions of men and things.

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<sup>1</sup> We might translate mental fluid, for here the mental functions of the vital fluid are referred to, which is the bearer of life as well as the originator of mind, *animus* and *anima*.

## Lun-hêng

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Others say that ghosts are apparitions of the fluid of sickness. This fluid being stirred up strikes against other people, and by doing so becomes a ghost. It imitates the human shape, and becomes visible. Thus, when the fluid of very sick persons is in a state of excitement, it appears in human form, and the sick see it in this form. In case they fall sick in mountains and forests, the ghosts they see will be the essence of those mountains and forests, and, p1.241 if their sickness breaks out in *Yüeh*, they will behold people of that country sitting by their side. Accordingly, ghosts like that of *Kuan Fu* and *Tou Ying* <sup>1</sup> were apparitions of that particular time.

The fluid of this world is purest in heaven. The heavenly signs <sup>2</sup> present certain forms <sup>3</sup> above, and their fluid descends, and produces things. When the fluid is harmonious in itself, it produces and develops things, when it is not, it does injury. First it takes a form in heaven, then it descends, and becomes corporeal on earth. Hence, when ghosts appear, they are made of this stellar fluid. The bodies of the stars form men, beasts, and birds. Consequently sick people see the shapes of men, beasts, and birds.

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Some maintain that ghosts are the essence of old creatures. When creatures grow old, their essence forms a human being, but there are also those, which by their nature can be transformed, before they are old, and then take a human shape. If the fluid a man is endowed with, is the same as the essence of another creature <sup>4</sup>, there will be some relation between him and this creature, and, when it becomes sick, and its vital fluid begins to decline, it falls in with that person as a ghost. How can we prove that ?

Those creatures which people usually have to do with, appear to them as

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 1.217.

<sup>2</sup> The stars.

<sup>3</sup> The constellations.

<sup>4</sup> This seems to refer to the animals connected with the twelve cyclical signs (cf. p. 1.106). A man born under one of these signs is supposed to have been imbued with the same essence as the corresponding animal has.



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ghosts, for what difference is there between the ghosts seen by sick people and those sick creatures ? If people see ghosts resembling a dead man in his grave, who is coming to meet and call them, it is one of the domestic animals in their houses. If they see other ghosts, unknown to them previously, those ghosts are caused by other people's animals e. g. those in the open fields.

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According to another opinion ghosts originally live in men, and, when they cease to be men, they are transformed and disappear. The organisation of the universe is such, that these transformations take place indeed, but the votaries of Taoism cannot discuss this subject <sup>1</sup>.

p1.242 That which assaults men, is sickness. Sick people are doomed to die, but the deceased do not give up all intercourse with men. This will become clearer from the following :

The *Liki* tells us that *Chuan Hsü* <sup>2</sup> had three sons living who, when they died, became the ghosts of epidemics. One living in the water of the *Yangtse*, became the *Ghost of Fever*, the second in the *Jo* <sup>3</sup> was a *Water Spirit*, the third, dwelling in the corners of palaces and houses, and in damp store-rooms, would frighten children <sup>4</sup>. Anterior to *Chuan Hsü's* time there have been more sons living, consequently there must have been hundreds of spirits like those of *Chuan Hsü's* time. All spirits and ghosts possess a body, and there is a method to make them stand upright. Those who meet with people have all lived in good men, and acquired their fluid, hence in their appearance they are like good men. That which can injure the good is the fluctuating *Yang* and *Yin* fluid, as a fluid like that of the clouds and vapours it could not do so.

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Another idea is that ghosts are the spirits of the first and second cyclical

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<sup>1</sup> Their views are too phantastic, as can be seen from their works.

<sup>2</sup> A legendary ruler of the 26th cent. B.D.

<sup>3</sup> According to the 'Water Classic' a river in the south-east of China.

<sup>4</sup> This passage is not to be found in our *Liki*. According to the *Pei-wên-yün-fu* it is contained in the *Sou-shen-chi* (4th cent. A. D.).

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signs <sup>1</sup>. These spirits are a peculiar fluid of heaven. In their shapes they appear like human beings. When a man is sick, and about to die, the spirit of the first and second day makes its appearance. Provided that somebody falls sick on the first or second day, he will perhaps see the spirit of the seventh or eighth, when he dies. Why ? Because the ghost of the first and second day is the messenger of the seventh and eighth, therefore the person is taken ill on the first and second, and when his end is near, and the ghost that destroys him appears, it is the spirit of the seventh and eighth. This is evident from the fact that for a malady, that broke out on the first or second day, the crisis which decides on life and death, sets in on the seventh or the eighth.

Critics do not accept this view as correct. However, the ways of Heaven are difficult to understand, and ghosts and spirits abscond and hide. Therefore I have noted all the different opinions, that my contemporaries may judge for themselves.

p1.243 Some say that ghosts are creatures in no way different from men. There are spiritual beings in the world, usually staying beyond the frontiers, but from time to time coming to China, and mixing with men. These are malignant and wicked spirits, hence they appear to men, who are sick, and going to die. As a being created in this world man is like a beast or a bird. When demons are created, they also resemble men, or are like beasts or birds. Thus, unhappy families see corpses flying about, or crawling demons, or beings like men. All three are ghosts, they may be styled ghosts or demons, goblins or devils. They really exist, as long as they are, and are not empty, formless beings. How do we know ?

Commonly people who will be visited with misfortune see a ray of light descending on their homes, or they perceive something having the shape of a bird flitting several times into their hall, but on looking carefully, they discover that it is not like a bird, or an animal. Creatures having a body can eat ; by eating they acquire activity, and, if they give signs of activity, their body must be real.

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<sup>1</sup> The signs *chia* and *yi*.

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*Tso Ch'iu Ming* says in his *Ch'un-ch'iu* <sup>1</sup> :

They were banished into the four frontier States to repulse the goblins and devils <sup>2</sup>,

and the *Shan-hai-king* reports that in the North there is the Kingdom of the Ghosts <sup>3</sup>. They say that goblins are dragon-like creatures. Devils are also related to dragons, therefore they must resemble dragons. Moreover, a kingdom is defined as a congregation of men and other creatures.

The *Shan-hai-king* also relates that in the midst of the Green Ocean there is the *Tu So* Mountain, on which grows an enormous peach-tree. Its girth measures 3,000 Li. Between its boughs to the north-east there is the so-called door of the ghosts, where the ten thousand ghosts pass in and out. On the tree there are two spirits, one called *Shên Shu*, the other *Yü Lü*, who have the superintendence over all the ghosts. They bind the wicked ones, who have wrought evil, with reeds, and feed the tigers with them.

Subsequently *Huang Ti* worshipped for the purpose of expelling the ghosts for ever. He erected a huge human figure of peachwood and painted *Shên Shu* and *Yü Lü* along with tigers and cords <sup>p1.244</sup> of reeds hanging down on the house-doors, and thus frightened them away <sup>4</sup>.

Malignant devils have bodies, therefore they can be caught hold of, and thrown as food to tigers. Being eatable creatures, they cannot be unsubstantial or unreal. Yet these creatures have a different nature from that of man. Sometimes they are visible, sometimes hidden. In this respect they do not differ from dragons, which are not always visible either.

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Some people hold that anterior to a man's fortune or misfortune lucky or

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<sup>1</sup> In his commentary to the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, the *Tso-chuan*.

<sup>2</sup> Four wicked princes were cast out by *Shun* into the four distant regions. which were believed to be inhabited by devils. *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Wên* 18th year [[Couvreur](#)] (*Legge*, *Classic* Vol. V, Pt. I, p. 283).

<sup>3</sup> *Shan-hai-king* XII, 1.

<sup>4</sup> According to the *Fêng-su-t'ung* of the 2nd cent. A. D. this story is narrated in the *Huang Ti shu*, the Book of *Huang Ti*. On New-year's Eve the pictures of *Shên Shu* and *Yü Lü* are still at present pasted on the doorways as a talisman against evil spirits.

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unlucky apparitions become visible, and that, when a man is approaching his death, a great many miracles appear to him. Ghosts belong to these miracles. When apparitions and miracles come forth, they take human form, or they imitate the human voice to respond. Once moved, they do not give up human shape.

Between heaven and earth there are many wonders, in words, in sound, and in writing. Either does the miraculous fluid assume a human shape, or a man has it in himself, and performs the miracles. The ghosts, which appear, are all apparitions in human shape. Men doing wonders with the fluid in them are sorcerers. Real sorcerers have no basis for what they say, and yet their lucky or unlucky prophecies fall from their lips spontaneously like the quaint sayings of boys. The mouth of boys utters those quaint sayings spontaneously, and the idea of their oration comes to wizards spontaneously. The mouth speaks of itself, and the idea comes of itself. Thus the assumption of human form by the miracles, and their sounds are spontaneous, and their words come forth of their own accord. It is the same thing in both cases.

They say that during the time of *Chou*, ghosts cried at night outside the city, and that when *T'sang Hsieh*<sup>1</sup> invented the art of writing, ghosts wept at night likewise. If the fluid can imitate human sounds, and weep, it can also imitate the human shape, and appear in such a form, that by men it is looked upon as a ghost.

p1.245 A ghost that appears is an evil omen to somebody. When in this world fortune or misfortune approach, they are always accompanied by portents. These come slowly, not suddenly, and not in great numbers. According to the laws of nature, when a man is going to die, an unlucky phantom comes forth also, and, when a State is going to perish, an evil portent becomes visible. Conversely, when somebody is going to prosper, there are lucky omens, and, when a State is going to flourish, there are signs indicating this prosperity beforehand. Good and bad omens or portents are the same thing after all.

Now, however, the general belief is that ghosts are not a kind of portents,

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<sup>1</sup> A legendary personage.

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but spirits, which can hurt people. One does not understand the nature of portents, nor pay attention to the transformations undergone by the fluid of creatures. When a State is near its ruin, and a phantom appears, it is not this phantom which ruins the State. When a man is near his end, and a ghost comes forward, the ghost does not cause his death. Weapons destroy the State, and diseases kill man, as the following example will show.

When Duke *Hsiang* of *Ch'i* was going to be killed by robbers, he travelled in *Ku-fên*, and subsequently hunted in *Pei-ch'iu* <sup>1</sup>, where he beheld a big hog. His followers said :

— Prince *P'êng Shêng* ! <sup>2</sup>

The duke got angry, and said,

— *P'êng Shêng* dares to show himself ?

Then he pulled his bow, and shot the hog, which rose like a man, and howled. The duke became so panic-stricken, that he fell down in his carriage, hurt his foot, and lost one shoe <sup>3</sup>. Afterwards he was assassinated by robbers.

Those who killed duke *Hsiang* were robbers, the big hog which appeared on the road previous, was a portent indicating duke *Hsiang's* impending death. People called it *P'êng Shêng*, because it resembled him. Everybody knows that duke *Hsiang* was not killed by the hog. Therefore it would also be a great error to assert that ghosts can kill men.

The fluid of the universe which forms phantoms foreboding evil is the solar fluid. Phantoms are the same as poison. That part of the fluid which injures man, is called poison, that which is being transformed, a phantom. People say that the quaint ditties <sup>p1.246</sup> of boys are due to the influence of the Glimmering Star upon men. There is truth in these words. The Glimmering Star is the Fire Star (the planet Mars). Fire has a poisonous glare. Therefore, when Mars reigns in the sky during the night, it means a disaster and defeat

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<sup>1</sup> Two places in the *Ch'i* State, in *Shantung*.

<sup>2</sup> Prince *P'êng Shêng* was a half-brother of Duke *Hsiang* of *Ch'i*, who employed him to murder his brother-in-law, the duke of *Lu*. The people of *Ch'i* put *P'êng Shêng* to death. Cf. *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Huan* 18th year (693 B. C.) [[Couvreur](#), § 2].

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from the *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Chuang* 8th year, corresponding to 685 B. C. [[Couvreur](#)].

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for a State.

The fluid of fire flickers up and down, and so phantoms are at one time visible, at another not. A dragon is an animal resorting from the *Yang* principle, therefore it can always change. A ghost is the *Yang* fluid, therefore it now appears, and then absconds. The *Yang* fluid is red, hence the ghosts seen by people have all a uniform crimson colour. Flying demons are *Yang*, which is fire. Consequently flying demons shine like fire. Fire is hot and burning, hence the branches and leaves of trees, on which those demons alight, wither and die.

In the *Hung-fan* of the *Shuking* the second of the five elements is called fire, and the second of the five businesses speech <sup>1</sup>. Speech and fire are the same essence, therefore the ditties of boys and ballads are weird sayings <sup>2</sup>. The words come forth, and a composition is completed. Thus there are always writings full of the supernatural. They say that boys are of the *Yang* fluid <sup>3</sup>, hence the weird sayings come from small boys <sup>4</sup>. Boys and sorcerers have the *Yang* fluid in them, therefore at the great rain sacrifice in summer boys must dance, and sorcerers are exposed to the sun. According to the rites of this sacrifice the *Yin* principle, which has separated, is united with the *Yang* principle <sup>5</sup>.

In the same manner at an eclipse of the sun, when the *Yin* predominates <sup>6</sup>, an attack is made on the *Yin* of the land. As during an eclipse, while the *Yin* reigns supreme, everything belonging to the *Yin* fluid is being assaulted, so at the time of a drought, when the *Yang* is in the ascendant, the indignation is directed against all allies of the *Yang*. Sorcerers belong to this class. Therefore, p1.247 when Duke *Hsi* of *Lu* <sup>7</sup> was visited with

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<sup>1</sup> *Shuking, Hung-fan* Pt. V, Bk. IV, 5 and 6 (*Legge* Vol. III, Pt. II, p. 325 and 326).

<sup>2</sup> All weird things are manifestations of the *Yang*, the solar fluid, which is fiery.

<sup>3</sup> The *Yang* principle is male.

<sup>4</sup> The Chinese believe that popular songs and sayings foretelling future events, of which they have collections, are supernatural inspirations or revelations. Hence they bring them into connection with ghosts or supernatural beings. *Wang Ch'ung* falls back on the *Yang* principle as the origin of those quaint ditties.

<sup>5</sup> The *Yin* fluid is the rain.

<sup>6</sup> The sun is eclipsed by the moon, which belongs to the *Yin* fluid.

<sup>7</sup> 659-626 B. C.

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a drought, he had resolved to burn all the sorcerers. The sorcerers being imbued with the *Yang* fluid, there are for this reason a great many sorcerers in the *Yang* region (the South) <sup>1</sup>. The sorcerers are related to ghosts, accordingly sorcerers have something diabolical.

These sorcerers bear a certain resemblance to the boys singing those quaint ditties. The real sorcerers know how to determine luck and misfortune. Being able to do that, they are the messengers of fate <sup>2</sup>.

Thus the phantom of *Shên Shêng* <sup>3</sup> appeared in a sorcerer. Since they are filled with the *Yang* fluid, phantoms can appear in sorcerers. As *Shên Shêng* appeared as a phantom, we may infer that the Marquis of *Tu* <sup>4</sup>, *Chuang Tse Yi* <sup>5</sup>, and the malignant ghost <sup>6</sup> were likewise phantoms.

As the discontented spirit of the Marquis of *Tu* was a phantom, the bow and arrows used by him were the poison of this phantom. The phantoms assuming human shape, their poison must have resembled human weapons. The ghosts and their poison being of the same colour, the bow and arrows of the Marquis of *Tu* were all red. The poison was like a weapon used by man, therefore, when it hit a man, he died, when it hit him but slightly, he faded away, but did not die at once. His incurable disease was the effect of the poison.

Phantoms either emit their poison, but do not show themselves, or they show themselves, but do not emit any poison, or they produce sounds, which, however, do not form any words, or they make known their thoughts, but do

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<sup>1</sup> The South is the land of the sun, the *Yang* principle.

<sup>2</sup> The foregoing futile speculations are based on the gratuitous analogies, in which Chinese natural philosophers, starting from the *Yi-king*, indulge.

<sup>3</sup> Heir-apparent to Duke *Hsien* of the *Chin* State, by whom he was put to death in 654 B. C. We learn from the *Tso-chuan*, 10th year of Duke *Hsi* [[Couvreur](#)], that in 649 the ghost of the murdered prince appeared to an officer of *Chin*, and spoke to him. He told him that in seven days he would have a new interview with him through a wizard, and that he would take his revenge on Duke *Hui* of *Chin*. Cf. p. 1.203.

<sup>4</sup> The Earl of *Tu* had been unjustly put to death by King *Hsüan* of the *Chou* dynasty, 826-780 B. C. According to a legend the ghost of the murdered man appeared to the king while hunting. He was dressed in red, and carried a red bow and red arrows. One of these arrows he shot through the king's heart, who died on the spot. Cf. [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 278 Note 2](#). Vid. also p. 1.202.

<sup>5</sup> See p. 1.202.

<sup>6</sup> By which *Yeh Ku* of *Sung* was killed. Cf. chap. 76.

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not know their sounds. *Shên Shêng* showed himself and pronounced words, the Marquis of <sup>p1.248</sup> *Tu* became visible, and sent forth his poison. Queer songs, the ditties of boys, and the words on stones are thoughts uttered <sup>1</sup>. The music of the harp on the *P'u* River <sup>2</sup> and the wails of the ghosts in the suburb of *Chou* <sup>3</sup> were sounds produced.

At the appearance of ill omens, either mishap is impending, and the omens appear in advance, or misfortune comes, and is accompanied by those omens. In that case omens and poison are both at work. When omens appear beforehand, they cannot be poisonous. *Shên Shêng* was an omen seen before, the discontented ghosts of the Marquis of *Tu* and *Chuang Tse I* were phantoms appearing simultaneously with misfortune.

When King *Hsüan* of *Chou*, Duke *Chien* of *Yen* <sup>4</sup>, and *Yeh Ku* of *Sung* <sup>5</sup> were going to die, ill omens appeared, and the poison hit them. When Duke *Hui* of *Chin* was to be captured <sup>6</sup>, but not yet to die, merely a phantom made its appearance, but no poison shot forth. The appearance of the Earl of *Tu*, *Chuang Tse I*, and the discontented spirit however, were ill omens, announcing the impending deaths of King *Hsüan* of *Chou*, *Chien* of *Yen*, and *Yeh Ku*. *Shên Shêng* coming forward was an omen indicative of the captivity of Duke *Hui* of *Chin*. By *Po Yu* appearing in people's dream the deceases of *Sse Tai* and *Kung Sun Tuan* were foreshadowed <sup>7</sup>. The knitting of grass by the old man was an auspicious portent for the victory of *Wei K'o*, and for the capture of *Tu Hui* at that time <sup>8</sup>. The grey dog, by which the Empress *Lü Hou*

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<sup>1</sup> The thoughts of ghosts, uttered through the mouth of boys, singing queer songs, or mysteriously written on stones.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 1.220.

<sup>3</sup> See above p. 1.244.

<sup>4</sup> Duke *Chien* of *Yen*, 503-491 B. C. p. 1.202 speaks of Duke *Chien* of *Chao* and *Lun-hêng* Bk. IV, p. 5 of Viscount *Chien* of *Chao*.

<sup>5</sup> See chap. 76.

<sup>6</sup> Duke *Hui* of *Chin*, 649-635 B. C. In 644 the duke was taken prisoner by *Ch'in*.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. p. 1.208.

<sup>8</sup> *Wei K'o* was a commander of the forces of *Chin* in the 6th cent. B. C., with which he worsted those of the *Ch'in* State, and took their strongest man, *Tu Hui*, prisoner. He was supported during the battle by an old man twisting the grass in such a way as to impede the movements of his enemies. This old man was the spirit of the father of a concubine of *Wei Ko's* father, whom he had saved from death. Out of gratitude for the kindness shown to his daughter the spirit thus contributed to his victory and to the capture of *Tu Hui*. Cf. p. 1.211.



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was bitten, was the shape of a phantom showing that her death was near <sup>1</sup>. When p1.249 the Marquis of *Wu-an* was near his end, the portents had the mien of *Tou Ying* and *Kuan Fu* <sup>2</sup>.

In short, what we call lucky or unlucky omens, ghosts and spirits, are all produced by the solar fluid. The solar fluid is identical with the heavenly fluid. As Heaven can create the body of man, it can also imitate his appearance. That by which man is born are the *Yang* and the *Yin* fluids, the *Yin* fluid produces his bones and flesh, the *Yang* fluid, the vital spirit. While man is alive, the *Yang* and *Yin* fluids are in order. Hence bones and flesh are strong, and the vital force is full of vigour. Through this vital force he has knowledge, and with his bones and flesh he displays strength. The vital spirit can speak, the body continues strong and robust. White bones and flesh, and the vital spirit are entwined and linked together, they are always visible, and do not perish.

When the solar fluid is powerful, but devoid of the *Yin*, it can merely produce a semblance, but no body. Being nothing but the vital fluid without bones or flesh, it is vague and diffuse, and when it appears, it is soon extinguished again.

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<sup>1</sup> Vid. *Shi-chi* chap. 9, p. 8v. The Empress *Lü Hou* was bitten by a grey dog, which suddenly vanished. The diviners declared it to have been the phantom of *Ju I*, Prince of *Chao*, whom *Lü Hou* had assassinated. *Lü Hou* died of the bite [[Chavannes, Mém. Hist.](#)].

<sup>2</sup> *T'ien Fên*, Marquis of *Wu-an*, a minister of the Emperor *Han Wu Ti* had in 140 B. C. caused the death of his predecessor and rival *Tou Ying*. The ghost of the latter appeared to him, when he was about to die. The general *Kuan Fu*'s death was likewise the work of *T'ien Fên*. Cf. p. 1.217.

66. Book XXIII, Chap. I

*Yen-tu. On Poison*

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p1.298 Sometimes the following question is considered : Between heaven and earth there are the ten thousand beings with their characteristic nature. In the animal kingdom we find adders and vipers, bees and scorpions, which are poisonous. When their bite or sting has hurt a human body, the sickness which they cause must be most carefully treated, for without timely help, the virus spreads through the whole body. In the vegetable kingdom we have croton oil beans and wild dolichos, which, when eaten, cause a stomach-ache, and in large doses kill a man. What manner of fluid have these created beings received from heaven ? The ten thousand beings, when created, are endowed with the original fluid. Is there any poison in the original fluid ?

Poison is the hot air of the sun ; when it touches a man, he becomes poisoned. If we eat something which causes us such a pain in the stomach, that we cannot endure it, that which proves so unendurable is called poison. The fiery air of the sun regularly produces poison. This air is hot. The people living in the land of the sun are impetuous. The mouths and tongues of these impetuous people become venomous. Thus the inhabitants of *Ch'u* and *Yüeh* <sup>1</sup> are impetuous and passionate. When they talk with others, and a drop of their saliva happens to fly against their interlocutors, the arteries of the latter begin to swell and ulcerate.

The *Southern Circuit* <sup>2</sup> is a very hot region. When the people there curse a tree, it withers, and, when they spit upon a bird, it drops down. Wizards are all able to make people ill by their prayers as well as to avert their misfortunes. They hail from *Kiang-nan* <sup>3</sup>, and are imbued with the hot fluid. Poison is the fluid of the sun, therefore it burns like fire, when somebody is

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<sup>1</sup> *Hukuang* and *Chekiang*.

<sup>2</sup> *Hupei*.

<sup>3</sup> The country south of the *Yangtse*, now the provinces *Kiangsu*, *Kiangsi*, and *Anhui*.

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aspersed by it. When people bitten by a viper cut out the flesh, as p1.299 sometimes they do, and put it on the ground, it burns and bubbles up, which shows that there is a hot fluid in it. At the four cardinal points are borderlands, but the south-eastern corner alone has broiling hot air, which always comes forth in Spring and Summer. In Spring and Summer the sun rises in the south-eastern corner, which is the proper sphere of the sun.

When the air of other things enters into our nose or eyes, they do not feel pain, but as soon as fire or smoke enter into our nose, it aches, and, when they enter into our eyes, they pain us. This is the burning of the hot air. Many substances can be dissolved, but it is only by burning fire that they are scorched.

Eating sweets is not injurious to man, but, when for instance he takes a little too much honey, he has symptoms of poisoning. Honey is a secretion of the bee, and the bee is an insect belonging to the *Yang* fluid.

If a man without having hurt himself against anything in his movements feels a sudden pain in his body, for which there is no apparent reason, and if those parts of his body which pain him show marks of flogging so to speak, he suffers from lumbago. This lumbago, they say, is caused by devils who are beating the person. Devils are supernatural apparitions produced by the sun. If the disease be less acute, one calls it sciatica, and uses honey and cinnabar to cure it. Honey and cinnabar are substances belonging to the *Yang* fluid. This cure is homeopathic. As an antidote against a cold one uses cold, and against fever one uses heat. Since to cure sciatica they take honey and cinnabar, it shows us that sciatica is the effect of the *Yang* fluid and of the diffusion of a poison.

Poisonous air is floating between heaven and earth. When a man comes into touch with it, his face begins to swell, a disease which people call a sun-stroke.

Men who have seen ghosts, state that they have a red colour. The supernatural force of the sun must, of course, have this colour. Ghosts are burning poison ; the man whom they assault, must die. Thus did Earl *Tu*

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shoot King *Hsüan* of *Chou* dead <sup>1</sup>. The paraphernalia of these demons of death are like the fire of the sun. The bow as well as the arrow of *Tu Po* were both red. In the south they term poison 'small fox'. The apparition of Earl *Tu* had a bow in his hand, with which he shot. The solar fluid was kindled simultaneously, and, when it was thus intensified, it shot. p1.300 Therefore, when he bit the king, he seemed provided with bow and arrow.

When heat is pent up, and the temperature increased, the poison in the blood is stirred up. Therefore eating the liver of a race horse will cause a man's death, the fluid pent up in the liver having been chafed. During the dog-days, when a scorching heat prevails, people die by insulation ; the extreme heat has been turned into poison. We perspire, while running, near a stove, in the sunshine at noon, and, when we are feverish. The four causes have been different, but they all engender perspiration. The heat is the same, and it has been equally pent up.

Fire is a phenomenon of the sun. All created beings of the world are filled with the solar fluid and after their creation contain some poison. Reptiles and insects possessing this poison in abundance become vipers and adders, bees and scorpions, plants become croton seeds and wild dolichos, fishes become porpoises and 'to-shu' <sup>2</sup> fish. Consequently men eating a porpoise liver die, and the bite of a 'to-shu' is venomous. Fishes and birds are related, therefore birds can fly, and fishes too ; birds lay eggs, and fishes also. Vipers, adders, bees, and scorpions are all oviparous and have a similar nature.

Among mankind bad characters take the place of these creatures. Their mouths do mischief. The bad men of the world are imbued with a poisonous fluid. The poison of the wicked living in the land of the sun is still more virulent, hence the curses and the swearing of the people of southern *Yüeh* produce such wonderful results.

A proverb says, 'Many mouths melt metal'. The mouth is fire. Fire is the second of the five elements, and speech the second of the five actions <sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.202.

<sup>2</sup> *Kang-hi* quotes this passage, but does not say what kind of a fish the 'to-shu' is. It may be a variety of the *shu*, which seems to be a kind of sturgeon.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Shuking* (*Hung-fan*) Pt. V, Bk. IV, 5-6 [[Legge](#)] [[Couvreur](#)]

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There is an exact correspondence between speech and fire, therefore in speaking of the melting of metal one says that the mouth and the tongue melt it. They do not speak of pulling out wood and burning it, but expressly refer to the melting of metal. Metal is overcome by fire, fire and mouth belong to the same class <sup>1</sup>.

Medicinal herbs do not grow in one place only. *T'ai Po* left his country and went to *Wu* <sup>2</sup>. The melting of metal does not take <sub>p1.301</sub> place in one foundry alone. People speak very much of *T'ang-chi* in *Ch'u* <sup>3</sup>. The warm air on earth has its regions. One dreads to go into the southern sea, for the secretary falcon lives in the south, and he who drinks anything that has been in contact with it, must die <sup>4</sup>.

*Shên* appertains to the dragon and *ssě* to the snake. *Shên* and *ssě* <sup>5</sup> are placed in the south-east. The dragon is poisonous, and the snake venomous, therefore vipers are provided with sharp teeth, and dragons with an indented crust. Wood engenders fire, and fire becomes poison. Hence the 'Green Dragon' holds the 'Fire Star' in its mouth <sup>6</sup>.

Wild dolichos and croton seed both contain poison, therefore the dolichos grows in the south-east, and croton in the south-west. The frequency of poisonous things depends on the dryness and the humidity of the soil, and the strength of the poison is influenced by the locality, where they have grown. Snakes are like fish, therefore they grow in the grass and in marshes. Bees and scorpions resemble birds and are born in houses and on trees. In *Kiang-pei* <sup>7</sup> the land is dry ; consequently bees and scorpions abound there. In *Kiang-nan* the soil is wet, hence it is a breeding place for great numbers of

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<sup>1</sup> Another instance of Chinese symbolism, which they mistake for science.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 1.120.

<sup>3</sup> A place in *Honan* celebrated for its foundries. *Vid.* p. 1.377.

<sup>4</sup> *Chên*=secretary falcon has become a synonym for poison.

<sup>5</sup> The fifth and the sixth of the Twelve Branches (Duodenary Cycle of symbols).

<sup>6</sup> The 'Green Dragon' is the quadrant or the division of the 28 solar mansions occupying the east of the sky. The 'Fire Star' is the Planet *Mars*. *Mars* in the quadrant of the 'Green Dragon' forebodes war *i. e.* poison ; nothing but inane symbolism. (Cf. *Shi-chi* chap. 27, p. 6v.)

<sup>7</sup> The country north of the *Yangtse*, now the northern parts of the provinces *Kiangsu* and *Anhui*.

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snakes.

Those creatures growing in high and dry places are like the male principle. The virile member hangs down, therefore bees and scorpions sting with their tails <sup>1</sup>. The creatures living in low and wet places resemble the female principle. The female organ is soft and extensible, therefore snakes bite with their mouths <sup>2</sup>. Poison is either concealed in the head or the tail, whence the bite or the sting becomes venomous, or under the epidermis so that the eating causes stomach-ache, or it lies hidden in the lips and the throat, so that the movement of the tongue does mischief <sup>3</sup>.

p1.302 The various poisons are all grown from the same fluid, and however different their manifestations, internally they are the same. Hence, when a man dreams of fire, it is explained as altercation, and, when he sees snakes in his dreams, they also mean contention. Fire is an emblem of the mouth and the tongue ; they appear in snakes likewise, which belong to the same class, have sprung from the same root, and are imbued with the same fluid. Thus fire is equivalent to speed, and speech to bad men. When bad men say strange things, it is at the instigation of their mouths and their tongues, and the utterances of mouth and tongue are provoked by the influence heaven has exercised upon the persons in question. Consequently the second of the five actions is called speech.

The objectionable manifestation of speech is presumptuous error, symbolized by constant sunshine <sup>4</sup>.

Presumptuous error is extravagant and shining. In the same manner snakes are gaudily ornamented. All ornaments originate from the *Yang*, which produces them, as it were. Sunshine is followed by talk, which accounts for the weird songs so often heard <sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Which hang down likewise.

<sup>2</sup> Which are soft and extensible. — To such ineptitudes even the most elevated Chinese minds are led by their craze of symbolisation.

<sup>3</sup> The mischief done by the tongue in speaking, which is not only compared to, but identified with poison.

<sup>4</sup> *Shuking (Hung-fan)* Pt. V, Bk. IV, 34.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. p. 1.246 and above p. 1.300.

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The magical force engenders beauty, but the beautiful are very often vicious and depraved. The mother of *Shu Hu* <sup>1</sup> was a beauty. *Shu Hsiang's* <sup>2</sup> mother knew her, and would not allow her to go to the chamber of her husband. *Shu Hsiang* remonstrated.

— In the depths of mountains and in vast marshes dragons and snakes really grow, said his mother. She is beautiful, but I am afraid, lest she give birth to a dragon or a snake, which would bring mishap upon you <sup>3</sup>. You are of a poor family. In the States great favours are sometimes given, but what can the recipient of such favours do, when he is being slandered by malicious people. How should I be jealous of her ?

She then allowed her to go to her husband's couch, and she begot a son, named *Shu Hu*. Owing to his beauty and hero-like strength *Shu Hu* became a favourite of *Luan Huai Tse* <sup>4</sup> ; however, p1.303 when *Fan Hsüan Tse* expelled *Luan Huai Tse* <sup>5</sup>, he killed *Shu Hu*, and so brought misfortune upon *Shu Hsiang*.

The recesses of mountains and vast marshes are the places where dragons and snakes breed. *Shu Hu's* mother was compared to them, for under her charms the poison lay hidden. She bore a son, *Shu Hu*, whose beauty consisted in his hero-like strength. This strength grew from his beauty, and the disaster came from his strength.

Fire has splendour, and wood has a pleasant appearance. Dragons and snakes correspond to the east. Wood contains the essence of fire, hence its beautiful colour and graceful appearance. The gall being joined to the liver, courage and strength are produced. The force of the fire is violent, hence the great courage ; wood is hard and strong, hence the great strength. When

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<sup>1</sup> A half-brother of *Shu Hsiang*. His mother was a concubine of *Shu Hsiang's* father.

<sup>2</sup> An officer of *Chin*.

<sup>3</sup> Being an exceptional woman by her beauty, she would give birth to an extraordinary son — a dragon, and it would be dangerous for an ordinary man like her son *Shu Hsiang* to be a blood relation of such an extraordinary person, since fate likes to strike the exalted.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted from the *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Hsiang*, 21st year (551 B. C.) [[Couvreur](#), p. 369-370].

<sup>5</sup> Two noblemen of *Chin*, cf. p. 1.206.

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there is any supernatural apparition produced, it is through beauty that it brings about misfortune, and through courage and strength that it injures like poison. All is owing to beauty.

Generous wine is a poison ; one cannot drink much of it. The secretion of the bees becomes honey ; one cannot eat much of it. A hero conquers an entire State, but it is better to keep aloof from him. Pretty women delight the eyes, but it is dangerous to keep them. Sophists are most interesting, but they can by no means be trusted. Nice tastes spoil the stomach, and pretty looks beguile the heart. Heroes cause disasters, and controversialists do great harm. These four classes are the poison of society, but the most virulent poison of all is that flowing from the mouths of the sophists.

When *Confucius* caught sight of *Yang Hu* <sup>1</sup>, he retreated, and his perspiration trickled down, for *Yang Hu* was a glib-tongued man. The poison from a glib tongue makes a man sick. When a man has been poisoned, he dies alone, whereas a glib tongue ruins a whole State. Thus we read in the *Shiking* <sup>2</sup> :

Endless are the slanderous reports. They threw four States <sup>3</sup> into confusion.

Four States were thrown into confusion, how much more would be a single individual. Therefore a man does not fear a tiger, but dreads the calumniator's mouth, for his mouth contains the worst poison.

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<sup>1</sup> A powerful, but unworthy officer in *Lu*.

<sup>2</sup> *Shiking* Pt. II, Bk. VII, 5. [[Couvreur](#)] [[Legge](#)]

<sup>3</sup> Modern commentators explain the expression 四國 as meaning 'the four quarters of the empire'.



## 67. Book XXIII, Chap. II

### *Po-tsang. Simplicity of Funerals*

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p2.369 Sages and Worthies all are agreed in advocating simplicity of funerals and economy of expenses, but the world sets high store on expensive funerals, and there are many that do amiss by their extravagance and lavishness. The reason is that the discussions of *Confucianists* on this subject are not clear, and that the arguments put forward by the *Mêhists* are wrong. As to the latter, the *Mêhists* contend that men, after their death become ghosts and spirits, possess knowledge, can assume a shape, and injure people. As instances they adduce Earl *Tu* and others <sup>1</sup>. The *Confucianists* do not agree with them, maintaining that the dead are unconscious, and cannot be changed into ghosts <sup>2</sup>. If they contribute to the sacrifices and prepare the other funeral requisites nevertheless, they desire to intimate that they are not ungrateful to the deceased, and therefore treat them as though they were alive.

*Lu Chia* speaks like the *Confucianists* and, whatever he says, avoids giving a distinct answer. *Liu Tse Chêng* wrote a memorial on the simplicity of funerals, pleading for economy, but he did not exhaust the subject.

Thus ordinary people, on the one side, have these very doubtful arguments, and, on the other, they hear of Earl *Tu* <sup>3</sup> and the like, and note that the dead in their tombs arise and have intercourse with sick people whose end is near. They, then, believe in this, and imagine that the dead are like the living. They commiserate them that in their graves they are so lonely, that their souls are so solitary and without companions, that their tombs and mounds are closed and devoid of grain and other things.

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<sup>1</sup> These arguments of the *Mêhists* are refuted in chap. 62.

<sup>2</sup> This is *Wang Ch'ung's* opinion at least.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 1.202, Note 2.

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Therefore they make dummies to serve the corpses in their coffins, and fill the latter with eatables, to gratify the spirits. This custom has become so inveterate, and has gone to such lengths, that very often people will ruin their families and use up all their property for the coffins of the dead <sup>1</sup>. They even kill people to p2.370 follow the deceased into their graves, and all this out of regard for the prejudices of the living. They ignore that in reality it is of no use, but their extravagance is eagerly imitated by others. In their belief, the dead are conscious and do not distinguish themselves from the living.

*Confucius* condemned these practices, but could not establish the truth, and *Lu Chia*, in his essay, does not adopt either alternative. The memorial of *Liu Tse Chêng* does not do much to elucidate the assertion of the *Confucianists* that the dead are unconscious, or the arguments of the *Mêhists* to the effect that they are conscious. The subject not being borne out by proofs, and the question not being settled by evidence, there is nothing but empty words and futile talk, and even the views of the most honest people do not find credence. Therefore, the public remains wavering and ignorant, and those who believe in a lucky and unlucky destiny, dread the dead, but do not fear justice ; make much of the departed, and do not care for the living. They clear their house of everything for the sake of a funeral procession.

Provided that the disputants and men of letters have proofs such as Earl *Tu* adduced by the *Mêhists*, then the truth that the dead are unconscious can be borne out, and the advice to be economical and not to squander too much money on burials, be substantiated. Now the *Mêhists* say that the *Confucianists* are wrong, and the *Confucianists* think the same of the *Mêhists*. Since they both have their different tenets, there is such a discrepancy of opinions, and a consensus so difficult to be attained.

In this dispute of the two schools, the problem of life and death has not yet been solved, nobody having ever been resuscitated by sacrifices. As a matter of fact, the dead are hidden from our view, being dissolved and belonging to another sphere than the living, and it is almost impossible to have a clear conception of them. Unless, however, their state of

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<sup>1</sup> A practice still prevailing in our time.

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consciousness or unconsciousness be ascertained, the true nature of ghosts cannot be determined. Even men of great learning and able scholars may be unfit to discover the truth, though they avail themselves of all the old and modern literature, plunging into the works of the various schools of thought, and perusing them page after page and paragraph after paragraph. To attain this aim there must first be a holy heart and a sage mind, and then experience and analogies are to be resorted to. If anybody in his reasoning does not use the greatest care <sup>p2.371</sup> and discernment, taking his evidence indiscriminately from without, and thus establishing right and wrong, he believes in what he has heard or seen from others, and does not test it in his mind. That would be reasoning with ears and eyes, and not with the heart and intellect. This reasoning with ears and eyes conduces to empty semblances, and if empty semblances be used as proofs, then real things pass for fictions. Ergo, right and wrong are independent of eyes and ears, and require the use of the intellect.

The *Mêhists*, in their investigations, do not inquire into things with their mind, but thoughtlessly believe the reports of others. Consequently, they fail to find the truth in spite of the plainness of their proofs. An opinion incompatible with truth, however, is not apt to be imparted to others, for though they may have the sympathies of illiterate people, they do not find favour with the learned. It is owing to this that the maxim of the *Mêhists* that all expenses for the various things employed at funerals are unprofitable does not gain ground.

A man of *Lu* was going to put cat's-eyes into a coffin. *Confucius*, upon hearing of it, went across the court-yard, passed over the steps (of the hall), and remonstrated ; this was a breach of *etiquette*. The intention of *Confucius* was to avert a calamity <sup>1</sup>. Calamities very often originate from covetousness. Cat's-eyes are precious stones ; when the man of *Lu* put them into the coffin,

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<sup>1</sup> We learn from the 'Family Sayings' that, when a member of the *Chi* family had died, they were going to put cat's-eyes into his coffin, as is customary for princes, and to bestow pearls and jade upon him. *Confucius*, just then governor of *Chung-tu*, hearing of it, ascended the steps and interfered saying, 'To inter a man with precious stones is like exposing a corpse in the open plain, and thus affording people an opportunity of gratifying their wicked designs'. *Chia-yü* IX, 16r.  
On the old custom of filling the mouths of deceased princes with jade and other

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wicked people spied it out, and their greed was roused. The desires of wicked people having been excited, they do not fear laws or penalties, and break tombs open. *Confucius*, from some insignificant indications, foresaw this result, therefore he crossed the court, ascended the steps (of the hall), and, in order to avert this calamity, straightforth made his remonstrance. But since he did not show that the dead are deprived of consciousness, barely limiting himself to a remonstrance, on the ground that the grave might be violated, people would not have listened to him, even though he had possessed the same influence on mankind as *Pi Kan*. Why ? Because the wealth <sup>p2.372</sup> of the feudatory lords was so great, that they were not apprehensive of poverty <sup>1</sup>, and their power so strong, that they did not fear a desecration of their graves.

Thus, the doubts concerning the dead were not solved, and for a dutiful son the best plan was to follow the advice imposing upon him the heaviest obligations. Had it been plainly shown that the dead have no knowledge, and that sumptuous burials are of no advantage, the discussion would have been closed, and the question settled, and after it had been made public, the custom of using cat's-eyes would have been abandoned, and there would have been no occasion for crossing the court-yard and remonstrating. Now, the problem was not solved, and barely a strong protest made. That is the reason why *Confucius* could not carry through his doctrine.

*Confucius* perfectly well understood the true condition of life and death, and his motive in not making a clear distinction is the same which appears from *Lu Chia's* words. If he had said that the dead are unconscious, sons and subjects might perhaps have violated their duties to their father and sovereign. Therefore they say that the ceremony of funeral sacrifices being abolished, the love of sons and subjects would decrease ; if they had decreased, these persons would slight the dead and forget the deceased, and, under these circumstances, the cases of undutiful sons would multiply. Being afraid that he might open such a source of impiety, the Sage was reluctant to speak the truth about the unconsciousness of the dead.

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precious objects see [De Groot, Religious System Vol. I, p. 269 seq.](#)

<sup>1</sup> They could afford to put precious things into the grave.

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However, different spheres must not be confounded. The care taken in abundantly providing for the wants of the living leads to moral perfection, but how does carelessness about the dead interfere with it ? If the dead possess knowledge, then a disregard might have evil consequences, but if they are unconscious, a neglect cannot cause any injury. The conviction of their unconsciousness does not necessarily lead to an ill-treatment of the dead, whereas the ignorance of this fact involves the living in ruinous expense.

A dutiful son nursing a sick parent before his death, calls in the diviners and requests the services of physicians with the hope that the malady may be expelled, and the medicines prove efficacious. But, after the death of his parent, nobody — be he as wise as *Wu Hsien* <sup>1</sup>, or as clever as *Pien Ch'io* — can bring him back to life <sup>p2.373</sup> again, well knowing that, when, by death, the vital fluid is destroyed, there is absolutely no help, and no treatment whatever would be of any benefit to the dead. Is there any great difference in an expensive funeral ? By supineness with regard to the deceased, people fear to violate the moral laws, but would it not likewise be an impiety to dismiss the diviners and keep the physicians from the dead ?

As long as a parent is alive, he takes an elevated seat in the hall, but, after death, when buried, stays under the yellow springs <sup>2</sup>. No human being lives under the yellow springs, yet those burying the dead have not the slightest scruples about it, because the dead inhabit quite a different region, and cannot live together with the living. If they were to be taken care of like living people, and supposed to take offence, they ought to be buried in their house and be close to the living. Those ignorant of the unconsciousness of the dead, are afraid that people might offend against their parents. They only know that, having been buried, they live under the yellow springs, but do not think of the separation from their ancestors <sup>3</sup>.

When a parent is in jail, and his case still pending, a dutiful son hurries about, to rescue him from this danger, but after the case has been tried, and

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<sup>1</sup> Or the diviner *Hsien* who lived under the *Yin* dynasty and is mentioned in the Preface of the *Shuking*. Cf. [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 191, Note 1.](#)

<sup>2</sup> In *Hades*.

<sup>3</sup> Therefore they treat them, as if they were still alive and together with the living.

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a penalty has been fixed, there is no escape left, and even a *Tsêng Tse* or a *Min Tse Ch'ien* <sup>1</sup> could do nothing but sit down and weep. All schemes would be in vain and lead to useless trouble. Now, the souls of deceased parents decidedly have no consciousness, and are in a similar position to imprisoned parents who cannot be rescued from their punishment. Those who ignore the unconsciousness, apprehend lest people should show a disregard for their ancestors, but do not take exception that, when punishment is settled, parents are abandoned.

When a sage has established a law furthering progress, even if it be of no great consequence, it should not be neglected ; but if something is not beneficial to the administration, it should not be made use of in spite of its grandeur. Now, how does all the care bestowed on the dead benefit mutual good feeling, and how could any disregard or neglect violate any law ?

*Confucius* further said that 'spirit vessels' are not substantial, but merely symbolical and imaginary. Therefore puppets are made to resemble men, and effigies like living persons. In *Lu* they used <sup>p2.374</sup> dummies for burials. *Confucius* sighed, seeing in this custom an indication that living men would be interred together with the dead <sup>2</sup>. This sigh was an expression of grief, and if (at funerals) things had to be used as if for the living, he warned against an overstraining of this principle. Dummies being buried, it was to be feared that later on, living men might be forced to accompany the dead <sup>3</sup>, but why did *Confucius* not consider the possibility that for 'spirit vessels', real vessels might be placed in the graves in future ? <sup>4</sup> He obviated human sacrifices, but did nothing to prohibit the use of funeral gifts. He valued human life so much, that he was afraid of wasting it, and he felt pity for the individual but no sympathy for the State <sup>5</sup>. In this his reasoning was wrong.

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<sup>1</sup> Two prominent disciples of *Confucius*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Liki, T'an-kung* p. 52r. ([Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 173](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>3</sup> This was not likely, for, historically speaking, human sacrifices precede, but do not follow the use of dummies buried together with the dead.

<sup>4</sup> Real vessels are, likewise, antecedent to the so called 'spirit vessels', made of straw or clay, and merely symbolical and commemorative of an ancient custom that had fallen into desuetude.

<sup>5</sup> The State became impoverished by extravagant funerals.

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In order to prevent the water from leaking out, one must stop all the holes, then the leakage ceases. Unless all the holes be stopped, the water finds an outlet, and having an outlet, it causes damage. Unless the discussion on death be exhaustive, these extravagant customs are not stopped, and while they are going on, all sorts of things are required for burials. These expenses impoverish the people, who by their lavishness bring themselves into the greatest straits.

When *Su Ch'in* was envoy of *Yen*, the people of *Ch'i* were in the habit of erecting enormous sepulchres, filled with heaps of valuables. *Su Ch'in* personally did nothing to incite them. When all their wealth was gone, and the people greedy for money, the exchequer empty, and the army good for nothing, the troops of *Yen* suddenly arrived. *Ch'i* was unable to stand its ground : the State was ruined, the cities fell, the sovereign left his country, and his subjects dispersed <sup>1</sup>. Now, as long as people are in the dark, regarding the unconsciousness of the dead, they will spend all their money for the sumptuous burial of a parent, and be ruined in the same manner as *Ch'i* was by the cunning of *Su Ch'in*.

The device of the *Mêhists* is self-contradictory : on the one side, they advocate a simple burial, and on the other, they honour <sup>p2.375</sup> ghosts. To justify this veneration, they refer to Earl *Tu*, who was a dead man. If Earl *Tu* be deemed a ghost, then all the dead really possess knowledge, and if they do, they would be incensed at the shabbiness of their burials.

There is a general craving for luxuriance and a strong aversion to paucity. What advantage, therefore, would the veneration of ghosts bring to those guilty of mean burials ? Provided that ghosts be not dead men, then the belief in Earl *Tu* is preposterous, if, however, ghosts be dead men, then a mean burial would not be proper. Thus theory and practice of the *Mêhists* are inconsistent, head and tail do not agree, and it cannot but be wrong. But right and wrong not being understood, cannot be practised. Therefore the public should carefully consider what has been written, and having done so, they

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 2.047.

## Lun-hêng

may bury their dead in a simple style <sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *De Groot* in his [Religious System Vol. II, p. 659](#) speaks at great length of the reaction against expensive funerals, but does not mention *Wang Ch'ung* as an advocate of economy. He calls attention to two chapters of the *Lü-shih-ch'un-ch'iu*, recommending simplicity in burials, and to the disquisitions of *Wang Fu* of the 2nd cent. A. D. Later on, *Chu Hsi* was in favour of plain funerals, but the exaggerated ideas on filial piety have counteracted all reasonable arguments.



## 68. Book XXIII, Chap. III

### *Sse-hui*. Four Things to be Avoided

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p2.376 There are four things which, according to public opinion, must be avoided by all means. The first is to build an annex to a building on the west side, for such an annex is held to be inauspicious, and being so, is followed by a case of death. Owing to this apprehension, nobody in the world would dare to build facing the west. This prohibition dates from days of yore.

We have a record that [Duke *Ai* of *Lu* <sup>1</sup> wished to build an annex to the west. The astrologer opposed this scheme as unpropitious. Duke *Ai* flushed up and got angry ; his attendants remonstrated several times, but he would not hear and asked the prime minister *Chih Sui* saying,

— I wish to build an annex on the west side, and the astrologer declares it to be unpropitious. What do you mean ?

— There are three unpropitious things in the world, replied *Chih Sui*, but building an annex on the west side is not among them.

The duke cheered up, and shortly afterwards again asked which were the three unpropitious things. The other said,

— Not to act fairly and justly is the first unpropitious thing. To give way to one's unrestrained desires is the second, and not to listen to a proper remonstrance is the third.

The duke became meditative and, having pondered for awhile, he frankly acknowledged his fault and changed his mind. The annex was not built] <sup>2</sup>, for the astrologer and the prime minister both received the order to stop building.

The annex in the west caused useless trouble, it is true, but we know not

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<sup>1</sup> 494-468 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from *Huai Nan Tse* XVIII, 18v.

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whether it was auspicious or inauspicious. Should the astrologer and *Chih Sui* have been of opinion that an annex in the west was inauspicious indeed, then both would be on a par with the common people of the present day <sup>1</sup>. On all the four sides of a house there is earth ; how is it that three sides are not looked upon as of ill omen, and only an annex in the west is said to be unpropitious ? How could such an annex be injurious to the p2.377 body of earth. or hurtful to the spirit of the house ? In case an annex in the west be unpropitious, would a demolition there be a good augury ? Or, if an annex in the west be inauspicious, would it be a lucky omen in the east ? For if there be something inauspicious, there must also be something auspicious, as bad luck has good luck as its correlate.

A house has a form, and a spirit disposes of good and bad luck ; a cultivation of virtue leads to happiness, and an infringement of the laws brings about misfortune. Now, if an annex in the west is believed to be unpropitious, where must it be built to be propitious ? Moreover, who is it that takes exception at people extending their house to the west ? Should earth resent it, what damage does it do to earth, if the west side of an eastern house be enlarged and, at the same time, the east side of a western building be diminished ?

Provided that the spirit of the house dislike an annex to the west, a spirit resembles man, and every man would gladly see his residence enlarged ; for why should he dislike it ? Supposing that the spirit of the house dislikes the trouble caused by the alteration, then all annexes on the four sides ought to be ill-omened.

The experts in the various arts and professions, in explaining omens, specify the different cases. The house builders state that in erecting a house mischievous spirits may be met with, in removing one's residence care should be taken to avoid the spirits of the year and the months, in sacrificing, certain days may be encountered when bloodshed is to be shunned, and in burying one may fail against the odd and even days. In all these instances these prohibitions are given in view of ghosts and spirits, and evil influences. Those who do not avoid them, fall sick and die, but as for building an annex in the

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<sup>1</sup> Common people believe in these superstitions.

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west, what harm is there, that it is held to be inauspicious, and how does the subsequent calamity manifest itself ?

Properly speaking, this prohibition of something inauspicious is based on reason, and not to be observed on account of good or bad luck : The west is the region of elders and the seat of the honoured. The honoured and the elders being in the west, the inferiors and youngsters are in the east. The superiors and elders are the masters, the inferiors and youngsters, their assistants. Masters are few, and assistants many. There can be no two superiors above, but there are a hundred inferiors below. When in the west an addition is made to the master <sup>1</sup>, whereas the assistants are not <sup>p2.378</sup> increased, there are two superiors, but not a hundred inferiors (for each). That is contrary to justice, and therefore called unpropitious <sup>2</sup>. Being unpropitious it should not be done. Yet though being contrary to justice, it is not of ill omen for the following reason :

A tomb is a place where a dead man is interred ; a field one whence man gets his food and drink ; and a house the place where man lives. In respect to auspiciousness these three places are the same for man. Now, an annex to a house in the west is considered inauspicious, whereas nobody pretends the same of an annex made in the west of a tomb or a field. A tomb, being the residence of a dead man, is somewhat neglected and treated with indifference, and in a field which is not inhabited by man, the distinction between superiors and inferiors is not drawn. In a house old and young live together, therefore great care is taken to carry out this idea, and the prohibition is insisted upon. The rule is diligently observed in houses, but great laxity prevails in regard to graves and fields.

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The second thing to be avoided is that a convict having suffered corporeal punishment ascends a tumulus. People merely know that this should not be

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<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, when a new building is erected in the west for the use of a second master. The other possibility that the new building is destined for the one master to enlarge his dwelling, is not taken into account.

<sup>2</sup> The *Fêng-su t'ung*, quoted in the *Pei-wên-yün-fu*, gives a similar reason : The west is the seat of the superiors, and a new building in this direction would be hurtful to them.

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allowed, but do not understand the reason of this interdiction, and if you inquire of those insisting upon this prohibition, they ignore the meaning of this avoidance ; nor do those complying with this advice trouble much about it. One imitates the other ; this goes so far, that when the father and the mother of a culprit die, he does not bury the dead, and being near their tomb, does not venture to approach and inter them. He does not even condole, and looks upon the coffin as if it belonged to a stranger.

A good man, being convicted, after having suffered corporeal punishment is called a convict <sup>1</sup>. Such a one may ascend a tumulus. The two parents after their death are said to be deceased. What difference is there between a house and a tomb, or between living and deceased parents ?

If convicts be reproved by their ascendants for having suffered punishment, then they ought not to enter their home, or see their parents either, and if, on the other hand, convicts be not allowed <sup>p2.379</sup> to have commerce with the dead, then, when their parents have expired in their hall, they should not cry by their coffins. If, in fine, convicts be not permitted to ascend a tumulus, then they should not be allowed to mount hills or mountains either.

Which reasons have those people to give who enforce this prohibition ? As a matter of fact, there are two reasons why convicts do not ascend a tumulus ; the injunction is based on these causes, and there can be no question of any avoidance of unlucky influences :

The convicts are aware that their ancestors have generated them complete, and that the descendants should also return their bodies complete. [Wherefore *Tsêng Tse* being ill called to him the disciples of his school, and said,

— Uncover my feet, uncover my hands. . . . Now and hereafter, I know my escape, my young friends.] <sup>2</sup>

*Tsêng Tse* was so considerate, that before his end he wanted to show that his body was intact, and he was glad that he had escaped all bodily injury.

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<sup>1</sup> Even a good man may innocently suffer punishment and thus become a convict.

<sup>2</sup> [Analects VIII, 3](#) [Couvreur].

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*Confucius* said,

— The body, the hair, and the skin, we received them from our parents, and dare not impair them <sup>1</sup>.

A dutiful son dreads falling into the clutches of the law : the cutting and branding of the body as well as the disfiguring and scathing of the hair and the skin, are the upshot of a lack of virtue, of unworthy dealings, and carelessness. A criminal is ashamed of having suffered the disgrace of a punishment, and most earnestly reproaches himself. It is for this reason that he does not ascend a tumulus.

According to the ancient rites, the sacrifices to ascendants were performed in temples, the modern custom is to offer them at the grave. Consequently, a convict does not ascend a tumulus out of shame lest he should cause displeasure to his ascendant. That is the first reason.

A tomb is the abode of ghosts and spirits. As regards the place of sacrifice and the sacrificial rites, it is of the utmost importance that there should be penance and absolute purity. Now, people that have suffered punishment are disgraced, and not fit to attend at an offering, or to worship their ascendants. Their modesty and reverence demand that they should retire and humiliate themselves, for their ancestors, remarking that their descendants have <sup>p2.380</sup> suffered punishment, would commiserate them, and feel unhappy, and most likely, at the sacrifice, not be able to enjoy the offering. This is the second reason why the former do not ascend a tumulus.

In times of old, *T'ai Po* noticed that *Wang Chi* had a holy son, *Wên Wang*, and he knew that *T'ai Wang* wished to raise him to the throne. Therefore he repaired to *Wu*, where he collected medicinal herbs, cut off his hair, and tattooed his body, to follow the customs of *Wu*. At the decease of *T'ai Wang*, *T'ai Po* returned, and *Wang Chi* intended to yield the supreme power to him. *T'ai Po* again declined, but *Wang Chi* would not hear of it. So he declined three times, saying,

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<sup>1</sup> See *Liki, Chi-yi* ([Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVIII, p. 229](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

## Lun-hêng

— I went to *Wu* and *Yüeh*, and, in accordance with their customs, cut off my hair, and tattooed my body. I am like a man who has been subjected to torture, and cannot be the chief of the ancestral temple and of the altars of the land and grain.

*Wang Chi* admitted that it was impossible, and, much against his will, accepted his resignation <sup>1</sup>.

A convict not ascending a burial mound is like *T'ai Po* declining the royal dignity, which means that he is unqualified to perform the sacrificial rites, but not, to conduct the funeral, when a coffin is to be buried.

At the burial of a descendant the ancestors are grieved, and the aspect of a convict fills them with sorrow. When such a person, worthy of pity, buries somebody whose death is a cause of grief to his ascendants, the latter, provided that they are conscious, would feel grieved at the death, and commiserate the disgrace of their descendant, wherefore then should he be abashed ? Should they be unconscious, then the burial mound is nothing but a piece of uncultivated land, and there is still less any occasion for shame.

These convicts are said to stand abashed before their ascendants, because their body is mutilated by torture and not like that of other people. Anciently, by torture the body was in fact, racked, and did not remain intact, which may have rendered it unfit. But, at present, the penalties are merely symbolical <sup>2</sup>, the gravest consisting in shaving the head and in an iron collar. The lesser delinquents whose punishments are less than forced labour at building a wall, may wear coloured silk dresses and caps and girdles different to those worn by common people, why should they be unfit for a funeral ? The public believes them all to be obnoxious, and p<sub>2.381</sub> carries its error to the length of not allowing such persons to condole at the death of a fellow-villager, or to ascend the tumulus of a stranger ; a great mistake this.

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The third thing to be shunned is a woman who, having born a child, is believed to bring ill-luck. Those who have some lucky undertaking in hand, go

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.120 and 1.131, where *Wang Chi* is called 'king *Chi*' or *Chi Li*.

<sup>2</sup> *Vid.* p. 2.081.

## Lun-hêng

far away into mountains and forests, traversing streams and lakes, and have no intercourse with such a woman. They even avoid coming near her house, and only, after having passed a month in the huts on burial grounds and on the roads, they return. The unexpected sight of the woman appears to them very unlucky.

If we study the question carefully, on what is this dislike based ? When a woman gives birth to a child, it comes into the world, filled with the original fluid. This fluid is the finest essence of Heaven and Earth, how could it be harmful and detestable ? Man is an organism, and so is a child. What difference is there between the birth of a child and the production of all the other organisms ? If human birth be held to be baleful, is the creation of the myriads of organisms baleful too ?

The new-born issues with the placenta. If the placenta be deemed foreshadowing evil, the human placenta is like the husk <sup>1</sup> of fruits growing on trees ; wrapped round the infant's body, it comes out with it like the egg-shell of a young bird. What harm is there to justify people's aversion ? Should it be due to its supposed inauspiciousness, then all organisms with husks and shells ought to be detestable.

There is such a plethora of organisms, that I am at a loss where to begin with my deductions : Human birth does not distinguish itself from that of the Six Domestic Animals <sup>2</sup>. They are all of them animated beings with blood, that breed and bring forth their young not otherwise than man. Yet the aversion applies to human birth only, and does not include that of animals. Is it perhaps in view of the bigness of the human body and of the quantity of its vital fluid and its blood ? But the size of an ox or a horse is much greater than that of man.

p2.382 If, with reference to distasteful objects, there is no equality, and only one singled out, irrespective of its similarity to all the others, the case becomes rather doubtful. Now, the Six Animals are hardly different from man, and they produce their young in the same way. That, (notwithstanding this

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<sup>1</sup> This meaning is not found in the dictionaries.

<sup>2</sup> The horse, the ox, the goat, the pig, the dog, and the cock.

## Lun-hêng

similarity between the Six Animals and man), the latter is avoided, and not the former, proves the ignorance of the people.

Supposing they could make a distinction between the birth of a child and the breeding of the Six Animals, I would admit their avoidance, but in case they are unable to draw a line, I must say that this popular avoidance is unreasonable.

There is certainly nothing more loathsome for man than putrescence and fetor ; putrid and fetid smells make one sick. The nose smelling stench, and the mouth eating something rotten, people feel their stomach turn, make a wry face and begin spitting and vomiting. Privies <sup>1</sup> may be said to be fetid, and dried fish to be putrid meat, yet there are persons that put up with privies even, and do not shudder at them <sup>2</sup>, and for many dried fish are a relish from which they do not recoil. That which the mind does not turn to, is thought of as disgusting, and its good or bad qualities are left out of account.

Now, as for detestable things, (such as black varnish bespattering one's body) <sup>3</sup>, after the eyes have seen, and the nose has smelled them, and they have passed, everything is over. Why still abhor them, when they have vanished, and are no more to be seen ?

If going out on the road, we behold a man carrying a pig on his shoulders, or remark some foul stuff in a ditch, we do not take this for evil omens, because the filth is on somebody else's body, and not on our own. Now, a woman bearing a child, carries it with her, why then must people be so scrupulous as to shun her ?

North of the *Yangtse*, they do not leave the house when a child is born, knowing that there is no harm in it, but when a bitch whelps, they place her outside the house, which is likewise an absurdity. North of the *Yangtse*, they are afraid of a dog, but not of a human being, south of the *Yangtse*, they recoil <sup>p2.383</sup> from a human being, but not from a dog. In either case the superstitious attempts to avert evil are not the same, but what difference is

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<sup>1</sup> A term strangely corresponding to the German word 'toilet' = privy.

<sup>2</sup> Most Chinese privies are so horrid, that even Chinese try to avoid them.

<sup>3</sup> Chinese varnish is so poisonous, that its smell alone suffices to produce a cutaneous eruption.



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there between a human being and a dog, or a place within or without the house ? What the one detests, the other does not, and what people of this side stagger at, the other side does not fear. After all, there is no principle in all these popular precautions.

As regards the darkening of the moon, a month is counted from each conjunction of the sun and the moon in a solar mansion. When, on the eighth day of a month, the moon is cut in two halves, it is called a 'crescent', when, on the fifteenth, sun and moon face each other, it is called the 'facing moon', and on the thirtieth, when sun and moon are conjunct in a mansion, it is called the 'dark moon'. The dark moon, the crescent, and the facing moon are in reality the same. On the last day of the month, the moonlight is no other than on the first day of the following month. Why is this light called auspicious after the commencement of the next month ? If it be really ill-boding it cannot be said to be auspicious in the next month, and if it really be so it would make no difference that the new month had not yet begun.

As a matter of fact, the injunction to keep aloof from newborn infants and puppies, is intended as an incentive to self-purification, preventing people from polluting themselves with filth and sordid things. When they are clean in their bodies, their minds are pure, and their minds being pure, their proceedings are undefiled. These irreproachable dealings are the basis of honesty and unselfishness.

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The fourth thing to be shunned is the bringing up of children born in the first or the fifth months, because such children are supposed to kill their father and mother, and therefore on no account can be reared. Father and mother having perhaps died through some calamity, this assertion has found credence and is taken for certain. Now, wherefore should children of the first or the fifth months kill their father and mother ?

The human embryo, filled with the fluid, remains in the womb, where it develops ten months, when it is born. All are imbued p2.384 with the same original fluid ; what difference is there between the first and the second months, and what diversity between the fifth and the sixth, that an ill omen might be found in them ?

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This opinion has long spread in the world, and all those who cling to destiny dare not act against it. If men of vast erudition and great talents carefully go into the question, and minutely examine the difference between good and bad omens, they must arrive at a clear understanding.

Of old, [a humble concubine of *T'ien Ying*, minister of *Ch'i*, had a son, whom she named *Wên*. As *Wên* had been born in the fifth moon, *T'ien Ying* told his mother not to bring him up, but the mother clandestinely reared him. When he had grown up, the mother took her son *Wên* together with his brothers, and introduced him to his father.

*T'ien Ying*, very angry, said to her,

— I ordered you to do away with this son, how did you dare to keep him alive ?

*Wên* bowed his head, and interfering in the discussion, said,

— What is the reason that Your Honour does not want to rear a fifth month child ?

— Because, replied *T'ien Ying*, a fifth month child grows as high as a door, and will do harm to his parents.

*Wên* rejoined,

— Does the fate which man receives at his birth depend on Heaven, or does it depend on a door ?

*T'ien Ying* made no reply.

— No doubt, said *Wên*, it depends on Heaven. Then, why are you dissatisfied ? Should fate be received from a door, and the child become as high as a door, who could attain to that ?

*T'ien Ying* acquiesced and said,

— Leave off, my son.]

[Subsequently, he entrusted him with the superintendence of his household and the reception of guests. Their numbers increased daily, and *T'ien Wên's* name became known to all the princes.] <sup>1</sup> He grew higher than a door, but *T'ien Ying* did not die.

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<sup>1</sup> Quotation from the *Shi-chi* chap. 75, p. 2r. the biography of *T'ien Wên*. Cf. also p. 1.161, where, in line 10, 'He replied' should be written for 'She replied', and, in line 13, 'He rejoined' for 'She rejoined'.

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According to the reasons put forward by *T'ien Wên* and corroborated by the fact that his father did not die, the common dread is baseless. *T'ien Ying* was an ordinary father, but *T'ien Wên* an exceptional son, the former trusted in the general prejudice, and did not inquire into its reasons, whereas the latter confided in fate, and did not admit the avoidance. As their parts were different, ordinary and exceptional, so were their actions. <sup>p2.385</sup> *T'ien Ying's* name is obscure and unknown, while his son's fame spread far and wide, and never faded.

Still this common avoidance has also its reason : The first month is the beginning of the year, and in the fifth the *Yang* reaches its acme. A child being born in one of these months, its original nature is fiery and impetuous and weighs heavily on its parents. Not being strong enough to offer resistance, they must come to grief <sup>1</sup>.

This idea has gained ground, and no one contradicts it. It is an unfounded assertion, and there is no proof of a real misfortune. The world suffers itself to be imposed upon and to fall into the greatest errors. Things to be avoided are manifold, but always some prodigy is put forth, and if really somebody should happen to die, then the public is convinced of the truth of the assertion, and abides by it.

As to what is to be dreaded and shunned, different views prevail everywhere. I shall give some instances of universal customs, which I trust will be considered. There are innumerable minor rules and observances, all meant to induce to virtue and to exhort to particular carefulness <sup>2</sup>. Nothing is to be feared from ghosts and spirits, and no calamities are due to mischievous influences :

In making bean-sauce people dislike very much to hear thunder <sup>3</sup>. One person did not eat the sauce in order to induce people to hasten its

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<sup>1</sup> This reason may be in accordance with *Wang Ch'ung's* system, to us it appears inane.

<sup>2</sup> This is *Wang Ch'ung's* opinion. The belief of his countrymen is that many actions, apart from their qualities, entail misfortune, and solely for this reason are to be shunned.

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps the electricity caused the sauce to spoil, as milk becomes sour when the air is charged with electricity. *Wang Ch'ung* does not know this.

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preparation, and not to allow the stuff to lie about in their premises up to spring time <sup>1</sup>.

One avoids grinding a knife over a well — lest it fall into the well, or, as some say, because the character *hsing* (capital punishment) 刑 is composed of *ching* (a well) 井 and *tao* (a knife) 刀. Grinding a knife over a well, the knife and the well face each other, and one apprehends suffering capital punishment (*hsing* 刑) <sup>2</sup>.

p2.386 One must not sit under the eaves of a house — a tile might fall down and hit one on the head.

One must not hang up a cap upside down — for it would resemble the garments of a dead man, or, as some say, it should not be turned, lest it be filled with dust.

One must not lie down flat — for one would be like a corpse <sup>3</sup>. One must not receive chopsticks from anybody — because they are not solid. <sup>4</sup>

One must not expect others to sweep the ground for one — for a man building a grave might request one to sweep for him <sup>5</sup>.

All these 'One must not' are to induce people to exert particular cautiousness, and to exhort them to do good. The *Liki* says,

[ One must not roll the rice into a ball, and one must not slobber.] <sup>6</sup>

These are prohibitions regarding propriety and righteousness, and not spoken in reference to good or bad fortune.

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<sup>1</sup> The first thunder-storms are in spring. This single case, *Wang Ch'ung* seems to intimate, was the reason that, subsequently, people always liked to have their bean-sauce ready before the first peal of thunder was heard *viz.* before the beginning of spring.

<sup>2</sup> Similar 'avoidances' have come down to our own rational times. *E. g.* one must not thank any one for a knife or a pair of scissors, otherwise they would cut the friendship. A young lady avoids cutting a fresh pat of butter, otherwise she is sure not to marry during the year.

<sup>3</sup> This rule goes back to *Confucius*, who in bed, did not lie like a corpse. [Analects X, 16 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>4</sup> This may be an allusion to the frailty of the body or of friendship.

<sup>5</sup> A man making such a request would be like one having somebody to bury. The very sensible reasons given for these various customs are *Wang Ch'ung's*.

<sup>6</sup> *Liki, Ch'ü-li* p. 18r. ([Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 80](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

69. Book XXIII, Chap. IV

*Lan-shih. False Charges against Time*

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p2.387 When people dig up the earth for the foundation of a building, the year-star and the moon will swallow something <sup>1</sup>, and, on the land which they consume, a case of death occurs. If e. g. the planet *Jupiter* is in the sign *tse*, <sup>2</sup> the year-star swallows up some land in the sign *yu* <sup>3</sup>, and if the moon in the first month stands in *yin* <sup>4</sup>, it consumes some land in the sign *sse* <sup>5</sup>. Some building being erected on land situated in *tse* and *yin*, people living in *yu* and *sse* are swallowed up, and being about to be thus injured, they have recourse to charms to counteract these influences, using objects made of the Five Elements, and hanging up metal, wood, water, and fire. Should, for example, *Jupiter* and the moon infest a family in the west, they would suspend metal <sup>6</sup>, and should those luminaries be going to devour a family in the east, this family would suspend charcoal <sup>7</sup>. Moreover, they institute sacrifices with a view to averting the evil, or they feign to change their residence, in order thus to eschew the calamity. There is unanimity about this, every one doing like the others. A careful consideration, however, reveals the utter futility of this mistake. How ?

The spirits of Heaven and Earth must have equal minds. People misconducting themselves are liable to punishments and penalties. In this respect the spirits cannot have two minds or different feelings, and their former ideas cannot be opposed to the later ones. When, in moving their residence, people do not take heed of the year-star and the moon, both

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<sup>1</sup> This must not be taken literally. It seems to mean to cause damage or misfortune.

<sup>2</sup> The North.

<sup>3</sup> The West.

<sup>4</sup> East-north-east.

<sup>5</sup> South-south-east.

<sup>6</sup> The element metal corresponds to the west.

<sup>7</sup> The element of the east is wood, that of the south where the inimical luminaries are placed, while menacing the family, is fire. Charcoal is a combination of wood and fire.

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resent this disregard of p2.388 their opposition, and are irritated with the delinquents <sup>1</sup>. Now, people, doing some building, likewise move the body of the earth, and their misdemeanour is the same as that committed in moving one's residence. Therefore, those builders should be swallowed by the year-star, wherefore then, contrariwise, has the soil of the signs *sse* and *yu* to suffer for their guilt? If the spirits of the year-star and the moon take exception to the moving, and find fault with building, how is it that their judgment is so inconsequent? <sup>2</sup>

Ghosts and spirits call the sinners to account as a district magistrate reprimands and punishes. The ways in which people infringe the laws are many. In small cases the penalty is remitted, and only great viciousness entails capital punishments. But it does not happen that the innocent suffer. If they are subject to punishment, without any guilt, the world calls it injustice.

Now, the people of *sse* and *yu* have not offended against the moon or the year-star, yet while in *tse* they are building houses, they are eaten without any reason. Thus the year-star would be cruel to innocent persons.

Just when *Jupiter* stands in *tse*, the houses in *tse* would be safe, and those in *wu* <sup>3</sup> be injured. One must not commence building, or do any work, but though remaining idle and inactive, one is nevertheless visited with disasters. In the matter of the swallowing by the year-star and the moon, as soon as a *tse* house <sup>4</sup> begins to be stirred, *sse* and *yu* have hard times.

*Jupiter* is the spirit of the year and the moon. If its penalties and ravages are different on various occasions, one cannot expect Heaven to follow the excentricity of the spirit of the year and the moon.

As for the spirit of the year-star and the moon, the year-star in reality is *Jupiter*. When it has its position on the horizon in the sign *tse*, and some

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<sup>1</sup> On the collision with the year-star = *Jupiter* of people moving their residence see chap. 73.

<sup>2</sup> In one case they punish those who collide with them, in the other, those living in quite a different direction *viz.* a quarter to the right or the left of their stand-point.

<sup>3</sup> We ought to read *yu*, as above, I suppose.

<sup>4</sup> Perhaps we should add 'and a *yin* house'.

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edifice is constructed in one of the provinces of China, say in *Yang-chou* <sup>1</sup> in the south-east — according to the view of *Tsou Yen* who takes China for one continent only, it would also p2.389 be in the south-east : — then the year-star consuming some ground in the sign *yu* <sup>2</sup>, ought to swallow the soil of the western *Ch'iang* <sup>3</sup> ; how could the land in the south-east suffer any damage ? In case *Jupiter* stays amidst men <sup>4</sup>, and a house in the west lies in *yu*, in the house of the family, erecting some building there, there must likewise be a *yu* region, why then does *Jupiter* not swallow this *yu* quarter in the house in question, and injure another family instead ?

Besides, who really is it that swallows ? If it really be *Jupiter* and the moon, these two are attending spirits of Heaven : their eating and drinking, therefore, must resemble that of Heaven. Heaven does not eat men, therefore at the suburban sacrifices <sup>5</sup>, they are not immolated as victims. If the two stars are not celestial spirits, they cannot eat men either.

Respecting the food of the numerous spirits between *Heaven* and *Earth*, the Sage says that they must be treated like men. The dead are to be worshipped after the manner of the living, and ghosts, as if they were men. Consequently, at the offerings made to the various spirits all sorts of things are used, but not men.

Tigers and wolves are man devouring brutes ; do the spirits of *Jupiter* and the moon grow from the essence of tigers and wolves ? In a time of famine, when there is a scarcity of grain and food, men, out of hunger, devour one another. Are the spirits of *Jupiter* and the moon imbued with the fluid of those men-eaters ?

If *Jupiter* and the moon have spirits, the sun must likewise have a spirit. *Jupiter* swallows land, and the moon does ; why should the sun not do the same ?

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<sup>1</sup> A province under the *Han* comprising *Kiangsu*, *Anhui*, *Kiangsi*, *Fukien*, and *Chekiang*.

<sup>2</sup> In the west.

<sup>3</sup> Tibetan tribes.

<sup>4</sup> *Jupiter* was first supposed to stay in the north, outside of China, now it is placed amidst men, in the interior.

<sup>5</sup> The suburban sacrifices were offered to Heaven.

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A number of days makes up a month, a number of months forms a season, several seasons, a year, 1,539 years are a *t'ung*<sup>1</sup> period, and 4,617 years a *yuan* period<sup>2</sup>. These are multiplied and involved numbers, and the names of fractions and full numbers. How could ghosts and spirits have anything to do with them, p2.390 or felicity and misfortune depend on them? If the year and the month, as full numbers, must have spirits, then the four seasons would have them, and the *t'ung* and *yuan* periods as well.

Three days of the moon are *po* (the first quarter), eight days are the crescent, and fifteen, full-moon<sup>3</sup>. What difference is there with a full year or a full moon? If the year and the moon have spirits, the first quarter and the crescent must have spirits too.

One day is divided into twelve hours. When dawn is during the *yin* hour (3-5 a. m.), the sun rises during the *mao* time (5-7 a. m.). The twelve moons rest in *yin* and *mao*, consequently the *yin* and *mao* times are added to the twelve moons<sup>4</sup>. The sun receives the twelve hours and does not swallow land, the moon, however, resting in the twelve signs, does. Has the sun no spirit in spite of this addition, whereas the moon has owing to this relation? How is it that the moon alone, being thus related, consumes land, and that the sun, although connected with the hours, does not? If the sun has no spirit, notwithstanding this connexion, it is not proper to decide the question

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<sup>1</sup> Three *t'ung* are one *yuan*.

<sup>2</sup> These periods may be of Taoist origin. Some reckon a *yuan* at 129,600, others at 24,192,000 years, something like a geological period. The Taoists like the Indians are fond of big numbers. According to one authority 3,276,000 years have elapsed from the creation of the world to 481 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. also p. 2.383, Notes 1 and 2.

<sup>4</sup> The twelve hours of the day are denominated after the twelve cyclical signs *yin*, *mao*, &c., marking that place of the horizon over which the sun stays during each double hour. In the same way, every month of the Chinese calendar is connected with that cyclical sign in which the moon rests during that month. In the course of twelve months the moon has passed through all the twelve constellations or cyclical signs. *Wang Ch'ung* is not correct in saying that the *yin* and *mao* 'times' are added to the twelve months, they are not times in this case, but constellations corresponding to those of our zodiac. The twelve [], to which belong *yin* and *mao*, are those places of the firmament through which the sun passes in twelve double hours, and the moon in twelve months. For this reason they are made use of to designate the twelve hours as well as the twelve months. Moreover, the course of the planet *Jupiter* through these signs of the zodiac, which is completed in 12 years, affords a means of denoting the consecutive years, on which cf. [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. III, p. 655 seq.](#)



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by a reference to hours, and if the addition of hours gives spirituality, it is not right that one star should not eat.

The mouth and the stomach of a spirit must be like those of man. Being hungry, he eats, and being satiated, he stops. He does not take a meal each time a building is erected. Provided that the spirits of *Jupiter* and the moon eat when there is a building in course of construction, buildings are few ; do the two spirits suffer hunger then ?

p2.391 During a famine, people quit their homes, which remain desolate and abandoned. Every building activity ceases. Do the spirits of the year-star and the moon starve then ?

Moreover, fields no less than houses are put in order by men ; the force displayed in these works and the efforts made are identical. In building a house, the earth is dug up, and wooden beams are erected, on the field, they cut a ditch and raise dykes. Beams and dykes are equally raised, and the digging and cutting the ground are the same. If, in case a house be erected, *Jupiter* and the moon eat the ground, but do not do so, when a field is put under cultivation, are they hungry, when the house is building, and have they no appetite, when the land is cultivated ? How is it possible that under similar circumstances, and the proceedings being the same, eating and drinking are different ?

Those maintaining the encroachments of the two celestial bodies, will measure the bulk of the work done and calculate the distance by steps. If e. g. some construction 3 feet high be built, the eating would take place within one step, if the height exceed 100 feet, the eating would extend over more than a Li. According as the work is big or small, the calamity would reach far or near.

*Mêng T'ien* built the *Great Wall* for the *Ch'in* dynasty, the length of which was half that of the empire <sup>1</sup>. The misfortune caused thereby ought to have affected tens of thousands of people, but while the construction of the *Great Wall* was going on, the deaths among the people of *Ch'in* were comparatively few.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.167.

## Lun-hêng

When the Duke of *Chou* was building *Loyang*, great works were carried out. At that time the two stars should have swallowed lots of land, and the Sage foreseeing this, ought to have moved from the place thus menaced to a favourable site, because, unless he avoided a collision, many hardships would have befallen the people. In the Classics and Records, Sages and Worthies should have criticized this proceeding. Now, we hear that the people building *Loyang* flocked together from the four quarters, but we are not told that after the work was completed, and everything finished, many died. Therefore, the statements about the year-star and the moon are probably baseless and untrue.

Besides, if the two stars really eat, a feeling of hunger in their mouths and bellies like that of men, must have been the cause. Now, suppose, in the *sse* and *yu* quarters, they employ charms paralyzing their influences ; would they be afraid of a <sup>p2.392</sup> metal blade, or dread a dead charcoal, and therefore shut their mouths, not daring to eat ? Really, to be afraid there ought to be some equilibrium of the antagonistic quantities. The Five Elements overcome one another, but the forces of things must be equally balanced. If a cupful of water be thrown on the burning mountain of *Ch'in*, or if a handful of earth be employed to stop a breach of the *Yellow River*, a thousand Li in width, would they master those elements ? The relation of the elements remains the same, but the dimensions and quantities are not proportionate.

The nature of Heaven and Earth is such, that, as regards the strength of human beings, a little cannot overpower much, or a small force vanquish a great one. Let a big army be equipped with wooden staves only, and a single warrior, armed with a sword, try conclusions and exert his strength, he is sure to be killed. Metal, by its nature, subdues wood ; if, in this case, wood gets the better, and metal succumbs, it is due to the great amount of wood and the small quantity of metal. If metal be heaped up in mounds, and a charcoal fire approached, to light and burn them, it is obvious that the metal does not melt. The principles of the Five Elements are not violated, but there is too much metal and too little fire, and the disproportion of dimensions and quantities is too great.

A boy five feet high, fighting with *Mêng Pen*, could not gain the victory,

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not because of his cowardice, but of his inadequate strength. Wolves, in packs, eat men, and men, crowded together, eat the wolves. In all contests depending on strength and courage, very seldom the small overcome the great, and that, in struggles and competitions, the minority beats the majority is of very rare occurrence. According to the laws of Heaven, among human beings the small cannot vanquish the great, and the few do not subdue the many. How could evil influences be suppressed and averted, or the calamities, caused by the year-star, be removed by means of a blade of metal or a charcoal fire ?

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70. Book XXIV, Chap. I

*Chi-jih. Slandering of Days*

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p2.393 As people trust in the time of the year, so, in their proceedings, they also place reliance on days. If there be some sickness, death, or other calamities, in a serious case, they speak of having offended against the year or a month, in minor ones, of having neglected a forbidden day. Books on forbidden days enjoy no less popularity than tracts on the year and the month. Common people repose implicit confidence in them, and even scholars able to reason cannot solve the problem. Consequently, when taking any steps, people do not examine their hearts, but conform to some days, and unconcerned with their intentions, they expect everything from time.

Works on time and days exist in great numbers, and a short inquiry into their general tenor will disclose what they are worth, and induce those believing in Heaven and time to have some doubt, and repudiate such ideas.

Happiness and misfortune accompany prosperity and decay <sup>1</sup>, alternating and passing away. At all proceedings people will say that the unlucky must be afraid of their bad luck which will come to pass, and, concerning the lucky, they pretend that the luck which they hope for will be realised. When happiness and misfortune have arrived of their own accord, they attribute them to former good or bad luck in order to frighten and caution their hearers. That is the reason why, for many generations, people have not had any misgivings about the calendar, and why for such a long time the truth has not dawned upon them.

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The calendar for burials prescribes that the nine holes and depressions of

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<sup>1</sup> Prosperity and decay are the events and circumstances making people happy or miserable.

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the earth <sup>1</sup>, as well as odd and even days, and single and paired months are to be avoided. The day being lucky and innocuous, oddness and evenness agreeing, and singleness and parity <sup>p2.394</sup> tallying, there is luck and good fortune. The non-observance of this calendar, on the other hand, conduces to bad luck and disaster.

Now, burying means concealing the coffin, and shrouding, concealing the corpse. Shortly after death, the corpse is concealed in the coffin, and, after a while, the coffin is concealed in a tomb. What difference is there between a tomb and a coffin, or between shrouding and burying ? In placing the body into the coffin, unlucky auguries are not avoided, solely in interring it, good luck is sought.

If the grave be made much of, the grave is earth, and the coffin, wood. In respect to the nature of the Five Elements, wood and earth resemble each other <sup>2</sup>. Wood is worked to receive the corpse, and earth is dug up to inter the coffin. Working and digging are similar proceedings, and a corpse and a coffin are very much the same. Should the digging up of earth injure the body of Earth, then in trenching ditches or tilling a garden, a special day should be chosen as well. If people are able to make a distinction between these two things <sup>3</sup>, I am willing to admit their prohibitions, but unless they can do so, I am not in a position to accept this avoidance.

When the day is not injurious, they still require that it be odd or even, and oddness and evenness being in harmony, they still demand the singleness or parity of the month. When the day is odd or even, and the month single or paired, in accordance with the burial calendar, by combining these dates with lucky auguries, they always find out some correspondence. How can we explain this ?

In the 'Spring and Autumn' period sons of Heaven, princes, and high officers died by hundreds and thousands, but their burial days were not always conformable to the calendar. It is further said that an interment could not take place because it rained, and that it was performed at mid-day on a

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<sup>1</sup> These seem to be geomantic terms.

<sup>2</sup> Both are elements.

<sup>3</sup> Digging a grave, and making ditches or tilling a garden.

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*kêng-yin* day <sup>1</sup>. Provided that the Duchess of *Lu* <sup>2</sup> died on an odd day, then the burial might have been on a *chi-ch'ou* day, when oddness and evenness would have been in harmony, and this being the case, the day would have been propitious <sup>3</sup>. She could not be buried to avoid p2.395 the rain, but if the day was a good one it ought not to have been rejected barely because of the rain, for rain may have been inconvenient, but the disregard of odd and even could result in the most serious calamities and disasters. To seek their convenience and thereby entail calamities could not have been the intention of the people of *Lu* or according to the view of a diligent officer. Now, they paid no attention to odd and even, and waited for the *kêng-yin* day, taking the sunshine on this day for a good presage <sup>4</sup>.

The *Liki* states that the Son of Heaven is interred in the seventh month, the princes of a State in the fifth, the ministers, great officers, and officers in the third month <sup>5</sup>. If *e. g.* the Son of Heaven expires in the first month he is buried in the seventh, if he dies in the second he is buried in the eighth <sup>6</sup>. The same applies to the princes, ministers, great officers, and officers. According to the calendar for burials the month of the interment of the Son of Heaven, and the princes would be either even or uneven throughout <sup>7</sup>.

Degenerate ages have great faith in these sorts of laws, and depraved princes are bent on seeking happiness. The 'Spring and Autumn' time was very degenerate, and that between Duke *Yin* and Duke *Ai* was the worst, yet

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, Duke *Hsüan* 8th year [[Couvreur](#), § 10].

<sup>2</sup> The Duchess of *Lu* was *Ching Ying*.

<sup>3</sup> Originally the duchess was to be buried on a *chi-ch'ou* day, but the rain prevented it. *Chi-ch'ou*, being the 26<sup>th</sup> combination of the cycle of sixty, would have been an even day, and as such in harmony with the uneven day of the death of the duchess. The *kêng-yin* day, the 27<sup>th</sup> combination, was an odd day again and not tallying with the odd day of death.

<sup>4</sup> The *Tso-chuan*, commenting upon the above quoted passage, states that to delay the interment owing to rain was according to rule. The *Liki* ([Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 223](#)) [[Couvreur](#)] informs us that common people did not suspend the interment because of rain, and this rule seems to prevail at present, a rain-fall during a burial being regarded as very propitious. Cf. *De Groot*, [Religious System Vol. I](#), p. 213.

<sup>5</sup> *Liki eod.*

<sup>6</sup> In adding seven, five, or three, the month of death is included.

<sup>7</sup> *I. e.*, it would correspond to the month of death, being even in case the latter was even, and uneven if the latter was.

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they did not take any precautions for the days of interment, because they did not shun bad luck.

Under the reign of King *Wên* of *Chou*, laws and institutions were perfect. The intellect of *Confucius* was very acute, and the arguments of the *Ch'un-ch'iu* were very subtle. If, by neglecting lucky auguries, people were afflicted, or if, by their heedlessness, they had incurred misfortune, some few words and some slight attempts at criticism would not have been out of place. Now we find nothing of the kind, consequently there exist no fixed rules for the time of burials.

p2.396 The calendar of sacrifices has its favourable and inauspicious presages as well. Thus, a day when bloodshed is to be avoided, and when the month is baleful, always bodes evil. If sacrifices are offered with animals slaughtered on such days, some catastrophe will ensue.

Now, sacrificing is feeding the ghosts, and the ghosts are the essence of dead men <sup>1</sup>. If they are not, people cannot have seen them eating and drinking. The service of the dead is analogous to that of the living, and the worship of ghosts, corresponding to that of men. Since we behold the living eating and drinking, they must do the same after they have died and become ghosts. Affection for other beings, and remembrance of dear relatives are the main springs of sacrifices. As for the offerings to other spirits, and the numerous ghosts, although they are not dead men, yet the ritual of their worship is identical with that of the deceased. As we never see their shapes, we only think of them in the form of living men. The living have no fixed days for their eating and drinking, wherefore then must spirits and ghosts have such days ?

In case ghosts and spirits really are conscious and not different from men, it is unnecessary to select days for sacrifices <sup>1</sup>. If, however, they are unconscious, they cannot partake of food and drink, and though days be selected or shunned, of what use would it be ?

In reality, there are no ghosts for the diverse sacrifices, and the departed

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<sup>1</sup> In general belief, here only used as an argument, for *Wang Ch'ung* does not share it. See Vol. I, chap. 15 and below.

## Lun-hêng

do not possess any knowledge. The various sacrifices are performed in appreciation of great services, to show that virtue has not been forgotten, and the dead are treated as though they were alive, for the purpose of avoiding the appearance of ingratitude. Sacrifices do not bring happiness, and their omission does not entail calamities. Since sacrifices and the omission thereof neither cause happiness nor misfortune, how can lucky and unlucky days be of advantage or harmful ?

If bloodshed be avoided, and the baleful days of the month shunned, because, when animals are slaughtered, blood is spilled, the living, eating the Six Animals, should likewise take these precautions. In the many slaughter-houses throughout China, several thousand animals are killed daily, no distinction being made between <sup>p2.397</sup> lucky and unlucky ones, but the butchers do not die an untimely death for that reason. As regards capital punishment, those criminals, beheaded every month, also count by thousands. When they are executed in the market-place, no auspicious day is chosen, yet the judges are not visited with misfortune.

When the meat supply is exhausted, animals are slaughtered, and when a case is settled, the culprits are decapitated. The decapitation of convicts, and the slaughter of animals are both bloodshed indeed. Why do victims, immolated at sacrifices, receive a different treatment, and why is a calendar established for sacrifices alone ? Why are butchers and judges left out of account ? The world adopts an opinion, without considering analogous cases. It sacrifices, though there are no ghosts, and believes in things to be avoided, though they do not exist. Attempting to secure happiness, by means of these two non-entities, it does not obtain it.

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In writings on baths we are informed that, if anybody washes his head on a *tse* day, he becomes lovely, whereas if he does so on a *mao* day, his hair turns white.

A man is liked or disliked according as his features are handsome or ugly, whereas the black and white colour of his hair depend upon his age and the

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<sup>1</sup> Because men do not choose propitious days for eating and drinking.



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number of his years. If a woman as plain as *Mu Mu* <sup>1</sup> were to wash her head on a *tse* day, would she excite love thereby ? Or if a girl of fifteen were to do the same on a *mao* day, would her hair turn white ?

Moreover, *mu* (沐) signifies to remove the impurity of the head, *hsi* (洗) to remove that of the feet, *kuan* (盥) to remove that of the hands, and *yü* (浴) to remove that of the body. All these manners of washing aim at cleansing the same body, and resemble each other. For washing the feet, the hands, and the body no days are selected, only for washing the head there are certain days. If the head be deemed the noblest part of the body, in bathing (浴) the face is included and the face belongs to the head also. If the hair be considered the noblest, there ought to be chosen a day for combing the hair as well.

p2.398 For combing one uses wood <sup>2</sup> and for washing, water. Water and wood both belong to the Five Elements. Now, in using wood one does not shun anything, only in using water certain days are appointed. Should water be nobler than wood, then whenever water is used a day should be selected.

Besides, water is less noble than fire <sup>3</sup> ; if different degrees of nobility must be admitted, then, in all cases when fire is used, a day ought to be chosen.

Further, provided that a person, washing his head on a *tse* day, becomes the object of love, and that, by washing it on a *mao* day, his hair turns white, who is the cause of all this ? The nature of *tse* is water, and of *mao*, wood <sup>4</sup>. Water cannot be loved, and the colour of wood is not white. The animal of *tse* is the rat, and that of *mao* is the hare. The rat cannot be loved, and the fur of the hare is not white <sup>5</sup>. Who is it that renders the person, bathing on a *tse*

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.473, Note 3.

<sup>2</sup> The Chinese still use wooden combs to-day, a fact illustrated by the character for comb 櫛.

<sup>3</sup> Fire, the *Yang* fluid, the producing force of nature is nobler than water, the *Yin* fluid, which is regarded as passive or destructive.

<sup>4</sup> According to the theory of the Five Elements, elaborated in the *Han* epoch, of the Twelve Branches *hai* and *tse* are related to water, and *yin* and *mao*, to wood. Cf. [Appendix I](#) p. 467.

<sup>5</sup> The prescription cannot be explained by the fanciful theory on the elements and their correlates.

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day, lovable, and causes the hair of another, bathing on a *mao* day, to take the colour of hoar-frost ?

Consequently <sup>1</sup>, bathing days are not lucky or unlucky, and it is not admissible to establish a special bathing calendar.

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There are books for tailors, giving auspicious and inauspicious times. Dresses, made on an inauspicious day, bring misfortune, made on a lucky day, they attract happiness.

Clothes as well as food serve to support the human body : — food supports it within, and clothes protect it from without. For food and drink no days are chosen, whereas, in tailoring, certain days are tabooed. Are clothes of greater importance because they cover the body ? Of things appreciated by humanity there is none more urgently needed than food. Therefore the first of p2.399 the Eight Objects of Government <sup>2</sup> is food, the second commodities. Clothes fall under commodities. Should they rank higher, for being on the body, then nothing, worn on the body, is more important than the hat <sup>3</sup>. In manufacturing it, no restrictions are to be observed, whereas tailoring is beset with prohibitions. The more valuable object is thus treated with indifference, and much care is bestowed on the meaner.

Besides, washing removes the impurity of the head, and hats are used as head-gear ; baths take away the dirt from the body, and clothes protect it from cold. For washing there are prohibitions, but for hats there are no restrictions ; for baths no good or bad auguries exist, clothes, on the other hand, have good or bad influences. All these things are alike and refer to the same body, but some are held to be good, others to be bad, and the taboo is not the same. Common people, with their shallow knowledge, cannot grasp the truth.

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<sup>1</sup> We have to insert the answer to the preceding rhetorical question : nobody.

<sup>2</sup> The Eight Objects of Government, enumerated in the *Shuking*, viz. food, commodities, sacrifices, works, instruction, jurisdiction, entertainment of guests, and warfare. [[Couvreur](#)]

<sup>3</sup> Its importance lies not so much in its usefulness — in this respect a coat or a cloak are more important — as in its covering the head, the noblest part of the body.

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Moreover, clothes are less valuable than a chariot and horses. The first of the Nine Gifts of Investiture <sup>1</sup> are a chariot and horses, the second, robes of State. Cartwrights do not seek a propitious time, and tailors alone look out for a lucky day. By their prejudices, people lose the true estimate of what is important and not.

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For commencing the building of a dwelling and the construction of a house the selection of a day is requisite.

A house covers the human shape, and a dwelling harbours the human body ; how could they be liable to the evil influences of the year and the moon, that the aforesaid selection becomes necessary ? If the spirits dislike them because they cover and shield the human body, then for building a carriage, and constructing a ship, for making a canopy, and manufacturing a hat, a propitious day ought to be chosen as well. In case the spirits be <sup>p2.400</sup> displeased, because the earth is moved, and the soil dug up, then, for making a trench or tilling a garden, a good day should be appointed also. Provided that the spirit of Earth be molested by the turning up of the soil, it might well forgive man, for he has no bad intentions, and merely desires to shelter his body and find a resting place. The holy mind of a spirit would not be irritated thereby, and, under this condition, even the omission to select a day would not have evil consequences. If, however, the spirits of the soil could not pardon man, and irrationally hated him, in view of the vexations caused by his disturbing the earth, of what avail would be the selection of a propitious day ? <sup>2</sup>

The imperial law forbids murder and the wounding of man. All murderers and those who have wounded others, are liable to punishment, and, though they should select a day for transgressing the law, they would not escape. In default of such a prohibition, even wilful manslaughter would not be atoned

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<sup>1</sup> These Nine Gifts were symbols of authority, anciently bestowed upon vassals and ministers. They were : a chariot and horses, robes of State, musical instruments, vermilion coloured entrance doors, the right to approach the sovereign by the central path, armed attendants, bows and arrows, battle-axes, and sacrificial wines. *Mayers' Manual* Pt. II No. 284.

<sup>2</sup> The disturbance would be the same, whether the day be auspicious or not.

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for.

The jurisdiction of a district magistrate is like the sway of ghosts and spirits, and the crime of throwing up and piercing the soil, analogous to killing and wounding. For killing and wounding the selection of days is of no use, wherefore then should there be those prohibitive rules concerning the construction and the erection of houses and dwellings ?

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In studying books the *ping* days are eschewed, because they say that *Ts'ang Hsieh* <sup>1</sup> expired on a *ping* day. The rites prescribe that on *tse* and *mao* days no music should be made, for the *Yin* and *Hsia* dynasties perished on a *tse* and a *mao* day <sup>2</sup>. If people study on a *ping* day, or make music on a *tse* and *mao* day, they are not necessarily visited with misfortune. Out of regard for the death day of former emperors, and out of sympathy with their sufferings, people cannot bring themselves to undertake anything. The system of tabooed days is related to these customs connected with the *ping*, *tse*, and *mao* days. Although something be shunned there is no fear of any disaster or calamity <sup>3</sup>.

p2.401 A great variety of spirits are referred to in the calendars embracing Heaven and Earth, but the Sages do not speak of them <sup>4</sup>, the scholars have not mentioned them, and perhaps they are not real. The laws of Heaven are hard to know, but provided that spirits exist, then what benefit could be derived from shunning a day on which they display their activity, or what adversity could accrue from a non-avoidance ? If a king undertakes something on such and such a day, and the people also choose this day, the king, on hearing it, would not mete out punishments, for he would not be angry that his subjects did not shun him. Wherefore then should the spirits of Heaven alone be so cruel ?

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<sup>1</sup> The inventor of writing.

<sup>2</sup> These dynasties were celebrated for their music.

<sup>3</sup> Some days are shunned out of respect for great men that died on these days, but not because they forebode evil.

<sup>4</sup> *Confucius* admits the existence of ghosts and spirits, and that they be sacrificed to, but avoids speaking of them and answering any questions about their nature.

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The State law inquires whether a thing be permissible or not according to human ideas, but does not concern itself with prognostics. *Confucius* said that one puts up a dwelling after having taken its forecast <sup>1</sup>. Regarding the sacrifices of the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, he does not allude to the divination of days. The *Liki* says that domestic affairs are settled on an even day and outside matters, on an odd day. Odd and even are observed with regard to inside and outside matters, but do not refer to good or bad luck, or indicate happiness and misfortune.

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<sup>1</sup> Quotation from the *Hsiao-ching* (*Pei-wên-yün-fu*).

## 71. Book XXIV, Chap. II

### *Pu-shih*. On Divination

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p1.182 The world believes in divination with shells and weeds. The first class of diviners question Heaven, they say ; the second, Earth. Milfoil has something spiritual, tortoises are divine, and omens and signs respond, when asked. Therefore they disregard the advice of their friends, and take to divination, they neglect what is right and wrong, and trust solely to lucky and unlucky portents. In their belief, Heaven and Earth really make their wishes known, and weeds and tortoises verily possess spiritual powers.

As a matter of fact, diviners do not ask Heaven and Earth, nor have weeds or tortoises spiritual qualities. That they have, and that Heaven and Earth are being interrogated, is an idea of common scholars. How can we prove that ?

*Tse Lu* asked *Confucius* saying,

— A pig's shoulder and a sheep's leg can serve as omens, and from creepers, rushes, straws, and duckweed we can foreknow destiny. What need is there then for milfoil and tortoises ?

— That is not correct, said *Confucius*, for their names are essential. The milfoil's name means old, and the tortoise's, aged <sup>1</sup>. In order to elucidate doubtful things, one must ask the old and the aged.

According to this reply, milfoil is not spiritual, and the tortoise is not divine. From the fact that importance is attached to their names, it does not follow that they really possess such qualities. Since they do not possess those qualities, we know that they are not gifted with supernatural powers, and, as they do not possess these, it is plain that Heaven and Earth cannot be asked through their medium.

Moreover, where are the mouths and the ears of Heaven and Earth, that

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<sup>1</sup> A gratuitous etymology, of which the Chinese are very fond. *Shih*=milfoil and *kuei*=tortoise have nothing whatever to do with *ch'i*=old and *kiu*=aged.

## Lun-hêng

they may be questioned ? Heaven obeys the same laws <sup>p1.183</sup> as man. To form a conception of Heaven, we must start from human affairs. When we ask anybody, we cannot learn his opinion, unless we see him ourselves before us, and personally address him. If we wish to ask Heaven, Heaven is high, and its ears are far away from us. Provided that Heaven has no ears, it is incorporeal, and being incorporeal, it is air. How could air like clouds and fog speak to us ?

By milfoil they ask the Earth. Earth has a body like man, but, as its ears are not near us, it cannot hear us, and not hearing us, its mouth does not speak to us. In fine, if they speak of questioning Heaven, Heaven being air cannot send omens, and, if they address themselves to Earth, the ears of Earth are far, and cannot hear us. What reliable proofs are there for the assertion that Heaven and Earth speak to man ?

We are living between Heaven and Earth, as lice do on the human body. If those lice, desirous of learning man's opinion, were emitting sounds near his ear, he would not hear them. Why ? Because there is such an enormous difference of size, that their utterances would remain inaudible. Now, let us suppose that a pigmy like a man puts questions to Heaven and Earth, which are so immense ; how could they understand his words, and how become acquainted with his wishes ?

Some maintain that man carries the fluid of Heaven and Earth in his bosom. This fluid in the body is the mind, I daresay. When man is going to divine by weeds and shells, he puts questions to the milfoil and the tortoise. The replies which he hears with his ears, his mind regards like its own thoughts. From the depth of the bosom and the stomach the mind hears the explanation. Thus, when the tortoise is cut to pieces <sup>1</sup> and the divining stalks grasped, omens and signs appear. Man thinks with his mind, but when in his thoughts he cannot arrive at a decision, he consults the milfoil and the tortoise. In case their omens and signs harmonize with the thoughts, the mind may be said to have been a good adviser.

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<sup>1</sup> From *Chuang Tse* chap. 26, p. 4v. it appears that for divining purposes the tortoise shell used to be cut into 72 pieces or divining slips.

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Yet it happens that the heart regards something as feasible, but the omens and signs are inauspicious, or these are felicitous, but the heart considers them as unlucky. Now, the thoughts are one's own spirit, and that which causes the omens and signs is also one's spirit. In the bosom, the spirit of a body becomes the mental power, and outside the bosom, omens and signs. It is, as p1.184 if a man enters a house, and sits down, or goes out through the door. The walking and sitting makes no difference in his ideas, and entering or issuing does not change his feelings. Provided that the mind produces omens and signs, they would not be opposed to man's thoughts.

Heaven and Earth have a body, therefore they can move. In so far as they can move, they are like living beings, and being alive, they resemble man. To ask a living man, we must use a living person, then we can be sure of a reply. Should we employ a dead man for this purpose, we would certainly not obtain an answer. Now, Heaven and Earth are both alive, and milfoil and tortoises are dead. How could we elicit a reply by asking the living through the dead ? The shell of a dried tortoise and the stalk of a withered weed are supposed to question living Heaven and Earth ! Ergo the common assertion that Heaven and Earth respond is quite erroneous.

If milfoil and tortoises be like tablets, omens and signs would represent the written characters thereon, and resemble the instructions emanating from a prince. But where would be the mouths and the ears of Heaven and Earth, that such instructions might be possible ?

— How can Heaven speak ? said *Confucius*. The four seasons roll on, and the various things are produced <sup>1</sup>.

Heaven does not speak, nor does it hear what men say. Heaven's nature is said to be spontaneity and non-interference. Now, if people question Heaven and Earth, and they respond, this response would require that interference be coupled with spontaneity.

According to the text of the *I-king*, the art of grasping the straws consists in sorting them into two parcels to resemble Heaven and Earth, in grasping them by fours in imitation of the four seasons, and in returning the

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects XVII, 18](#) [Couvreur].



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superfluous straws as an emblem of an intercalary month.<sup>1</sup> These resemblances are marked with the object of forming the necessary number of diagrams, and not a word is said about Heaven and Earth conjointly replying to man. It is usual among men to answer, when asked, and not to reply, unless there be any question. Should anybody knock at other people's door without any reason, not wishing anything, or make a useless discourse in their presence, without asking their opinion, the master of the house would laugh, but not reply, or he would become angry, and not give an answer. Now, let a diviner p1.185 perforate a tortoise shell in sheer play, or sort the milfoil for nothing, and thus mock Heaven and Earth, he would obtain omens and signs all the same. Would Heaven and Earth then reply indiscriminately ? Or let a man revile Heaven, while divining by shells, or beat the Earth, while drawing the lots, which is the height of impiety, he would obtain omens and signs nevertheless. If omens and signs are the spirit of Heaven and Earth, why do they not extinguish the fire of the diviner<sup>2</sup>, burn his hand, shake his fingers, disturb his signs, strike his body with painful diseases, and cause his blood to freeze and to boil, instead of still showing him omens and sending signs ? Do Heaven and Earth not fear the bother, and not disdain to take this trouble ? Looking at the problem from this point of view it becomes plain to us that the diviners do not ask Heaven and Earth, and that omens and signs are not the replies of the latter.

Besides, those who divine are sure to be either lucky or unlucky. Some are of opinion that good and bad luck correspond to the good and the bad actions of mankind. Thus bliss and felicity would accompany goodness, and calamitous changes follow in the rear of badness. Good or bad government is the result of goodness or badness, but I doubt that Heaven and Earth purposely reply, when questioned by diviners. When a lucky man cuts up a tortoise, he finds auspicious omens, whereas an unlucky one, grasping the milfoil, obtains contrary signs. This will be shown by the following examples.

*Chou* was the worst of rulers ; during his reign there was an abundance of calamitous events. Seventy times the tortoise was consulted, and the replies

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<sup>1</sup> *Yi-king, Chi-t'se I* (Legge's transl. p. 365).

<sup>2</sup> Which he uses in burning the tortoise shell.

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were always unlucky. Therefore *Tsu Yi* <sup>1</sup> said,

— Excellent men and the great tortoise dare not know anything about happiness. The worthy are not called to office, and the large tortoise does not give good omens. A catastrophe is impending <sup>2</sup>.

When King *Wu* of *Chou* received the heavenly appointment, and *Kao Tsu* ascended the dragon throne, Heaven and men conjointly lent them their aid, and there were great numbers of wonders and miracles. The sons of *Fêng* and *P'ei* <sup>3</sup> divined by shells, and <sup>p1.186</sup> they likewise received propitious replies. The omens which a lucky man attracts by his personality are invariably good, whereas those brought about by the doings of an unlucky person are always bad.

When *Shih T'ai* <sup>4</sup> of *Wei* died, he had no rightful heir, but six illegitimate sons <sup>5</sup>. They divined, who would be the successor, and made out that bathing and the wearing of gems would afford an omen. Five of the sons took a bath, and adorned themselves with precious stones, but *Shih Ch'i Tse* <sup>6</sup> said,

— Who, being in mourning for a parent, can bathe and wear gems ?

Hence he did not bathe, nor wear any gems. It was he who hit the omen. The men of *Wei* divining confided in the wisdom of the tortoise <sup>7</sup>, but it did not possess any wisdom, the wise one was *Shih Ch'i Tse* himself. He governed his State well, and what he said was excellent, hence the felicitous auguries. Had no recourse been taken to divination at that time, and the people alone be consulted, they would nevertheless have declared in his favour. Why ? Because the heart and its feelings are nothing else than luck and mishap. If

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<sup>1</sup> The minister of *Chou*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Shuking*, *Hsi po k'an Li* and *Shi-chi* chap. 3 ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 204](#)).

<sup>3</sup> The countrymen of *Kao Tsu*, who was born in *Fêng*, in the sub-prefecture of *P'ei* in *Kiangsu*.

<sup>4</sup> The *Li-ki* writes *Shih T'ai Chung*.

<sup>5</sup> From his concubines.

<sup>6</sup> A feudal lord in *Wei*, mentioned in the *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Chuang* 12th year (681 B. C.), as influencing the policy of his native State.

<sup>7</sup> So far the story is culled from the *Li-ki*, *T'an Kung II* ([Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 181](#)).

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this be true, it disposes of the truth of divination. While the shells are being cut in pieces, and the straws sorted, omens and signs take place spontaneously, and while they appear, happiness and misfortune happen of their own accord, and the lucky as well as the unlucky fall in with them by chance.

The lucky meet with good omens, whereas the unlucky encounter bad signs. Thus wherever the lucky pass, things are pleasant to them, and wherever they look, they behold felicitous objects. Yet those pleasant things and felicitous objects are not special auguries for the lucky. In a similar manner the unlucky encounter all sorts of hardships on their way. These good and bad things are not the response of Heaven, it is by chance that they fall to the lot of the good and the bad. The lucky and unlucky omens obtained by cutting the tortoise and drawing the milfoil are like the happiness and the unhappiness which we experience. This much we gather from the following instances.

When King *Wu* of *Chou* was down-spirited, the Duke of *Chou* consulted three tortoises, and said that he would *meet* with <sup>p1.187</sup> success <sup>1</sup>. When the minister of *Lu*, *Chuang Shu* <sup>2</sup>, had got a son, *Mu Shu* <sup>3</sup>, he drew the lots with the help of the *Yi-king* and *encountered* the 36th diagram <sup>4</sup>, which became the 15th <sup>5</sup>. In regard to the divination with shells the term to *meet* is used, and the expression to *encounter* is applied to the drawing of straws. Thus, as a matter of fact, the replies were obtained by mere chance, and were not the outcome of goodness or badness.

The good *meet* with happiness, and the wicked *encounter* misfortune. The law of Heaven is spontaneity, it does nothing for the sake of man. The

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<sup>1</sup> The Duke of *Chou* had built three altars to his three ancestors, whom he consulted on the fate of his side brother *Wu Wang*. He probably had one tortoise for each altar. (Cf. *Shi-chi* chap. 33, p. 1v. [[Chavannes, Mém. Hist.](#)] and p. 1.205.)

<sup>2</sup> *Shu Sun Chuang Shu* or *Shu Sun Tê Chên*. When he died in 603 B. C., he received the posthumous name *Chuang*.

<sup>3</sup> The same as *Shu Sun Mu Tse* mentioned in Chap. 64. His clan name was *Shu Sun*, *Mu* being his posthumous title.

<sup>4</sup> [The diagram Ming-i.](#)

<sup>5</sup> [The diagram Ch'ien.](#) *Wang Ch'ung* here quotes a passage from the *Tso-chuan*, Duke Chao 5th year (*Legge* Vol. V, Pt. II, p. 604) where the expression 'encountered' is used.

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happiness attending the government of a ruler must be judged by the same principle. When a prince chances to be virtuous, it just so happens that there is peace and joy, and that many wonderful and auspicious things appear. Contrariwise, when there happens to be a degenerate ruler, all this is reversed.

There are many people discoursing on divination, but very few who understand its real meaning. Some hold that divination must not be practised by itself, but that circumstances are to be taken into account. The tortoise being cut, and the milfoil grasped, omens and signs appear. Seeing unusual signs, the diviners resort to their imagination : auspicious omens they explain as disastrous, and unlucky signs as auspicious. If in such a case luck and mishap do not become manifest, people say that divination is not to be trusted.

When King *Wu of Chou* destroyed *Chou* <sup>1</sup>, the interpreters put a bad construction upon the omens, and spoke of a great calamity. *T'ai Kung* flung the stalks away, and trampled upon the tortoise saying,

— How can dried bones and dead herbs know fate ?

In case the omens and signs obtained by divination do not correspond to happiness and misfortune, there must have been a p1.188 mistake. When the soothsayers are unable to ascertain fate, it is thrown into confusion, and owing to this confusion *T'ai Kung* disparaged divination.

Divination by shells and stalks bears a resemblance to the administration of a wise emperor, and the omens of divination are like the auspicious portents during the reign of such an emperor. These portents are unusual, and the omens are extraordinary and marvellous. It is for this reason that the diviners fall into error, and it is the unusual which blindfolds the emperor's advisers to such a degree, that in their blindness they declare a peaceful government to be mismanaged, and in their error call bad what is auspicious. Lucky omens a lucky man can fall in with, and, when during a reign auspicious portents are met with, it is a manifestation of the virtue of a wise ruler. When the King of *Chou* destroyed *Chou*, he encountered the omens of a

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<sup>1</sup> The last emperor of the *Shang* dynasty, *Chou Hsin*.

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bird and a fish, why did his diviners regard these as unlucky omens ? Had King *Wu*'s elevation not been predestinated, he ought not to have met with portents, when going out. Provided that it was *Wu Wang*'s fate to rise, the diviners should not have thought it inauspicious. Thus, since the divination for King *Wu* could not be unlucky, but was declared to be so, this interpretation was erroneous.

When *Lu* was going to attack *Yüeh*, the diviners by milfoil gave their verdict to the effect that the tripod had broken its leg. *Tse Kung* explained this as evil. Why ? Because the tripod had its leg broken, and for moving on one uses the legs. Consequently he considered it unlucky. *Confucius*, on the other hand, explained it as lucky, saying,

— The people of *Yüeh* are living on the water ; to reach them one requires boats, not legs.

Therefore he called it lucky. *Lu* invaded *Yüeh*, and in fact defeated it.

*Tse Kung* explained the breaking of the leg of the tripod as evil, just as the interpretation of the diviners of *Chou* was adverse. But in spite of this adverse comment there was certainly luck, and in accordance with the right explanation of the broken leg *Yüeh* could be invaded. In *Chou* there were many persons who could give a straightforward interpretation like *Tse Kung*, but very few gifted with the same subtle reasoning power as *Confucius*. Consequently, upon viewing an unusual omen, they were unable to catch the meaning.

Because *Wu Wang* had no fault, when the divining took place, and nevertheless got a bad omen, people think that divination must not be practised by itself, and is but of little service in government. But it serves to show that there are spiritual <sup>p1.189</sup> powers, and that a plan is not merely the production of somebody's brain <sup>1</sup>.

Writers and chroniclers have collected all sorts of events, as *Han Fei Tse* for instance, who in his chapter on the embellishment of false doctrines <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Those in power win the people over to their views by showing that the omens are favourable, and that the spirits causing them give their approval.

<sup>2</sup> Chapter XIX of *Han Fei Tse*'s work.

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examines the proofs of those manifestations. There he depreciates divination by shells, stigmatises that by weeds, and condemns the common belief in their usefulness. As a matter of fact, divination can be made use of, yet it happens that the diviners are mistaken in their interpretations. In the chapter *Hung fan* we read concerning the investigation of doubts that, as regards exceptional portents explained by divination, the son of heaven must be asked, but that sometimes the ministers and officials are also able to offer a solution <sup>1</sup>. Owing to this inability to give a correct explanation, omens and signs often do not prove true, hence the distrust in the usefulness of divination.

Duke *Wên* of *Chin* was at war with the viscount of *Ch'u*. He dreamt that he was wrestling with King *Ch'êng* <sup>2</sup>, who gained the upper hand, and sucked his brains. This was interpreted as inauspicious, but *Chiu Fan* <sup>3</sup> said,

— It is lucky. Your Highness could look up to heaven, while *Ch'u* was bending down under the weight of his guilt. Sucking your brains means softening and craving for mercy <sup>4</sup>.

The battle was fought, and *Chin* was in fact victorious, as *Chiu Fan* had prognosticated.

The interpretation of dreams is like the explanation of the signs of the tortoise. The oneirocritics of *Chin* did not see the purport of the visions, as the diviners of *Chou* did not understand the nature of the omens of the tortoise-shell. Visions are perfectly true, and omens perfectly correct, but human knowledge is insufficient, and the reasoning therefore not to the point.

There is still another report, according to which King *Wu*, when attacking *Chou*, consulted the tortoise, but the tortoise was deformed <sup>5</sup>. The diviners regarded this as very unpropitious, but *T'ai* <sub>p1.190</sub> *Kung* said,

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Shuking, Hung-fan*, Pt. V, Bk. IV, 20 (*Legge* Vol. III, Pt. II, p. 334). The viscount of *Ch'u*, who styled himself king.

<sup>2</sup> The viscount of *Ch'u*, who styled himself king.

<sup>3</sup> The *Tso-chuan* calls him *Tse Fan*.

<sup>4</sup> Quotation from the *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Hei* 28th year (631 B. C.) [[Couvreur](#), pp. 395-396].

<sup>5</sup> I surmise from the context that the character [] must denote some deformity of the tortoise. *Kang-hi* says in the appendix that the meaning is unknown.

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— The deformation of the tortoise means bad luck for sacrifices, but victory in war.

King *Wu* followed his advice, and at length destroyed *Chou*. If this be really so, this story is like the utterances of *Confucius* on the diagrams, and *Chiu Fan's* interpretation of the dream. Omens and signs are true by any means, if good and bad fortunes do not happen as predicted, it is the fault of the diviners who do not understand their business.

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## 72. Book XXIV, Chap. III

### *Pien-sui*. Criticisms on Noxious Influences

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p1.525 It is a common belief that evil influences cause our diseases and our deaths, and that in case of continual calamities, penalties, ignominious execution, and derision there has been some offence <sup>1</sup>. When in commencing a building, in moving our residence, in sacrificing, mourning, burying, and other rites, in taking up office or marrying, no lucky day has been chosen, or an unpropitious year or month have not been avoided, one falls in with demons and meets spirits, which at that ominous time work disaster. Thus sickness, misfortunes, the implication in criminal cases, punishments, and even deaths, the destruction of a family, and the annihilation of a whole house are brought about by carelessness and disregard of an unfortunate period of time. But in reality this idea is unreasonable.

In this world men cannot but be active, and, after they have been so, they become either lucky or unlucky. Seeing them lucky, people point at this happiness and regard it as the happy result of their previously having chosen a lucky day, and seeing them unlucky, they look at their misfortune as the fatal consequence of their former inattention to an ill-timed hour. However, there are many persons who become unhappy, although they have chosen their day, and others who obtain happiness in spite of their neglect. The horoscopists and seers, desirous of propagating their mystical theory, are silent upon such misfortunes, when they observe them, and hush up those cases of happiness. Contrariwise they adduce abundance of misfortunes with a view to frighten people, lest they should be careless in electing a day, and give many instances of happiness to induce them to be cautious in observing the proper time. Consequently all classes of people, no matter whether they be intelligent or feeble-minded, virtuous or depraved, princes or common citizens, believe in this from fear, and dare not make any opposition. They

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<sup>1</sup> Not a moral offence, but a disregard of noxious influences.



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imagine that this theory is of high antiquity, p1.526 and make the nicest distinctions, regarding it as a revelation of Heaven and Earth and a doctrine of wise and holy men. The princes are anxious for their throne, and the people love their own persons, wherefore they always cling to this belief, and do not utter any doubts. Thus, when a prince is about to engage in some enterprise, the horoscopists throng his halls, and, when the people have some business, they first ask for the proper time to avoid collision and injury. A vast literature of sophistic works and deceitful writings has appeared in consequence. The writers are very clever in passing their inventions off as knowledge for their own profit, winning the stupid by fear, enticing the rich, and robbing the poor.

This is by no means the method of the ancients or conformable to the intentions of the sages. When the sages undertook something, they first based it on justice, and, after the moral side of the question had been settled, they determined it by divination to prove that it was not of their own invention, and showed that ghosts and spirits were of the same opinion, and concurred with their view. They wished to prevail upon all the subjects to trust in the usefulness of divination and not to doubt. Therefore the *Shuking* speaks of the seven kinds of divination by shells <sup>1</sup> and the *Yiking* of the eight diagrams. Yet those who make use of them, are not necessarily happy, or those who neglect them, unhappy.

Happy and unhappy events are determined by time, the moments of birth and death, by destiny. Human destiny depends on Heaven, luck and misfortune lie hidden in the lap of time. If their allotted span be short, people's conduct may be ever so virtuous, Heaven cannot lengthen their span, and, if this span be long, Heaven cannot snatch it away from them, though their doings be evil.

Heaven is the master of the hundred spirits. Religion, virtue, kindness, and justice are the principles of Heaven, trembling and fear, heavenly emotions <sup>2</sup>. The destruction of religion and the subversion of virtue are

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<sup>1</sup> [Shuking, Hung-fan Pt. V, Bk. IV](#), 23 (*Legge* Vol. III, Pt. II, p. 335) [[Couvreur](#)]. By another punctuation the commentators bring out another meaning *viz.* that there are seven modes of divination in all, five given by the tortoise and two by milfoil.

<sup>2</sup> We must not suppose that Heaven can fear and tremble, for, as *Wang Ch'ung* tells us over and over again, Heaven is unconscious and inactive. It possesses those

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attacks upon the principles of Heaven ; menaces and angry looks are antagonistic to the mind of Heaven.

p1.527 Among the irreligious and wicked none were worse than *Chieh* and *Chou*, and among the lawless and unprincipled of the world none were worse than *Yu* and *Li* <sup>1</sup>. Yet *Chieh* and *Chou* did not die early, and *Yu* and *Li* were not cut off in their prime. Ergo it is evident that happiness and joy do not depend on the choice of a lucky day and the avoidance of an unpropitious time, and that sufferings and hardships are not the result of a collision with a bad year or an infelicitous month.

*Confucius* has said,

Life and death are determined by fate, wealth and honour depend on Heaven <sup>2</sup>.

In case, however, that certain times and days are to be observed, and that there are really noxious influences, wherefore did the sage hesitate to say so, or why was he afraid to mention it ? According to the ancient writings scholars have been enjoying peace or been in jeopardy, thousands of princes and ten thousands of officials have either obtained or lost luck or mishap, their offices have been high or low, their emoluments have increased or diminished, and in all this there have been many degrees and differences. Taking care of their property, some people have become rich, others poor, they have made profits, or suffered losses, their lives have been long or short, in brief, some have got on, while others remained behind. The exalted and noble have not selected lucky days in all their doings, nor have the mean and ignoble chosen an unlucky time.

From this we learn that happiness and unhappiness as well as life and death do not depend on the lucky auguries which people encounter, or on the time of ill omen or dread, with which they fall in. While alive, men are

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qualities ascribed to it only virtually. They become actual and are put into practice by man, who fulfils the commands of Heaven with trembling awe. Its moral feelings are heavenly principles and heavenly emotions. Cf. p. 1.129.

<sup>1</sup> Two emperors of the *Chou* dynasty of bad repute. *Yu Wang* reigned from 781 to 771 B. C., *Li Wang* from 878 to 828 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 1.136.

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nurtured by their vital fluid, and, when they expire, their life is cut off. During their lives people do not meet with a special luck or joy, nor can it be said that at their deaths they fall in with an ominous time of dread. Taking *Confucius* as a witness and basing our arguments on life and death, we come to the conclusion that the manifold misfortunes and calamities are not brought about by human actions.

*Confucius* is a sage and a store of knowledge. Life and death are the greatest events. These great events prove the justness of our theory. *Confucius* has declared that life and death are determined by destiny, and that wealth and honour depend on Heaven. All the writings and covert attacks cannot invalidate this dictum, and common and weak-minded people cannot controvert it. Our <sup>p1.528</sup> happiness and unhappiness in this world are fixed by fate, but we can attract them ourselves by our actions <sup>1</sup>. If people lead a tranquil and inactive life, happiness and misfortune arrive of their own accord. That is fate. If they do business and work, and luck or mishap fall to their lot, they have themselves been instrumental.

Very few of the human diseases have not been caused by wind, moisture, eating or drinking. Having exposed themselves to a draught, or slept in a damp place, people spend their cash to learn, which evil influence has been at play. When they have overeaten themselves, they rid their vital essence from this calamity by abstinence, but, in case the malady cannot be cured, they believe that the noxious influence has not been detected, and, if their life comes to a close of itself, they maintain that the divining straws have not been well explained. This is the wisdom of common people.

Among the three hundred and sixty naked animals <sup>2</sup> man ranks first ; he is a creature, among the ten thousand creatures the most intelligent. He obtains his life from Heaven and his fluid from the primordial vapours in exactly the same manner as other creatures. Birds have their nests and eyries, beasts their dens and burrows, reptiles, fish, and scaly creatures their holes, just as man has cottages and houses, high-storied buildings and towers.

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<sup>1</sup> Even in that case there is fate, which includes human activity.

<sup>2</sup> Snakes, reptiles, and worms which like man have no scales, fur, or feathers.

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Those moving creatures die and suffer injuries, fall ill and become worn out, and the big and the small ones prey upon one another, or man hunts and seizes them as a welcome game for his mouth and belly. They do not miss the proper time in building their nests and burrowing their hollows, or fall in with unlucky days in rambling east and west. Man has birth and death, and so other creatures have a beginning and an end. He is active, and so other creatures have their work likewise. Their arteries, heads, feet, ears, eyes, noses, and mouths are not different from the human, only their likes and dislikes are not the same as the human, hence man does not know their sounds, nor understand their meaning. They associate with their kindred and consort with their flock, and know, when they can come near, and when they must keep away just like man. They have the same heaven, the same earth, and they look equally up at the sun and the moon. <sup>p1.529</sup> Therefore one does not see the reason, why the misfortune caused by demons and spirits should fall upon man alone, and not on the other creatures. In man the mind of Heaven and Earth reach their highest development. Why do the heavenly disasters strike the noblest creature and not the mean ones ? How is it that their natures are so similar, and their fates so different ?

Punishments are not inflicted upon high officials, and wise emperors are lenient towards the nobility. Wise emperors punish the plebeians, but not the patricians, and the spirits visit the noblest creature with calamities and spare the mean ones ? This would not tally with a passage in the *Yiking* to the effect that a great man shares the luck and mishap of demons and spirits <sup>1</sup>.

When I have committed some offence and fallen into the clutches of the law, or become liable to a capital punishment, they do not say that it has been my own fault, but that in my house some duty has been neglected. When I have not taken the necessary precautions for my personal accommodation, or when I have been immoderate in eating or drinking, they do not say that I have been careless, but discover some unpardonable disregard of an unlucky time. In case several persons die shortly one after the other, so that there are up to ten coffins awaiting burial, they do not speak of a contagion through contaminated air, but urge that the day chosen for one

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<sup>1</sup> [Yiking, 1st diagram](#) (*Ch'ien*).

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interment has been unlucky. If some activity has been displayed, they will talk about the non-observance of lucky or unlucky days, and, if nothing has been done, they have recourse to one's habitation. Our house or lodging being in a state of decay or delapidation, flying goblins and floating spectres assemble in our residence, they say. They also pray to their ancestors for help against misfortunes and delivery from evil. In case of sickness, they do not ask a doctor and, when they are in difficulties, they do not reform their conduct. They ascribe everything to misfortune and call it offences or mistakes. Such is the type of the ordinary run ; their knowledge is shallow, and they never get at the bottom of a thing.

When delinquents are employed by the Minister of Works for hard labour, it does not follow that the day, when they appeared before the judge, was inauspicious, or that the time, when they were condemned to penal servitude, was one of ill omen. If a murderer selects an auspicious day to go out and meet the judge, who inflicts his punishment, and if he chooses a good time for <sup>p1.530</sup> entering the prison, will the judgment then be reversed, and his pardon arrive ?

A man is not punished, unless he has met with mishap, nor thrown into jail, if not punished. Should one day a decree arrive, in consequence of which he could walk out released from his fetters, it would not follow that he had got rid of evil influences.

There are thousands of jails in the world, and in these jails are ten thousands of prisoners, but they cannot all have neglected the precarious time of dread. Those who hold office and have their revenues, perhaps from special towns and districts, which have been given them in perpetual fief, number thousands and tens of thousands, but the days, when they change their residences, are not always lucky.

The city of *Li-yang* <sup>1</sup> was flooded during one night and became a lake. Its inhabitants cannot all have been guilty of a disregard of the year and the months. When *Kao Tsu* rose, *Fêng* and *P'ei* <sup>2</sup> were recovered, yet their

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<sup>1</sup> *Vid.* p. 1.136.

<sup>2</sup> *Cf.* p. 1.185.

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inhabitants cannot be said to have been particularly cautious with reference to times and days. When *Hsiang Yü* stormed *Hsiang-an*, no living soul was left in it <sup>1</sup>. This does not prove, however, that its people have not prayed or worshipped. The army of *Chao* was buried alive by *Ch'in* below *Ch'ang-p'ing*. 400,000 men died at the same time together <sup>2</sup>. When they left home, they had surely not omitted to choose a propitious time.

On a *shên* day one must not cry, for crying entails deep sorrow. When some one dies on a *wu* or a *chi* day, other deaths will follow, yet in case an entire family dies out, the first death did not of necessity take place on a *shên*, *wu*, or *chi* <sup>3</sup> day. On a day, when blood-shed is forbidden, one must not kill animals, yet the abattoirs are not scenes of more misfortunes than other places. On the first day of the moon, people should not crowd together, yet shops are not especially visited with disasters. When skeletons become visible on the surface of the soil, they have not necessarily come out on a *Wang-wang* day, and a dead man, whose coffin is standing in a house, must not just have returned on a *Kuei-chi* day <sup>4</sup>. Consequently p1.531 those who interpret evil influences cannot be trusted, for if they are, they do not find the truth.

Now, let us suppose that ten persons living and eating together in the same house do not move a hoe or a hammer, nor change their residence, that in sacrificing and marrying they select but lucky days, and that from Spring to Winter they never come into collision with any inauspicious time. Would these ten persons not die, when they have attained a hundred years ?

The geomancers will certainly reply that their house would either be in good repair or commence to decay, and that, on the *Sui-p'o* or *Chih-fu* days they would not think of leaving it. In that case they might every now and then ask the soothsayers about the state of their house and remain in it, as long as it is in good repair, but leave it, when it begins to delapidate, and, on the

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<sup>1</sup> The *Shi-chi* chap. 8, p. 11v., where this passage occurs ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 343](#)), speaks of the city of *Hsiang-ch'êng* in *Honan*, whereas *Hsiang-an* is situated in *Anhui*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 1.136.

<sup>3</sup> Three cyclical numbers.

<sup>4</sup> On a *Wang-wang* day one must not go out, and on a *Kuei-chi* day returning home is disastrous.

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*Sui-p'o* and *Chih-fu* <sup>1</sup> days, the whole family might move. But would they not die then at the age of a hundred years ?

The geomancers would again object that while changing their residence they would hit upon an unlucky time, or that their moving to and fro might be unpropitious. Then we would advise them to consult the seers and not to move, unless they can safely go, nor revert, unless their coming is without danger. But would they remain alive then after having reached a hundred years ?

The geomancers would not fail to reply that life stops and that age has a limit. Ergo human life and death solely depend on destiny ; they are not affected by unlucky years and months, or influenced by a disregard of fatal days of dread.

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<sup>1</sup> *Wang-wang*, *Kuei-chi*, *Sui-p'o*, and *Chih-fu* are technical terms used by geomancers and in calendars to designate certain classes of unlucky days.

## 73. Book XXIV, Chap. IV

### *Nan-sui*. Questions about the Year Star

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p2.402 Common people have a feeling of uneasiness, and are prone to believe in defences and prohibitions. Even the wise become doubtful, and are at a loss how to settle these questions. Consequently, artisans carry the day, and scholars and well informed people submit to them. Books on auguries outshine the Classics and Canons, and the utterances of artisans have more weight than the words of scholars and students. Now, I propose to inquire a little into this question, that others may see for themselves, weighing right and wrong, and that people in general may be roused.

Concerning the moving of one's residence, they say that to encounter *T'ai-sui* <sup>1</sup> is unlucky, and that to turn one's back upon it likewise bodes evil. The encounter of *T'ai-sui* is termed '*Jupiter's* descent', and the moving in opposite direction to it, '*Jupiter's* destruction', wherefore both are attended with misfortune.

In case *T'ai-sui* is in *chia-tse*, people on earth must not move in a northerly or a southerly direction. Building a house and marrying, they should avoid this as well. When they move to the east or the west, or in one of the four intermediate directions, these configurations are all lucky. Why? Because then they do not collide with the *T'ai-sui*, nor meet its shock.

Let us ask what this avoidance of *T'ai-sui* really means. Does it object to people's moving altogether? Then all moving would entail calamities. Or does *T'ai-sui* not prevent people from moving, but resent their collision? Then all people going north or south on the roads would be visited with misfortunes.

The feelings of *T'ai-sui* would be like those of a high officer. When a high

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<sup>1</sup> A fictitious point, also called *sui-yin*, 'the opposite of *Jupiter*', used for designating the year by means of the cycle of sixty. (See [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. III, p. 654](#)). The term *chia-tse* would correspond to the north. Then *Jupiter* itself would have its position due south.



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officer is on a road, and somebody runs against <sup>p2.403</sup> the carts and horses of his men, he would fly into a passion. Why should *T'ai-sui* chastise only those who, carrying their furniture and transporting their things, in changing their domicile run against it ?

Of yore, when on a trip, the Emperor *Wên Ti* <sup>1</sup> was crossing the *Pa-ling* bridge, there was an individual on the road who, falling in with the *cortège*, jumped down from the bridge. Trusting that the carriages of the emperor had already passed, he suddenly emerged again, and frightened the carriage-horses. The emperor, very angry, handed him over to the sheriff *Chang Shih Chih* <sup>2</sup> for trial. Provided that the spirit of *T'ai-sui* <sup>3</sup> travel like *Wên Ti*, then those who fall in with it would resemble the man emerging from below the bridge.

At present, many wayfarers are unexpectedly drowned, or fall down dead. How do we know but that they also encountered *T'ai-sui* on its journeys ?

Those moving their residence cannot stay in their former home. Unable to stay there, they ignore whether they will meet with the Year Star or not, and not knowing this, they cannot make up their minds what to do.

Moreover, in case the spirit of *T'ai-sui* really travels about, then perhaps it proceeds along a crooked line, and not necessarily along a straight one, south or northwards <sup>4</sup>, as with high officers, leaving their houses, it happens that they take a crooked road. Should it, as a spirit of Heaven, take the straight road, and not a crooked one <sup>5</sup>, then people moving from east and west and in the four intermediate directions, would also run against it <sup>6</sup>. A high officer proceeding southward and northward, and people moving from east to west, the configuration of these intermediate directions would be like that leading to

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<sup>1</sup> 179-157 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Giles, Bibl. Dict.* No. 105 and p. 2.144, Note 5.

<sup>3</sup> We see from this passage that the personification of '*T'ai-sui*' is not a recent invention as *De Harlez, Le Livre des Esprits et des Immortels*, p. 134 says. This spirit is venerated at the present day, and seems by some to be regarded as a dangerous spirit of the soil.

<sup>4</sup> On the firmament *Jupiter* describes a curve, not a straight line.

<sup>5</sup> The spirits of Heaven dislike crookedness.

<sup>6</sup> While crossing the course of *T'ai-sui* from north to south.

## Lun-hêng

a collision. If *T'ai-sui* does not go straight south and north, how could people, moving in these directions, fall in with it ?

p2.404 If *T'ai-sui* did not move at all, then it might perhaps stay in its palace and behind its walls without meeting anybody ; how then were man to encounter it ?

Supposing *T'ai-sui* had no body like high officers and, shaped like vapours, clouds, or a rain-bow, stretched straight across the firmament, reclining at its extremities in the south and the north on *tse* and *wu* <sup>1</sup>, then people, moving east and west as well as those taking an intermediate line, would also run against it, just as men of our time, encountering an extensive fog and malarial exhalations, no matter whether they moved straightways or sideways, backward or forward, would all be affected <sup>2</sup>. If *T'ai-sui* were really like air, people ought to meet it and even, without moving, they would have to suffer from it.

Further *T'ai-sui* is another spirit of Heaven resembling the Green Dragon <sup>3</sup>. The body of the latter does not exceed several thousand *chang* <sup>4</sup>. Let us suppose that the size of our spirit is exceptional, and measures several ten thousand *chang*, and that this body covers the north. Then we ought to say that *T'ai-sui* stands in the north, but not in *tse*. East of *tse* is *ch'ou*, (N.N.E.) and west of it, *hai* (N.N.W.). If it be shown that *T'ai-sui* does not cover the whole north, it is owing to the great distance between the extreme eastern and western limits of the north. But if it be held to be just in *the tse* point, and colliding with people on earth, only those settled in *tse* and *wu* regions should not move south and north ; why should those living eastward as far as *ch'ou* (N.N.E.) and *sse* (S.S.E.), or westward as far as *hai* (N.N.W.) and *wei* (S.S.W.) refrain from doing so ?

Provided that the inhabitants of the *ch'ou* and *hai* regions move up and down on the right or the left side of *T'ai-sui* southward and northward, or east

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<sup>1</sup> The north and the south points.

<sup>2</sup> The fog would spread sideways as well as from north to south.

<sup>3</sup> The eastern quadrant of heaven.

<sup>4</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* seems to take the Green Dragon for a real dragon of extraordinary dimensions.

## Lun-hêng

and west, they are quite safe. *Ch'ou* being east and *hai* west of *tse*, the people of these quarters moving simply east and west <sup>1</sup>, must come into collision with the position of *T'ai-sui*, and those of the *sse* and *wei* regions moving east and west, be afraid lest they suffer destruction by the planet.

p2.405 The Literati considering the Nine Provinces 'under Heaven' <sup>2</sup> hold that they cover the entire length and breadth of the earth, north, south, east, and west. These Nine Circuits comprise five thousand Li which alone form the country of the Three Rivers <sup>3</sup>, i. e., the centre of the earth. With reference to the Duke of *Chou*, consulting the tortoise, about his new residence the Classic says, [Let the king come here as the vicegerent of God, and labour in the centre of the earth.] <sup>4</sup> Consequently *Lo* is the centre of the earth.

*Tsou Yen*, arguing on the subject, maintains that of the Nine Continents the five thousand Li form only one Continent, situated in the east and called *Ch'ih-hsien* <sup>5</sup>. Of continents, each comprising nine circuits, there are nine. Nine times nine gives eighty-one, consequently there are altogether eighty-one circuits. This view is probably imaginary, but it is difficult to know the shape of the earth. Should it be as described, there would also arise one difficulty.

In case all land under Heaven forms Nine Circuits as the Literati conceive it, then merely the circuits due south from *Lo-yi* and north from the Three Rivers viz. *Yü-chou*, *Ching-chou*, and *Chi-chou* could be frequented by *T'ai-sui*. How could it be between *Yung* and *Liang-chou*, in *Ch'ing-chou*, *Yen-chou*, *Hsü-chou*, and *Yang-chou* ? <sup>6</sup>

Should *Tsou Yen's* view be correct, and the Nine Circuits of the empire occupy the south-eastern corner of the earth, and not be lying exactly in *tse* or *wu*, how could *T'ai-sui* be present ?

If *T'ai-sui* did not keep its position at the confines of Heaven and Earth,

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<sup>1</sup> I. e., not always keeping on one side of *T'ai-sui*.

<sup>2</sup> Equivalent to *China*.

<sup>3</sup> The *Huang-ho*, the *Huai*, and the *Lo*.

<sup>4</sup> *Shuking* Part V, Book XII, 14 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part II, p. 428](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>5</sup> Cf. p. 1.253.

<sup>6</sup> Names of the Nine Circuits.

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and were wandering about among the people, then the house of every family might harbour it, and although a person did not move south or north, it would come across it all the same. Moving from an eastern to a western village, it would find *T'ai-sui* there, and should it move from an eastern into a western building, *T'ai-sui* would be in the western dwelling too. It would be east or west, north or south of the person in question, just as, walking on a highway, one falls in with other people in the east or the west, the north or the south.

Provided that the space filled by *T'ai-sui* measures several thousand, ten thousand, or hundred thousand *chang*, and that all mankind under heaven by moving entails some adversity, then p2.406 how can their moving be regulated? If *T'ai-sui* stands in the interstice between Heaven and Earth, it has a similar position to a king in the midst of his country. People in the eastern part of it, bending their bows and shooting westward, would not be supposed to have wounded the king, because their bows do not carry as far as the king's capital; they merely shoot in their own place. Now, how could people moving proceed as far north as where *T'ai-sui* has its resting-place? Moving no farther than perhaps a hundred steps, how could they be charged with having hurt *T'ai-sui*?

Moreover, people moving their residence, are warned to go south or north, because *T'ai-sui* is held to stay in the *tse* point; *tse* breaks *wu*<sup>1</sup>, and those moving north or south, receive the shock, which is called a calamity. Now, in order to smash something, one requires a hammer. If there really be such a tool, then all people, even those not stirring, would be smashed and destroyed with it, but how could they be smitten in default of such a tool?

Thunder is the heavenly fluid. When in mid-summer it strikes, it splits trees and rends mountains, and, at times, suddenly kills a man. If the blow of *T'ai-sui* should be like a thunderbolt, there ought to be a crashing sound also, and death ensue instantaneously, for, otherwise, there could not be destruction either.

If the knocking together, and the falling foul of each other be said to

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<sup>1</sup> In Chinese natural philosophy the North, or cold, overcomes the South, or heat; there is no real breaking.

## Lun-hêng

cause destruction, how can the knocking and striking have this effect ? The meeting of east and west is called knocking together, and the coming into contact of south and north, falling foul. Provided that knocking and running foul be calamitous, then east and west must be always baleful, and south and north always fatal <sup>1</sup>.

In case a collision with *T'ai-sui* proves disastrous only because of its being a spirit, it should be borne in mind that there are no spirits more powerful than Heaven and Earth. If Heaven and Earth meeting, dashed one against the other, no human life would be possible between Heaven and Earth.

Perhaps there are Twelve Spirits above, *Têng-ming*, *Tsung-k'uei* and the like <sup>2</sup>, which the artisans declare to be all celestial spirits. They always occupy *tse*, *ch'ou*, and the other cardinal points, and <sup>p2.407</sup> are endowed with a fluid rushing and dashing against whosoever crosses their way. Though in spiritual force not equal to *T'ai-sui*, still they must do some minor damage, and those moving their residence, although they may eschew the perils of *T'ai-sui*, would, nevertheless, fall a prey to the attacks of the Twelve Spirits. Therefore, whenever they are going to move they should be prevented.

The winter air is cold and corresponds to water, which has its position in the northern quarter. The summer air is hot and corresponds to fire, whose place is in the south. Autumn and winter are cold, spring and summer are warm ; that applies to every place throughout the empire, and water and fire are not solely encountered in southern and northern regions. Now, *T'ai-sui* stands in *tse* only, but it is formed all over the world, and it is not merely encountered in *tse* and *wu*. Should really the position alone be decisive, then in *wu* there would be a hot summer and in *tse*, a hard winter. Would those moving south and north, in winter and summer, still meet with disasters ?

In the beginning of spring, *kên* represents the king, and *chên*, the minister, *sun* is the embryo, and *li* means annihilation, *k'un* death, and *tui* imprisonment, *ch'ien* disgrace, and *k'an* tranquillity <sup>3</sup>. The king incurring

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<sup>1</sup> Theoretically opposite directions as well as opposite qualities of things, in short all opposites, knock together and destroy one another.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 1.534.

<sup>3</sup> The eight terms are those of the Eight Diagrams.

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death, and the minister imprisonment, king and minister have knocked against the respective positions <sup>1</sup>, and elicited the fluids of death and imprisonment.

*Ch'ien*, *k'un*, and their six sons <sup>2</sup> embody the true laws of nature which *Fu Hsi* and *Wên Wang* have illustrated to govern the world thereby. These texts are written in the Classics, and the principles are believed by all the sages. They are evidently much more certain than what we know about *T'ai-sui*.

If, at the commencement of spring, people should move to the north-east, they would come under the diagram *kên* <sup>3</sup>, but not suffer any injury. When *T'ai-sui* stands in *tse*, and from the northeast they move to *k'un* <sup>4</sup>, this diagram would be near *wu* <sup>5</sup>, as when *k'un* is changed for *kên*, they would strike against the *tse* point. Why would the latter fact alone entail misfortune ? <sup>6</sup>

p2.408 The first moon resting in *yin* <sup>7</sup> is destructive in *shên* <sup>8</sup>, but the moving between *yin* and *shên* is not attended with disasters in its course. Although *T'ai-sui* does not point to *wu*, they wrongly maintain that the year breaks *wu*. As a matter of fact, there is no adversity to be apprehended, and the prohibition to move south and north is inane and unreasonable.

Twelve months make a year and, when the four seasons are completed, and the fluid of the *yin* and *yang* reaches a certain limit, again a year is formed, which is but another name of days and months joined together. Why should it be taken for a spirit, supposed to stand in the *tse* point ? By dissolving this combination we get days, the addition of days forms a month, several months become a season, and a number of seasons, a year, which therefore, is something similar to a day, a month, and a season.

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<sup>1</sup> Viz. *k'un* and *tui*.

<sup>2</sup> The other six diagrams.

<sup>3</sup> In one plan of the Eight Diagrams (*Mayers' Manual* p. 335) *kên* represents the North-east.

<sup>4</sup> The South-west.

<sup>5</sup> The South.

<sup>6</sup> Why would the approaching of *wu* from *kun* not be disastrous ?

<sup>7</sup> E.N.E.

<sup>8</sup> W.S.W.

## Lun-hêng

If the year possess a spirit, have days, months, and seasons spirits also ? 1,539 years form a *t'ung* period, 4,617 a *yuan* period. A year is like a *t'ung* or a *yuan* period <sup>1</sup>. A year having a spirit, have the *t'ung* and *yuan* periods spirits likewise ? Critics deny it, but should they have them, for what reason would they injure mankind ? No spirits surpass Heaven and Earth, and Heaven and Earth do not hurt mankind. People speak of the Hundred Spirits, but they do not injure them either. Why should the fluid of *T'ai-sui*, being the essence of Heaven and Earth, be so inimical to men as to strike and hurt them ?

Further, the text says that in *chia-tse* one must not move. This may denote that *chia* and *tse* are different directions ; but *T'ai-sui*, having its position in *tse*, cannot stay in *chia* <sup>2</sup>. In case persons moving proceed there (to *tse*), and again settle in *chia*, taking that course, but finally staying in *chia*, those fixing the time for moving ought likewise to hinder them from moving eastward or westward <sup>3</sup>. Provided that *chia* and *tse* are combined, their calamities should be the same too. Not shunning *chia*, but avoiding *tse*, those persons fixing the time talk at random and deserve no confidence.

p2.409 People living somewhere cannot but change their residence, and changing their residence, they cannot but come into collision with the Year Star. Even if they do not, they cannot avoid dying at their time. Artisans noticing people's death at present, ascribe this misfortune to a change of residence in a former time. Common folk are very timid in their minds, there are always people passing away, and the consequence is that the story about *T'ai-sui* is handed down from generation to generation and never dies out.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 2.389, Note 7.

<sup>2</sup> In the term *chia-tse*, *chia* does not signify any direction. Together with *yi* it may stand for the east.

<sup>3</sup> Because in the east they might collide with *T'ai-sui* in *chia*, provided it could stay there.

## 74. Book XXV, Chap. I

### *Ch'i-shu*. Criticisms on Certain Theories

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p2.410 The theory of drawing plans of houses teaches us that there are eight schemes, and that houses are numbered and classed according to the names of the cycle of the six *chia* <sup>1</sup>. Their position having been fixed, and their names being established, *kung*, *shang* <sup>2</sup>, and the other sounds manifest their difference. Houses have the *Five Sounds* <sup>3</sup>, as the surnames (of the owners) are provided with the *Five Tones*. When the houses do not accord with the surnames, and the latter disagree with the houses, people contract virulent diseases and expire, or pay the penalty of some crime and meet with adversity <sup>4</sup>.

I beg to offer the following criticism : in this world man is the noblest of all creatures. His houses resemble the nests of birds and the dens of wild beasts. If his houses be held to bear the cyclical signs *chia*, *yi*, &c., have nests and dens these signs as well ? Why do the spirits of *chia*, *yi* <sup>5</sup> solely stay in men's houses, but not among birds and brutes ?

Men have their houses as they have their fields. From these fields they derive their food and drink, and their houses serve as dwellings. For people, I should say, food is of paramount importance, therefore do the fields rank first, and the houses come after, the fields being of greater consequence. To the paths crossing the fields from north to south and from east to west, the eight schemes might be applied. By joining together lots of land, fields are formed, which might be numbered *chia*, *yi*. Why is the *chia*, *yi* system merely used for houses, and not transferred to fields ?

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<sup>1</sup> This would seem to be the cycle of sixty in which the sign *chia* recurs six times.

<sup>2</sup> The two first of the *Five Tones* or musical notes.

<sup>3</sup> The same as the *Five Tones*.

<sup>4</sup> It is difficult to grasp the full meaning of the aforesaid without a commentary.

<sup>5</sup> These signs are thought of as spiritual beings also.



## Lun-hêng

In courts and public buildings the residences of officers are connected, and not of a shape different from that of other houses. How do the places inhabited by officers distinguish themselves from <sup>p2.411</sup> those of laymen ? Yet they are not counted by the cycle of ten, which is merely employed for houses. For what reason ?

The dwellings of the people may be contiguous to the office of the head-borough, and conterminous to his land, but this calculation does not apply to his office, being restricted to the houses of the people. Wherefore do the spirits of *chia, yi* merely stay in the houses of the people ?

The system of numbering houses is applied to market inns ; streets and alleys there being marked with *chia, yi*, &c. But having passed through the market gate, and turning round, one again finds streets and alleys <sup>1</sup>. During the day and at night, people stay in their homes, but in the morning and in the evening, they are in the habit of sitting in the market-place, which is the same as sitting at home <sup>2</sup>. Why then are the booths and bazaars in the market not included in this computation with the cycle of ten ? <sup>3</sup>

Provinces and circuits are equally inhabited, and districts and cities are crowded with people ; they do not differ from streets and alleys, or houses. Wherefore then are provinces and circuits, districts and cities not reckoned by *chia, yi* ?

Does this cycle of ten exist since the creation of Heaven and Earth, or did it originate with the subsequent rulers ? If it existed from the time of creation, in remote antiquity people would seek shelter in nests and caverns, and had no dwellings to live in, nor were there regular streets or alleys ; where then were the spirits of *chia, yi* staying at that period ?

If, for expressing the situation of houses, the cycle of ten is made use of, the physicists concerned with the Five Elements must count the days by this

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<sup>1</sup> Streets and alleys not near an inn, which seem not to have been marked like those surrounding an inn.

<sup>2</sup> Therefore these stands and bazaars should be treated like dwelling houses viz. be marked with *chia, yi*, &c.

<sup>3</sup> Only market inns, *i. e.*, solid buildings are placed on a level with dwelling houses.

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cycle likewise <sup>1</sup>. *Chia* and *yi* are contained in the Ten Stems and Twelve Branches, and these symbols are added to the hours <sup>2</sup>. There being a special agreement between hours and symbols, there is luck, whereas their antagonism augurs ill. But in the last case only something is to be avoided, and sorrow or shame are not a necessary consequence. All depends on the p2.412 question whether a person be right or wrong, and so the penalties inflicted, are heavy or mild. The high commissioners try the merits of the case with impartiality. There is no evidence of the Stems and Branches causing luck or misfortune, and it is obvious that the persons affected thereby are in the right or in the wrong. What have the champions of the Stems and Branches to say against this ?

*Wu Wang* won a victory on a *chia-tse* day, and *Chou* succumbed on the same day. Both leaders chose the same time : their armies met, and their flags and standards were in view of one another, all on the same day. The one survived, and the other fell. Besides there was a special harmony between *chia* and *tse* <sup>3</sup>. The hour of early dawn bore the sign *yin* <sup>4</sup>, which was not at variance with *chia* and *yi* <sup>5</sup>, yet *Wu Wang* destroyed *Chou* under these signs all the same. Why ?

The sun is fire : in the sky it is the sun, and on earth it is fire. How shall we prove it ? A burning glass being held up towards the sun, fire comes down from heaven. Consequently fire is the solar fluid.

The sun is connected with the cycle of ten <sup>6</sup>, but fire is not. How is it that there are ten suns <sup>7</sup> and twelve constellations <sup>8</sup> ? The suns are combined with

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<sup>1</sup> Days are counted by means of the two cycles of ten and of twelve combined.

<sup>2</sup> Properly speaking, only the Twelve Branches are added to the hours.

<sup>3</sup> *Chia* corresponds to wood, and *tse* to water, two harmonious elements.

<sup>4</sup> 3-5 a. m.

<sup>5</sup> The element of *yin* and *mao* is wood like that of *chia* and *yi*. Consequently there was no antagonism between the signs *chia*, *tse*, and *yin*, and yet *Chou* was unlucky.

<sup>6</sup> In so far as this and the duodenary cycle are used to determine the days = 日, which originally means 'sun'.

<sup>7</sup> There are not ten suns, but the ten cyclical signs are attached to each ten consecutive days.

<sup>8</sup> These twelve constellations, designated by the Twelve Branches, serve to determine the twelve Chinese double-hours, according as the sun, in its daily course, passes through them.

## Lun-hêng

these constellations, therefore *chia* is joined to *tse* <sup>1</sup>. But what are the so-called ten suns ? Are there ten real suns, or is there only one with ten different names ?

Provided that there be ten real suns, and that *chia*, *yi* be their names, why are they not simply designated by the cycle of ten and must the duodenary cycle be employed too ? <sup>2</sup>

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p2.413 In the drawings of the court of the sun <sup>3</sup> the Ten Stems have their positions, and so have the Twelve Branches assigned their places. All have their own departments, being arranged in the five directions. It is like a king's castle, where he stays, without moving. Now the genuine sun passes through the middle, rising in the east every morning, and setting in the west every evening, always moving on and never stopping. It is widely different from the court of the sun, why then denote this sun with the names *chia*, *yi*, &c. ?

The house experts will retort by saying that the *chia*, *yi*, &c. of the, days, of course, are spirits of Heaven and Earth, displaying their activity by turns, changing every day, that, therefore, they are designated by the cycle of ten, and that their preponderance and defeat <sup>4</sup> determine good and bad fortune. — These names have no connexion with the true sun. Under these circumstances, the physicists treating of the Five Elements, should only make use of the cycle of ten, to find out fate ; why do they still speak of adding hours ? For hours being added, the real sun comes into play <sup>5</sup> ; how could it be potent or weak ?

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The experts of the Five Sounds articulate the surnames, personal names, and styles with their mouths, using the surname to fix the personal name, and the personal name to determine the style. By opening and closing the mouth, they produce outward and inward tones, and thus fix the Five Sounds,

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<sup>1</sup> The first signs of the denary and of the duodenary cycles.

<sup>2</sup> Here we have the same equivocation of days and suns. The notation by the two cycles merely applies to days, not to suns.

<sup>3</sup> Probably a diagram, used for divining purposes, similar to that found in calendars.

<sup>4</sup> Based on the well known symbolism by reference to the elements.

<sup>5</sup> It determines the hours.

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and modulate *kung* and *shang* in the proper way <sup>1</sup>.

Now, men have received their surnames from Heaven. Does Heaven produce these surnames by the fluid of the Five Elements inherent in it, or are they the result of the opening and shutting of the mouth, and of outward and inward tones ? If they are originally obtained from Heaven, they are like the fluid pervading the Five Grains and other productions <sup>2</sup>, what necessity would there be still for opening the mouth, shutting out sounds, and thus producing the right modulations of the voice without and within ?

p2.414 In ancient times, surnames used to be given with reference to the birth of the person in question <sup>3</sup>. According to the manner in which he was born a surname was bestowed upon him. For example, the ancestor of the *Hsia* dynasty was engendered by the swallowing of some pearl-barley, whence he received the surname *Sse*. The *Shang* dynasty owes its origin to a consumed swallows-egg, whence its surname *Tse*, and the house of *Chou* grew from the treading upon the foot-steps of a giant, and thus received the surname *Chi* <sup>4</sup>.

Personal names are given from some pre-intimation, from some auspice, from some appearance, from some other object, or from some similarity. When a child is born with a name on it, that is a pre-intimation. So *Yo*, Prince of *Lu*, had the character *Yo* on his hand, when he was born <sup>5</sup>. When the name is derived from some virtue this is called an auspice. Thus *Wên Wang* was called *Ch'ang* <sup>6</sup>, and *Wu Wang*, *Fa* <sup>7</sup>. A name from some resemblance is a name from appearance. *Confucius e. g.* was called *Ch'iu* <sup>8</sup>. A name taken from some other object is borrowed ; a duke of *Sung*, for example, was

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<sup>1</sup> In the encyclopedias of surnames one of the Five Sounds is attached to each name. I fail to understand how they were determined by the so-called experts. There is another tradition that *Huang Ti* blew the flute to fix the surnames.

<sup>2</sup> They are naturally obtained, and it is superfluous artificially to determine their sounds.

<sup>3</sup> *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Yin* 8th year (*Legge, Classics Vol. V, Part I, p. 25*) [[Couvreur](#), § 9].

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 1.318.

<sup>5</sup> See p. 1.095, Note 6.

<sup>6</sup> [], which may mean : prosperous, flourishing, powerful.

<sup>7</sup> [] = to expand, to prosper, to advance, to rise.

<sup>8</sup> The mother of *Confucius* is reported to have ascended the *Ni* hill, before his birth.

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named *Ch'u-chiu* (Pestle and Mortar) <sup>1</sup>, and when the name is taken from the father it is a name from similarity, there being some resemblance to the father <sup>2</sup>.

A style is given by expanding the personal name and finding a similar meaning. The personal name being *T'se*, the style was *Tse Kung*, and the name being *Yü*, the style was *Tse Wo*.

Accordingly, a surname is given with reference to the circumstances of the birth of the person, a personal name is taken from <sup>p2.415</sup> some pre-intimation, some auspice, some appearance, some other object, or from some similarity, and a style determined from the personal name, by expanding it and finding a similar meaning. There is no need for opening and closing the mouth, or for articulating outward and inward tones, and thus producing *kung* and *shang* ; on what then do the advocates of the Five Sounds theory base their view ?

The ancients had proper surnames and clan surnames. *T'ao* <sup>3</sup> and *T'ien* <sup>4</sup> are clan surnames intimating the occupation of the bearer, *Shang-Kuan* <sup>5</sup> and *Sse-Ma* <sup>6</sup> are clan surnames indicative of some office, and the clan surnames *Mêng* and *Chung* <sup>7</sup> are derived from the style of the deceased grandfather <sup>8</sup>. Thus we have three classes of clan surnames, either describing the occupation, or the office of the bearer, or referring to the style of his deceased grandfather. Proper surnames are connected with a person's birth, whereas clan surnames refer to the occupation, the office, or the style of the deceased grandfather. What room is there still left for articulating these surnames by opening and closing the mouth ?

With the *Hsiung-nu* it was customary to have only a personal name and

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<sup>1</sup> This was the personal name of Duke *Chao* of *Sung*, 619-611 B. C. (See [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. IV, p. 241](#)), and it was borne by some other dukes of other States too.

<sup>2</sup> The gist of this passage, but not the examples, is derived from the *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Huan* 6th year (*Legge, Classics Vol. V, Part I, p. 49*) [[Couvreur](#), § 5].

<sup>3</sup> [], meaning a potter.

<sup>4</sup> [] meaning a farmer.

<sup>5</sup> [], a high officer.

<sup>6</sup> [], a military officer.

<sup>7</sup> [] and [], denoting the eldest and the second son of a family.

<sup>8</sup> The theory of clan-names exposed in *Legge's* translation of the *Tso-chuan* p. 26 differs somewhat.

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no surname or style. Although these names did not harmonise, the *Hsiung-nu* reached an old age. How about good and bad luck then ?

The Rites prescribe that in case the surname of a bought concubine be unknown, it should be ascertained by divination <sup>1</sup>. Those ignoring it do not know the proper surname of the concubine, for, at all events, she bears the family surname of her parents. By this divination the surname of her father and mother must necessarily be changed, and a wrong one be substituted, but since the Rites are very strict, as regards the marriage of a woman of the same surname <sup>2</sup>, this divination of the surname cannot be p2.416 dispensed with. If merely by correct pronunciation the surname and the family name could be set right, why would the Rites still require that the name of a purchased concubine be determined by divination ?

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The theory of drawing plans of houses enjoins that the doors of a house of a family with a *shang* <sup>3</sup> surname should not face the south, and that the doors of a house belonging to a family with a *chih* <sup>4</sup> surname should not be turned to the north. For *shang* corresponds to metal, and the south, to fire ; *chih* is equal to fire, and the north, to water. Water conquers fire, and fire injures metal. The fluids of the Five Elements may be hostile, wherefore, in the dwellings of families with the five classes of surnames, the doors should have their proper bearings. The bearings being correct, wealth and happiness, luck and prosperity are the consequences, whereas improper bearings are fraught with poverty and ignominy, disgrace and ruin.

Now, is there any difference between gates and halls ? To the gates of families with the five kinds of surnames halls must correspond, why are their bearings of no consequence ? Gates closing some place are less important than halls and rooms. During the day, and at night, people stay in their halls, and not at the gates, therefore the experts calculating happiness and misfortune, ought to base their computations on the halls.

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<sup>1</sup> *Liki, Ch'ü-li* ([Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 78](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> Which they forbid *loc. cit.* See also p. 2.253, Note 2.

<sup>3</sup> [], the first tone.

<sup>4</sup> [], the fourth tone.

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Since gates merely serve as entrances and issues, the inner doors should be dealt with in the same manner. *Confucius* said,

[— Who can go out without passing through the door ?] <sup>1</sup>.

He speaks of the inner door, and not of the gate. The Five Sacrifices <sup>2</sup> are equally offered to the gate and the door. If it be necessary to rectify the bearings of the gate, ought not the inner doors to correspond to the gate ?

Moreover, in the dwellings of the officials joined together in public buildings, the doors often face the south or the north, and in the temporary residences of high officers, the gateways may look eastward or westward. Among high officers there are certainly many with a *kung* or a *shang* surname, and many of the p2.417 houses of officials are marked *chih* or *yü* <sup>3</sup>. Those functionaries who live at peace, or are promoted, need not of necessity bear a *chio* <sup>4</sup> surname, or their gate face the south, and those who lose their office, and are degraded, have not always a *shang* surname, nor is their gate turned northward. Some live at ease, and are promoted, whereas others lose their positions, and are degraded. How is this ?

As the surnames are connected with the Five Sounds, so, in human characters, the Five Elements also play an important part. If, among people related to the Five Sounds, a person with a *shang* surname is not allowed to have a gate facing the south, then can a man imbued with a *metal* nature sit down facing the south, or walk in a southerly direction ?

There is another objection : To the gates combined with the Five Sounds men endowed with one of the Five Elements must correspond. Provided that there be five such living men, all bearing a *shang* surname, then each of them should have his peculiar colour. The one imbued with the element *wood* would be green, the one filled with *fire*, red, the *water* man would be black, the *metal* man, white, and the one endued with the element *earth*, yellow. These men of five colours passing through a gate facing the south, some would

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects VI, 15](#) [Couvreur].

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 1.510 and 1.516.

<sup>3</sup> [[]], the fourth and the fifth tones corresponding to the south = fire and the north = water. Fire and water would injure metal and earth, the elements of *kung* and *shang*.

<sup>4</sup> [] corresponding to wood.

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become unhappy, others happy, some would die early, others live long. The miserable and short-lived would not necessarily be white <sup>1</sup>, nor would the happy and longlived be yellow <sup>2</sup>. How do these theorists solve this dilemma with their Five Elements ? What is the real cause of the gate facing the south injuring people bearing a *shang* surname ?

The south is fire. Provided that a calamity resulting from fiery air be like a real fire, burning and spreading, and that it come straight from the south, then even gates facing the north would be involved in the catastrophe. Should, on the other side, this fiery air be like the heat of a summer day, diffused over all the four quarters, then everything between Heaven and Earth would be affected by this air, for wherefore should families with gates facing the south alone have to suffer ?

p2.418 The south is fire, which has its place in the south. To this<sup>1</sup> an objection may be urged : This air spreads over all the four quarters, the south is not alone in possession of fire, nor are the other quarters devoid of it, just as water has its seat in the north, and yet all the four quarters have water. Fire fills the world, and water is dispersed over all the four quarters, it may be south of us, or it may be north of us. To contend that fire can only be in the south, would be like maintaining that the east cannot have any metal, and that in the west there cannot be any wood <sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Metal = white being destroyed by fire = the south.

<sup>2</sup> Earth = yellow not being injured by fire = the south.

<sup>3</sup> According to the theory of the Chinese physicists, metal is connected with the west, and wood with the east.



75. Book XXV, Chap. II

*Chieh-ch'u. On Exorcism*

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p1.532 The world believes in sacrifices, trusting that they procure happiness, and it approves of exorcism, fancying that it will remove evil influences. Exorcism begins with the ceremony of presenting an offering. An offering is like a banquet given by the living to their guests. First the ghosts are treated like guests and given a meal, but, when they have eaten it, they are expelled with swords and sticks. Provided that ghosts and spirits possess consciousness, they would undubitably resent such a treatment, offering resistance and fighting, and would refuse to leave forthwith. In their anger, they would just cause misfortune. If they are not conscious, then they cannot do mischief. In that case exorcising would be no use, and its omission would do no harm.

Moreover, what shape do people ascribe to ghosts and spirits ? If they believe them to have a shape, this shape must be like that of living men. Living men in a passion would certainly make an attempt upon the lives of their adversaries. If they have no shape, they would be like mist and clouds. The expulsion of clouds and mist, however, would prove ineffectual.

As we cannot know their shapes, we can neither guess their feelings. For what purpose would ghosts and spirits gather in human dwellings ? In case they earnestly wish to kill people, they would avoid their aggressors, when they drive them out, and abscond, but, as soon as the expulsion ceases, they would return, and re-occupy their former places. Should they have no murderous intentions, and only like to dwell in human houses, they would cause no injury, even if they were not expelled.

When grandees go out, thousands of people assemble to have a look at them, thronging the streets and filling the alleys, and striving for the places in front. It is not before the soldiers repel them, that they go away, but no sooner have the soldiers turned their back, than they return to their places.

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Unless the soldiers kept watch the whole day without leaving their post, they could not restrain them, because they are bent on having a look and <sup>p1.533</sup> would not go home on account of having been driven back once. Provided that ghosts and spirits resemble living men, they would feel attracted to their homes in the same way as those thousands are determined on sight seeing. If the soldiers repelling them do not keep watch for a long while, the lookers-on do not disperse, and unless expelled during a whole year, the ghosts would not leave. Now, being expelled, after they have finished their meal, they would retire, but having retired, come back again, for what could prevent them ?

When grain is being dried in a court-yard, and fowls and sparrows pick it up, they escape, when the master drives them off, but return, when he relaxes his vigilance. He is unable to keep the fowls and sparrows at bay, unless he watches the whole day. If the ghosts be spirits, an expulsion would not induce them to retreat, and if they be not spirits, they would be like fowls and sparrows, and nothing but a constant repulse could frighten them away.

When tigers and wolves enter into a territory, they are pursued with bows and cross-bows, but even their deaths do not do away with the cause of those terrible visits. When brigands and insurgents assault a city, the imperial troops may beat them, but notwithstanding this rebuff, the cause of their frightful incursions is not removed thereby. The arrival of tigers and wolves corresponds to a disorganised government, that of rebels and bandits, to a general disorder. Thus the gathering of ghosts and spirits is indicative of the sudden end of life. By destroying tigers and wolves and by defeating insurgents and bandits one cannot bring about a reform of the government or re-establish order, neither is it possible to remove misfortune or prolong life by ever so much exorcising or expelling ghosts and spirits.

Sick people see ghosts appear, when their disease has reached its climax. Those who are of a strong and violent character will grasp the sword or the cudgel and fight with the ghosts. They will have one or two rounds, until at last, having missed a thrust, they are forced to surrender, for, unless they surrender, the duel will not come to a close. The ghosts expelled by exorcism are not different from those perceived by sick people, nor is there any

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difference between expelling and fighting. As the ghosts will not withdraw though assailed by sick people, the conjurations of the master of the house will not prevail upon the ghosts and spirits to leave. Consequently of what use would be such conjurations for the house ? Therefore we cannot accept the belief that evil influences might thus be neutralised.

p1.534 Furthermore, the ghosts which are expelled from the house live there as guests. The hosts are the Twelve Spirits of the house, such as the Blue Dragon and the White Tiger, and the other spirits occupying the Twelve Cardinal Points <sup>1</sup>. The Dragon and the Tiger are fierce spirits and the chief ghosts of heaven <sup>2</sup>. Flying corpses and floating goblins would not venture to gather against their will, as, when a host is fierce and bold, mischievous guests would not dare to intrude upon him. Now the Twelve Spirits have admitted the others into the house, and the master drives them away. That would be nothing less than throwing out the guests of the Twelve Spirits. Could such a hatred against the Twelve Spirits secure happiness ? If there are no Twelve Spirits, there are no flying corpses or goblins either, and without spirits and goblins exorcism would be of no avail, and the expulsion have no sense.

Exorcism is an imitation of the old ceremony of the expulsion of sickness. In ancient times *Chuan Hsü* had three sons, who vanished, when they had grown up. One took up his abode in the water of the *Yangtse* and became the *Ghost of Fever*, one lived in the *Jo River* and became a *Water Spirit*, and one in damp and wet corners as the arbiter of sickness <sup>3</sup>. At the end of the year, when all business had been finished, sick people used to drive out the Spirit of Sickness, and believed that by seeing off the old year and going to meet the new one they would obtain luck. The world followed this example, whence originated exorcism. But even the ceremony of driving out sickness is out of place.

When *Yao* and *Shun* practised their virtue, the empire enjoyed perfect

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to the Blue Dragon and White Tiger *Wang Ch'ung* mentions the *T'ai-sui*, *Têng-ming* and *Tsung-k'uei* as such spirits. Cf. *Lun-hêng*, chap. 24, 13 (*Nan-sui*).

<sup>2</sup> The Blue Dragon and the White Tiger are also names of the eastern and western quadrant of the solar mansions. Comp. p. 1.106 and p. 1.352.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 1.242.

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peace, the manifold calamities vanished, and, though the diseases were not driven out, the Spirit of Sickness did not make its appearance. When *Chieh* and *Chou* did their deeds, everything within the seas was thrown into confusion, all the misfortunes happened simultaneously, and although the diseases were expelled day by day, the Spirit of Sickness still came back. Declining ages have faith in ghosts, and the unintelligent will pray for happiness. When the *Chou* were going to ruin, the people believed in ghosts, and prepared sacrifices with the object of imploring happiness and the divine help. Narrow-minded rulers fell an easy prey to <sup>p1.535</sup> imposture, and took no heed of their own actions, but they accomplished nothing creditable, and their administration remained unsettled.

All depends upon man, and not on ghosts, on their virtue, and not on sacrifices. The end of a State is far or near, and human life is long or short. If by offerings, happiness could be obtained, or if misfortune could be removed by exorcism, kings might use up all the treasures of the world for the celebration of sacrifices to procrastinate the end of their reign, and old men and women of rich families might pray for the happiness to be gained by conjurations with the purpose of obtaining an age surpassing the usual span.

Long and short life, wealth and honour of all the mortals are determined by fortune and destiny, and as for their actions, whether they prove successful or otherwise, there are times of prosperity and decline. Sacrifices do not procure happiness, for happiness does not depend on oblations. But the world believes in ghosts and spirits, and therefore is partial to sacrifices. Since there are no ghosts and spirits to receive these sacrifices, the knowing do not concern themselves about them.

Sacrifices are meant as a kindness done to the ghosts and spirits, and yet they do not bring about luck and happiness. Now fancy that these spirits are expelled by brute force. Could that bring any profit ?

The sacrificial rites and the methods of exorcism are very numerous. We will prove their uselessness by one example, for from a small sacrifice one may draw a conclusion to the great ones, and from one ghost learn to know the hundred spirits.

When people have finished the building of a house or a cottage, excavated

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the ground, or dug up the earth, they propitiate the Spirit of Earth, after the whole work has been completed, and call this appeasing the earth. They make an earthen figure to resemble a ghost. The wizards chant their prayers to reconcile the Spirit of Earth, and, when the sacrifice is over, they become gay and cheerful, and pretend that the ghosts and spirits have been propitiated, and misfortunes and disasters removed. But if we get to the bottom of it, we find that all this is illusive.

Why ? Because the material earth is like the human body. Everything under heaven forms one body, whose head and feet are tens of thousands of Li apart. Mankind lives upon earth as fleas and lice stick to the human body. Fleas and lice feed upon man, and torment his skin, as men dig up the earth, and torment <sup>p1.536</sup> its body. Should some among the fleas and lice, being aware of this, wish to appease man's heart, and for that purpose assemble to propitiate him near the flesh, which they have eaten, would man know about it ? Man cannot comprehend what fleas and lice say, as Earth does not understand the speech of man.

The *Hu* and the *Yüeh* have the same ears and mouths, and are animated by similar feelings, but even if they speak mouth to mouth, and ear to ear, they cannot understand each other. And there should be a communication between the ears and the mouth of Earth and man, who does not resemble her ?

Moreover, who is it that hears what man says ? Should it be Earth, her ears are too far away to hear, and if it be the earth of one special house, this earth is like an atom of human flesh, how could it understand anything ? If the spirit of the house be the hearer, one ought to speak of appeasing the house, but not of appeasing Earth.

The Rites prescribe that entering into the ancestral hall one must not find a master there <sup>1</sup>. One has made the device of cutting a wooden tablet, one foot and two inches long, and calling it the master, and serves it in the spirit, but does not make a human likeness. Now at the propitiatory sacrifices to Earth, they make an earthen human figure resembling the shape of a ghost.

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<sup>1</sup> The image of the departed, who as master dwells in the ancestral hall.

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How could that have a propitiatory effect ? Spirits are diffuse, vague, and incorporeal ; entering and departing they need no aperture, whence their name of spirits. Now to make a bodily image is not only in opposition to the Rites, but also reveals a misapprehension of the nature of spirits. We know that they have no likeness, therefore, when the mats are spread for sacrifice, no figures of ghosts are put up.

If at the propitiatory service for Earth they set up human figures, could a stone effigy be used at the sacrifice to the Mountains, or could a wooden man be made for the sacrifice to the Gates and Doors <sup>1</sup> ?

When *Ch'ung Hang Yin* of *Chin* <sup>2</sup> was near his end, he summoned his high-priest, wishing to punish him.

— The victims, said he, which you have immolated for me, have not been fat and glossy. You have not observed the rules of fasting with reverence, and thus have caused the ruin of my State. Is it not so ?

p1.537 The priest replied in plain terms,

— Formerly, my old lord, *Ch'ung Hang Mi Tse*, possessed ten chariots, and did not feel grieved at their small number, but at the insufficiency of his righteousness. Your Lordship has a hundred war-chariots, and does not feel distressed that your justice is so imperfect, but merely regrets that your chariots do not suffice. When vessels and chariots are well equipped, the taxes must be high, and the taxes being heavy, the people defame and curse their sovereign. If he then offers sacrifices, of what use can it be to his State ? These curses must also ruin the State. — One man prays for him, and the whole State curses him. One prayer cannot overcome ten thousand curses. Is it not quite natural that a State should perish thus ? What is the guilt of the priest ?

*Ch'ung Hang Yin* then felt ashamed.

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<sup>1</sup> No figures are used at the sacrifices to those deities.

<sup>2</sup> A nobleman, related to the ducal house of *Chin*, of the 5th cent. B. C. The *Ch'ung Hang* family possessed large domains in *Chin*.

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The people of to-day rely on sacrifices like *Ch'ung Hang Yin*. They do not improve their conduct, but multiply the prayers, do not honour their superiors, but fear the ghosts. When they die, or misfortune befalls them, they ascribe it to noxious influences, maintaining that they have not yet been regulated. When they have been regulated and offerings prepared, and misfortunes are as numerous as before, and do not cease, they make the sacrifices answerable, declaring that they have not been performed with sufficient reverence.

As regards exorcism, exorcism is of no use, and as regards sacrifices, sacrifices are of no avail. As respects wizards and priests, wizards and priests have no power, for it is plain that all depends upon man, and not on ghosts, on his virtue, and not on sacrifices.

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76. Book XXV, Chap. III

*Sse-yi. Sacrifices to the Departed*

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p1.509 The world believes in sacrifices, imagining that he who sacrifices becomes happy, and he who does not, becomes unhappy. Therefore, when people are taken ill, they first try to learn by divination, what evil influence is the cause. Having found out this, they prepare sacrifices, and, after these have been performed, their mind feels at ease, and the sickness ceases. With great obstinacy they believe this to be the effect of the sacrifices. They never desist from urging the necessity of making offerings, maintaining that the departed are conscious, and that ghosts and spirits eat and drink like so many guests invited to dinner. When these guests are pleased, they thank the host for his kindness.

To prepare sacrifices is quite correct, but the belief that spirits can be affected thereby is erroneous. In reality the idea of these oblations is nothing else than that the host is anxious to manifest his kindness. The spirits are not desirous of tasting the offerings, as I am about to prove.

Our sacrifices are for the purpose of showing our gratitude for benefits enjoyed. In the same manner we are kind to living people, but would the latter therefore wish to be treated to a dinner ? Now those to whom we present sacrifices are dead ; the dead are devoid of knowledge and cannot eat or drink. How can we demonstrate that they cannot possibly wish to enjoy eating and drinking ?

Heaven is a body like the Earth. Heaven has a number of stellar mansions, as the Earth has houses. These houses are attached to the body of the Earth, as the stellar mansions are fixed to the substance of Heaven. Provided that this body and this substance exist, then there is a mouth, which can eat. If Heaven and Earth possess mouths to eat, they ought to eat up all the food offered them in sacrifice. If they have no mouths, they are incorporeal, and being incorporeal, they are air like clouds and fog. Should the spirit of Heaven



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and Earth be like the human spirit, could a spirit eat and drink ?

p1.510 A middle-sized man is seven to eight feet <sup>1</sup> high and four to five spans in girth. One peck of food and one peck of broth are enough to satisfy his appetite and his thirst. At the utmost he can consume three to four pecks. The size of Heaven and Earth is many ten thousand Li. Cocoon millet, ox rice <sup>2</sup> cakes, and a big soup are offered them on round hills, but never more than several bushels. How could such food appease the hunger of heaven and earth ?

Heaven and Earth would have feelings like man. When a man has not got enough to eat, he is vexed with his host, and does not requite him with kindness. If we hold that Heaven and Earth can be satiated, then the sacrifices presented to them in ancient times were derogatory to their dignity.

Mountains are like human bones or joints, Rivers like human blood. When we have eaten, our intestines are filled with food, which forms abundance of bones and blood. Now, by the oblations made to Heaven and Earth, Mountains and Rivers are also satiated along with Heaven and Earth, yet Mountains and Rivers have still their special sacrifices, as if they were other spiritual beings. That would be like a man who, after having eaten his fill, would still feed his bones and his blood.

We thank the Spirits of the Land and Grain for their kindness in letting grain and other organisms grow. The ten thousand people grow on earth, as hair does on a body. In the sacrifices to Heaven and Earth the Spirits of the Land and Grain are therefore included. Good men revere them, and make to them special offerings. They must hold that they are spirits. In this manner man ought to specially feed his skin and flesh likewise.

The origin of the Five Sacrifices <sup>3</sup> is the Earth. The Outer and Inner Doors are made of wood and earth, both substances growing from earth. The Well, the Hearth, and the Inner Court of the house all depend on earth. In the sacrifice to the Earth, these Five Sacrifices are therefore comprised. Out of

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<sup>1</sup> Ancient Chinese feet, which are much smaller than the modern.

<sup>2</sup> Large kinds of rice and millet.

<sup>3</sup> The Five Sacrifices of the house often mentioned in the *Liki*.

## Lun-hêng

veneration a good man prepares special oblations for them, being convinced undubitably that they are spirits. But that would be, as if a man, after having appeased his appetite, were still specially feeding his body.

p1.511 The Gods of Wind, Rain, and Thunder <sup>1</sup> are a special class of spirits. Wind is like the human breath, rain like secretions, and thunder like borborygmus. These three forces are inherent in heaven and earth, therefore they partake of the sacrifices to the latter. Pious men make special offerings to them as a mark of respect, regarding them as spiritual beings. Then a man ought to feed still his breath, his secretions, and his borborygmus.

The Sun and the Moon are like human eyes, the Stars like human hair. These luminaries being attached to heaven, they are included in the sacrifices presented to the latter. Out of piety good men honour them with special sacrifices regarding them, no doubt, as spirits. That would be tantamount to our still feeding our eyes and hair after having satisfied our appetite.

The ancestral temple is the place of one's forefathers. During their lifetime they are diligently and reverently maintained and nourished by their children, and after their deaths the latter dare not become unfaithful, and therefore prepare sacrifices. Out of consideration for their ancestors they attend their dead to show that they have not forgotten their forefathers. As regards the sacrifices to the Five Emperors and the Three Rulers like *Huang Ti* and *Ti K'u*, they were offered in appreciation of their mighty efforts and great accomplishments, for people did not forget their virtues. This, however, is no proof that there really are spirits, who can enjoy offerings. Being unable to enjoy, they cannot be spirits, and not being spirits, they cannot cause happiness nor unhappiness either.

Happiness and unhappiness originate from joy and anger, and joy and anger proceed from the belly and the intestines. He who possesses a belly and intestines, can eat and drink, and he who cannot eat and drink, has no belly and no intestines. Without a belly and intestines, joy and anger are impossible, and in default of joy and anger, one cannot produce happiness

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<sup>1</sup> *Fêng Po*, the Prince of the Wind, *Yü Shih*, the Master of Rain, and *Lei Kung*, the Thunderer. Their sacrifices are determined in the *Chou* ritual.

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and unhappiness.

Somebody might object that odours cannot be eaten. I reply that smelling, eating, and drinking are very much the same. With the mouth one eats, and with the mouth one likewise smells. Unless there be a belly and intestines, there is no mouth, and without a mouth one cannot eat nor smell either.

How can we demonstrate that smelling is out of the question ?

When some one offers a sacrifice, and others pass by, they do not immediately become aware of it. Unless we use the mouth, <sup>p1.512</sup> we must use the nose for smelling. When with the mouth or the nose we smell something, our eyes can see it, and what our eyes perceive, our hands can strike. Now, in case the hands cannot strike, we know that the mouth and the nose cannot smell.

Another objection might be raised. When Duke *Pao* of *Sung* <sup>1</sup> was sick, the priest said,

— *Yeh Ku* will direct the service of the discontented spirit.

The ghost leaning on a pole addressed *Yeh Ku* saying,

— Why are my vessels not filled with plenty of rice ? Why are the grazing animals for the sacrifice not big and fat ? Why are the sceptres and badges not of the proper measure ? Is it your fault or *Pao's* ?

— *Pao* is still an infant in swathing cloth, replied *Yeh Ku* with a placid face, who understands nothing about this. For how could he know or give any directions ?

The angry spirit lifted his pole and struck *Yeh Ku* dead on the steps of the altar. — Can this not be considered a proof of his having been able to use his hand ?

It is not certain that *Yeh Ku's* death was caused by the blow of a

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<sup>1</sup> Duke *Pao* alias *Wên* of *Sung*, 609-588 B. C. His death is chronicled in the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, Duke *Ch'êng* 2nd year [[Couvreur](#)].

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discontented ghost. Just at that moment he was doomed to die ; an apparition took the shape of a malignant ghost, and being shaped like a ghost, it had to speak like a ghost, and it also dealt a blow like a ghost. How do we know ?

A ghost is a spirit, and spirits are prescient. Then after having remarked that the sacrificial vessels were not full of rice, the sceptres and badges not of the proper size, the victims lean and small, the ghost, being prescient, ought to have reproached *Yeh Ku* and struck him with the pole. There was no need to first ask him. The fact that he first asked, shows that he was not prescient, and, if he was not prescient, it is plain that he was not a spirit. Being neither prescient nor a spirit, he could not appear with a body, nor talk, nor strike a man with a pole.

*Yeh Ku* was an honest official who took the guilt upon himself, and offered himself for punishment, so that the ghost struck him. Had he been dishonest and inculpated *Pao*, the ghost would have hit *Pao* with his pole.

Furthermore, provided that the spirit resented the laxity in the performance of his sacrifice, and therefore made his appearance, and killed the superintendent of the sacrifice, then would he, in case all the rites were duly fulfilled, be pleased and appear, and <sup>p1.513</sup> as a favour present the sacrificer with some food ? Men have joy and anger, and spirits should have these sensations likewise. A man who does not rouse another's anger, preserves his life, whereas he who displeases him, loses it. The malignant ghost in his wrath made his appearance, and inflicted a punishment, but the sacrifices of the *Sung* State have certainly often been according to the rites, wherefore did the ghost not appear then to reward ?

Joy and anger not being like the human, rewards and punishments are not like those dealt out by man either, and owing to this difference we cannot believe that *Yeh Ku* was slain by the spirit.

Moreover, in the first place, for smelling one takes in air, and for speaking one breathes it out. He who can smell, can talk likewise, as he who inhales, can exhale too. Should ghosts and spirits be able to smell, they ought to speak about the sacrifices. Since they are incapable of speech, we know that they cannot smell either.

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Secondly, all those who smell, have their mouths and their noses open. Should their noses be stopped up by a cold, or their mouths gagged, olfaction becomes impossible. When a man dies, his mouth and his nose putrefy, how could they still be used for smelling ?

Thirdly, the *Liki* has it that, when men have died, they are dreaded. They then belong to another class of beings than man, hence the dread. As corpses they cannot move, they decay, and are annihilated. Since they do not possess the same bodies as living people, we know that they can have no intercourse with the living. As their bodies are dissimilar, and as we know that there can be no intercourse, their eating and drinking cannot be like that of man. The Mongols and the Annamese <sup>1</sup> are different nations, and in the matter of eating their tastes widely differ. Now, the difference between the departed and the living is not merely like that between the Mongols and the Annamese. Hence we infer that the dead cannot smell.

Fourthly, when a man is asleep, we may put some food near him, he does not know, but, as soon as he awakes, he becomes aware of it, and then may eventually eat it. When a man is dead, however, and sleeps the long sleep, from which there is no awakening, how could he know anything or eat then ? This shows that he is unable to smell.

p1.514 Somebody might raise the question, what it means that the spirits partake of a sacrifice, as people say. It means that people conscientiously clean the sacrificial vessels, that the rice is fragrant, and the victims fat, so that persons coming near and perceiving all this would feel inclined to eat and drink. With these their feelings they credit the ghosts and spirits, which, if they were conscious, would decidedly enjoy the offerings. Therefore people speak of the spirits, as though they were partaking of the sacrifice.

Another objection is the following : The *Yiking* says that an ox killed by the eastern neighbour, is not like the humble offering of the western neighbour <sup>2</sup>. This assertion that the eastern neighbour does not come up to the western, signifies that the animal of the eastern neighbour is big, but his

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<sup>1</sup> The *Hu* in the north, and the *Yüeh* in the south of China.

<sup>2</sup> [Yiking, 63d diagram](#) (*Chi-chi*), Legge's translation p. 206.

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luck small, whereas the fortune of the western neighbour is great, though his sacrifice be poor. Now, if the spirits are denied the faculty of enjoying the offering, how can we determine the amount of happiness ?

This also depends on the question, whether a sacrifice is carefully prepared, so that everything is clean, or not. *Chou* had an ox immolated, but he did not fulfill all the rites. *Wên Wang*, on the other hand, made only a small offering, but did his utmost to show his devotion. People condemn a lack of ceremonies, and are full of praise for a pious fulfilment of all the rites. He who is praised by the people, finds support in all his enterprises, while the one who is disliked, meets with opposition, whatever he says or does. Such a resistance is no smaller misfortune than the rejection of a sacrifice by the spirits, and the general support is a happiness like that experienced, when the spirits smell the oblation.

Ghosts cannot be pleased or angry at a sacrifice for the following reason. Provided that spirits do not require man for their maintenance, then, in case they did need them, they would no more be spiritual. If we believe in spirits smelling the sacrifices, and in sacrifices causing happiness or misfortune, how do we imagine the dwelling places of the ghosts ? Have they their own provisions stored up, or must they take the human food to appease their hunger ? Should they possess their own stores, these would assuredly be other than the human, and they would not have to eat human food. If they have no provisions of their own, then man would have to make offerings to them every morning and every evening. According as he had sacrificed to them or not, they would be either satiated or hungry, and according as they p<sup>1.515</sup> had eaten their fill or were hungry, they would be pleased or vexed.

Furthermore, sick people behold ghosts, and, while asleep, people meet with the departed in their dreams. They are shaped like men, therefore the sacrifices presented to them are like human food. Having food and drink, the spirits must be provided with raiment too, therefore one makes silken clothes for them after the fashion of the living. Their sacrifices are like dinners for the living. People desire to feed them, and hope that the ghosts will eat their offerings. As regards the clothes, however, they are not larger than from five or six inches to one foot. Now, supposing that tall and big spirits, which have

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been observed, are to don garments of a foot in length, would they be very pleased, and bestow happiness on the donors ?

Should the ghosts, which have been seen, be really dead men, then the clothes made for them ought to be like those of the living, if, however, those garments are really put on by the ghosts, they must be shaped like dolls. Thus the question about ghosts and spirits remains an open one. How is it possible then to secure their protection and happiness by means of abundant offerings, and how can people firmly believe in this ?

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## 77. Book XXV, Chap. IV

### *Chi-yi. Sacrifices*

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p1.516 According to the *Liki* the emperor sacrifices to Heaven and Earth, the feudal princes to the Mountains and Rivers <sup>1</sup>, the ministers, and high dignitaries to the Five Genii <sup>2</sup>, the scholars and the common people to their ancestors <sup>3</sup>. From the offerings to the spirits of the Land and Grain down to those in the ancestral hall there is a gradation from the son of heaven down to the commoners.

The *Shuking* says that a special sacrifice was made to *Shangti*, a pure one to the Six Superior Powers, a sacrifice on high to the Mountains and Rivers, and a sacrifice to the various spirits round about <sup>4</sup>.

[*Shun*, says the *Liki*, offered the imperial sacrifice to *Huang Ti*, the suburban sacrifice to *Ti K'u*, the patriarchal to *Chuan Hsü* <sup>5</sup>, and the ancestral to *Yao*. The *Hsia* dynasty likewise presented the imperial sacrifice to *Huang Ti*, but the suburban to *K'un* <sup>6</sup>, the patriarchal to *Chuan Hsü*, and the ancestral to *Yü*. The *Yin* dynasty transferred the imperial sacrifice to *Ti K'u*, the suburban to *Ming* <sup>7</sup>, the patriarchal to *Hsieh*, and the ancestral to *T'ang*. The *Chou* dynasty made the imperial sacrifice to *Ti K'u*, the suburban to *Chi* <sup>8</sup>, the patriarchal to *Wên Wang*, and the ancestral to *Wu Wang* <sup>9</sup>.

Wood was burned on the big altar as a sacrifice to Heaven, a victim was

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<sup>1</sup> The mountains and rivers of their territory.

<sup>2</sup> The five genii of the house to whom the Five Sacrifices were offered. See further on.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Liki, Ch'ü-li* ([Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 116](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>4</sup> [Shuking, Shun-tien Pt. II, Bk. I, 6](#) ([Legge Vol. III, Pt. I, p. 33](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>5</sup> *Huang Ti*, *Ti Ku* and *Chuan Hsü* are mythical emperors. *Ti K'u* is said to have been the father of *Yao*.

<sup>6</sup> *Kun*, the father of *Yü*.

<sup>7</sup> *Ming* was a descendant of *Hsieh*, who was a son of *Ti K'u*.

<sup>8</sup> *Chi* = *Hou Chi*, the ancestor of the *Chou* dynasty.

<sup>9</sup> The four sacrifices here mentioned were presented by the sovereigns of the ancient dynasties to the founders of their dynasties, their ancestors, and predecessors.



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buried in the big pit as a sacrifice to Earth. A red <sup>p1.517</sup> calf was immolated, and a sheep buried in bright daylight as a sacrifice to the Seasons, and they approached the sacrificial pits and altars to offer sacrifice to the Heat and the Cold. In the imperial palace a sacrifice was made to the Sun, and in clear night they sacrificed to the Moon. Oblations were made to the Stars in the dark hall, to Water and Drought in the rain hall, and to the Four Cardinal Points at the four pits and altars.

The mountain forests, the valleys of the rivers, and the hills and cliffs can emit clouds and produce wind and rain. All these curious phenomena are regarded as spirits. The ruler of the world sacrifices to all the spirits, the princes only as long as they are within their territories, but not, when they have left them.] <sup>1</sup>

Such are the official sacrifices according to usage and the prescribed rites. The emperor treats Heaven like his father and Earth like his mother. Conformably to human customs he practises filial piety, which accounts for the sacrifices to Heaven and Earth. In the matter of Mountains and Rivers and the subsequent deities the offerings presented to them are in appreciation of their deserts. A living man distinguishing himself is rewarded, ghosts and spirits which are well-deserving have their sacrifices. When mountains send forth clouds and rain, the welcome moisture for all the organisms, and when the Six Superior Powers keep in their six spheres, and aid Heaven and Earth in their changes, the emperor venerates them by sacrifices, whence their appellation the 'Six Honoured Ones' <sup>2</sup>.

The spirits of Land and Grain are rewarded for their kindness in letting all the things grow, the spirit *Shê* <sup>3</sup> for all the living and growing things, the spirit *Chi* <sup>4</sup> for the five kinds of grain.

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<sup>1</sup> Quotation from the *Liki, Chi-fa* (Law of sacrifices). The commentators, whom *Legge* follows in his translation ([Sacred Books Vol. XXVIII, p. 201](#)) [[Couvreur](#)], read much between the lines, which appears rather problematic.

<sup>2</sup> What the 'Six Honoured Ones' are, is disputed. Some say : water, fire, wind, thunder, hills, and lakes ; others explain the term as signifying : the sun, the moon, the stars, rivers, seas, and mountains.

<sup>3</sup> The Spirit of the Land or the Soil.

<sup>4</sup> The Spirit of Grain.

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The Five Sacrifices are in recognition of the merits of the Outer and Inner Doors, the Well, the Hearth, and the Inner Hall. Through the outer and inner doors man walks in and out, the well and the hearth afford him drink and food, and in the inner hall he finds a resting-place. These five are equally meritorious, therefore they all partake of a sacrifice.

p1.518 *Ch'i* of *Chou* was called *Shao Hao* <sup>1</sup>. He had four uncles <sup>2</sup> of the names of *Chung*, *Kai*, *Hsiu*, and *Hsi* <sup>3</sup> who could master metal, fire, and wood, wherefore he made *Chung* the Genius of Spring, *Kou Mang*, *Kai* the Genius of Autumn, *Ju Shou*, and *Hsiu* and *Hsi* Gods of the Winter, *Hsüan Ming* <sup>4</sup>. They never neglected their office, and assisted *Ch'iung-sang* <sup>5</sup>. To these the Three Offerings are made.

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<sup>1</sup> By other authors *Ch'i* is not identified with the legendary emperor *Shao Hao*, whose birth was miraculous also. His mother was caused to conceive by a huge star like a rainbow (*T'ai-p'ing-yü-lan*).

<sup>2</sup> Errata : The whole page from: 'He had four uncles' to 'From the *Shang* dynasty downwards people sacrificed to him' on page 519 is a quotation from the *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Chao* 29th year (*Legge's* transl. Vol. II, p. 729) [[Couvreur](#)]. The text of the *Tso-chuan* confirms my suggestion (p. 518 Note 4) that we ought to read : 'who could master metal, *water*, and wood', replacing 'fire' by 'water', for the Classic speaks of metal, wood, and water. It describes the Five Spirits as officers of the five elementary principles, assigning the proper element to each. I have translated [a][b] by 'four uncles'. *Legge's* rendering 'four men' is better, [b] may mean a gentleman or a squire (cf. *Williams' Dictionary*).

<sup>3</sup> According to the commentary of the *Liki* these were not uncles, but sons of *Shao Hao*.

<sup>4</sup> The names of these deities or deified men correspond to their functions : *Kou Mang* = 'Curling fronds and spikelets', *Ju Shou* = 'Sprouts gathered', and *Hsüan Ming* = 'Dark and obscure'. According to the *Liki* (*Yüeh-ling*) these three deities were secondary spirits, each presiding over three months of spring, autumn, and winter. Some say that *Hsüan Ming* was a water spirit. As the spirit of summer, *Chu Yung*, who is related to fire, is venerated. There being a fixed relation between the four seasons, the four cardinal points, and the five elements we have the following equations :

*Kou Mang*, Genius of Spring, the east, and wood.

*Chu Yung*, Genius of Summer, the south, and fire.

*Ju Shou*, Genius of Autumn, the west, and metal.

*Hsüan Ming*, Genius of Winter, the north, and water.

I suppose that in the clause 'who could master metal, *fire* and wood' we ought to read *water* in lieu of *fire*, for the gods there enumerated are those of wood, metal and water. The spirit of fire follows in the next clause.

In the *Liki*, *Hou Tu*, the Lord of the Soil is made to correspond to the middle of the four seasons — in default of a fifth season — to the centre, and to earth. (Cf. [Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 281 Note.](#)) [[Couvreur](#)]. Thus we have :

*Hou Tu*, Genius of Mid-year, the centre, and earth.

These Five Spirits are called the *Wu Shên*. They were worshipped during the *Chou* dynasty and are mentioned in ancient works (*Liki*, *Tso-chuan*, *Huai Nan Tse*).

<sup>5</sup> Another name of *Shao Hao*, who was lord of *Ch'iung-sang*.

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*Chuan Hsü* <sup>1</sup> had a son called *Li*, who became the God of Fire, *Chu Yung* <sup>2</sup>. *Kung Kung's* <sup>3</sup> son was named *Kou Lung*. He was made Lord of the Soil, *Hou Tu*. The Two Sacrifices refer to these two personages.

The Lord of the Soil was the spirit of the land and grain in charge of the fields. The son of *Lieh Shan* <sup>4</sup>, *Chu*, was the spirit of the grain and from the *Hsia* dynasty upwards worshipped as p1.519 such. *Ch'i* of *Chou* was likewise spirit of the grain. From the *Shang* dynasty downwards people sacrificed to him.

The *Liki* relates that, while *Lieh Shan* <sup>5</sup> was swaying the empire, his son of the name of *Chu* <sup>6</sup> could plant all the various kinds of grain, and that after the downfall of the *Hsia* dynasty, *Ch'i* of *Chou* succeeded him, and therefore was worshipped as Spirit of the Grain. While *Kung Kung* was usurping the power in the nine provinces, his son, called Lord of the Soil, was able to pacify the nine countries, and therefore was worshipped as Spirit of the Land <sup>7</sup>.

There is a tradition to the effect that *Yen Ti* <sup>8</sup> produced fire and after death became the tutelary god of the Hearth, and that *Yü* having spent his energy on the waters of the empire, became Spirit of the Land after death.

The *Liki* says that [the emperor institutes the Seven Sacrifices as representative of his people, namely for the arbiter of fate <sup>9</sup>, for the inner court, for the gates of the capital, for its high-ways, for the august demons <sup>10</sup>, for the doors, and for the hearths. The princes on their part institute the Five Sacrifices for their States, namely for the arbiter of fate, for the inner court, for the gates of their capital, for its high-ways, and for the

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<sup>1</sup> A legendary emperor.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Note 4.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 1.250.

<sup>4</sup> Personal name of the emperor *Shên Nung*, who was lord of *Lieh-shan*.

<sup>5</sup> The *Liki* in the current edition writes : *Li Shan*.

<sup>6</sup> The *Liki* has : *Nung*.

<sup>7</sup> *Liki, Chi fa* (end).

<sup>8</sup> Dynastic appellation of *Shên Nung*.

<sup>9</sup> The fourth star in *Ursa major*.

<sup>10</sup> The discontented and mischievous spirits of former sovereigns without children, who must be propitiated.

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illustrious demons. The high dignitaries present the Three Sacrifices for the demons of their ancestors, for their doors, and for their roads. The ordinary scholars make Two Offerings, one for the door and one for their roads, and the commoners only one, either for their inner doors or for the hearth.] <sup>1</sup>

There are no fixed rules for the oblations to be made to the spirits of the Land and Grain or for the Five Sacrifices, but they are all expressions of gratitude for benefits received from the spirits, whose goodness is not forgotten.

If we love somebody in our heart, we give him to eat and to drink, and, if we love ghosts and spirits, we sacrifice to them. With *Yü* the worship of the spirits of the land and grain, and the sacrifices to the lord of the grain commence. Subsequently they fell into desuetude, until in the 4th year of the emperor *Kao Tsu* <sup>2</sup> p1.520 the world was called upon to sacrifice to the *Ling* constellation <sup>3</sup>, and in the 7th year people were enjoined to sacrifice to the spirits of the land and grain <sup>4</sup>.

The offerings to the *Ling* constellation are for the sake of water and drought. In the *Liki* their ancient name is rain sacrifices. They are being performed for the people praying for grain rain and for grain ears. In spring they sue for the harvest, and within one year's time they sacrifice again, because grain grows twice a year. In spring this is done in the second moon, and in autumn in the eighth. Therefore we read in the *Analects* <sup>5</sup> :

About the end of spring, when the spring robes are all complete, along with five or six young men who have assumed the cap, and six or seven boys, I would wash in the *Yi* <sup>6</sup>, enjoy the breeze among the rain altars, and return home singing.

The end of spring is the fourth month, but the fourth month of the *Chou*

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<sup>1</sup> Quotation from the *Liki, Chi-fa* ([Legge, loc. cit. p. 206](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> In 203 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> The constellation *T'ien-t'ien* 'Heavenly field' in *Virgo*.

<sup>4</sup> According to the *Shi-chi* chap. 28 ([Chavannes Vol. III, p. 453](#)) *Han Kao Tsu* instituted these sacrifices in the 9th and 10th years of his reign.

<sup>5</sup> [Analects XI, 25](#), VII [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>6</sup> River in the south-east of *Shantung*.

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dynasty corresponds to our first and second months. During the time of the second month, the *Dragon Star* rises, whence it has been observed that, when the dragon appears, the rain sacrifice takes place. When the *Dragon Star* becomes visible, the year has already advanced as far as the time, when the insects begin to stir.

The vernal rain sacrifice has fallen into oblivion, while the autumnal one is still observed. Yet during all the ages the sacrifices to the *Ling Star* have always been prepared until now without interruption, only the ancient name has been changed, therefore the people of our time do not know it, and, since the ceremony has been abolished, the scholars are not cognisant of the fact. Finding nothing about the sacrifice to the *Ling Star* in the Rites, our literati could not form an opinion about it, and declare that the emperor <sup>1</sup> had the *Ming Star* in view. Now the *Ming Star* is identified with the planet *Jupiter* <sup>2</sup>.

*Jupiter* stands in the east, the east rules over the spring, and the spring over all things that grow. Consequently one sacrifices to the planet *Jupiter*, they say, with the purpose of praying for <sup>p1.521</sup> vernal bliss. However all the four seasons affect the growth of things. By imploring the spring only, one lays great stress on the outset and emphasizes the beginning. Provided that in fact, according to the opinion of the scholars, the happiness of spring be sought, then by the autumnal sacrifice spring could not well be implored <sup>3</sup>. In conformity with the *Yüeh-ling* <sup>4</sup> one sacrifices to the inner door in spring, and to the outer door in autumn <sup>5</sup>, all in accordance with the proper time. If the offerings made to the outer door in autumn were considered to be those to the inner door, would this be approved of by the critics? If not, then the *Ming Star* is not the planet *Jupiter*, but the '*Dragon Star*' <sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Kao Tsu.

<sup>2</sup> The 'Bright star' is generally regarded as another name of *Venus*. Cf. *Shi-chi* chap. 27, p. 22 [[Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. III, p. 371](#)].

<sup>3</sup> Thus *Jupiter*, which rules over spring only, could not well be sacrificed to at the rain sacrifice in autumn.

<sup>4</sup> A chapter of the *Liki*.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Legge's translation of the *Liki* ([Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 251](#) [[Couvreur](#)] and [283](#) [[Couvreur](#)]).

<sup>6</sup> The *Dragon Star* occurs in the *Tso-chuan*, Duke Hsiang 28th year [[Couvreur](#)], as the star of *Sung* and *Chêng*. The commentary explains it as a synonym of *Jupiter*.

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When the *Dragon Star* becomes visible in the second month, one prays for grain rain at the rain sacrifice, and, when in the eighth month it is going to disappear, one sues for the grain trop at the autumnal rain sacrifice. The literati were probably aware of this, and what they say is not quite unreasonable. The vernal sacrifice for rain has been abolished, and only the autumnal one has survived. This explains why they termed the star corresponding to the autumnal sacrifice the *Ming Star* <sup>1</sup>. The correct name however is the *Ling Star*.

The *Ling Star* means a spirit, and this spirit is the *Dragon Star*, as under the various spirits the wind god *Fêng Po*, the rain god *Yü Shih*, the god of thunder, *Lei Kung*, and others are understood. Wind produces a wafting, rain a moisture, and thunder a concussion. The four seasons, the growing, heat and cold, the natural changes, the sun, the moon, and the stars are what people look up to, inundations and droughts are what they dread. From the four quarters the air pours in, and from the mountains, the forests, the rivers, and valleys people gather their riches. All this is the merit of the spirits.

Two motives are underlying all sacrifices : gratitude for received benefits and ancestor worship. We show our gratitude for the efforts others have take on our behalf, and worship our <sup>p1.522</sup> ancestors out of regard for their kindness. Special efforts, extraordinary goodness, merits, and universal reforms are taken into consideration by wise emperors, and it is for this reason that they have instituted sacrifices. An oblation is offered to him who has improved the public administration, who for the public welfare has worked till his death, who has done his best to strengthen his country, who has warded off great disasters, or prevented great misfortunes.

[*Ti K'u* could fix the courses of the stars and enlighten the world <sup>2</sup>. *Yao* knew how to reward, and equitably mete out punishments, so that justice reigned supreme. *Shun* toiled for his people, and died in the country, *K'un* laboured to quell the flood, and was banished for life. *Yü* could take up his work. *Huang Ti* gave things their right names to enlighten people about the

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<sup>1</sup> The *Ming Star* = *Venus* governs the west and autumn, whereas *Jupiter* reigns in the east and in spring.

<sup>2</sup> About the prognostics furnished by the stars.

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use to be made of them. *Chuan Hsü* still further developed this system. When *Hsieh* was minister of education, the people flourished. *Ming* fulfilled his official duties with the greatest diligence, and found his death in the water. *T'ang* inaugurated a liberal government, and delivered the people from oppression. *Wên Wang* relieved the misery of the people by culture and science, *Wu Wang* by his military exploits. By all these glorious deeds the people were benefitted <sup>1</sup>.] They rely on the strength of men like those, and show their gratitude by sacrifices.

The ancestors in the ancestral temple are our own kindred. Because, while they are alive, it is customary to maintain our parents, this duty cannot be shirked, when they are dead. Therefore we sacrifice to them, as though they were still alive. Ghosts are treated like men, for it is the living who attend the dead. For man it is usual to reward good deeds, and to maintain the nearest relatives, whence the duty to requite the kindness of the ancestors and to sacrifice to them has been derived.

When the dog which *Confucius* had bred was dead, he requested *Tse Kung* to bury him.

— I have been told, quoth he, that one does not throw an old curtain away, but uses it to bury a horse, and that an old cart-cover is not thrown away, but used to bury a dog. I am poor, and have no cover to wrap him in.

Then he gave him a mat, and bade him not to throw the dog down with his head first <sup>2</sup>.

p1.523 *Chi Tse* <sup>3</sup> of *Yen-ling* <sup>4</sup> passed through *Hsü*. The prince of *Hsü* <sup>5</sup> was very fond of his sword, but, because *Chi Tse* had to go as envoy to a powerful State <sup>6</sup> he, at that time did not yet consent to give it him. When *Chi Tse* came back from his mission, the prince of *Hsü* had died in the meantime. *Chi Tse*

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the *Liki, Chi-fa* ([Legge, loc. cit. p. 208](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> Quotation from the *Liki, T'an-kung* ([Legge, loc. cit. p. 196](#)).

<sup>3</sup> *Chi Cha*, fourth son of King *Shou Mêng* of *Wu*, who died in 561 B. C.

<sup>4</sup> A territory in *Kiangsu*, the appanage of Prince *Chi Tse*.

<sup>5</sup> A State in *Anhui*.

<sup>6</sup> He was on an embassy to *Lu*, *Ch'i*, *Chêng*, *Wei* and *Chin*, and passed in 544 B. C.

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unbuckled his sword and hung it up on a tree over the grave. His charioteer asked for whom he did so, since the prince of *Hsü* was already dead.

— Previously, replied *Chi Tse*, I have made this promise in my heart already. Shall I become unfaithful, because the prince of *Hsü* has died ?

Whereupon he hung up his sword and went away <sup>1</sup>.

Those who make offerings in recognition of special merits, are animated by the same sentiment as *Confucius*, when he interred his pet dog, and those who sacrifice, lest they should evade a former obligation, have the same tenderness of heart as *Chi Tse*, who hung up his sword on a tree over a tomb.

A sage knows these facts, and yet while sacrificing he will fast, and show such respect and devotion, as if there were really ghosts and spirits, and reform without cease, as if happiness and unhappiness depended thereon. But though people thus appreciate goodness, and honour merit, and take such pains to manifest their gratitude, it is not necessary that there should be really ghosts to enjoy these manifestations. We see this from the sacrifice offered to Earth at the meals. When people are going to eat and drink, they respectfully retire, as if they were giving precedence to somebody. *Confucius* says :

— Although the food might be coarse rice and vegetable soup, one must offer a little of it in sacrifice with a grave, respectful air <sup>2</sup>.

The *Liki* tells us that, when subjects are invited to dine with their prince, he first calls upon them to sacrifice, before they receive their rations.

These oblations are like the various sacrifices of the *Liki*. At a meal one also may omit the offering, and though venerating the spirits one may forego a sacrifice. The same principle holds good for all the sacrifices, which invariably consist in giving <sup>p1.524</sup> something as an offering. He who knows that at the sacrifice to Earth no spirit is present, and still maintains that ghosts attend the various sacrifices, ignores how to reason by analogy.

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<sup>1</sup> See a parallel passage in the *Shi-chi* chap. 31, p. 9v.

<sup>2</sup> [Analects X, 8](#), X [[Couvreur](#)].



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In the text of the Classics and the writings of the worthies nothing is said yet about ghosts and spirits <sup>1</sup>, nor did they compose special works on this subject. The unauthorized sacrifices offered by the people are not enjoyed by any ghosts, but people believe in the presence of spirits, who can cause either happiness or misfortune.

The votaries of Taoism studying the art of immortality abstain from eating cereals and take other food than other people with a view to purifying themselves. Ghosts and spirits, however, are still more ethereal than immortals, why then should they use the same food as man ?

One assumes that after death man loses his consciousness, and that his soul cannot become a spirit. But let us suppose that he did, then he would use different food, and using different food, he would not like to eat human food. Not eating human food, he would not ask us for it, and having nothing to ask at the hands of man, he could not give luck or mishap.

Our joy and anger depend on the fulfilment of our wishes. When they are satisfied, we are pleased, when not, irritated. In our joy we are generous and cause happiness, when we are sulky, we give vent to our anger and make others unhappy. Ghosts and spirits are insensible of joy and anger. People may go on sacrificing to them for ever, or completely disregard and forget them, it makes no difference, how could they render man happy or unhappy ?

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<sup>1</sup> This is not quite true. The *Liki*, the *Tso-chuan*, and the *Shi-chi* treat of ghosts and spirits in many places, as we have seen.

## 78. Book XXVI, Chap. I

### *Shih-chih*. The Real Nature of Knowledge

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p2.114 The Literati, discoursing on Sages, are of opinion that they know thousands of years of the past, and ten thousand future generations. Merely by the keenness of their sight, and the subtlety of their hearing, they are able to give the proper names to new things. They know spontaneously, without learning, and understand of themselves, without inquiring, wherefore the term Sage is equivalent with supernatural. They are like milfoil and the tortoise, which know lucky and unlucky auguries, whence the milfoil plant is regarded as supernatural, and the tortoise as a divine creature.

The talents of Worthies do not reach this standard ; their intelligence is weaker and not so comprehensive, whence they are called Worthies. This difference of name implies a difference of nature, for the substance being the same, the name uses to be equal. As for the name Sage, it is known that Sages are something extraordinary and different from Worthies.

When *Confucius* was about to die, he left behind a book of prophecies <sup>1</sup> wherein he says,

— I know not what sort of fellow, styling himself the First Emperor of *Ch'in*, comes to my hall, squats on my bed, and turns my clothes topsy-turvy. After arriving at *Sha-ch'iu* he will die.

In course of time the king of *Ch'in*, having swallowed the empire, assumed the title of First Emperor. On a tour of inspection, he came to *Lu* and visited the home of *Confucius*. Then he proceeded to *Sha-ch'iu*, but on the road he was taken ill and expired.

Another entry is this,

*Tung Chung Shu* carries confusion into my book.

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 1.319, Note 1.

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Subsequently, the minister of *Chiang-tu* <sup>1</sup>, *Tung Chung Shu* made special researches into the *Ch'un-ch'iu* and wrote comments and notes on it <sup>2</sup>. The book of prophecies further says,

*Ch'in* will be p<sub>2.115</sub> ruined by *Hu*.

Later on, the Second Emperor *Hu Hai* in fact lost the empire.

These three instances are used to bear out the statement that Sages foreknow ten thousand future generations.

*Confucius* ignored his descent, his father and mother having concealed it from him. He blew the flute and then of himself knew that he was a scion of *Tse*, a great officer of *Sung* of *Yin* <sup>3</sup>. He did not consult books or ask anybody, his playing the flute and his genius alone revealed to him his generation <sup>4</sup>. This would appear to be a proof of the faculty of Sages to know thousands of years of the past.

I say that all this is fallacy. Such miraculous stories are recorded in prophecy books and all in the style of *Hu* destroying the *Ch'in*, told in many books, or of the text of the Plan of the River <sup>5</sup>. The plain illustrations of *Confucius* have been magnified with a view to prove wonders and miracles, or the stories were fabricated in later times to furnish evidence.

*Kao Tsu* having enfeoffed the king of *Wu*, and seeing him off, patted him on his shoulder saying,

— Within fifty years hereafter, some one will revolt from the *Han* in the south-east. Will that not be you ?

In the time of *Ching Ti*, *Pi* <sup>6</sup> along with seven other States plotted a rebellion

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<sup>1</sup> In the *Yang-chou* prefecture, *Kiangsu*.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 1.466.

<sup>3</sup> *Tse* was the family name of the *Yin* dynasty. *Wei Tse*, the viscount of *Wei*, a clansman of the last emperor of the *Yin* dynasty, was made prince of *Sung*. He is believed to have been the ancestor of *Confucius*. Cf. [Chavannes, \*Mém. Hist.\* Vol. V, p. 284 seq.](#) In the *Liki* ([Legge, \*Sacred Books\* Vol. XXVII, p. 139](#)) [[Couvreur](#)] *Confucius* says himself, 'I am a man of *Yin*'.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 1.324, Note 4.

<sup>5</sup> The Plan of the Yellow River containing the eight diagrams revealed to *Huang Ti*, see p. 1.294, Note 1.

<sup>6</sup> King of *Wu*, a nephew of *Han Kao Tsu*.

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against the *Han* <sup>1</sup>. Those who first made this statement had perhaps noticed the dispositions and the signs of the time, whence they surmised that a rebellion would come, but they ignored the name of the leader. *Kao Tsu* having observed the valour of *Pi*, then correctly hinted at him.

If from this point of view we consider *Confucius*' cognisance of *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* and of *Tung Chung Shu*, it may be that at the time he merely spoke of somebody visiting his home and deranging his book, and, later on, people, remarking that *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* entered his house, and that *Tung Chung Shu* studied his <sub>p2.116</sub> work, exaggerated the dicta of *Confucius* and wrote down the names of the principal persons.

If *Confucius* was endowed with supernatural powers, so that he could see the First Emperor and *Tung Chung Shu* ere they existed, then he ought to have at once been aware of his being a descendant of the *Yin* and a scion of *Tse* likewise, and have no need of blowing the flute to determine it. *Confucius* was unable to ascertain his family name without playing the flute, but his seeing the First Emperor and beholding *Tung Chung Shu* is like blowing the flute.

According to the narrative of *Shih Huang Ti* <sup>2</sup>, he did not go to *Lu* ; how then should he have entered the hall of *Confucius*, squatted down on his bed, and turned his clothes topsy-turvy ? In the thirty-seventh year of his reign, on the *kuei-ch'ou* day of the tenth month <sup>3</sup>, *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* started on a journey to *Yün-mêng*. From afar he sacrificed to *Shun* in *Chiu-yi*. Floating down the *Yangtse*, he visited *Chieh-ko*, crossed the stream at *Mei-chu* <sup>4</sup>, went over to *Tan-yang*, arrived at *Ch'ien-t'ang*, and approached the *Chê* river. The waves being very boisterous, he went 120 Li westward, crossed the stream at a narrow passage, and went up to *Kuei-chi*, where he made an oblation to Great *Yü*, and erected a stone with an encomiastic inscription. Then turning to

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<sup>1</sup> This great rebellion broke out in B. C. 154. See *Shi-chi* chap. 11, p. 2r. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 498](#)).

<sup>2</sup> As given in the *Shi-chi* chap. 6, p. 26v. from which the following narrative is abridged.

<sup>3</sup> The 1st of November 211 B. C. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 184](#)).

<sup>4</sup> *Mei-chu* lies in the *Chien-p'ing* district of *Anhui*, which is conterminous with *Tan-yang-hsien* in *Kiangsu*.

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the southern Sea, he went back. Passing *Chiang-ch'êng*, he sailed along the seashore northward as far as *Lang-yeh*, whence still further north he arrived at the *Lao* and *Ch'êng*<sup>1</sup> Mountains. Then he proceeded to *Chefoo*, and always keeping near the sea-shore, reached the *P'ing-yuan* Ford, where he fell sick. He passed away on the *P'ing* Terrace in *Sha-ch'iu*<sup>2</sup>.

Since he did not go to *Lu*, wherefrom does the Book of Prophecies derive its knowledge that *Shih Huang Ti* came to *Lu* as p2.117 it says ? This journey to *Lu* not being a fact that might be known, the words ascribed to *Confucius* 'I know not what sort of a fellow', &c. are not trustworthy either, and this utterance being unreliable, the remark about *Tung Chung Shu* deranging his book becomes doubtful also.

In case records of famous deeds seem rather queer, they are the work of common people. All books, unless they be directly written by Heaven and Earth, go back on former events, there being reliable evidence. Those without experience, of course, cannot utilise these sources. All Sages foreseeing happiness and misfortune, meditate and reason by analogies. Reverting to the beginning, they know the end ; from their villages they argue on the palace, and shed their light into the darkest corners. Prophecy books and other mystic writings see from afar what has not yet come to pass ; they are aware of what is going to happen in future, which, for the time being, is still a void and wrapt in darkness. Their knowledge is instantaneous, supernatural, and passing all understanding.

Although ineloquent persons may not be qualified for it, still it is possible to predict calamities by observing analogies, or to predetermine future events by going back to their sources and examining the past. Worthies have this faculty as well, and Sages are not alone fit to do it.

When *Chou Kung* was governing *Lu*, *T'ai Kung* knew that his descendants would be reduced to impotence, and when *T'ai Kung* was ruling in *Ch'i*, *Chou Kung* saw that his scions would fall victims to robbery and murder. By their methods they foreknew the ultimate end, and perceived the signs of adversity

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.231, Note 7.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 1.232, Note 3.

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and rebellion.

*Chou* having ivory chop-sticks made, *Chi Tse* administered reproof <sup>1</sup>, and *Confucius* sighed because dummies were buried in *Lu*. From the ivory chop-sticks the one inferred the misery attending the search for dragon-liver, whereas the other saw in the dummies the danger that living persons might be interred along with the dead <sup>2</sup>.

*T'ai Kung* and *Chou Kung* were both cognisant of what had not yet come to pass, as *Chi Tse* and *Confucius* were aware of what <sup>p2.118</sup> had not yet taken place. As regards the source from which they drew the knowledge of the future, there is no diversity between *Sages* and *Worthies*.

The marquis of *Lu* being old, and the crown-prince weak, his daughter by a second wife leaned against a pillar, heaving a sigh. Old age and weakness were to her presages of future disorders and revolutions. Even a woman was clever enough to reason by analogies and thus discover the future. How much more should this be the case with *Sages* and superior men of exceptional parts and great intelligence ?

In the 10th year of *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* <sup>3</sup> the mother of King *Yen Hsiang* <sup>4</sup>, the queen-dowager *Hsia*, saw in a dream the consort of King *Hsiao Wên* <sup>5</sup> who said,

— The queen *Hua Yang* together with her husband *Wên Wang* <sup>6</sup> is buried in *Shou-ling*, and the queen-dowager *Hsia* and King *Yen Hsiang* are buried in *Fan-ling*. For this reason the tomb of the queen-dowager *Hsia* is transferred to *Tu-ling* <sup>7</sup>, so that I can say, 'I

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.354.

<sup>2</sup> The dummies had taken the place of living persons who were thus buried symbolically. Burying them alive would have been a relapse into the primitive custom. Cf. chap. 67.

<sup>3</sup> In B. C. 237.

<sup>4</sup> A misprint for *Chuang Hsiang*, king of *Ch'in*, 249-246 B. C.

<sup>5</sup> This king of *Ch'in* reigned only three days in B. C. 250.

<sup>6</sup> *I. e.*, *Hsiao Wên Wang*.

<sup>7</sup> East of *Hsi-an-fu*, *Shensi*.

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see my son <sup>1</sup> in the east and my husband in the west. After a hundred years a city of ten thousand families will rise by my tomb.

In course of time everything turned out as predicted. If those foreknowing the future from analogies be regarded as Sages, then the daughter of the second wife and the queen-dowager *Hsia* were Sages.

In the 10th year of King *Chao* of *Ch'in* <sup>2</sup>, *Ch'u Li Tse* <sup>3</sup> died and was interred in *Wei-nan* <sup>4</sup>, east of the *Chang* terrace. He said,

— A hundred years hence, an emperor's palaces will hem in my tomb.

After the rise of the *Han* dynasty, the *Ch'ang-lo* palace was built at his east and the *Wei-yang* palace at his west side. The arsenal was just on his tomb, exactly as he had said. This is a proof of his prescience and of his foreseeing future events. If such an evidence constitutes a claim to sagehood, then *Ch'u Li Tse* was a Sage. If he was not a Sage, then the knowledge of the future does not suffice to make a man a Sage.

p2.119 *Ch'u Li Tse* seeing the emperor's palaces close by his grave, was like *Hsin Yu*, who knew that *Yi-ch'uan* <sup>5</sup> would become the territory of the *Jung* <sup>6</sup>. In ancient days *Hsin Yu* passing through *Yi-ch'uan* and noticing the inhabitants, wearing their hair long down on their back, performing sacrifices, said,

— Within a hundred years this land will most likely belong to the *Jung*.

A hundred years hence *Chin* <sup>7</sup> transferred the *Jung* of *Lu-hun* <sup>8</sup> to *Yi-ch'uan*,

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<sup>1</sup> King *Yen Hsiang*, who had been adopted by Queen *Hua Yang*. His real mother, the queen-dowager *Hsia*, was originally a concubine.

<sup>2</sup> B. C. 297, the *Shi-chi* chap. 5 adduces the 7th year = B. C. 300.

<sup>3</sup> A member of the royal house.

<sup>4</sup> Near *Hsi-an-fu*.

<sup>5</sup> In the *Sung* district of *Honan* province.

<sup>6</sup> Non-Chinese tribes in the west.

<sup>7</sup> *Chin* and *Ch'in* combined invited the *Jung* to change their residence.

<sup>8</sup> In *Kua-chou*, *Kansu*.

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and what *Hsiu Yu* knew before became a reality <sup>1</sup>. From the omen of the long hair he inferred the expansion of the *Jung*, just as *Ch'u Li Tse*, on beholding the vast plain near his tomb, foresaw that the Son of Heaven would move quite close to his tomb.

*Han Hsin* <sup>2</sup>, burying his mother, likewise had a vast and elevated place built, that by its side there might be room for ten thousand families. Subsequently, in fact ten thousand families settled near his tomb. *Ch'u Li Tse's* comprehending the presages indicative of the imperial buildings in the vast plain was like *Han Hsin's* perceiving the edifices of ten thousand families on the plateau. The foreknowing of things to come is not a knowledge requiring the faculty to look through obstacles or an exceptionally fine hearing ; in all these cases omens are taken into account, traces followed up, and inferences drawn from analogous circumstances.

When in the *Ch'un-ch'iu* epoch ministers and high officers held a meeting, they had an eye for all abnormal proceedings and an ear for strange utterances <sup>3</sup>. If these were good they took them for indications of felicitous events, if they were bad they saw in them unlucky auguries. Thus they knew how to ascertain happiness and misfortune, and, long before, were aware of what had not yet come to pass. It was no divine or supernatural knowledge, but all derived from signs and analogies.

p.2120 At present all things knowable may be grasped by reflection, but all things unknowable <sup>4</sup> remain incomprehensible without research or inquiry. Neither ancient nor modern history affords any instances of men knowing spontaneously without study or being enlightened without inquiry. For things knowable merely require earnest thought, then even big subjects are not

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<sup>1</sup> Abridged from the *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Hsi* 22nd year [[Couvreur](#)], whence we learn that the *Jung* emigrated to *Yi-chuan* in 638 B. C. *Hsin Yu* predicted it, when King *P'ing* of *Chou*, to avoid the incursions of the *Jung*, transferred his capital from *Chang-an* to *Lo-yi* in 770 B. C. Consequently the hundred years of *Hin Yu* are only a round number. The *Tso-chuan* adds that *Hsin Yu* foresaw the event from the fact that in *Yi-ch'uan* the rules of ceremony were already lost. Wearing long or dishevelled hair is a sign of barbarity, therefore barbarians might well occupy the land.

<sup>2</sup> The friend of *Han Kao Tsu*. Cf. p. 1.148, Note 5.

<sup>3</sup> They were as superstitious as the old Romans.

<sup>4</sup> Unknowable at first sight, not altogether.



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difficult of apprehension, whereas things unknowable, how small soever, do not become easy through mental efforts or research. Consequently great *savants* are not apt to bring about anything without study or to know anything in default of inquiry.

An objection may be urged on the score that *Hsiang T'o* <sup>1</sup>, at seven years of age, taught *Confucius*. At the age of seven, he could not yet have entered an elementary school, and yet he acted as teacher to *Confucius*. Therefore he must have been self-knowing by nature.

*Confucius* says that [those who are born with the possession of knowledge are the highest class of men. Those who learn, and so get possession of knowledge, are the next.] <sup>2</sup> Speaking of those born with knowledge, without referring to their studies, *Confucius* has in view men like *Hsiang T'o*.

In the time of *Wang Mang* <sup>3</sup>, *Yin Fang* of *Po-hai* <sup>4</sup> was twenty-one years old. He had neither had a teacher nor a friend, but his inner light was fully developed, so that he was well versed in the Six Arts <sup>5</sup>. When the governor of *Wei-tu* <sup>6</sup>, *Shun Yü Tsang*, had written a memorial, *Yin Fang*, who had not studied, on seeing the document, could read it and argue on its purport. The quotations from the Five Classics he could elucidate and discourse on the subject to the gratification of all persons present. The emperor summoned him and gave him a theme 'The flying insects', on which he wrote an excellent essay. Verily, he was endowed with great erudition, and all under Heaven called him a Sage. A man <sup>p2.121</sup> conversant with the Six Arts, without having had a teacher or a friend, and able to read a document placed before him, although he has not studied books formerly, is a Sage. Without study he possesses knowledge spontaneously, and without instruction he is enlightened of himself. If this is not divine, what is it ?

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. [Huai Nan Tse XIX, 13v](#). See also *Giles, Biogr. Dict.* No. 696, where we read that *HsiangT'o* was merely qualified to be the teacher of the Sage.

<sup>2</sup> [Analects XVI, 9](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>3</sup> 9-22 A. D.

<sup>4</sup> In *Shantung*.

<sup>5</sup> Ceremonial, music, archery, charioteering, writing, mathematics.

<sup>6</sup> I suppose that the capital of *Wei* = *Ta-liang*, the modern *K'ai-fêng-fu*, is thus designated.

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My answer to this objection is this : Although *Yin Fang* had no teacher or friend, yet he must himself have learned many things, and though he did not study books, he must himself have plied pen and ink. When an infant is born, and its eyes first open, it has no knowledge, even though it possess the nature of a Sage. *Hsiang T'o* was seven years old. At the age of three and four already he must have listened to other men's speeches. *Yin Fang* counted twenty-one years. At fourteen and fifteen years of age he has probably learnt a great deal.

When a man of great natural intelligence and remarkable parts is confined to his own thoughts and has no experience, neither beholding signs and omens nor observing the working of various sorts of beings, he may imagine that after many generations a horse will give birth to an ox, and an ox to a donkey, or that from a peach-tree plums may grow, or cherries from a plum-tree. Could a Sage know this ? <sup>1</sup>

If a subject assassinated his sovereign, or a son killed his father and if, on the other side, somebody were as kind-hearted as *Yen Yuan*, as dutiful a son as *Tsêng Tse*, as brave as *Mêng Pên* and *Hsia Yü* and as critical as *Tse Kung* and *Tse Wo* <sup>2</sup>, would a Sage be apt to find this out ?

*Confucius* says that [some other dynasty may follow the *Chou*, but though it should be at the distance of a hundred ages, its affairs may be known] <sup>3</sup>, and elsewhere he remarks,

[— A youth is to be regarded with respect. How do we know that his future will not be equal to our present ?] <sup>4</sup>

In regard of abrogations and innovations he believes that they may be known, but he asks how the future of a youth could be known. The future of a youth is hard to be pre-ordained, whereas abrogations and innovations are easy to detect.

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<sup>1</sup> Even a Sage could not know the erroneousness of such suppositions. Pure thought alone does not provide true knowledge, there must be experience besides and reasoning by analogy.

<sup>2</sup> The two former and the two latter were disciples of *Confucius*.

<sup>3</sup> [Analects II, 23](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>4</sup> [Analects IX, 22](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

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p2.122 However, all this is very far away, and nothing that may be heard or investigated.

Let us suppose that somebody standing at the east side of a wall raises his voice, and that a Sage hears him from the west side, would he know whether he was of a dark or a pale complexion, whether he was tall or short, and which was his native place, his surname, his designation, and his origin ? When a ditch is dug out and filled with water, affectionate care is bestowed on human skeletons excavated. Provided that the face and the hair of such a skeleton be deformed and partially destroyed, and the flesh decomposed and gone, would a Sage, upon inquiry, be apt to tell whether the deceased was a peasant or a merchant, young or old, or eventually the crime he had committed and for which he had to suffer death ? Not that a Sage is devoid of knowledge, but this cannot be known through his knowledge. Something unknowable by knowledge may only be learned by inquiry. Being thus unable to know, Sages and Worthies equally fail.

An opponent might retort with the following story : When *Chan Ho*<sup>1</sup> was sitting in his room with a pupil in attendance upon him, a cow was heard lowing outside the gate. The pupil said,

— This is a black cow, but it has white hoofs.

*Chan Ho* concurred saying,

— Yes, it is a black cow, but with white hoofs,

and he sent somebody to look at it. In fact, it was a black cow with its hoofs wrapped in some stuff. *Chan Ho* being merely a Worthy, was still in a position to distinguish the sound of the cow and to know its colour ; should a Sage with his superior insight not be qualified to know this ?

I beg leave to put a counter-question : If *Chan Ho* knew the cow to be black and to have white hoofs, did he also know to whom it belonged, and for what purpose its hoofs had been made white ? With this manner of devices one barely finds out one point, but cannot exhaust the whole truth. People thus may learn one thing, but being questioned and cross-examined, they

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<sup>1</sup> A native of the *Ch'u* State in the *Chou* epoch.

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show that they do not possess the entire knowledge, for only what has been seen with the eyes and asked with the mouth, may be perfectly known.

In the 29th year of Duke *Hsi* of *Lu*, *Ko Lu* of *Chieh* <sup>1</sup> came to court and stopped above *Chang-yen*. Hearing a cow lowing, he p2.123 said,

— This cow has already had three calves, but they have all been taken away from her.

Somebody asking how he knew this, he replied that her voice disclosed it. The man applied to the owner of the cow, and it was really as *Ko Lu* had said <sup>2</sup>. This again is an instance of the use of some scheme and not knowable by knowledge alone.

*Yang Wêng Chung* of *Kuang-han* <sup>3</sup> understood the voices of birds and brutes. Once, when he was driving a lame horse in the open country, another blind horse was grazing at some distance. Both horses took notice of each other by neighing. *Yang Wêng Chung* said to his charioteer,

— That loose horse knows this one, although it be blind.

The charioteer inquiring how it could know that, *Yang Wêng Chung* replied,

— It abuses this horse in the shafts for being lame, and our horse, in turn, reviles the other because it is blind.

The charioteer did not believe it ; he went to look at it, and the eyes of the other horse were really blind <sup>4</sup>. *Yang Wêng Chung* understood the voices of horses as *Chan Ho* and *Ko Lu* of *Chieh* could distinguish the lowing of cows.

They used a method and relied on a certain device. If both are combined it is not necessary to look or hear through, or to see at a distance and make distinctions, the eyes wandering about. For hearing sounds there is a method, and for discerning colours there is a device. Using these methods is like foreseeing. The public does not understand this, and under these circumstances speaks of a Sage with supernatural gifts.

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<sup>1</sup> A small State held by wild tribes, south of *Kiao-chou*, of which *Ko Lu* was the chief.

<sup>2</sup> This story is told in the *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Hsi* 29th year [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>3</sup> Region in the province of *Ssechuan*.

<sup>4</sup> The *Pei-wên-yün-fu* cites this passage, but calls the person *Han-yang Wêng-chung* i. e., *Wêng-chung* of *Han-yang*. I could not find any farther information on the man.

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*Confucius* seeing an animal named it *rhinopithecus*, and the Grand Annalist had the idea that *Chang Liang* looked like a woman. *Confucius* had never before seen a rhinopithecus, but when it arrived he could give it its name. The Grand Annalist belonged to another age than *Chang Liang*, but his eyes beheld his shape. If the people at large had heard of this, they would have looked upon both as divine beings who were prescient. However *Confucius* could name the *rhinopithecus*, because he had heard the songs of the people of *Chao*, and the Grand Annalist knew *Chang Liang* from a picture p2.124 which he had seen in the emperor's memorial hall <sup>1</sup>. They kept secret what they had seen, concealed their knowledge, and did not disclose their hidden thoughts. The great majority of people are thoughtless and know little. Noticing Worthies or Sages giving some creatures their proper names, they take them for supernatural beings.

From this point of view *Chan Ho* as well, who knew a cow to be black with white hoofs, comes under this category. Unless he was in possession of a peculiar method or device of his own, he must have got his information about the animal from without beforehand.

The present diviners look to their methods and calculations and, those being of no avail, contemplate the circumstances of the case. By combining these circumstances with their theory, they appear to be in possession of supernatural powers. *Chan Ho* and the like are the diviners of the present day. If *Chan Ho* and others had an intuitive knowledge and needed no theory, then they were like those animals living in nests which foresee a storm, or those cave-dwellers which foresee rain <sup>2</sup>. Their intellect was prematurely developed as was the case of *Hsiang T'o* and *Yin Fang*.

Against this it may be urged that *Huang Ti*, at his birth, was endowed with supernatural faculties, and that he could already speak as a babe. The

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<sup>1</sup> [a]. *Williams* and *Giles* translate this word by 'imperial palace', which is much too vague, *Couvreur* by 'chancery', quoting two passages referring to the *T'ang* time. Originally it must have been a hall where the emperor used to sacrifice and pray to his ancestors for happiness. But other business was transacted there also. We read in the biography of *Chia Yi*, *Shi-chi* chap. 84, p. 14r. that *Chia Yi* was received there by the emperor *Hsiao Wên Ti* : [...]. The commentator remarks that the [a] was the principal room in front of the *Wei-yang* palace.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 1.109.

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emperor *K'u* could tell his name after he was born. They had not yet gained any experience from without and immediately after their births were able to talk and tell their names. Was not this a proof of their superhuman faculties and an instance of their innate knowledge ?

I answer that, if *Huang Ti* could talk after his birth, his mother had carried him twenty months before she gave birth to <sup>p2.125</sup> him, and that, according to this computation of the months, he must have been about two years in his mother's womb <sup>1</sup>.

The Emperor *K'u* could speak his own name, but he could not tell those of other people. Although he possessed this one gift it did not reach very far. Did his so-called divine and innate knowledge merely amount to his faculty to utter his name when he was born ? The allegation that he knew it and did not learn it from any one, cannot be verified. Even if *Huang Ti* and *Ti K'u* should really have been in possession of supernatural powers, these would only have been some prematurely developed talents.

A man's talents may be precocious, or they may be completed rather late. Even in case he has been without a teacher, he has at home acquired the learning of his family. People upon remarking his precociousness and premature erudition, in their admiration exceed all bounds. If they say that *Hsiang T'o* was seven years of age, he must have been ten, and their assertion that he instructed *Confucius* shows only that *Confucius* put a question to him. If they say of *Huang Ti* and *Ti K'u* that, after their birth, they were able to talk, the time has, no doubt, been several months, and the twenty-one years which they ascribe to *Yin Fang* must have been about thirty. If they contend that he had no teacher nor a friend, and that he did not study, as a matter of fact, he travelled about to gather information and worked at home. But the masses are extravagant in their commendations, and in condemning they magnify the faults.

There is a popular tradition about *Yen Yuan* to the effect that, at the age of eighteen, he ascended Mount *T'ai*, whence, in the far distance, he viewed a

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<sup>1</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* means to say that *Huang Ti* at his birth was as developed as a child of two years, so that his ability to talk would not be so marvellous. He only forgets to tell us how *Huang Ti* could learn speaking, while in his mother's womb.

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white horse fastened outside the *Chang* gate in *Wu* <sup>1</sup>. An investigation reveals the fact that *Yen Yuan*, at that time, was thirty years old, and did not ascend Mount *T'ai*, nor descry the *Chang* gate in *Wu*. The credit given to *Hsiang T'o* and the praise bestowed on *Yin Fang* are like the admiration of which *Yen Yuan* was the object.

*Tse Kung* asked,

[— Why should the Master not study ? But, on the other side, how could he always find a teacher ?] <sup>2</sup>

And *Confucius* remarks that at the age of fifteen he had his mind bent p2.126 on learning <sup>3</sup>. The Five Emperors and Three Rulers all had their teachers. I believe that this has been set up as an example for mankind.

Somebody may object that mere cogitation might be recommended as well, and that there is no need for learning. Things may be difficult to be grasped without any alien assistance, still the talents of Worthies and Sages are equal to it.

The so-called spirits have knowledge without learning, and the so-called Sages require learning, to become Sages. Since they are compelled to study we know that they are not Sages <sup>4</sup>.

Among the creatures between Heaven and Earth that are not provided with innate knowledge, the rhinopithecus knows the past and the magpie, the future <sup>5</sup>. The heavenly nature which pervades them thus acts spontaneously. Should Sages resemble the rhinopithecus, then they ought to belong to the same class *viz.* of beasts and birds.

The queer ditties of boys are known without study, and may be described as supernatural and prescient. If Sages be put on a level with these songs, they would be uncanny like these songs.

Or are the divine Sages on earth held to be sorcerers ? Ghosts and spirits

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<sup>1</sup> See chap. 16.

<sup>2</sup> [Analects XIX, 22 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>3</sup> [Analects II, 4 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>4</sup> Their wisdom is not supernatural.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. p. 1.358, Notes 3-5, and [Huai Nan Tse XIII, 14r](#).

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speak to men through the mouths of sorcerers. If Sages be regarded as sorcerers, in this capacity they would likewise be preternatural. That which is of the same stuff as prodigies are, has nothing in common with Sages. Sorcerers differ from Sages, therefore the latter cannot be spiritual. Not being spiritual, they are akin to Worthies, and being akin to Worthies, their knowledge cannot be diverse.

As to their difference, Sages are quick in embracing the right principles, and Worthies, slow. Worthies have many talents, and Sages, great knowledge. Their objects of thought are the same, only the amount differs. They walk the same road, but in their progress one overruns the other.

Things are hard to be understood, or easy of apprehension, and call the attention of both Worthies and Sages. For example, the alternation of culture and simplicity, the repetition of the three systems of government <sup>1</sup>, the succession of the first days of the first moon, the concatenation of the abolitions from, and improvements upon the institutions of the various dynasties, all these things p2.127 Worthies and Sages equally know. Water and fire of ancient times are the water and fire of the present day, and sounds and colours of the present are the sounds and colours of later ages. As regards beasts and birds, plants and trees, the goodness and wickedness of men, we learn to understand antiquity from the present, and from what is now infer what is to come. Between a thousand years back and ten thousand generations hereafter there is no diversity. In investigating remotest antiquity and in inquiring into future ages, in such matters as civilization and primitive simplicity, or water and fire, Worthies and Sages are equal. In observing omens and noticing signs as well as in drawing schemes showing people's destiny, Worthies and Sages are equal. Meeting with anomalies, they know their names and have no doubts about them, Worthies no less than Sages.

Things that may be known Worthies and Sages equally know, and things that may not be known, Sages do not comprehend either. I prove it thus :

Suppose that a Sage by mental abstraction foresees a rainfall, then his nature excels in one thing, but if his understanding does not reach to the

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 1.475.



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remotest principles with all their details, it is not worth speaking of. What we speak of is the gift of prescience, and an intelligent mind, completely understanding the natures of all creatures, and fully apprehending thousands of important methods. If somebody is familiar with one thing, but not with the second, or if he knows the left and ignores the right, he is one-sided and imperfect, crippled in mind and not accomplished, and not what we call a Sage. Should he pass for a Sage it would be evident that a Sage has no superiority, and men like *Chan Ho* would be Sages, as *Confucius* and his equals are considered Sages. Then Sages would not distinguish themselves from Worthies, or Worthies come short of Sages.

If Worthies and Sages both possess many abilities, wherefore are Sages held in higher respect than Worthies ? If they are both dependent on their schemes and devices, why do not Worthies come up to the standard of Sages ? As a matter of fact, neither Worthies nor Sages are apt to know the nature of things, and want their ears and eyes, in order to ascertain their real character. Ears and eyes being thus indispensable, things that may be known are determined by reflexion, and things that may not be known are explained after inquiry. If things under Heaven or worldly affairs may be found out by reflexion, even the stupid can open their minds, if, however, they are unintelligible, even Sages with the highest intelligence cannot make anything out of them.

*Confucius* said

[— I have been the whole day without eating, and the whole night without sleeping — occupied with thinking. It was of no use. The better plan is to learn.] <sup>1</sup>

Those things under Heaven which are incomprehensible are like knots that cannot be undone. By instruction one learns how to untie them, and there are no knots but can be undone. In case they cannot be untied, even instruction does not bring about this result. Not that instruction does not qualify to undo knots, but it may be impossible to untie them, and the method of undoing

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects XV, 30 \[Couvreur\]](#).

## Lun-hêng

them is of no use <sup>1</sup>.

The Sage knowing things, things must be knowable, if, however, things are unknowable, neither the Sage can understand them. Not that a Sage could not know them, but things may prove incomprehensible, and the knowing faculty cannot be used. Therefore things hard to grasp may be attained by learning, whereas unknowable things cannot be comprehended, neither by inquiry, nor by study.

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<sup>1</sup> There are things plain and intelligible by reflexion, others require instruction to be understood, and many remain incomprehensible in spite of learning, baffling all our endeavours.

## 79. Book XXVI, Chap. II

### *Chih-shih*. The Knowledge of Truth

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p2.281 Whenever people in their discussions depart from truth and do not bear out their propositions by evidence, their arguments may be never so pleasing, and their reasons never so abundant, yet nobody believes them. If we urge that Sages are not in possession of superhuman powers or prescience, and that in this prescience they do not possess a peculiar kind of knowledge, this is not a frivolous assertion or futile talk, but the result of conclusions drawn from the human faculties, and there are proofs and testimonies to establish the truth. How shall we show it ?

[*Confucius* asked *Kung-Ming Chia* about *Kung-Shu Wên*, saying,

— Is it true that your master speaks not, laughs not and takes not ? Is this so ? <sup>1</sup>

*Kung-Ming Chia* replied,

— This has arisen from the reporters going beyond the truth. My master speaks when it is the time to speak, and so men do not get tired of his speaking. He laughs when there is occasion to be joyful, and so men do not get tired of his laughing. He takes when it is consistent with righteousness to do so, and so men do not get tired of his taking.

*Confucius* said,

— Is it so with him ? Is it so with him ?] <sup>2</sup>

There are men on earth as selfless as *Po Yi* who would not accept a straw from others, but none that would neither speak nor laugh. Since his own heart did not tell *Confucius* this, that he might have decided for one

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<sup>1</sup> These words are wanting in the *Analects*.

<sup>2</sup> [Analects XIV, 14](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

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alternative, his heart wondering and not believing the reports, he cannot have had a penetrating intellect or seen things from afar, thus being able to determine the truth. He had to ask *Kung-Ming Chia*, to know the matter. This is the first proof that *Confucius* did not possess foresight.

*Ch'ên* [*Tse Ch'in* asked *Tse Kung* saying,

— When our master comes to any country, he does not fail to learn all about its government. Does he ask his information, or is it given to him ?

p2.282 *Tse Kung* said,

— Our master is benign, upright, courteous, temperate, and complaisant, and thus he gets his information.] <sup>1</sup>

Benignity, uprightness, courteousness, temperance, and complaisance are tantamount to obsequiousness. Men are well disposed to him who is obsequious to them, and being well disposed, they will give him information. Thus *Confucius* obtained his information about government from what people told him. This was neither supernatural nor an independent knowledge.

Duke *Ching* of *Ch'i* inquired of *Tse Kung* whether his master was a Worthy.

— My master, rejoined *Tse Kung*, is a Sage ; why should he merely be a Worthy ? <sup>2</sup>

Duke *Ching* was not aware that *Confucius* was a Sage, and *Tse Kung* corrected the term. *Tse Ch'in* neither knew whence *Confucius* derived his information about government, and *Tse Kung* had to communicate to him the true facts. Since he answered Duke *Ching*,

— My master is a Sage, why should he merely be a Worthy ?,

he also ought to have given to *Tse Ch'in* the reply that he was superhuman and endued with spontaneous knowledge, so that he needed not listen to what others said. The reply of *Tse Kung* to *Tse Ch'in* is the second proof that

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects I, 10 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> The *Yuan-chien lei-han* chap. 268, 8v. quotes this passage from the *Hui-yuan*.

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Sages have no foresight.

When *Yen Yuan* was cooking his food some dust fell into his pot. If he had left it there his food would have been impure, had he thrown it away he would have spilled the rice, therefore he picked it out and ate the rice. *Confucius*, witnessing it from a distance, was under the illusion that *Yen Yuan* ate stealthily <sup>1</sup>. This is the third evidence that Sages have no foresight.

Fierce highwaymen lie in ambush, leaning on their swords, and ferocious tigers crouch in jungles, gnashing their teeth, in wait for their prey. Those who know it do not venture to proceed, and if somebody does not know it, he runs into the swords of the fierce highway robbers, or falls into the teeth of ferocious tigers. The people of *K'uang* <sup>2</sup> surrounded *Confucius* <sup>3</sup>. Had he foreseen it, p2.283 he ought to have taken another road in time, to avoid the danger. But he did not foresee it, encountered it, and came to grief. This surrounding of *Confucius* is the fourth proof that Sages have no foresight.

[The Master was put in fear in *K'uang*, and *Yen Yuan* fell behind. *Confucius* said,

— I thought you had died.] <sup>4</sup>

If *Confucius* had been foreknowing he ought to have known that *Yen Yuan* would certainly not have met with destruction, and that the people of *K'uang* would not have wreaked their animosity against him. It was not before *Yen Yuan* arrived that he knew that he was not dead, for before he arrived he imagined that he had died. This is the fifth proof that Sages have no foresight.

[*Yang Huo* <sup>5</sup> wished to see *Confucius*, but *Confucius* did not wish to see him. On this, he sent a present of a pig to *Confucius*, who, having chosen a

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<sup>1</sup> This incident is told, though somewhat differently, in the 'Family Sayings' quoted by the *Pei-wên-yün-fu*. There *Yen Yuan* simply eats the rice. *Confucius* desires to have some for an oblation, when *Yen Yuan* explains why he ate it, and that, owing to the impurity, it was unfit for an offering.

<sup>2</sup> A State in the modern *K'ai-fêng-fu* in *Honan*.

<sup>3</sup> *Confucius* was mistaken for *Yang Hu*, an enemy of the people of *K'uang*, and therefore kept prisoner five days. See *Legge, Classics Vol. I*, p. 217, Note 5.

<sup>4</sup> [Analects XI, 22](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>5</sup> Cf. p. 1.107, Note 2. *Yang Huo* is also called *Yang Hu*.

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time when *Yang Huo* was not at home, went to pay his respects. He met him, however, on the way.] <sup>1</sup>

*Confucius* did not wish to see him. The circumstance that, when he went to pay him a visit, he chose the time when he was not at home, shows that he did not wish to see him, but he met him on the road. The meeting of *Confucius* with *Yang Hu* is a sixth proof that Sages do not possess foresight.

[*Ch'ang Chü* and *Chieh Ni* were at work in the field together, when *Confucius* passed by them, and sent *Tse Lu* to inquire for the ford.] <sup>2</sup>

If *Confucius* knew the ford he ought not to have inquired for it again. A critic might object that he merely wished to have a look at the work done by the two recluses. However, being prescient, *Confucius* must have known even this of himself and required no inspection. If he did not know and had to ask, this is the seventh evidence of his not possessing any foresight.

When the mother of *Confucius* had died, he did not know the grave of his father, and therefore provisionally buried her on the highway of *Wu-fu*. The people seeing it, thought that it was the final burial, for a joint burial being impossible, and the rites for <sup>p2.284</sup> the provisional one being performed with great care, they took it for the final one. The mother of *Man Fu* of *Tsou*, a neighbour, informed *Confucius* about the grave of his father. On this, he buried his mother together with his father in *Fang* <sup>3</sup>. The burial place was in *Fang*. The fact that *Confucius* first buried her on a highway is the eighth proof that Sages have no foresight.

Having buried his mother together with his father, [*Confucius* returned, leaving the disciples behind. A great rain came on ; and when they rejoined him, he asked them what had made them so late.

— The earth slipped, they said, from the grave at *Fang*.

They told him this thrice, without his giving them any answer. He then wept freely, and said,

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects XVII, 1](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> [Analects XVIII, 6](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>3</sup> This episode is found in the *Liki, T'an-kung*, II, 5r. ([Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 124](#)) [[Couvreur](#)], but the text differs. Chinese critics take it for apocryphal.

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— I have heard that the ancients did not need to repair their graves.] <sup>1</sup>

Had *Confucius* been prescient he would have known the collapse of the tomb in *Fang* beforehand, and, when his pupils arrived he should have awaited them with tears, but he only learned it after their arrival. That is the ninth evidence of a Sage not possessing foresight.

[The Master, when he entered the grand temple, asked about everything.] <sup>2</sup> He did not know, therefore he asked, to set an example to mankind. *Confucius* had not yet entered the grand temple ; in the temple there was a great variety of sacrificial vessels and, though a Sage, *Confucius* could not know them all. It has been supposed that he had already seen them, and knew all about them, and that he asked again, to set an example. *Confucius* says that, being in doubt, one asks <sup>3</sup>. Now, must he ask that is in doubt, or must he who already knows the truth, ask again, with the object of setting an example to others ?

*Confucius* knew the Five Canons, and his disciples learned them from him. He should have asked again about them, to set an example to mankind ; why did he directly impart them to his pupils by word of mouth ? Regarding the Five Canons with which he was familiar, he did not ask again, but concerning the grand temple with which he was well acquainted likewise, he inquired p2.285 again, to set an example to others. Wherefore did he not show the same diligence in both cases ? The visit of *Confucius* to the grand temple affords the tenth proof that Sages have no foresight.

When a host invites a guest, food and drink are at the disposal of the latter whenever he likes them, and he is lodged as if he were in his own house. If, however, the guest has heard that in the family of the host there are reprobate sons and grand-sons who prompt their parent to withdraw the dainty dishes and keep back the choice food, so that there is nothing to eat or drink, and to close his halls and shut his house to visitors, the guest, if he is

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the *Liki eod.* 4r. (*Legge* p. 123). See also p. 1.197, Note 2.

<sup>2</sup> [Analects III, 15 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>3</sup> Allusion to [Analects XVI, 10 \[Couvreur\]](#).

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in his mind, on no account accepts an invitation, for he knows that he would have no pleasure from it, he would go in vain, and have nothing but annoyance, and expose himself to insult. In case he goes he has no enjoyment, and returns annoyed and insulted. He who does not know a family is not acquainted with its real character. The real nature of men is difficult to know, and it is not easy to foretell good or bad luck.

If *Confucius* had been prescient he would have been aware that the feudatory lords were humbugged by malicious ministers, and would never have employed him, and that all his efforts would have been in vain, and only have brought disgrace upon him. When the invitations and summonses arrived, he should have stayed at home, and not have gone. A superior man does not do useless things, nor venture upon undertakings calculated to bring him dishonour. He would not travel about in response to invitations, only to suffer the ignominy of having his foot-prints wiped out, nor have wasted his admonitions on unworthy rulers, only to come into danger of being cut off from his supplies <sup>1</sup>. Accordingly *Confucius* did not even know things quite near him.

It will perhaps be objected that *Confucius* himself knew quite well that he would not find employment, but his holy heart could not bear the idea that his doctrine should not be carried out, and that the people would continue living in a state of abject misery. Probably he wished to assist the princes, in order to carry out his principles and save the people, wherefore he accepted the invitations and travelled about, undaunted by shame and disgrace. He thought of his doctrine and not of himself, therefore he did not hesitate to brave all dangers ; solicitous for the people and not for his name, he did not care about the aspersions cast upon his character.

p2.286 I say this is not true. [*Confucius* said,

— I returned from *Wei* to *Lu*, and then the Music was reformed, and the Songs and Dithyrambs all found their proper places.] <sup>2</sup>

That means to say that *Confucius* himself knew the proper time. How did he

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.499.

<sup>2</sup> [Analects IX, 14](#) [[Couvreur](#)].



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know it? *Lu* and *Wei* were the most virtuous states on earth. Since *Lu* and *Wei* could not employ him, nobody in the world could employ him, wherefore he retired and produced the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, and revised the *Shiking* and the *Shuking*. From this return from *Wei* to *Lu* we infer that *Confucius* himself was in the dark as to the proper time for going and accepting an invitation.

As long as there were no signs or indications, the Sage did not find out the truth, but when *Wei* and *Lu* declined his services, he knew that the end had come, and when the people of *Lu* caught a unicorn <sup>1</sup>, he was convinced that all was over. His doctrine had come to an end, and his career was stopped. These signs being manifest, all the hopes cherished by his heart were frustrated, and he retired to quiet meditation.

Restlessly wandering about, he was like a sick man who, before he dies, prays and divines, with a view to curing his disease. Before the signs of death appear, he still hopes to retain his life. Thus *Confucius*, before seeing indications that all was over, obeyed the calls, expecting to find employment. When the marks of death appear, the diviners are dismissed, and the physicians <sup>2</sup> sent home. *Confucius*, then, resolutely grasped the pencil and revised the books. His acceptance of the invitations and his wanderings are the eleventh proof that Sages have no foresight.

*Confucius* said,

[— The swimming animals can be caught with a line and those running <sup>3</sup>, be shot with an arrow. As regards the dragon, I do not know, whether it can ride on the wind and the clouds, and thus rise on high. To-day I saw *Lao Tse*. Should he perhaps be like a dragon ?]

A Sage knows all creatures and their actions. *Lao Tse* and the dragon are a human and another creature, and their doings in the sky and on the earth

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.359, Note 1.

<sup>2</sup> Note the interesting character 醫 for 醫, which shows that in ancient times physicians were taken for a kind of sorcerers 巫.

<sup>3</sup> The parallel passage I, p. 358 says 'those flying', which is better. The prototype in the *Shi-chi* reads as follow, 'I know that birds can fly, that fish can swim, and that beasts can run. Those running may be ensnared, those swimming may be caught with a line, and those flying be shot with an arrow'.

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are actions. Why did he not know <sup>p2.287</sup> them ? If *Lao Tse* was a spirit, a dragon is also a spirit, and a sage likewise. All spirits obey the same law, and their spiritual fluids are entwined. Why did he not know them ? *Confucius'* ignorance about the dragon and *Lao Tse* is the twelfth proof that Sages have no foresight.

[*Confucius* said,

— Filial indeed is *Min Tse Ch'ien*. Men have no words of disparagement <sup>1</sup> for his conduct in reference to his parents and brothers.] <sup>2</sup>

*Shun* of *Yü* was a great sage, who hushed up the crimes of his own flesh and blood, and so far still surpassed *Min Tse Ch'ien*. *Ku Sou* and *Hsiang* <sup>3</sup> bade *Shun* build a granary and excavate a well, with the intention to bring about his death <sup>4</sup>. *Shun* should have seen the attempt made upon his life and, in time, have remonstrated and averted it, or if he had no means to do so, he should have made his escape, and not have carried out the orders. If he disliked such a course, then why did he allow his father and brother to become guilty of murder, so that still after thousands of generations people hearing of such a father and brother detested them ? That *Shun* did not foreknow this is the thirteenth proof that Sages have no foresight.

When *Wu Wang* was ill *Chou Kung* asked for Heaven's decree. When the altars had been erected, the straws were consulted, and the prayer was spoken, he was still in doubt whether Heaven had granted his request or not, therefore he divined from three tortoises, and all three gave a favourable reply <sup>5</sup>. If Sages were prescient, then *Chou Kung* ought to have known whether Heaven granted his prayer, and it was not necessary still to divine by means of three tortoises. But the Sage would not make a law of his own view, wherefore he still prayed for a decree, which being hidden cannot be seen, for the will of Heaven is hard to be known. Consequently, he divined and

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<sup>1</sup> I. e. they did not disparage.

<sup>2</sup> [Analects XI, 4 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>3</sup> The father and the brother of *Shun*.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 1.173.

<sup>5</sup> See p. 1.187, Note 1.

## Lun-hêng

compared the various omens. The omens having brought a decision, his mind was settled, and he acted accordingly. This is the fourteenth proof that Sages do not possess foresight.

*Yen Tse* <sup>1</sup> had arrived in *Lu* with a message of friendly inquiries. One does not hurriedly walk up the hall, but *Yen Tse* did p2.288 it, and presenting a jewel, one does not kneel, but *Yen Tse* knelt. The disciples wondering, asked *Confucius* about it, but *Confucius* did not know it either and inquired of *Yen Tse*. When the latter had explained the reason he understood it <sup>2</sup>. This is the fifteenth proof that Sages have no foresight.

[*Ch'ên Chia* asked *Mencius* saying,

— What kind of man was the duke of *Chou* ?

— A sage, was the reply.

— Is it the fact that he appointed *Kuan Shu* to oversee *Yin*, and that *Kuan Shu* rebelled ?

— It is.

— Did the duke of *Chou* know that he would rebel, and purposely appoint him to that office, or did he not know ?

*Mencius* said,

— He did not know.

— Then, though a sage, he still fell into error ?

— The duke of *Chou*, answered *Mencius*, was the younger brother, *Kuan Shu* was his elder brother. Was not the error of *Chou Kung* in accordance with what is right ?] <sup>3</sup>

*Mencius* is a man qualified to examine into a thing to the very bottom. He says that the Duke of *Chou* administering the affairs under his sway, according to his sagehood, did not know that *Kuan Shu* was going to rebel. That is the sixteenth proof that Sages have no foresight.

*Confucius* said,

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<sup>1</sup> An official from *Ch'i*.

<sup>2</sup> The *Pei-wên-yün-fu* chap. 91, p. 5v. quotes this story.

<sup>3</sup> *Mencius* II, Part II, 9 [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)]. Our text seems somewhat shortened.

## Lun-hêng

[— *Tse* did not receive Heaven's decree, but his goods are increased by him, and his calculations are generally correct. ] <sup>1</sup>

*Confucius* finds fault with *Tse Kung* for being too much given to opulence. Observing the rising and falling of prices, he succeeded, by his calculations, in hitting upon the right moment for his speculations, and his wealth increased to such a degree, that he was as rich as *T'ao Chu* <sup>2</sup>. The prescience of a Sage bears some resemblance to the computations and correct calculations of *Tse Kung*. A Sage takes signs and omens to investigate the nature of things, which he thus comprehends. Upon seeing extraordinary phenomena, he gives them their proper names, and, by his extensive learning, he knows them. He is an able thinker, never short of ideas, with vast views and an excellent memory. From small indications he draws his inferences, and considering the present, he foresees, in his mind, a thousand years still to come. His knowledge is like a vast ocean, so to say.

The glance of *Confucius* fell into every corner, noticing the smallest minutiae, his mind was penetrating, his talents and intellect p2.289 both most remarkable, his energy never flagging, and his eyes and ears outvying those of other people in keenness. But he could not look through obstacles, or know things unknowable to mankind. If the Sage had been able to look through things, or perceive them from the greatest distance, to hear through solid bodies, or catch imperceptible sounds, or if he could talk to Heaven and Earth and converse with ghosts and spirits, then he would know everything in the heavens and on earth, and might well be regarded as a spirit, endowed with foresight, and far superior to man. But now his eyes and ears see and hear like those of other people, and coming across something, or perceiving some object, he does not behave himself otherwise. He barely surpasses worthies by one degree ; why then should he be held to be a spirit and totally different ? Sages are like Worthies, and the most excellent among men are called Sages ; consequently Sages and Worthies are merely designations for a higher and a lower degree, but not names indicating a total difference, as may be gathered from the following story :

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.376, Note 2 and 1.408.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 1.146, Note 1.

## Lun-hêng

Duke *Huan* of *Ch'i* <sup>1</sup>, together with *Kuan Chung*, planned an attack upon *Chü* <sup>2</sup>. Before this plan was carried out, it was already rumoured in that State. Duke *Huan* amazed, asked *Kuan Chung* saying,

— What is the reason that the scheme I just laid with you of attacking *Chü* has already transpired in that State, before it is carried out ?

— There must be a Sage in that State, said *Kuan Chung*.

After a short while, *Tung-Kuo Ya* arrived, and *Kuan Chung* said,

— This, no doubt, is he,

and he caused him to be treated as a guest and to be given the place of honour, all the others taking their places according to their rank.

*Kuan Chung* said,

— Is it you that spoke of an invasion of *Chü* ?

— Yes, was the reply.

— I do not invade *Chü*, said *Kuan Chung*, wherefore do you speak of an invasion of *Chü* ?

— Your servant, replied *Tung-Kuo Ya*, has heard that a superior man is great in forming plans, whereas small people are skilful in finding them out. I have ventured to do so.

— I did not say, rejoined *Kuan Chung*, that I was going to attack *Chü*; why do you suppose it ?

— I have heard, answered the other, that a superior man has three different airs : buoyant joy and merriment, the air of bells and drums, sorrow and stillness, the air of mourning, and anger running through arms and legs, the warlike air. When you make p2.290 a wry face and do not open your mouth, you think of *Chü*, and when you lift your arm and point with your finger, you have *Chü* in view. Your servant begs leave to contend that the small

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<sup>1</sup> 685-643 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> A State in the present *Yi-chou-fu*, *Shantung*.

## Lun-hêng

State disliked by all the princes can only be *Chü*, therefore I said so.

*Kuan Chung* was a man with a splendid intellect, well fit for nice distinctions and investigations. His statement that there must be a Sage in the State, was perfectly correct, for there was one. When *Tung-Kuo Ya* arrived he said that this, no doubt, was he *i. e.*, that *Tung-Kuo Ya* was a Sage. If Sages and Worthies were two totally different classes, *Kuan Chung* knew that at that period there were no men like the Twelve Sages, and he should have said that there must be a Worthy in the State, instead of saying a Sage. The plan being spoken about in the State before it was made public, *Kuan Chung* supposed that there must be a Sage, that means to say that a Sage is prescient. Upon seeing *Tung-Kuo Ya*, he declared that this man must be he *i. e.*, that a Worthy was a Sage. *Tung-Kuo Ya* knew the plan, and in no wise differed from a Sage.

A gentleman introduced *Ch'un-Yü K'un* <sup>1</sup> to King *Hui* of *Liang* <sup>2</sup>. He saw him twice, but never uttered a syllable. The king was surprised at it, and, by way of reproach, said to the gentleman,

— In praising *Ch'un-Yü K'un*, you said that he outstripped *Kuan Chung* and *Yen Ying*, but when he saw me, I had nothing of him. Am I not worthy to be spoken to ?

The gentleman informed *Ch'un-Yü K'un* who replied,

— It is true. When I first saw the king, his mind was far away, and when I saw him a second time, it was engrossed with sounds, wherefore I remained silent.

The gentleman having apprized the king, the latter greatly astonished, exclaimed,

— Dear me ! *Ch'un-Yü K'un* is a Sage indeed. When he came the first time somebody had presented me with a dragon horse <sup>3</sup>, and

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<sup>1</sup> A famous controversialist and ready wit of the *Ch'i* State of the 4th cent. B. C. He was the son-in-law of the king of *Ch'i*. A sketch of his life is contained in the *Shi-chi* chap. 126.

<sup>2</sup> 370-334 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> Dragon was the name for a horse eight feet high (*Erh-ya*).

## Lun-hêng

I had not yet had time to look at it ; at that moment *Ch'un-Yü K'un* arrived. Afterwards, somebody had offered me a song which I had not yet tried, when *Ch'un-Yü K'un* arrived. Although I had dismissed my attendants, my heart was still occupied with those things.

p2.291 Thus *Ch'un-Yü K'un* saw that King *Hui's* mind was absent or intent on sounds. Even the sagacity of *T'ang* and *Yü* could not have gone farther. The mind is in the bosom, but hidden and invisible, still *Ch'un-Yü K'un* did know it. If men like *Ch'un-Yü K'un* be deemed Sages, then he must have been one ; if his equals be not regarded as Sages, then how does the knowledge of Sages exceed that of *Ch'un-Yü K'un* respecting King *Hui* ?

Those who from a person's looks draw inferences as to his character, want some data on which to base their reasoning : When King *Ling* of *Ch'u* had a meeting with the other feudal lords <sup>1</sup>, *Tse Ch'an* of *Chêng* declared that *Lu*, *Chu*, *Sung*, and *Wei* <sup>2</sup> would not come. When the meeting took place the four States really did not attend.

When *Chao Yao* was registrar in the seal department, *Fang Yü Kung*, a native of *Chao* spoke to the registrar-general *Chou Ch'ang* saying,

— Your registrar, *Chao Yao*, will by and by succeed to your office.

In course of time *Chao Yao* really became registrar-general.

*Tse Ch'an* discovered the reason why the four States would not attend the meeting, and *Fang Yü Kung* saw from outward appearances that *Chao Yao* would be made registrar-general. By searching the reason and observing appearances one may make manifest the future, and thus comprehend it.

*Kung-Sun Ch'ên* <sup>3</sup> of *Lu*, under the régime of *Hsiao Wên Ti*, sent in a memorial to the effect that, the ruling element of the *Han* being earth, its correlate, a yellow dragon, ought to become visible. Subsequently a yellow

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<sup>1</sup> 538 B. C. in the principality of *Shên*. This meeting is referred to in the *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Chao*, 4th year [[Couvreur](#), § 2] and in the *Shi-chi* chap. 40, p. 10v. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. IV, p. 358](#)).

<sup>2</sup> The *Tso-chuan* writes *Tsao* instead of *Sung*, the *Shi-chi* replaces *Chu* by *Chin*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 2.217, Note 8.

## Lun-hêng

dragon put in an appearance and became the style of a reign <sup>1</sup>. Consequently, *Kung-Sun Ch'ên* had foreseen the appearance of the yellow dragon, and ascertained it by his calculations.

The knowledge of Worthies and Sages requires research. Both are possessed of the faculty of foresight, but to practice this foresight, they have recourse to their devices, and use their computations, or they are excellent thinkers and shrewd wits. Sages are not endowed with spontaneous knowledge, and miracles and <sup>p2.292</sup> prodigies belong to quite another sphere than that of Sages and Worthies. Their knowledge does not exceed all bounds, and they use their mental faculties in a similar manner ; nor does any miracle take place when they are in a perplexity. Wherefore their names may be interchanged, for Worthies and Sages are designations implying excellency, virtue, wisdom, and genius. Spirits are obscure, diffuse, and formless entities. The substances being different, the natures cannot accord, and the substances being equal, their manifestations cannot be inconsistent. The names of Sages and spirits are not the same, therefore Sages are not looked upon as spirits, nor are spirits held to be sage.

*Tung-Kuo Ya*, by his acuteness, knew the affairs of the State, and *Tse Kung*, by his shrewdness, acquired a fortune and made great profits. The foresight of a Sage is that of *Tung-Kuo Ya* and *Tse Kung*. It being equal to that of these two men, *Tung-Kuo Ya*, *Tse Kung*, and the like must be Sages as well. Accordingly, the nature of Worthies and Sages is the same, only their designations differ, but that does not disclose any divergence between their talents or any discrepancy between their knowledge. [A high officer asked *Tse Kung*, saying,

— May we not say that your Master is a Sage ? How various is his ability !

*Tse Kung* said,

— Of course Heaven has endowed him unlimitedly. He is about a Sage. And, moreover, his ability is various.] <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The style *Huang-lung* 'Yellow Dragon' under the emperor *Hsüan Ti*, 49-48 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> [Analects IX, 6 \[Couvreur\]](#).



## Lun-hêng

'About' is as much as 'will be', and signifies that he was not yet a Sage, but would be one, *i. e.*, that sagehood was not yet reached by *Confucius*. A Sage is like a Worthy : they regulate their lives and polish their conduct. Before his conduct is well ordered, it is said of a person that he will be a Worthy. In this case it is stated that *Confucius* is going to become a Sage, sagehood being in his reach.

[*Confucius* said,

— At fifteen, I had my mind bent on learning. At thirty, I stood firm, at forty, I was not tempted astray, at fifty, I knew the decrees of Heaven, and at sixty, my ear was an obedient organ.] <sup>1</sup>

In the interval between the time when he knew the decrees of Heaven and the time when his ear was an obedient organ, his learning was completed, and his wisdom expanded, certain signs <sup>p2.293</sup> of complete sagehood. To the period before the age of fifty and sixty was reached, when he was still ignorant of the decrees of Heaven, until the ear became an obedient organ, the term 'will be' is applicable. The time when *Tse Kung* replied to the high officer, was most likely the period of thirty and forty years.

King *Chao* of *Wei* <sup>2</sup> questioned *T'ien Ch'ü* saying,

— When I was in the eastern palace, I heard you express the opinion that to be a Sage is easy. Is that so ?

— It is, rejoined *T'ien Ch'ü*, what I have learned.

— Then, quoth the king, are you a Sage ?

*T'ien Ch'ü* replied,

— To know a Sage, before his having won distinction, is like *Yao's* knowing *Shun* ; to know him only after he has made his mark, is like the market people knowing *Shun*. Now, I have not yet won laurels, and Your Majesty asks me whether I am a Sage. May I venture the counter-question whether Your Majesty perhaps is a *Yao* ?

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects II, 4 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> 295-277 B. C.

## Lun-hêng

Sagehood may be learned, therefore *T'ien Ch'ü* declared it to be easy. If it were entirely beyond human power, and a spontaneous faculty, received with the original nature, how could it be learned then or acquired? *T'ien Ch'ü* averred that it was easy; if sagehood could not be acquired, then *T'ien Ch'ü* could not have made the statement that it was easy. His reply to the king that it was what he had learned, would seem to be consistent with truth <sup>1</sup>. Worthies can learn sagehood, and only their efforts made to that end may differ. Consequently the benevolent as well as the wise are entitled to the name of Worthy or Sage.

[*Tse Kung* asked *Confucius* saying,

— Master, are you a Sage?

*Confucius* answered him,

— A Sage is what I cannot rise to. I learn without satiety, and teach without being tired.

*Tse Kung* said,

— You learn without satiety : that shows your wisdom. You teach without being tired : that shows your benevolence. Benevolent and wise : Master, you are a Sage.] <sup>2</sup>

It may be seen from this that the benevolent and the wise may be called Sages. [*Mencius* said,

— *Tse Hsia*, *Tse Yu*, and *Tse Chang* had each one member of the Sage. *Jan Niu*, *Min Tse Ch'ien* <sup>3</sup>, and *Yen Yuan* had all the members, but in small proportions.] <sup>4</sup>

All <sup>p2.294</sup> these six disciples, at their time, possessed the talents of the Sage, but either these talents were very refined, but not complete, or they were complete, but not very brilliant. Nevertheless, they were all called Sages, sagehood, therefore, is attainable by exertion.

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<sup>1</sup> This is not true : Sagehood, the highest degree of wisdom and virtue, is inborn and cannot be learned. An intelligent man may increase his knowledge by study and do good work, but he will never become a genius.

<sup>2</sup> *Mencius* II, Part I, 2 (19) [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>3</sup> *Mencius* writes *Min Tse*.

<sup>4</sup> *Mencius* II, Part I. 2 (20) [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)].

## Lun-hêng

*Mencius* also said,

[— Not to serve a prince whom he did not esteem, nor command a people whom he did not approve ; in a time of good government to take office, and on the occurrence of confusion to retire : this was the way of *Po Yi*. To say : 'Is he whom I serve not my master, and are those whom I command not my people ?', in a time of good government to take office, and when disorder prevailed, also to take office : that was the way of *Yi Yin*. When it was proper to go into office, to go into it ; when it was proper to keep retired from office, then to keep retired from it ; when it was proper to continue in it long, then to continue in it long ; when it was proper to withdraw from it quickly, then to withdraw quickly : that was the way of *Confucius*. These were all Sages of antiquity.] <sup>1</sup>

And again he said,

[— A Sage is the teacher of a hundred generations : this is true of *Po Yi* and *Hui* of *Liu-Hsia*. Therefore when men now hear the character of *Po Yi*, the corrupt become pure, and the weak acquire determination. When they hear the character of *Hui* of *Liu-Hsia*, the mean become generous, and the niggardly become liberal. Those two made themselves distinguished a hundred generations ago, and after a hundred generations, those who hear of them, are all aroused in this manner. Could such efforts be produced by them, if they had not been Sages ? And how much more did they affect those who were in contiguity with them, and felt their inspiring influence !] <sup>2</sup>

*Yi Yin*, *Po Yi*, and *Hui* of *Liu-Hsia* did not equal *Confucius*, yet *Mencius* called them all Sages. Worthies and Sages fall under the same category, and for that reason may be denoted by the same name. *Tsai Yü* <sup>1</sup> said,

— In my opinion the Master is a greater Worthy than *Yao* and *Shun* by far.

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<sup>1</sup> *Mencius* II, Part I, 2 (22) [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> *Mencius* VII, Part II, 15 [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)].

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*Confucius* being a Sage, he ought to have said 'a greater Sage than *Yao* and *Shun*' in lieu of saying a greater Worthy. Worthies and Sages are about the same, wherefore their names are promiscuously used.

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<sup>1</sup> Disciple of *Confucius*. p. 1.312, Note 3.

80. Book XXVII, Chap. I

*Ting-hsien. A Definition of Worthies*

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p2.129 Sages are difficult to know, and it is much easier to recognise a Worthy than a Sage. Ordinary people are unable to recognise a Worthy, how then could they find out a Sage ? Although they pretend to know Worthies, this is a random statement. But from what signs may Worthies be known, and by what method ?

Are officials holding high positions and being wealthy and honoured to be looked upon as Worthies ?

Wealth and honour are heavenly fate. Those who by fate are wealthy and honoured, are not Worthies, nor can those who by fate are poor and miserable be held to be depraved. Should wealth and honour be made the criterion of virtue and vice, then officials would have to rely solely on their abilities, and not on fate.

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Are those Worthies who in serving their sovereign take care to gloss over everything and never to give offence ?

These are those pliant courtiers, sycophants, and favourites who never say a word, without considering its effect upon their master, and in all their doings are opportunists. They never show any backbone, or dare to make opposition, and consequently never run the risk of being dismissed or cashiered. Or they have a stately and handsome bodily frame and a pleasing appearance, so that the emperor does not look at them with disfavour, which assures their good fortune, for they enjoy the imperial grace to an extraordinary degree. Still they cannot be called Worthies.

\*

Are those Worthies whom the government chooses for employment, and who thus come to honour ?

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Of those who make a show of themselves and are known to others, a great many are promoted, whereas those living in obscurity and retirement and unknown to the world, very seldom are recommended. This was the case with *Shun*. *Yao* wishing to employ p2.130 him, first inquired about *Kun* and *Kung Kung* <sup>1</sup>. Thus even the chiefs of the mountains <sup>2</sup> were unqualified. Therefore, the selection and promotion of a man does not inform us about his real character. Sometimes men of superior virtue are recommended by very few persons, whereas a great many intercede for men of inferior talents. An enlightened ruler, wishing to employ good men, in order to find out whether they are really good or bad, inquires into the faults of all those introduced to him.

Moreover, he who consorts with many people and tries to win the heart of the masses, is generally liked and praised. On the other side, whoever is so pure and upright, that he does not feel at home with his own kindred, and whose lofty aspirations preclude any intimacy with low characters, loses the general sympathy, and people dislike and slander him. Thus, a name is often won by the art of ingratiating one's self, and defamation often a consequence of the loss of sympathy.

King *Wei* of *Ch'i* <sup>3</sup> enfeoffed the great officer of *Chi-mo* <sup>4</sup>, in spite of his having been slandered, and caused the great officer of *O* <sup>5</sup> to be boiled, notwithstanding his fame. The former had great merits, but no fame, whereas the latter had done nothing, but was very celebrated <sup>6</sup>.

[*Tse Kung* asked how a person was who was liked by all his fellow-villagers. *Confucius* replied that that was not sufficient. He then asked again

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<sup>1</sup> *Yao* inquired in open court whom he might employ. First *Kun* and *Kung Kung* were recommended to him, but not thought well qualified. At last *Shun* was mentioned to him. See *Shuking* Part I, 10 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 23](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> Title of the chief ministers of which *Kun* and *Kung Kung* were two. Cf. [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 50, Note 1](#).

<sup>3</sup> 378-343 B. C.

<sup>4</sup> In *Shantung*, near *Kiao-chou*.

<sup>5</sup> In the *T'ai-an* prefecture of *Shantung*.

<sup>6</sup> This story is told in full in the *Shi-chi* chap. 46, p. 7v. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. V, p. 243](#)). In addition to the governor of *O*, all the sycophants about him were thrown into a cauldron and boiled.

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about a man hated by all his fellow-villagers. The master replied that that would not do either. The best thing would be, if all the good ones among the villagers esteemed and all the bad ones amongst them hated him.] <sup>1</sup> Accordingly, it does not follow that a person praised and belauded by the majority, whom big and small, all declare to be a man of honour, is a Worthy. If the good speak well of him, and the wicked disparage him, so that one half defames, the other extols him, he may be a Worthy.

p2.131 Then, provided that a man meet with the approval of the virtuous and be vilified by the wicked, may we see a Worthy in him ?

Thus Worthies would be recognised conformably to the principle laid down by *Confucius*. But we do not know whether he who praises somebody be virtuous, or whether another speaking ill of him, be a bad man. It happens that those who praise are wicked, and that those disparaging are good. People are thus led astray and cannot draw a distinction.

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May those be taken for Worthies to whom the masses turn and who assemble hosts of guests and retainers ?

Those to whom the masses turn are oftentimes persons having intercourse with many people. The public likes and esteems them and turns to them in great numbers. Either are they noble and exalted, and may be of use, or they are partial to warriors and condescending to guests, forgetting their dignity and waiting upon Worthies. The princes of *Hsin Ling*, *Mêng Ch'ang*, *P'ing Yuan*, and *Ch'un Shên* <sup>2</sup> entertained thousands of guests and were called worthy peers and great generals, but *Wei Ch'ing* <sup>3</sup> and *Ho Ch'ü Ping* <sup>4</sup> had not a single guest in their houses and, nevertheless, were celebrated generals. Thus many guests and followers assemble in the palaces of kind and condescending princes and of Worthies who may be useful or dangerous. If somebody is not fond of soldiers he must not be held in low

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects XIII, 24 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> About these men see p. 1.501, Note 2.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 1.169.

<sup>4</sup> P. 1.364, Note 5.

## Lun-hêng

repute for that, although the masses do not turn to him, and the warriors do not follow him.

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Is he a Worthy who is in a position to govern others, and who wins people's hearts to such an extent, that they sing songs in his praise ?

To gain the affections of the people does not differ from currying favour with the warriors. Propitiating the people by empty favours, one takes their fancy, and they are pleased and happy. We may adduce *T'ien Ch'êng Tse* of *Ch'i* <sup>1</sup> and King *Kou Chien* of *Yüeh* <sup>2</sup> as examples. *T'ien Ch'êng Tse* wishing to usurp the p<sub>2.132</sub> authority in *Ch'i*, would use a big bushel, while lending out grain, and a small one, when taking it back, so that people were enchanted. *Kou Chien*, with a view to wiping out the disgrace of *Kuei-chi* <sup>3</sup>, insinuated himself with his people by condoling, when somebody had died, and inquiring after people's health, so that all were charmed. Both had their own selfish ends, for which they needed the support of others, and merely humbugged their people. There was no sincerity in them, yet people were contented.

The prince of *Mêng-Ch'ang* <sup>4</sup> wished to pass through a gate of *Ch'in* during the night, but the cocks had not yet crowed, and the gate was not yet open. One of his inferior retainers, who occupied a low position, beat his arm <sup>5</sup> and imitated the cock-crow, when all the cocks responded, and the gate was thrown open, so that the prince could pass <sup>6</sup>. As cocks can be moved by false sounds, so men may be imposed upon by fictitious grace, and as men are subject to such impostures, even Heaven may be induced to respond, by tricks. In order to stir up the heavenly fluid, the spirit should be used, but people will employ burning glasses, to attract the fire from the sky.

By melting five Stones and moulding an instrument in the fifth month, in

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<sup>1</sup> A noble in *Ch'i*, whose descendants, later on, became dukes of *Ch'i*. He died about 460 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> He came to the throne in 496 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> On Mount *Kuei-chi* he had been surrounded by the king of *Wu*, and had to sue for peace.

<sup>4</sup> See above p. 2.131, Note 1.

<sup>5</sup> The noise thus made probably served to produce the crow.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. the biography of *Mêng Ch'ang* in the *Shi-chi* chap. 75, p. 4v.



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the height of summer, one may obtain fire. But now people merely take knives and swords or crooked blades of common copper, and, by rubbing them and holding them up against the sun, they likewise get fire. As by burning glasses, knives, swords, and blades one may obtain fire from the sun <sup>1</sup>, so even ordinary men, being neither Worthies nor Sages, can influence the fluid of Heaven, as *Tung Chung Shu* was convinced that by a clay dragon he could attract the clouds and rain, and he had still some reason for this belief <sup>2</sup>. If even those who in this manner conform to the working of Heaven, cannot be termed Worthies, how much less have those a claim to this name who barely win people's hearts ?

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May he be considered a Worthy who, holding office, achieves merit and proves successful ?

p2.133 But what is to be accounted merit or success of an office bearer ? That the populace turn to him ? However, the masses can be won by feigned favours.

When the *Yin* and the *Yang* are in harmony, there is a time of public peace. At such periods of harmony, even the depraved fall in with general tranquillity, whereas in times of unrest, even Sages are involved in catastrophes. Should the harmony of the *Yin* and the *Yang* determine the worthy or unworthy character of a man, then *Yao* ought to have been degraded owing to the Great Flood, and *T'ang* should have been thrown into the background in view of the Great Drought.

If merit and success be regarded as action, then merit appears and manifests itself by the activity of the body. But the success of designs based on principles is invisible and not apparent. The drum does not belong to the Five Sounds, but the Five Sounds <sup>3</sup> do not accord without a drum <sup>4</sup>. The teacher has no place in the Five Degrees of Mourning, but they do not

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 1.378.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. chap. 47.

<sup>3</sup> The Five Notes of the Chinese musical scale.

<sup>4</sup> The drum plays an important part in Chinese music.

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become practical without a teacher <sup>1</sup>. Water does not belong to the Five Colours, but in default of water the latter do not shine <sup>2</sup>. So principles are the root of merit, and merit is the upshot of principles. If people be called Worthies because of their merits, they would be the unworthy ones of the Taoists <sup>3</sup>.

When *Kao Tsu* came to the throne he rewarded the merits of all his ministers, and *Hsiao Ho* got the highest prize, because the acknowledgement of merit by *Kao Tsu* was like a hunt, when the hunter lets loose his dog. The dog alone catches the beast, but the hunter has the merit of it. All the ministers of the emperor took a personal part in the war like the dog, but *Hsiao Ho* did the chief part like the hunter. If those pass for Worthies who have achieved merit, then *Hsiao Ho* had no merit. Consequently merit and reward cannot be proofs of worth. That is the first objection.

p2.134 Sages and Worthies have their methods of governing the world. He who knows these principles obtains merit, he who ignores them fails like a physician curing a disease. Possessing a prescription, he may cure even a serious illness, without it he cannot even remove small ulcers <sup>4</sup>. A prescription is like a method, a disease like a disorder ; the physician corresponds to the official, and his physics to reforms. The prescription is used, and the physic administered, and so a method is employed, and reforms carried out. By these reforms disorder is stopped, and by the use of physics a disease is cured. A drug curing a disease must not of necessity be better than another without these medical properties, and an official qualified to govern a State is not necessarily worthier than another without such ability. A prescription may be obtained by chance, and a man may happen to know a certain method.

The administration of a State requires a method to secure success, but

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<sup>1</sup> The teacher has to inculcate them.

<sup>2</sup> Quotation from the *Liki, Hsiao-chi* ([Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVIII, p. 90](#)) [[Couvreur](#)], but with slight alterations.

<sup>3</sup> The Taoists despise external merit.

<sup>4</sup> This expression is nowhere explained, the *Appendix* to the *Pei-wên-yün-fu* merely cites this passage. [ ] means an ulcer on the legs, but what is a 'hare ulcer' ? From the opposition to [ ] [ ] we may infer that it is some small disease, perhaps only an excoriation, which the Germans call 'wolf'.

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there are also times of a natural disorder, when no methods are of any use to bring about anything ; and there are other times, when, by nature, peace must prevail, and merit may be achieved even without any method. Thus statesmen hitting upon the proper time, may accomplish their ends, when they lose it, they fail. Men possessing some method may achieve merit in accordance with time, but are not apt to bring about peace in opposition to the right time.

Good physicians may save the life of a man who is not yet about to die, but when his life-time is finished and his span terminated, no prescriptions are of any avail whatever. When there is to be a revolution, even *Yao* and *Shun* cannot accomplish anything with all their methods, and when a person is doomed to die, even the medicaments of *Pien Ch'io* cannot cure his illness.

Archers and charioteers as well as other artisans and handicraftsmen all have their methods, by means of which they acquire merit, and do business, so that their success becomes visible. Statesmen must be looked upon as being on a level with handicraftsmen. The achievement of merit being like the doing of business, then if those having merit be called Worthies, all handicraftsmen must likewise be Worthies.

*Shou Wang* of *Wu-ch'iu* <sup>1</sup>, a native of *Chao* <sup>2</sup>, was an expectant *hanlin* in the time of the emperor *Wu Ti* <sup>3</sup>. The sovereign bade him follow *Tung Chung Shu* and receive the *Ch'un-ch'iu* from him. His talents were of the highest order, and he thoroughly understood business. Subsequently he became military governor of *Tung-chün* <sup>4</sup>, and, in view of his excellence, the emperor did not appoint a civil governor <sup>5</sup>. But at one time military expeditions had to be organized, the people were in excitement, the year was bad, and robbers and thieves were rampant. Then the emperor sent a letter to *Shou Wang* running thus,

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<sup>1</sup> The *Han-shu* has the first reading.

<sup>2</sup> State in *Shansi*.

<sup>3</sup> *Han Wu Ti*, 140-87 B. C.

<sup>4</sup> A circuit in northern *Honan*.

<sup>5</sup> *Shou Wang* filled both posts, that of a [] *tu-wei*, military governor and of a *tai-shou*, civil governor.

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When you were in my presence, you became the centre of all our deliberations, and I imagined that you had not your equal in the world, and that there were not two men like you within the Four Seas. You were given the control of more than ten cities, and your post was a double one of 4 000 piculs <sup>1</sup>. What is the reason that now robbers and thieves on boats attack my arsenals to seize their arms, and that the present time so little tallies with the past ?

*Shou Wang*, by way of excuse, said that there was nothing to be done. He again was appointed commander of the Imperial Palace and constantly kept about His Majesty <sup>2</sup>. All his judgments and proposals were sound and just, so great were his talents, and so profound his knowledge. He understood everything and had the greatest experience. Albeit yet during his administration of *Tung-chün*, the year was bad, robberies and thefts were rampant, and the excitement of the people could not be stopped. I wonder whether *Shou Wang* did not know a method for governing *Tung-chün*, or whether this province had just again to pass through a revolution, and the administration of *Shou Wang* just coincided with this time ?

Thus even a worthy like *Shou Wang* in his administration of *Tung-chün* could not achieve merit. Should Worthies be judged <sup>p2.136</sup> by their achievements, then even a *Shou Wang* would be rejected and not be promoted. I am afraid that in the world there are a great many persons of the type of *Shou Wang*, yet the critics are unable to see the value of people in default of their merits.

In *Yen* there was a valley where in consequence of cold air the Five Grains did not grow. *Tsou Yen* by blowing the flute attracted a fluid by which the cold was changed into heat, so that in *Yen* they could sow millet, and the millet grew in great abundance. Up till now the valley bears the name of 'millet valley' <sup>3</sup>. The harmonisation of the *Yin* and the *Yang* requires the most exquisite wisdom and virtue, yet by *Tsou Yen's* blowing the flute the cold

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<sup>1</sup> The income of a military governor was of 2 000 piculs and that of a civil one the same amount.

<sup>2</sup> So far the text literally agrees with the biography of *Shou Wang* in the *Ch'ien Han-shu* chap. 64a, p. 13v.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 1.114.

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valley became warm, and grain and millet sprouted luxuriantly. Accordingly, all who have achieved merit have a method like *Tsou Yen* blowing the flute. Consequently, if they are in possession of some system, even the wicked are successful, and many Worthies and Sages would be unfitted for government in case they have not the proper method. Therefore merit is no criterion of virtue. This is the second point.

When people undertake something their will may be most earnest, still they have no success. Their plan is not carried out though their energy would pierce a mountain. Such was the case of *Ching K'o* and of the physician *Hsia Wu Chü*.

*Ching K'o* entered *Ch'in* with the intention to rob the king of *Ch'in* and convey him alive to *Yen*, but meeting with an unlucky accident, he was himself caught in *Ch'in*. When he was pursuing the king of *Ch'in*, who ran round a pillar, the surgeon *Hsia Wu Chü* hit him with his medicine bag, nevertheless *Ching K'o* won world-wide fame as a hero. The king of *Ch'in* rewarded *Hsia Wu Chü* with two hundred *yi* <sup>1</sup> of gold <sup>2</sup>. Being himself arrested in *Ch'in*, the planned capture and conveyance of the king alive could not be accomplished by *Ching K'o*, and the hitting a would-be assassin with a medicine bag, served to save the king's life. Yet either of them was praised or rewarded, owing to the great sincerity of the one, and the wonderful strength of the other. The scholars of the world did not forbear extolling the honesty of *Ching K'o* though he did not accomplish his object, and the king of *Ch'in* rewarded *Hsia Wu Chü* although his action had no consequence.

p2.137 The purpose being good, it matters not whether a result be achieved, and an idea being excellent, one does not think of the outcome. In case an idea is admirable, but the success inadequate, or a purpose grand, but the result small, the wise will reward, and the unwise, punish. If one always has the success in view, no account being taken of the intention, and if only the outward result is insisted upon, without paying attention to the inward motives, then the story of *Yü Jang* <sup>3</sup> drawing his sword and cutting the

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<sup>1</sup> One *yi* of gold equal to 20 ounces.

<sup>2</sup> For a more detailed account see p. 1.503.

<sup>3</sup> His second attempt to assassinate the viscount *Hsiang* of *Chao* having failed, he

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cloak of Viscount *Hsiang*, would not be worth mentioning, *Wu Tse Hsü's* flogging the corpse of King *P'ing* <sup>1</sup>, would not be worthy of note, and *Chang Liang's* dealing a blow at *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* and, by mistake, hitting the accompanying cart <sup>2</sup>, would have no interest.

All three had to suffer from unfavourable circumstances and could not accomplish their designs. They had the power, but not the success ; they formed plans, but could not carry them out. Therefore Worthies cannot be gauged by their merits. This is the third objection.

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Then can people become Worthies by their filial piety towards their father, or their brotherly behaviour towards their elder brothers ? In that case a dutiful son and a good brother must have a father or an elder brother. These two being unkind, then their filial piety or brotherly love become manifest. *Shun* had *Ku Sou*, and *Tsêng Shên* had *Tsêng Hsi* as father. Thus the filial piety could become apparent, and their fame was established, so that everybody belauded them. If, however, there be no father or elder brother, or if these be kind and good, there is no occasion to show these virtues, and the name of a dutiful son or a good brother cannot be acquired.

Loyalty to one's sovereign is similar to this : The loyalty of *Lung Fêng* <sup>3</sup> and *Pi Kan* <sup>4</sup> shone forth in *Hsia* and *Yin*, because *Chieh* <sub>p2.138</sub> and *Chou* were both wicked, whereas the fealty of *Chi* <sup>5</sup>, *Hsieh* <sup>6</sup>, and *Kao Yao* <sup>7</sup> remained

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asked permission to pass his sword through the cloak of the viscount, which was granted him. Having thus revenged his master, Earl *Chih*, symbolically, he committed suicide. See also p. 1.358, Note 1.

<sup>1</sup> King *P'ing* of *Ch'u*, who had put to death the father and elder brother of *Wu Tse Hsü* (*Wu Yuan*). The latter fled to *Wu*, inveighed the prince of this State to an expedition against *Ch'u*, which was vanquished. As victor *Wu Tse Hsü* caused the grave of King *P'ing* to be opened and his corpse to be publicly flogged.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 1.235.

<sup>3</sup> *Kuan Lung Fêng*, a minister of *Chieh Kuei*, who remonstrated with him and therefore was put to death.

<sup>4</sup> For having dared to object to the excesses of *Chou*, the last emperor of the *Yin* dynasty, *Pi Kan* had a similar fate as *Kuan Lung Fêng*. Cf. p. 1.485, Note 6.

<sup>5</sup> The ancestor of the *Chou* dynasty.

<sup>6</sup> Minister of *Shun*.

<sup>7</sup> Minister of *Shun*.

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concealed in *T'ang* and *Yü* <sup>1</sup>, since *Yao* and *Shun* themselves were virtuous. As the light of a glow-worm is eclipsed by the effulgence of the sun and the moon, so the name of a loyal official is overshadowed by the renown of his virtuous sovereign.

To die for a prince in disgrace, and to sacrifice oneself for him, falls under the same head. When an officer just happens to live at such a time and dies for his lord, his righteousness becomes known, and he earns great fame. A great Worthy, however, passes through this life, flying about and settling down and rising on apprehending some danger <sup>2</sup>. The ruin of a perishing prince does not involve him, nor does the calamity of a tottering State affect his family. Then, how should he meet with such a misfortune, or share the disaster of his lord ?

*Chan* of *Ch'i* asked *Yen Tse* <sup>1</sup> how a loyal minister had to serve his master. The other replied,

— So that he does not die with him nor see him off, when he leaves his country to go into exile.

— If a man, rejoined *Chan*, who has been given plenty of land and been the recipient of many honours lavishly bestowed upon him by his sovereign, if such a one does not die for his prince, when the latter is ruined, nor see him off, when he leaves his country, how can he be called loyal ?

— How can, said *Yen Tse*, a minister die, provided that his advice be followed ? Or how can he see the prince off, provided that his remonstrances be effective, so that his sovereign is never in his whole life compelled to quit the country ? If his advice be rejected, and the minister die for his lord, this would be a reckless death, and if his remonstrances be repudiated, and the minister see off his sovereign going into exile, this would be deception. Thus a loyal minister may share the happiness of his prince, but he cannot be engulfed with him in the same catastrophe.

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<sup>1</sup> *T'ang* and *Yü* were the territories of *Yao* and *Shun*.

<sup>2</sup> Allusion to *Analects* X, 18.

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According to this reply of *Yen Tse*, in seeking the Worthies of this world, those who die, because their sovereign is ruined, and thereupon base their claim to loyalty, do not count. Great Worthies have few accomplishments that may be named, and small Worthies do many things worthy of praise. Such faults <sup>p2.139</sup> for which people may be bamboosed, are only small ones, and so are all quantities that may be measured : For the greatest crimes the bamboo is not sufficient, and for the greatest quantities pints and bushels will not do. Inferior actions are easily described, and they usually occur in times of decay, when they are easily recognised. Thus virtuous acts are manifest, and their fame is heard of <sup>2</sup>.

Floating on the ocean, one may be thrown to the east or the west owing to the vastness of the water ; navigating on a creek, one knows the traces left by the oars of the boats on account of its smallness <sup>3</sup>. Small things are easy to see and, in times of disorder, easily brought to light. As long as an age is not in jeopardy, remarkable deeds are not taken any notice of, and unless the ruler be wayward and perverse, loyalty cannot be exhibited. The highest and noblest feelings are displayed under a *régime* at the verge of ruin, and the purest and finest acts done in an epoch of universal decay <sup>4</sup>.

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Are those Worthies who safeguard themselves from all injuries, so that they do not suffer any punishments like *Nan Jung* who was afraid about the white sceptre-stone <sup>5</sup> ?

To avoid all injuries is chance and a propitious fate. They are not to be prevented by abilities and knowledge, or to be averted by repressive measures. A divine snake may be cut in two and again grow together, but it

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<sup>1</sup> An officer of *Ch'i*, 6th century B. C., who died 493 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> These sentiments savour a good deal of Taoism.

<sup>3</sup> On a small sheet of water one knows exactly the course one has taken but not on the ocean where east and west become uncertain.

<sup>4</sup> Great virtue becomes visible by contrast and shines forth when there is wickedness all around.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Analects XI, 5* [*Couvreur*]. *Nan Jung*, to whom *Confucius* married the daughter of his elder brother. He used to repeat the lines of the *Shiking* 'A flaw in a white sceptre-stone may be ground away ; but for a flaw in speech nothing can be done'. See *Legge, Classics Vol. I*, p. 238, Note 5.



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cannot hinder men from cutting it, and so may Sages and Worthies be pressed hard and again liberated, but they cannot prevail upon others not to injure them. *Nan Jung* could free himself from capital punishment, but *Kung Yeh*, though quite innocent, was loaded with fetters <sup>1</sup>. *Chü Po Yü* <sup>2</sup> could preserve his principles in a degenerate State, whereas *Wên Wang* was kept a prisoner in *Yu-li* and *Confucius* endangered in *Ch'ên* and *Tsai* <sup>3</sup>. These are not disasters brought about by one's own <sup>p2.140</sup> doings and coming down upon a man, but unavoidable calamities in which he becomes implicated. This impossibility of avoiding calamities is like the inability to prolong one's life. The allotted span being terminated, no Worthy can extend it of his own accord, and when the time is perilous, no Sage is apt to save himself.

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Are those to be deemed Worthies who quit their country, giving up their dignity, and who reject wealth and honour, preferring penury and misery ?

To quit one's own country, one must be under compulsion, as *Po Yi* <sup>4</sup> was, who yielded the State to his brother, lest he should be suspected of struggling with him for his share. When the Old King *Tan Fu* <sup>5</sup> had fought several battles, his people all quitted the country. One gives up one's dignity, when one's principles prove impracticable, and one does not obtain one's ends. As long as his principles are successful, and his aims attained, nobody thinks of renouncing his dignity. Thus, for quitting one's country and giving up one's dignity one always has one's reasons. If such persons be called Worthies, are those not affected by similar reasons, to be termed unworthy ?

Moreover, only in case there is a State or a dignity, they may be abandoned and parted with, but there being no State or any high dignity, how can they be rejected ?

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. [Analects V, I \[Couvreur\]](#). To *Kung Yeh Ch'ang Confucius* gave his daughter to wife.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 1.066, Note 2.

<sup>3</sup> P. 1.499, Note 2.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 1.168, Note 2.

<sup>5</sup> The grandfather of *Wên Wang*, founder of the *Chou* dynasty, who removed his capital in consequence of the constant raids of barbarian tribes.

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The spending of wealth and giving their share to those below, is similar to this. But if there really be no wealth, what can be given away ? When the mouth is hungry, what can be yielded to others ?

While the granaries are full, people know rites and ceremonies, and when food and clothing are sufficient, one is sensible of honour and disgrace. Unselfishness grows from abundance, and strife is engendered by scarcity <sup>1</sup>. People may sometimes share their wealth with others. The general *Yuan* <sup>2</sup> again divided his <sup>p2.141</sup> family property with his nephew, and many saw in this a great kindness and generosity.

At the foot of Mount *K'un* <sup>3</sup>, jade is as common as pebbles, and on the banks of Lake *P'êng-li*, they feed dogs and pigs with fish. Provided that a liberal man whose wealth is like the jade of Mount *K'un* and the fish of Lake *P'êng-li* <sup>4</sup> again divide his family property, this would not be sufficient.

If *Han Hsin* sent food to the village elder in *Nan-ch'ang* <sup>5</sup>, did he part with his wealth ? And does the fact that *Yen Yuan* contented himself with a bamboo dish of rice and a gourd dish of drink <sup>6</sup> constitute a renunciation of his property ?

*Kuan Chung*, in dividing money, took the greater part for himself. Being very poor and destitute, he did not possess disinterestedness, and his moral sense was weakened <sup>7</sup>.

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Is it possible to become a Worthy by avoiding the world and keeping aloof from all that is common, purifying one's self and one's actions ? That would

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<sup>1</sup> Virtues, as it were, are luxuries ; to practise them, people must at least be provided with the necessities of life. The state of morality, to a great extent, depends on purely economical conditions.

<sup>2</sup> I only found one *Yuan Ch'ang* whom *Wang Ch'ung* may have in view, a contemporary of his who, during the reign of *Ho Ti*, 89-105 B. C., was appointed general.

<sup>3</sup> The same as the *K'un-lun*. The Yellow River is believed to have its source in Mount *K'un*. See also p. 1.254.

<sup>4</sup> Old name of the *Poyang* Lake.

<sup>5</sup> Now capital of *Kiangsi* Province.

<sup>6</sup> Allusion to [Analects VI, 9 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. p. 1.133.

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be much the same as abandoning one's country and giving up one's dignity. Wealth and honour are generally coveted, and big posts and high rank are a source of pleasure. To abandon them and retire can only be the consequence of a life full of disappointments and of the failure of one's plans.

*Ch'ang Chü* and *Chieh Ni* <sup>1</sup> both left the world to live in retirement. *Po Yi* and the recluse of *Wu Ling* <sup>2</sup> rejected honour and put up with meanness. But this was not their real desire.

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May those be looked upon as Worthies who are unpassionate and desireless, who do not care to fill an office, merely wishing to preserve their bodies and cultivate their natures ?

These are men like *Lao Tse*. The *Taoists* belong to another class than the Worthies. The sorrow for the world and the wish to help people in their difficulties, were a cause of great agitation for p2.142 *Confucius*, and gave much trouble to *Mê Tse* <sup>3</sup>. Those who do not co-operate with *Confucius* and *Mê Tse* and, on the other side, in their dealings follow *Huang Ti* and *Lao Tse*, are not Worthies <sup>4</sup>.

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Are those to be considered Worthies who carry on righteousness a thousand Li and who as teachers, making friends, never disregard propriety ?

Then people belonging to rich families and living in opulence, who, besides, have strong and powerful muscles, would best meet these requirements. The weak are unable to carry on propriety, and the feeble, unfit to travel very far, and therefore would not come up to it. Families with heaps of gold do not lack friends even outside their country, and States of a thousand chariots <sup>5</sup> never stand in need of allies, for they have always

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<sup>1</sup> Two hermits of *Ch'u* met by *Confucius*. See [Analects XVIII, 6 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 2.053, Note 2 and p. 1.427.

<sup>3</sup> The philosophy of *Confucius*, and in a still higher degree that of *Mê Ti*, propounds altruism, the Taoism, indifference and self-cultivation.

<sup>4</sup> Worthies in the Confucian sense.

<sup>5</sup> War chariots by the number of which the military power of a State was gauged.

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enough to spend. If food were as common as water and fire, then even the covetous and avaricious would distribute it beyond the frontier of their country. When there are few resources, not a single one of the fundamental rules is fulfilled, whereas, when there is plenty, gifts are made thoughtlessly to thousands of families. It is a very hard task to induce poor people who do not call a peck or a bumper their own to make friends and to spend much.

Men who carry heavy burdens a thousand Li, are strong men whose feats are admired even in distant countries. Their hands and feet are hardened, their faces dark, they do not feel painful diseases, and their skin and sinews must be different from those of other people. If we compare with them such officers as have proved important witnesses to their princes, in so far as no bodily pain could force a confession from their mouths, their flesh and bones must likewise have been very strong. The strong can conceal something and uphold righteousness, the weak speak ill of their time and defame morality.

*Yü Jang* <sup>1</sup> so disfigured himself, that his own wife did not recognise him, *Kuan Kao* <sup>2</sup> was so doubled up, that not a single p2.143 piece of flesh on his body was left uninjured. Both must have had bodies different from those of other people, whence their proceedings were not like those of the majority either <sup>3</sup>.

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Are those Worthies who know the Classics, have many pupils, and attract the masses ?

Those well versed in the Classics are the Literati, and one becomes literate by study. The Literati have studied, and students are the same as the Literati. They transmit the doctrines of former teachers, and learn the oral precepts of their professors, to impart them to others. But they have no original ideas in their heads, and are unfit to argue the *pros* and *cons* of a question. In this

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<sup>1</sup> See above p. 2.137 and p. 1.358.

<sup>2</sup> A minister of *Chao* who intended to assassinate *Han Kao Tsu*. This plan was discovered, and *Kuan Kao* with all his accomplices and relations to the third degree, were executed. Cf. p. 1.117 and *Shi-chi* chap. 8, p. 32r. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 391 and 392](#)).

<sup>3</sup> Virtue and self-sacrifice are easier for persons with a strong constitution than for weak ones. They have more courage and feel bodily pain much less.

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respect they resemble postmen conveying letters, and door-keepers transmitting an order. As long as the covers are intact, so that no part of the letter is lost, and that orders are taken care of and not tampered with, they have done their duty. The scholars transmit the teachings of the ancients, without altering a single word, so that the old sayings of former teachers have been preserved down to the present day. Yet, although they have followers a hundred and more, and themselves have obtained the rank of professors and academicians, they are on a level with postmen and door-keepers <sup>1</sup>.

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May those be called Worthies who possess a vast knowledge of things ancient and modern, and remember all sorts of secret records and chronicles ?

They rank but after the scholars above mentioned. Whoever possesses great talents and many interests, will devote himself to study, and never flag, like heirs specially provided with everything who, in possession of all the writings left by their forefathers, are thus enabled to complete these works, perusing and reciting them, as archivists do their papers. They are like the Grand Annalist and *Liu Tse Chêng* who, being in charge of all the records, have become famous for their great learning and vast erudition.

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May those be deemed Worthies who, by their wonderful influence and cunning, are apt to command troops and lead the masses ?

p2.144 They would be men like *Han Hsin* <sup>2</sup>, who in contending States win laurels and become celebrated generals ; but in peaceful times they cannot exert themselves and plunge into disastrous adventures. When the high-flying bird is dead, they store the good bow away, and after the cunning hare has been caught, the good greyhound is cooked <sup>3</sup>. A potent and wily officer is like

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<sup>1</sup> A hard word, but true, even of many of our philologists.

<sup>2</sup> One of the Three Heroes to whom the accession of the *Han* dynasty is due. See p. 2.119, Note 6.

<sup>3</sup> An old adage which was used by *Fan Li*, minister of *Yüeh*, 5th cent B. C. Cf. p. 1.310, and also by *Han Hsin*, when he was seized and arraigned for high-treason.

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the bow used for the high-flying bird and the greyhound chasing the cunning hare. In times of peace, there is no use for him, wherefore the bow is stored away, and the dog, cooked. In peaceful times, the ruler does not disdain such an officer, or slight a hero, but he cannot give that assistance to the sovereign which the time requires.

Had the talent of *Han Hsin* been so versatile, that he could have acted like *Shu Sun Tung* <sup>1</sup>, he would never have planned an insurrection nor miserably perished by execution <sup>2</sup>. He was endowed with strength and heroism, but had not the wisdom of preserving peace ; he knew all the devices to marshal troops, but did not see the benefits of a settled state. Living in a time of peace, he plotted a rebellion, whereby he was deprived of his glory, lost his country, and did not obtain the name of a Worthy.

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Are those Worthies who are able debaters with sweet words and clever speech ?

Then they would resemble *Tse Kung*. As a debater *Tse Kung* surpassed *Yen Yuan*, nevertheless *Confucius* placed him below the latter, because his real talents did not rank so very high.

People very much appreciate an able speaker. Since *Wên Ti* gave his favour mostly to the guardian of the tiger cage, and thought little of the intendants of the imperial parks, *Chang Shih Chih* <sup>3</sup> p2.145 commended *Chou P'o* and *Chang Hsiang-Ju* <sup>4</sup>, and the emperor became aware of his error. Able debaters are like the guardian of the tiger cage and can hardly pass for Worthies.

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Then are Worthies those proficient in penmanship whose style and calligraphy are equally good ?

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.380, Note 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Han Hsin's* plan to seize the Empress *Lü Hou* and the heir-apparent having been divulged, he was decapitated, and his whole family exterminated in B. C. 196.

<sup>3</sup> A high officer of *Wên Ti*, B. C. 179-157.

<sup>4</sup> Both were raised to the rank of marquis.

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Penmanship is not much different from speech. What the mouth utters becomes a word, and what the pencil writes, a character. The talents of controversialists are not of a very high order, and so the knowledge of clever writers is not very varied.

Furthermore in what must these penmen be well versed ? They must be familiar with office work. Among the office work nothing is more laborious than law-suits. A case being doubtful, a judgment is asked for. There was no better judge in the world than *Chang T'ang* whose writings were very profound, yet at the court of the *Han* he was not accounted a Worthy. The Grand Annalist in his introduction classes him with the cruel, and the proceedings of the cruel are not those of Worthies <sup>1</sup>.

In the forests of *Lu* a woman cried because a tiger had eaten her husband, and it again devoured her son, without her leaving the place, for the government was good and not oppressive, and the officers were not tyrannical <sup>2</sup>. The cruel are of the same type as the oppressive and tyrannical, and it is impossible to take them for Worthies.

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Do those deserve this name who are skilled in panegyrics and irregular verse, writing a pompous and highly polished style ?

*Sse-Ma Hsiang-Ju* <sup>3</sup> and *Yang Tse Yün* <sup>4</sup> would be the right persons. Their style was refined, and their subjects grand, their p<sub>2.146</sub> expressions exquisit, and their meaning deep, but they could not find out right and wrong, or discriminate between truth and falsehood. Although their diction was as brilliant as brocade and embroidery, and as deep as the *Yellow River* and the *Han*, the people did not learn thereby the difference between right and wrong,

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 2.062, Note 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Confucius* met this woman near the *T'ai-shan*, while proceeding to *Ch'i*. He sent *Tse Lu* to question her, and was told that formerly her husband's father had been devoured by a tiger, then her husband, and last her son. *Confucius* then said to his disciples, 'Remember this my children. Oppressive government is more terrible than tigers'. *Liki* ([Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 190](#)) [[Couvreur](#)] and the Family Sayings of *Confucius*, where *Tse Kung* takes the place of *Tse Lu*.

<sup>3</sup> A distinguished scholar and poet of the 2nd cent. B. C.

<sup>4</sup> The philosopher *Yang Hsiung*. Elsewhere (Vol. I, pp. 81 and 88) *Wang Ch'ung* deals more generously with him.

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nor did they help to bring about reforms aiming at the furtherance of truth.

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May those be called Worthies who live in perfect purity, never submitting to any defilement of their person?

Such are people who flee from the world and avoid all that is vulgar, like *Ch'ang Chü* and *Chieh Ni* <sup>1</sup>. Although they did not shun the company of common people altogether, they lived as if they had left the world, purifying their persons and not serving their sovereign, adhering to their principles and not troubling their fellow-citizens.

A great Worthy lives in this world in such a way, that when the time requires action he acts, and when it demands inaction he remains passive. Considering what is proper and what not, he upon that determines pure and impure actions. *Tse Kung* was yielding, but his goodness was limited; *Tse Lu* liked to receive, and passed for a virtuous man. Yielding is unselfishness and receiving, covetousness. Covetousness is profitable and unselfishness, injurious. Analogically human dealings cannot always be pure and without blemish <sup>2</sup>.

*Po Yi* cannot be considered an ideal. *Confucius* disapproves of him <sup>3</sup>, and he cannot be held to be a Worthy, his doings being opposed to those of a sage.

[Some one inquired of *Confucius* saying,

— What kind of a man is *Yen Yuan* ?

— A benevolent man, replied *Confucius*, and I am not his equal.

— And how is *Tse Kung* ?

— He is an excellent debater, and I do not come up to his standard.

— And *Tse Lu* ?

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<sup>1</sup> See above p. 2.141, Note 6.

<sup>2</sup> Perfect purity is not required to be a Worthy. *Tse Lu* was one in spite of his covetousness.

<sup>3</sup> On the contrary. *Confucius* commends him and calls him a Worthy. See [Analects VII, 14 \[Couvreur\]](#) and [XVI, 12 \[Couvreur\]](#).



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- He is a hero, said *Confucius*, and I cannot compete with him.
- These three gentlemen are all superior to you, Master, the stranger went on to say, why then do they serve you as their master ?
- I am benevolent, said *Confucius*, and at the same time submit to p2.147 ill-treatment, I am a clever disputant and a bad speaker, I am bold and timid. It is impossible to interchange the accomplishments of the three gentlemen with my ways.

*Confucius* knew how to use his faculties.] <sup>1</sup> Those who possess high talents and lead a pure life, but ignore how to employ their gifts, are really like imbeciles who do not act at all.

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Consequently, all have their faults, then can the faultless be considered Worthies ?

They would be like those good people of the villages of whom *Mencius* says,

[— If you would blame them, you would find nothing to allege. If you would criticise them, you would have nothing to criticise. They agree with the current customs. They consent with an impure age. Their principles have a semblance of right-heartedness and truth. Their conduct has a semblance of disinterestedness and purity. All men are pleased with them, and they think themselves right, so that it is impossible to proceed with them to the principles of *Yao* and *Shun*. On this account *Confucius* said that those good people of the villages are the thieves of virtue. Because they seem what they really are not, *Confucius* hated them.] <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted almost literally from *Huai Nan Tse* XVIII, 17r. Another parallel passage is furnished by *Lieh Tse* IV, 4v [[Couvreur](#)], but its wording is somewhat different and fuller, so that it may have been the archetype for *Huai Nan Tse*. There the questioner is *Tse Hsia*, who inquires about four disciples, adding *Tse Chang*.

<sup>2</sup> *Mencius* Book VII, Part II, 37 [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)].

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Then, how are the real Worthies to be recognised, and which method is to be used to acquire this knowledge ? People at large noticing great talents and brilliant gifts, and that a person has achieved success, call him a Worthy. Accordingly it is very easy to find out, wherefore then should it be difficult to know a Worthy ?

The *Shuking* says,

To know a man one must be wise, but the emperor finds it difficult <sup>1</sup>.

If a man be called a Worthy in view of his great abilities and extraordinary accomplishments, whence does the difficulty arise which is referred to ? There is a reason for this difficulty. For the emperor *Shun* it was not <sup>p2.148</sup> easy to know men, the statement of ordinary people that they are able to know a Worthy is, therefore, erroneous.

Then are Worthies altogether unrecognisable ? No, they are easy to be recognised. Those who find it an arduous task, do not know how they may be recognised, and therefore put forward this difficulty. A Sage is not easy to know. Knowing his criteria, even persons of moderate abilities may recognise him.

It is like artisans making a vessel. For those who understand their business, it is not difficult, for those who do not understand it, it is not easy. Worthies are more easily recognised than vessels produced. But in the world no difference is made, and true Worthies are mixed up with common scholars. Common scholars, by their eloquence and complaisance, the distinction of the official positions they occupy, and by the marks of conspicuous favour which they may expect, obtain the names of Worthies. The latter live in small alleys, poor and wretched they terminate their lives, having suffered from defamation, although they could not be convicted of any crime.

But, under these circumstances, when may they be recognised ? Wishing to recognise them, one must look at their good hearts. The abilities of Worthies must not of necessity be of a very high order, but their hearts are

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the *Shiking* Part II, Book III, 2 ; but transposed (*Legge, Classics* Vol. III, Part I, p. 70).

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bright, and though their intellectual power be not very great, they do what is right.

How then can their hearts be known ? From their speech : those who have a good heart speak good words. They serve to investigate their dealings. Good words are accompanied by good actions. Words and proceedings being right, in governing the family, all relations are assigned their proper places, and in governing the State, high and low have their proper ranks. Those with bad hearts cannot distinguish between white and black, and make no difference between good and bad. Their administration causes disorder and confusion, and their institutions lack the right measure.

Consequently with a good heart a man is always good, and with a bad heart he can never be good. Having a good heart, he is apt to distinguish between right and wrong. The principles of right and wrong being established, and the excellence of the heart in evidence, a person may be poor and wretched, troubled and miserable, his undertakings may fail, and no success be achieved, still he is a Worthy. In government not the result is to be considered, the important thing being whether the means employed are proper, and of actions the effect is not decisive, but it must <sup>p2.149</sup> be hoped that what has been done is correct. This correctness and propriety being manifest, it is not necessary that there be a flow of words or a great many actions. Therefore it has been said :

Words must not be many, but their meaning must be ascertained ; deeds must not be far-reaching, but their source should be examined.

This signifies that those possessing a well-principled heart, although they be bad speakers and debaters, discuss these questions in their bosoms. Men like the discussion of the heart, and not that of the mouth. When the heart is discussing, the words may be awkward, but no injustice is done. When the mouth is discussing, there are beautiful phrases perhaps, but there is no result. *Confucius* referring to the wickedness of *Shao Chêng Mao* <sup>1</sup> said that his words were bad, but overflowing, and that he conformed to what was

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.362, Note 1.

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wicked, but was very smooth. If people are wicked inwardly, but outwardly are able to dissimulate it, the masses do not see it and take them for Worthies.

As those who are vicious inwardly, but specious, are looked upon as Worthies by the world, so those possessing intrinsic merit who cannot make a show of it, in the eyes of the public are unworthy. When right and wrong are confounded and there is no real government, only a Sage knows it, and when the words and deeds of a man are mostly like those of *Shao Chêng Mao*, only a Worthy perceives it. Much is said in this world in which right and wrong are interchanged, and many things are done in which truth and error are confounded. To discriminate between such erroneous statements and to adjust such a confusion, but Sages and Worthies are qualified.

The heart of a Sage is bright and never beclouded, that of a Worthy well-principled and never perplexed. If this enlightenment be used to inquire into wickedness, it all comes out, and if those principles be employed to weigh the doubts, all doubts become settled, quite another result than that arrived at by the world.

What is the reason that the masses, although the words spoken be true and correct, do not understand this ? It is because they have been too long befooled by common prejudices, that they have not the force to retrace their steps and to follow truth. For this reason true and correct statements are rejected by the people, and all customs departing from the ordinary are criticised by the public.

p2.150 *Kuan Tse* <sup>1</sup> said that a superior man speaking in a hall, fills the hall, and speaking in a room, fills the room. I wonder how his words can fill an apartment. True and correct words being uttered, and the people of the hall all possessing a true and correct knowledge, they afterwards will fill the hall. But how can they fill it, if their knowledge be not true and correct, so that they feel surprised, and find fault with what they hear ?

When songs are very beautiful, there are very few who can sing them in a

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 1.073, Note 3.

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chorus, and when a speech is to the point, those who approve of it are not many. Falling in with a song and hearing a speech is about the same thing. A song being beautiful, people are not all able to chime in, and a statement being true, not all believe it.

Duke *Wên* of *Lu* sacrificing contrary to the custom, three men went away, and Duke *Ting* having made an offering according to the rules, five men rebelled <sup>1</sup>. Those used to old customs are forward to believe that the rites are not proper.

The number of those who know the rites is very small, and similarly those knowing the truth are but few. How then can the words of a superior man fill halls or rooms ? Therefore, unless it were said of men that they fill the world, one could not see whether the words spoken are true <sup>2</sup>.

The traces of ink and pencil left on boards and tablets, are unmistakable signs. Therefore *Confucius*, not becoming an emperor, composed the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, in order to make known his ideas. Although the *Ch'un-ch'iu* was but a mere literary work, yet it showed that *Confucius* possessed the virtues qualifying him for an emperor. *Confucius* was a Sage, and if the productions of anybody be like those of *Confucius*, this is a sufficient proof of his being a Worthy, though he have not the genius of *Confucius*.

Worthies and Sages walk the same way, but bear different names. When Worthies can be known, it is also possible to discourse on Sages. However, if *Confucius*, upon investigation, had not discovered that the ways of the *Chou* were corrupt, he would <sup>p2.151</sup> not have written the *Ch'un-ch'iu*. The production of this work originated from the corruption of the *Chou*. Had the principles of the *Chou* dynasty not been so degenerate, *Confucius* would not have written the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, yet for that he would not have been without talents, only he would not have had an occasion to write his book.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.074, Note 6 and *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Ting* 8th year (*Legge, Classics Vol. V, Part II*, p. 769 seq.) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> If, according to the opinion of *Kuan Tse*, the words of a superior man attract so many people, that they fill rooms and halls, then the effect produced on the hearers would be a criterion of truth. In that case the utterances of all the people ought to fill the whole world to be trustworthy. That is impossible, consequently the principle of *Kuan Tse* cannot be right.

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Consequently, the fact of *Confucius* having written the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, would not be a sufficient proof of his sagehood, and we cannot be sure whether those whose productions are like those of *Confucius* are real Worthies.

I reply to this objection that, owing to the depravity of the principles of *Chou*, *Confucius* took occasion to write his work, with a view to commending and denouncing right and wrong. He used a right method and did not commit the fault of wrongly condemning or favouring, whence the virtue of *Confucius* becomes evident. In default of utterances, we examine into the writings, and if there be none, we consider the utterances. Had *Confucius* written nothing, there would still be the words which he left behind. Such words have been elicited by something just as literary works have their *raison d'être*. It suffices to examine the quality of the writings, without troubling about their origin.

There are many works current in which no distinction is made between right and wrong, and where truth and falsehood are not determined. *Huan Chün Shan* <sup>1</sup>, in his reflections, may be said to have hit the truth. His discussions are an investigation into the truth. In so far he is a Worthy of the *Han* time.

Before *Ch'ên P'ing* <sup>2</sup> became an officer he cut meat in a village, and he divided the pieces so equally, that his qualification for the post of a prime minister became apparent. Between the cutting of meat and the cutting of words there is no great difference. If *Huan Chün Shan* might have governed the *Han*, *Ch'ên P'ing*, if he had devoted himself to discussions, would have had about the same result as the other. *Confucius* did not become an emperor, but the work of a typical emperor was embodied in the *Ch'un-ch'iu*. And so the traces of *Huan Chün Shan's* fitness to become a typical chief minister, are to be found in his 'New Reflections'.

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 1.467, Note 7.

<sup>2</sup> One of the Three Heroes of the *Han* time, cf. p. 1.305, Note 2. On one occasion, being appointed by the village elders to distribute sacrificial meats at the local altar, he performed this duty with such impartiality, that the elders wished he might manage the affairs of the empire in a similar manner.

81. Book XXVIII, Chap. I

*Chêng-shuo*. Statements Corrected

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p1.447 The researches of the Literati into the Five Canons <sup>1</sup> for the most part miss the truth. The former scholars, unable to distinguish between essential and accidental points, indulged in fanciful inventions, and their successors, relying on the words of old teachers, stuck to the old traditions and walked in the old grooves. Soon well versed in quibbling, they would thoughtlessly uphold the doctrine of one master and follow the teachings of their professor. When the time had come, they quickly took office, and in their eagerness for promotion, they had no time left to devote their faculties to the handling of such problems. Consequently an unbroken chain of false theories has been handed down, and truth has hid her face.

The truth about the Five Canons has been equally obscured, but compared with the *Yiking*, the statements about the *Shuking* and the 'Spring and Autumn' are still tolerably correct.

This rough theme may serve as an introduction into the minor details of this essay.

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Some of the critics of the *Shuking* are of opinion that originally it consisted of one hundred and two chapters, and that afterwards, when *Ch'in* burned the books of poetry and history, twenty-nine chapters were preserved. The statement that *Ch'in* burned the books of poetry and history is correct, but the assertion that originally there were one hundred and two chapters is erroneous.

The *Shuking* consisted of one hundred chapters first, which were transmitted by *Confucius*. When, by the advice of *Li Sse*, *Ch'in* burned the

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<sup>1</sup> The Five King or ancient Classics : [Yiking](#), [Shiking](#), [Shuking](#), [Liki](#), and [Ch'un-ch'iu](#).

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Five Canons, *Fu Shêng*<sup>1</sup> of *Chi-nan*<sup>2</sup> took the hundred chapters and concealed them in a mountain<sup>3</sup>. Under the p1.448 reign of the Emperor *Hsiao Ching Ti*<sup>4</sup> the *Shuking* was saved. *Fu Shêng* had taken it out from the mountain. *Chang Ti* sent *Chao Ts'o* to him. He received from *Fu Shêng* twenty odd chapters of the *Shuking*. *Fu Shêng* died as a very old man. His book was greatly damaged. *Chao Ts'o* handed it over to *Ni K'uan*.

During the time of the Emperor *Hsiao Hsüan Ti*<sup>5</sup> a young woman in *Honei*<sup>6</sup>, while opening an old room, discovered a chapter of a preserved *Yiking*, *Liki*, and *Shuking*. The books were presented to the emperor, who communicated them to the principal men of learning. Subsequently the *Yiking*, the *Liki*, and the *Shuking* had each one chapter added. It was then that the number of the chapters of the *Shuking* was brought up to twenty-nine.

When *Hsiao Ching Ti* had ascended the throne<sup>7</sup>, Prince *Kung of Lu*<sup>8</sup>, while demolishing the school of *Confucius* for the purpose of building a palace there, found a copy of the *Shuking* in one hundred chapters in the wall<sup>9</sup>. The Emperor *Wu Ti* sent messengers to fetch the books for him to see, but there was nobody who could read them, whereupon he stored them away in the palace, so that no one outside could see them.

Under the Emperor *Hsiao Ch'êng Ti*<sup>10</sup> the study of the *Shuking* in ancient characters received a new impetus. *Chang Pa* of *Tung-hai*<sup>11</sup> concocted a *Shuking* of one hundred and two chapters, following the order of the hundred chapters, and presented it to the emperor. The emperor produced the

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<sup>1</sup> A scholar of great learning.

<sup>2</sup> The capital of *Shantung*.

<sup>3</sup> The *Shi-chi* chap. 121, p. 8 says 'in a wall'.

<sup>4</sup> 156-141 B. C.

<sup>5</sup> 73-49 B. C.

<sup>6</sup> A city in *Huai-ch'ing-fu* (*Honan*).

<sup>7</sup> In 156 B. C.

<sup>8</sup> A son of the Emperor *Ching Ti*, who in 154 B. C. was made Prince of *Lu*.

<sup>9</sup> In addition to these hundred chapters of the *Shuking*, a *Li(ki)* in 300 chapters, a *Ch'un-ch'iu* in 300 chapters and a *Lun-yü* in 21 chapters were brought to light. Cf. *Lun-hêng* XX, 4v. (*Yi-wên*).

<sup>10</sup> 32-7 B. C.

<sup>11</sup> A place in *Huai-an-fu* (*Kiangsu*).



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concealed hundred chapters for comparison, but it was found out that they did not agree at all. Upon this the emperor handed *Chang Pa* over to the court. The judges declared that his crime deserved death, but the emperor, who had a very high opinion of his talents, did not put him to death, nor did he destroy his writings, for which he had a certain weakness. Thus the one hundred and two chapters were handed down to posterity, and people who saw them imagined that the *Shuking* had one hundred and two chapters first.

p1.449 Some hold that, when *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* burned the 'poetry (and the) books', he burned the Book of Poetry, but not the Canons. Thus the *Shiking* would alone have been committed to the flames. However, the term 'poetry and the books' is a general designation of the Five Canons.

There is a common saying to the effect that a lad who does not read the Canons is bent on plays and amusements. 'Tse Lu got Tse Kao <sup>1</sup> appointed governor of *Pi* <sup>2</sup>. The Master said,

— You are injuring a man's son.

Tse Lu replied,

— There are the people, and there are the spirits of the land and grain. Why must one read *books*, before he can be considered to have learned <sup>3</sup> ?

A general term for the Five Canons is 'the books'. Those who have recorded the burning of the books by *Ch'in* do not know the reason for this measure, therefore they do not understand its meaning <sup>4</sup>.

In the 24th year of *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti's* reign <sup>5</sup>, a banquet was given in the *Hsien-yang* palace. Seventy great scholars wished the emperor long life, and the *Pu-yeh* <sup>6</sup> *Chou Ch'ing Ch'en* made a eulogistic speech. When the emperor had gathered all the people around him, *Shun Yü Yüeh* remonstrated

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<sup>1</sup> Tse Lu and Tse Kao were both disciples of Confucius.

<sup>2</sup> A place in Shantung.

<sup>3</sup> *Analects XI, 24* [Couvreur].

<sup>4</sup> On the burning of the books cf. p. 1.490.

<sup>5</sup> This is a misprint. It was the 34th year (213 B. C.). See the *Shi-chi* chap. 6, p. 21v. [*Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 169*] and p. 1.490.

<sup>6</sup> An official title under the *Ch'in* and *Han* dynasties.

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with him. He was of opinion that, because the emperor did not grant fiefs to the sons of the nobility, a catastrophe like that of *T'ien Chang* <sup>1</sup> and the six ministers <sup>2</sup> was unavoidable. Besides he stigmatised *Chou Ch'ing Ch'ên's* panegyric as a flattery of the emperor.

*Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* handed over his memorial to the premier. The premier, *Li Sse*, regarded the remarks of *Shun Yü Yüeh* as quite unfit to be taken into consideration. For this reason he denounced the speeches of the literati as inveigling the black haired people. Then the officials were ordered to completely destroy the Five <sup>p1.450</sup> Canons by fire. Those who dared to conceal books or writings of the hundred authors <sup>3</sup> should be severely dealt with. Only members of the academy were allowed to keep books. Thus the Five Canons were all burned, and not merely the books of the various schools of thought. In this the writers on this epoch believe. Seeing that poetry and 'books' are mentioned we can only say that the Canons are here termed 'books'.

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Some writers on the *Shuking* are aware of the fact that it was burned by *Ch'in*, but urge that twenty-nine chapters were saved and left unscathed. If this was the case, then were the twenty-nine chapters of the *Shuking* left by the fire, and did the seventy-one chapters become coal and ashes, whereas the twenty-nine remained ?

When *Fu Shêng* was old, *Ch'ao T'so* studied under him and just, when he had received twenty odd chapters, *Fu Shêng* died. Therefore these twenty-nine chapters alone came forth, and the seventy-one had been saved. Seventy-one chapters had been saved, and they conversely state that twenty-nine chapters were saved.

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<sup>1</sup> A noble of the State of *Ch'i*, who in 481 B. C. put to death the reigning sovereign Duke *Chien*, and usurped the government of the State with the title of chief minister.

<sup>2</sup> The chiefs of the six powerful families in *Chin* who struggled for supremacy. Three of these families were destroyed during these struggles, the remaining three : *Chao*, *Han* and *Wei* in 403 B. C. divided the *Chin* State among them.

<sup>3</sup> Writers on philosophy and science.

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Some say that the twenty-nine chapters of the *Shuking* are an imitation of the Dipper and seven zodiacal constellations <sup>1</sup>. Four times seven gives twenty-eight chapters, and the one is the Dipper, so that there would be the number of twenty-nine. However, when the *Shuking* was destroyed in *Ch'in*, only twenty-nine chapters remained, how could there be any imitation? During the reign of the emperor *Hsüan Ti* one chapter was found of the lost *Shuking*, the *Yiking*, and the *Liki* each. The number of the chapters of the *Yiking* and the *Liki* became complete then. How could any imitation find its way? Out of the series of the hundred chapters of the *Shuking*, seventy-one were missing, and no more than twenty-nine still extant. How should the imitation have taken place then?

Others hold that *Confucius* selected twenty-nine chapters, and that these alone were up to the standard. Only common scholars can speak so, and it does not show much wisdom in the writers p1.451 on these subjects. The twenty-nine chapters were a fragment and incomplete, and just on account of this deficiency the writers conceived the idea of the imitation. They misunderstand the sage, and their opinion disagrees with the facts now and formerly.

The chapters of a Classic correspond to the periods and clauses. Periods and clauses still consist of words. Words giving a sense form a clause, and a certain number of clauses is combined into a period. A complex of periods gives a chapter. A chapter therefore is a combination of periods and clauses. If one maintains that the chapters imitate something, then he must admit that periods and clauses have their prototype likewise.

In ancient times the *Shiking* also consisted of several thousand chapters. *Confucius* expunged a great many and made a revised edition, retaining but three hundred chapters. They are like the twenty-nine chapters of the *Shuking*. Provided that the letter had their model, the three hundred and five chapters must have had theirs likewise.

Some one might suggest that the *Ch'un Ch'iu* is a reproduction of the

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<sup>1</sup> There are 28 stellar mansions in all, 7 for each quadrant.

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twelve months. The twelve dukes of the *Ch'un Ch'iu* <sup>1</sup> are like the hundred chapters of the *Shuking*. Since these chapters are not modelled after anything, the twelve dukes cannot be such an imitation either.

Discussing the 'Spring and Autumn', people have put forward the following theory. During the two hundred and forty-two years of the 'Spring and Autumn' period, the people had excellent principles, and those of the emperor were perfect. The good were liked, and the wicked detested. Revolutionists were led back to the right path. Nothing could be like the 'Spring and Autumn' period in this respect. Thus the principles of the people and of the emperor just happened to be perfect.

Three armies forming six divisions, of 12,000 men, suffice to crush an enemy, to defeat brigands, and to put a stop to their attacks on the empire, but it is not necessary that they should be an imitation of any standard.

When *Confucius* composed the 'Spring and Autumn', the chronicle of the twelve dukes of *Lu*, it was like the three armies forming six divisions. The number of soldiers, 12,000 in all, would correspond to the two-hundred and forty-two years. Six divisions consisting of 12,000 soldiers would suffice to form an army, and twelve dukes comprising two hundred and forty-two years would <sup>p1.452</sup> be sufficient to establish a moral system. But those who concern themselves with these questions, are very partial to extravagant theories and imposing doctrines. In their opinion, the reckless meet with misfortune, therefore the number of the chapters of the classical writings has always a certain sense.

Let us get to the bottom of the thing, and see what these writings are meant to be, and I am sure that our ideas will represent the view of the venerable men who wrote those books and poetries. The sages are the authors of the Canons, the worthies of the Classics. Having exhausted a theme and laid all they could about it, they made a chapter of it. The subjects were cognate, and the various paragraphs homogeneous. In case the subjects were heterogeneous, and the diction not uniform, they formed a new chapter. The sense being different, the words differed too. Thus, when a new theme

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<sup>1</sup> The twelve dukes of *Lu*, whose history is given in the *Ch'un-ch'iu*.

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was treated, another chapter had to be commenced. All depended on the subject, how could the number of stars be imitated ?

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Concerning the two hundred and forty-two years of the 'Spring and Autumn' there are some who say that the longest life lasts ninety years, a medium long one eighty, and the shortest long life seventy years. *Confucius* took three generations of a medium long life for his work. Three times eight gives twenty-four, ergo there are two hundred and forty years. Others urge that this is the mean number of the days of pregnancy <sup>1</sup>. Others again contend that during two hundred and forty-two years the ways of the people were excellent, and those of the emperors perfect.

Now, if we accept the three generation theory, the statement about the excellent conduct must be wrong, and, if we declare the latter view to be correct, then we must dismiss the theory about the three generations as erroneous, for both are contradictory. How could we be sure to be in accordance with the views of the sage, if we decide in favour of either of these opinions ?

The addition of years, months, and days to a record will always increase its accuracy. The Five Timekeepers of the *Hung-fan* <sup>2</sup>, p1.453 the years, months, days, and stars serve to describe events, but have no reference to any outwards signs. It is on record that the years during which the twelve dukes enjoyed the possession of their State were two hundred and forty-two altogether. These, at all events, have given rise to the three generation theory. As a matter of fact, *Confucius* in writing the history of the twelve dukes, either was of opinion that the events which happened under their reigns were sufficient to illustrate the principles of a sovereign, or he took three generations, and these three generations just happened to embrace the

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<sup>1</sup> This translation is mere guess. [] might mean 'rule for the new-born'. According to Chinese ideas pregnancy lasts 7-9 months or 210-270 days, whereas we reckon 182-300 days. The mean number would be 240 or 241 days. The dictionaries do not explain the expression.

<sup>2</sup> These Five Timekeepers of the *Hung-fan* chapter are : the year, the month, the day, the stars, and the dates of the calendar. *Shuking, Hung-fan*, Pt. V, Bk. IV, 8 (*Legge* Vol. III, Pt. II, p. 327).

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time of the twelve dukes. If he took the twelve dukes, then the two hundred and forty-two years were not regarded as three generations, and if he took three generations, so that eight were multiplied by three, this would give two hundred and forty, why then did he add two ?

I shall receive the answer that he wished to include the first year of Duke *Yin*, and did not add two years. Had these two years not been included, the first year of Duke *Yin* would have been omitted in the Classic. Provided that in the composition of the *Ch'un-ch'iu* the time for three generations was chosen on purpose, wherefore was it necessary to begin the narration from the events which happened during the first year of Duke *Yin's* reign ? If, conversely, these events were required for the beginning, then only completeness was aimed at, and it would be no use speaking of three generations. They say that Duke *Yin* reigned fifty years <sup>1</sup>. Now, should a complete record be given from the first year, or should it be cut in two to have the number of three times eight ? If a complete record from the first year was given, the number of three times eight did cut it in two, and, if it was cut in two with the object of obtaining the full number of years for three generations, then the first years of Duke *Yin* were superfluous.

Furthermore, a year differs in length from months and days, but the events, which they embrace, have all the same purport. Since the two hundred and forty-two years are believed to represent three generations, the days and months of these two hundred and forty-two years ought to have a fixed number likewise. The years represent three generations, but how many months and days are there, and what do they represent ? The years of the 'Spring and Autumn' are like the paragraphs of the *Shuking*. A paragraph p1.454 serves to bring out a meaning, and a year to chronicle events. He who holds that the years of the *Ch'un-ch'iu* have a prototype, must admit that the paragraphs of the *Shuking* have a prototype also.

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Writers on the *Yiking* all state that *Fu Hsi* made the Eight Diagrams, and

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<sup>1</sup> This would seem a misprint. Duke *Yin* of *Lu* reigned from 721-711 B. C. *i. e.* 10 years, not 50.

## Lun-hêng

that *Wên Wang* increased them to sixty-four. Now, because a wise emperor rose, the *Yellow River* produced the Plan and the *Lo* the Scroll. When *Fu Hsi* was emperor, the Plan of the River put forward the diagrams of the *Yiking* from the water of the River, and during *Yü's* time the Scroll of the *Lo* was obtained. It emerged from the *Lo*, putting forward the nine paragraphs of the 'Flood Regulation' <sup>1</sup>. Thus by means of the diagrams *Fu Hsi* governed the empire, and *Yü* put the 'Flood Regulation' into practice to regulate the great flood.

Of old, when *Lieh Shan* <sup>2</sup> was on the throne, he obtained the Plan of the *River*. The *Hsia* dynasty took it over and called it *Lien-shan*. The Plan of the *River* obtained by the Emperor *Lieh Shan* also went over to the *Yin* dynasty, which styled it *Kuei-tsang*. *Fu Hsi* came into possession of the plan during his reign, and the people of *Chou* denoted it as *Chou-Yi* <sup>3</sup>. The diagrams of this Classic were sixty-four in all. *Wên Wang* and *Chou Kung* made a summary of them in eighteen paragraphs and explained the six lines <sup>4</sup>.

The current tradition on the *Yiking* is that *Fu Hsi* made the eight diagrams. Only he who keeps on the surface, can say that *Fu Hsi* really composed the eight diagrams. *Fu Hsi* obtained the eight diagrams, but did not make them, and *Wên Wang* received the sixty-four quite complete, and did not increase them. These words : to make and to increase, have their origin in the common tradition. People lightly believe in this statement, and consider it p1.455 as true, whereas the truth is nearly forgotten. Not knowing that the *Yiking* is the Plan of the *River* <sup>5</sup>, they are not aware either to which dynasty

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<sup>1</sup> The chapter of the *Shuking* entitled 'Hung-fan'.

<sup>2</sup> The Emperor *Shên Nung*.

<sup>3</sup> The *Yiking* of the *Chou* Dynasty, the only one which has come down to us.

<sup>4</sup> We learn from the *Ti-wang-shih-chi* (3d cent. A. D.) that *Fu Hsi* made the eight diagrams, and that *Shên Nung* increased them to sixty-four. *Huang Ti*, *Yao*, and *Shun* took them over, expanded them, and distinguished two *Yikings*. The *Hsia* dynasty adopted that of *Shên Nung*, and called it *Lien-shan*, the *Yin* dynasty took the version of *Huang Ti*, and called it *Kuei-tsang*. *Wên Wang* expanded the sixty-four diagrams, composed the six broken and unbroken lines of which they were formed, and called it *Chou Yi*.

Others think that *Lien-shan* is another name of *Fu Hsi*, and *Kuei-tsang* a designation of *Huang Ti*.

<sup>5</sup> The tradition about the Plan of the River and the Scroll of the Lo is very old. We find traces of it in the *Yiking*, the *Liki*, the *Shuking*, and the *Analects*. Cf. [Legge's translation of the Yiking, p. 14.](#)

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the different *Yikings*, still extant, belong. Sometimes it is the *Lien-shan* or the *Kuei-tsang Yiking*, and sometimes the *Yiking* of the *Chou* dynasty.

The amplifications and abridgements which the Books of Rites underwent under the *Hsia*, *Yin*, and *Chou* dynasties vary very much. If, because the *Chou* dynasty is the last of the three, our present *Yiking* is regarded as that of the *Chou* dynasty, then the *Liki* ought to be from the *Chou* time also. But, since the 'Six Institutions' do not tally with the present *Liki*, the latter cannot be that of the *Chou* dynasty. Thus it becomes doubtful too, whether our *Yiking* dates from the *Chou* epoch.

Since *Tso Ch'iu Ming* <sup>1</sup>, who in his commentary quotes the authors of the *Chou* dynasty, uses diagrams which agree with our modern *Yiking*, it is most likely the *Yiking* of the *Chou* period. The writers on the *Liki* all know that the *Liki* is the *Liki*, but to which dynasty does it belong ?

*Confucius* says <sup>2</sup>,

The *Yin* dynasty continued the Rites of the *Hsia* ; wherein it amplified or abridged them, may be known. The *Chou* dynasty has continued the Rites of the *Yin* ; wherein it amplified or abridged them, may be known.

Accordingly the *Hsia* as well as the *Yin* and *Chou* all had their own *Liki*. Now is our own the *Chou Liki* or that of the *Hsia* or *Yin* dynasties ?

If they hold that it is the *Chou Liki*, one must object that the Rites of the *Chou* had the Six Institutions <sup>3</sup>, whereas our *Liking* does not contain them. Perhaps at that time the *Yin Liki* was not yet extinct, and the *Liki* with the Six Institutions was not handed down. Consequently ours has been regarded as the *Chou Li*. The Official System of the *Chou* <sup>4</sup> does not agree with the present *Liki*, it must be the *Chou Liki* with the Six Institutions therefore, but it is not being handed down, just as the *Shuking*, the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, and the *Tso-*

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<sup>1</sup> The author of the *Tso-chuan*.

<sup>2</sup> [Analects II, 23](#), 2 [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>3</sup> The Six Institutions or departments of the *Chou* : administration, instruction, rites, police, jurisdiction, and public welfare. Cf. [Chou-li, Bk. II, T'ien-kuan. \(Biot's translation, Vol. I, p.20.\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> Now known as the *Chou-li*.



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*chuan* in ancient characters are not much in vogue.

p1.456 Those who treat of the *Analects* merely know how to discourse on the text, and to explain the meaning, but they do not know the original number of the books of the *Analects*. During the *Chou* time eight inches were reckoned to one foot <sup>1</sup>. They do not know for what reason the size of the *Analects* was only one foot. The *Analects* are notes on the sayings and doings of *Confucius*, made by his disciples. It happened very often that he corrected them. Many tens of hundreds of books thus originated. For writing them down the size of one foot of eight inches was chosen, as it was more economical, and the books could be kept in the bosom more conveniently. Because the sayings left by the sage were not to be found in the Classics, the pupils were afraid lest they should forget them, when recording from memory, therefore they only used books of one foot like eight inches, and not of two feet four inches.

At the accession of the *Han* dynasty the *Analects* had been lost. When under *Wu Ti*'s reign the wall of the house of *Confucius* was pierced <sup>2</sup>, twenty-one books in ancient characters were brought to light. Between the two rivers of *Ch'i* and *Lu* <sup>3</sup> nine books were discovered, which makes thirty together. The daughter of the Emperor *Chao Ti* <sup>4</sup> read twenty-one books. When the Emperor *Hsüan Ti* <sup>5</sup> sent them down to the scholars of the court of sacrificial worship, they still declared that the work was hard to understand, and called it a record. Afterwards it was transcribed in *Li* characters <sup>6</sup> to give it a wider publicity. First the grandson of *Confucius*, *K'ung An Kuo*, explained it to *Fu Ching*, a native of *Lu*. When the latter became governor of *Ching-chou* <sup>7</sup>, he

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<sup>1</sup> Under the *Hsia* dynasty the foot had ten inches, under the *Yin* nine, under the *Chou* eight. Now it has ten inches again. The foot of the *Chou* time measured but about 20 cm., whereas the modern foot is equal to 35 cm.

<sup>2</sup> By Prince *Kung*. *Vid.* above p. 1.448.

<sup>3</sup> It is not plain which rivers are meant. They must have been at the frontier of the two conterminous States. There was the *Chi* River, which in *Ch'i* was called the *Chi* of *Ch'i*, and in *Lu* the *Chi* of *Lu*.

<sup>4</sup> 86-74 B. C.

<sup>5</sup> 73-49 B. C.

<sup>6</sup> The massive *Li* characters were invented during the *Han* time and form the link between the ancient seal characters and the modern form of script.

<sup>7</sup> A place in *Hupei* province.

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first called it *Analects* <sup>1</sup>. Now we speak of the twenty books of the *Analects* <sup>2</sup>.

p1.457 The nine books found between the rivers of *Ch'i* and *Lu* have again been lost. Originally there were thirty, but by the transmission of separate books, some have disappeared. Those twenty-one books may be too many or too few, and the interpretation of the text may be correct or erroneous, the critics of the *Lun-yü* do not care, they only know how to ask knotty questions concerning the explanation of ambiguous passages, or find difficulties in all sorts of minutiae. They do not ask about the origin of the work, which has been preserved, or the number of its books or its chapters. Only those well versed in antique lore, who also understand the present time should become teachers, why do we now call teachers men who know nothing about antiquity ?

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*Mencius* said,

The traces of the old emperors were obliterated, and the Odes forgotten, when the *Ch'un-ch'iu* was composed. The *Ch'êng* of *Chin* and the *T'ao-wu* of *Ch'u* correspond to the *Ch'un-ch'iu* of *Lu* <sup>3</sup>.

As *Mencius* states, *Ch'un-ch'iu* was the name of the history of *Lu* like the *Ch'êng* and the *T'ao-wu* <sup>4</sup>. *Confucius* preserved the old name and styled it the *Ch'un-ch'iu* Classic. This is by no means a queer expression, nor has it any other sense or any deep and excellent meaning. The ordinary scholars of the present day contend with reference to the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, that *Ch'un* (Spring) is the beginning and *ch'iu* (Autumn) the end of the year. The *Ch'un-ch'iu* Classic can feed the young and afford nourishment to the old, whence the designation *Ch'un-ch'iu* (Spring and Autumn). But wherein does the *Ch'un-ch'iu* differ from the *Shuking* ? The *Shuking* is regarded as the book of the emperors of remotest antiquity, or people think that it contains the deeds of

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<sup>1</sup> *Analects* = *Lun-yü*.

<sup>2</sup> Our text of the *Lun-yü* consists of twenty books. In the *Han* time there were two editions of the Classic, one of *Lu* in twenty books and one of *Ch'i* in twenty-two.

<sup>3</sup> *Mencius* Bk. IV, Pt. II, chap. 21 [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>4</sup> The meaning of the names of these old chronicles, *Ch'êng* and *T'ao-wu*, is as obscure as that of the *Ch'un-ch'iu*.

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the ancients, which were written down by their successors. At all events, the facts and the mode of transmission are both in accordance with truth, and so is the name. People were not at a loss what to say, and then concocted a meaning, so that the expression seemed strange. Those dealing with the *Shuking* speak the truth about it, whereas those concerned with the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, have missed the meaning of the Sage.

We read in the commentary of the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, the *Tso-chuan*, that during the seventeenth year of Duke *Huan's* reign <sup>1</sup>, in winter, p1.458 in the tenth month, the first day of the moon, the sun was eclipsed <sup>2</sup>. The day is not mentioned, because the responsible officer had lost it.

The idea that the official had lost the day is correct <sup>3</sup>, I dare say. The historiographer had to record the events, as in our times the district magistrates keep their books. Years and months are long and difficult to be lost, days are short and may easily be forgotten. Good and bad actions are recorded for the sake of truth, and no importance is attached to days and months.

In the commentaries of *Kung Yang* and *Ku Liang* <sup>4</sup> days and months are not mentioned at all. That is on purpose. To omit usual things and use queer expressions, and to give an ambiguous meaning to straightforward words would not be to *Confucius'* mind. In reality *Ch'un-ch'iu* (Spring and Autumn) refers to the Summer also. That it is not mentioned is like the omission of days and months.

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*T'ang*, *Yü*, *Hsia*, *Yin*, and *Chou* are territorial names. *Yao* ascended the throne as marquis of *T'ang* <sup>5</sup>, *Shun* rose to power from the *Yü* territory <sup>6</sup>. *Yü* came from *Hsia* <sup>7</sup> and *T'ang* <sup>1</sup> from *Yin* <sup>2</sup>, when they began their brilliant

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<sup>1</sup> 710-693 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> *Ch'un-ch'iu* II, 17, 8.

<sup>3</sup> I. e. the day of the sexagenary cycle, for the day of the month is mentioned.

<sup>4</sup> Two other commentaries to the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, less important than the *Tso-chuan*.

<sup>5</sup> *T'ang* was situated in *Pao-ting-fu* (*Chili*).

<sup>6</sup> In *Shansi*.

<sup>7</sup> In *K'ai-fêng-fu* (*Honan*).

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careers. *Wu Wang* relied on *Chou* <sup>3</sup> to fight his battles. They all regarded the country, from which they had taken their origin, as their basis. Out of regard for their native land, which they never forgot, they used its name as their style, just as people have their surnames. The critics on the *Shuking*, however, assert that the dynastic names of the ruling emperors, such as *T'ang*, *Yü*, *Hsia*, *Yin*, and *Chou*, are expressive of their virtue and glory, and descriptive of their grandeur.

*T'ang* means majesty, they say, *Yü* joy, *Hsia* greatness, *Yin* to flourish, and *Chou* to reach. *Yao's* majesty was such, that the people had no adequate name for it, *Shun* was the joy and the bliss of the world, *Yü* got the heritage of the two emperors, and once more <sup>p1.459</sup> established the majesty of the moral laws, so that the people had no adequate name for him. Under *T'ang* of the *Yin* morality flourished, and the glory and virtue of *Wu Wang* of *Chou* reached everywhere. The scholars have found very nice meanings, indeed, and bestowed great praise on these five reigning houses, but they are in opposition to the real truth, and have misconceived the primary idea. The houses of *T'ang*, *Yü*, *Hsia*, *Yin* and *Chou* bear their names just as the *Ch'in* and *Han* do theirs. The *Ch'in* rose from *Ch'in* <sup>4</sup>, and the *Han* started from *Han-chung* <sup>5</sup>. Therefore they still kept the names of *Ch'in* and *Han*. Similarly *Wang Mang* seized the supreme power as a marquis of *Hsin-tu* <sup>6</sup>, and for this reason was called doomed *Hsin*. Had the *Ch'in* and the *Han* flourished anterior to the classical writings, the critics would surely have explained the words *Ch'in* and *Han* as meaning morality and virtue.

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When *Yao* was old and wished to yield the throne, the Chief of the Four Mountains <sup>7</sup> recommended *Shun*. *Yao* said,

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<sup>1</sup> *Ch'êng T'ang*, the founder of the Yin (*Shang*) dynasty.

<sup>2</sup> A principality in *Honan*.

<sup>3</sup> The kingdom of *Chou* in *Shensi*.

<sup>4</sup> The kingdom of *Ch'in* in *Shensi*.

<sup>5</sup> In *Shensi*.

<sup>6</sup> Principality in *Nan-yang-fu (Honan)*.

<sup>7</sup> The president of all the nobles of the empire.

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— I will try him <sup>1</sup>.

The commentators of the *Shuking* maintain that this signifies, 'I will use him, namely : I will use him and make him emperor'. To make him emperor, is to be understood.

The text goes on,

I will wive him, and then observe his behaviour with my two daughters.

To observe means nothing more than that *Shun* is to show himself to the world, they say, it does not imply that *Yao* himself is going to observe him. Two such extraordinary men like *Yao* and *Shun*, who are regarded as sages, must have known one another at first sight. There was no need for any trial or observation. The flashes of their genius meeting, they felt an unlimited confidence in each other.

We read further on :

The four quarters of the empire were all submissive. Being sent to the great plains at the foot of the mountains, amid violent wind, thunder and rain, he did not go astray <sup>2</sup>.

*Ta li* (the great plains at the foot of the mountains) is the office of the three prime ministers, they say. Filling the post of <sup>p1.460</sup> one minister, *Shun* had to act as registrar-general, the duties of the two other ministers were manifold, but in all he was equally successful like violent wind and powerful rain-showers.

Now, inspite of their great ability sages do not always know each other, although they be sages in fact. *Shun* found it difficult to know the cunning, wherefore he employed *Kao Yao* <sup>3</sup>, who showed a great knowledge of men. Cunning people are hard to know, and sages are difficult to find out. *Yao's* genius was like *Shun's* knowledge ; *Shun* knew cunning people, and *Yao* knew sages. When *Yao* had heard of *Shun's* virtue, and that he was recommended

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<sup>1</sup> *Shuking Yao-tien*, Pt. I, Bk. III, 12 (*Legge* Vol. III, Pt. I, p. 26).

<sup>2</sup> *Shuking Shun-tien*, Pt. II, Bk. I, 2 (*Legge* Vol. III, Pt. I, p. 31).

<sup>3</sup> Minister of Crime under *Shun*.

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by the Chief of the Four Mountains, he knew that he was an extraordinary man, but he was not yet sure of his ability. Therefore he said, 'I will try him', and he tried him in an office and gave him his two daughters in marriage to see, how he would behave as husband. He filled his posts irreproachably, nor did he deviate from the right path of matrimony. Then *Yao* again bade all the people go into the country and observe his sagehood. *Shun* braved storm and rain-showers, and did not go astray. Then *Yao* knew that he was a sage and entrusted him with the empire. If the text speaks of observing and trying, it means to observe and to try his ability.

The commentators regard this expression as figurative and by adding to and embellishing the text they distort everything, and do not preserve the true sense. Their misinterpretations quite spoil the meaning. Thus the wrong explanations are transmitted to posterity uninterruptedly, and fanciful comments obscure the truth ever since.

Intelligent persons wishing to understand the Canons do not go back to the original meanings, and even if they do, they still compare the old commentaries, and adopt the old explanations, which have been several times repeated, and look upon them as proofs. What has been handed down about the Canons cannot be relied upon, for the erroneous statements about the Five Canons are very numerous. The facts and the texts of the *Shuking* and the *Ch'un-ch'iu* are comparably plain and intelligible, therefore my remarks apply especially to them.

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## 82. Book XXVIII, Chap. II

### *Shu-chieh*. On Literary Work

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p2.229 Some people contend that for judging the character of a scholar, his literary productions are of no account. I answer that, when a man is an elegant writer, his character is perfect <sup>1</sup>. With plants it is different : there are some that have flowers, but no fruit, and some that bear fruit, but have no flowers <sup>2</sup>. The *Yiking* says that the feelings of a Sage appear from his utterances <sup>3</sup>. He opens his mouth to speak and joins tablets to write. His sayings and writings having been made public, his real nature shines forth in all its splendour.

Letters and virtue are the garments of mankind. Letters are unsubstantial signs, and virtue is practical action. Both are like over-clothes, donned by men. The greater a man's virtue, the more refined is his literary work, and the more illustrious his excellence, the more enlightened he is himself. A great man's virtue is vast, and his writings are brilliant, a small man's virtue may be remarkable, but his writings are unequal. A celebrated officer writes a great deal, and, side by side with high virtue, we find abundance of literary compositions.

A beautifully coloured and bright mat being a prerogative of a high officer, *Tsêng Tse*, who was laid up with a very serious illness, ordered *Yuan* to rise and change it <sup>4</sup>. We learn from this incident that garments serve to denote the rank of worthies. Worthies distinguish themselves by their literary ability. If dullards and clever men cannot be otherwise distinguished, one must fall back upon their writings <sup>5</sup> (ornaments) to draw a distinction. This is not only

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<sup>1</sup> A statement contradicted by facts.

<sup>2</sup> This reminds us of [Analects IX, 21](#) [[Couvreur](#)] [...]. The flowers, of course, are compared with literary productions, and the fruit with the author's character.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 274 Note 2.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Liki* ([Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 128](#)) [[Couvreur](#)] and p. 2.023.

<sup>5</sup> The expression [ ] means writings as well as ornaments.

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true of men, the rule obtains for all animals likewise :

The dragon has ornaments on its scales, and therefore ranks above the snakes. The phoenix's plumage has five colours, p2.230 wherefore it is the king among the birds. The tiger is fierce, and its skin is coloured like that of the mole and the bull-frog <sup>1</sup>. The tortoise is wise, and carries characters on its back <sup>2</sup>. The bodies of these four animals are not quite plain, and in wisdom and knowledge they surpass all other animals.

Mountains without woods are barren mountains, land without vegetation is sterile, and men without letters are plain and simple people. Barren mountains are deprived of stags, sterile land lacks the Five Grains, and men without letters and virtue <sup>3</sup> do not prove themselves Worthies or Sages. High Heaven has plenty of celestial signs, and august Earth has many marks and lines. The two forces amalgamating, Worthies and Sages are endowed with them. Therefore they imitate their archetypes by a display of literature <sup>4</sup>. Lucky signs correspond with their lives, and they are not without letters :

When *T'ang Shu Yü of Chin*, *Ch'êng Chi Yo of Lu* and the consort of Duke *Hui* with the designation of *Chung Tse* were born, a miracle happened, for they all had characters on their hands <sup>5</sup>. When *Chang Liang* was on his way to high honour, he met with a spirit in his rambles. An old man presented him with a book <sup>6</sup>, and suddenly he was enfeoffed as a marquis of *Liu*.

The spirit of the *Yellow River* put forth the *Plan* on purpose, and the genius of the *Lo* deliberately emitted the *Scroll*. All wonderful things described on bamboo and silks do not issue from small ponds. Animals are covered with ornaments, and men base their supremacy on letters. *Chi Tse Ch'êng* desired to stop letters, but was censured by *Tse Kung* <sup>7</sup>. Those maintaining that letters do not deserve to be held in respect, are on a par with *Chi Tse Ch'êng*.

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<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, its colour is black and yellowish.

<sup>2</sup> Signs, looking like Chinese characters, which are made use of for divination.

<sup>3</sup> Letters and virtue, in *Wang Ch'ung's* opinion, are always combined.

<sup>4</sup> Again mere symbolism which the old philosophers took for science.

<sup>5</sup> See p. 1.095.

<sup>6</sup> *Vid. loc. cit.*

<sup>7</sup> [Analects XII, 8 \[Couvreur\]](#), where *Chi Tse Ch'êng* is introduced saying :



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p2.231 Those who themselves compose, are literary scholars, those who discourse on the Classics, ordinary scholars. These two classes are met with in the world, and we do not know yet to which the palm is to be awarded.

Some say that literary scholars come short of ordinary ones. The latter treat of the Classics of the Sages, and explain the records of the Worthies. Vast and profound is their knowledge of different meanings and principles, they hold sound views, and for that reason are always in office. Those most respected become professors, disciples crowd about them, and they attract students from a thousand Li's distance. Although their body dies, their doctrine survives, transmitted to posterity. Literary scholars do not profit the world with their polished and exquisite style and, therefore, are not called to office. Not a single pupil or student puts in an appearance, and when they die, their memory is not handed down. Consequently, they cannot compete with ordinary scholars.

I answer that this is not true : Ordinary scholars argue on all matters concerning the Sages, making the same investigations, and equally following up all their doings. The details may be divergent, but their scope is the same ; their words may differ, but their conceptions are very similar.

Why say that what literary scholars propound is of no advantage to mankind ? The work of ordinary scholars is very simple, and people learn it in great numbers. There being nothing to establish a distinction between them, all posts in the public service are filled with them. The work done by literary scholars is unusual and not easily imitated, and their books are seldom met with, but though their work cannot be taught, and they have no pupils, still their books are highly admired and handed down by the people. There is the empty talk of their rivals, and on the other side, their important writings. Weighing these two classes, which is the worthier ? <sup>1</sup>

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— In a superior man it is only the substantial qualities which are wanted ; why should we seek for ornamental accomplishments ?

<sup>1</sup> In many respects, these remarks apply still to our own times. Originality and genius but seldom qualify a man for a professorship. To obtain this it is much safer to keep in the beaten tracks, holding sound views viz. these just in vogue, and to show a fair mediocrity, as any superiority is calculated to offend the *amour-propre* of 'ordinary scholars'.

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p2.232 In ancient times great and celebrated men wrote down their thoughts. They, at least, made use of their principles and became famous in their age. Although the ordinary scholars may have been more honoured at the time, yet unless they were taken notice of in the books of their literary rivals, their traces were soon obliterated.

The Duke of *Chou* adjusted the Rites <sup>1</sup> and Music, and his name was handed down uninterruptedly. *Confucius* wrote the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, and his memory has been preserved up to the present day. Their productions are more than mere researches <sup>2</sup>.

The literary geniuses of the *Han* era, *Lu Chia*, *Sse-Ma Ch'ien*, *Liu Tse Chêng*, and *Yang Tse Yün* are all but marvellous, and their glory does not depend on others. The world speaks also of the expositor of the *Shiking*, *Shên Kung* of *Lu* <sup>3</sup>, and of *Ou Yang* of *Ch'ien-ch'êng* <sup>4</sup> and *Kung Sun* <sup>5</sup>, both scholiasts of the *Shuking*, but if they had not fallen under the notice of the Grand Annalist, the world would not know them <sup>6</sup>.

Is it not better to earn fame by one's own efforts than to need others for that purpose ? And does he not rank higher who records the lives of hundreds of people than he who barely wins a name for himself ?

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Some hold that writers must be free from troublous thoughts, and that it is not their talents by which they exceed other people. Unless they enjoy quietude their ideas do not come. In case such writers have to look after all the affairs of every-day-life, or to do office work in some department of the State, they will compose, whenever they have some leisure from their

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<sup>1</sup> *Chou Kung* is believed to be the author of the *Chou-li*, the Rites of the *Chou* dynasty.

<sup>2</sup> They are creations, classical works.

<sup>3</sup> *Shên Kung* lived in the 2nd and 3rd cent. B. C. His edition of the *Shiking* is known as the *Lu-shi*, the *Shiking* of *Lu*.

<sup>4</sup> A scholar of the 2nd cent. B. C., born in *Ch'ien-ch'êng* in *Shantung*. He was a pupil of the famous *Fu Shêng* and is generally known as *Ou-Yang Shêng*.

<sup>5</sup> This seems to be *Kung-Sun Hung*, who died 121 B. C. The *Shi-chi*, however, does not mention him as a commentator of the *Shuking*, but couples his name with that of an expositor of the *Shiking*.

<sup>6</sup> Notices on these three scholars are given in the *Shi-chi* chap. 121.

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multifarious duties. p2.233 If common people be given plenty of time to concentrate their thoughts, they are also able to indite eighty and more chapters.

*Wên Wang* had no leisure to take his meals either during the day or in the evening <sup>1</sup>, and *Chou Kung*, bathing his hair once, had to grasp it three times <sup>2</sup>. What time had they to walk about for pleasure, or to cover tablets with the elegant compositions of their pen ? *Confucius* wrote the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, and found no employment in *Chou*, *Sse-Ma Hsiang Ju* <sup>3</sup> was free from the duties of a statesman, and therefore could write his poem *Tse-hsü-fu* <sup>4</sup>, and *Yang Tse Yün* lived in the palace as *chung-lang* <sup>5</sup>, and thus had occasion to complete the *T'ai-hsüan-ching*, and to take up the *Fa-yen*. Had *Confucius* obtained imperial dignity, the *Ch'un-ch'iu* would not have been published, and had *Sse-Ma Hsiang Ju* and *Yang Tse Yün* been chief ministers, they would not have worked at the poem or the *T'ai-hsüan-ching*.

I beg leave to reply that *Wên Wang's* want of time to eat during the day or in the evening, implies that he elucidated the *Yiking* and increased the number of diagrams, and if *Chou Kung*, bathing once, grasped his hair thrice, it was because he changed and fixed the institutions of the *Chou* dynasty. If the principles of the *Chou* had not been corrupt, *Confucius* would not have written his work ; he would have enjoyed repose, and his thoughts would have been unoccupied. But the laws of the *Chou* were loose and degenerate, and he could not abide by them.

Those who by Heaven and Earth are endowed with letters, will emit them from their bosoms, they do not write because they have nothing else to do, nor are there any days when they have no leisure. They are affected by what

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<sup>1</sup> Allusion to the *Shuking*, Part V, Book XV, 10 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part II, p. 469](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> [Huai Nan Tse XIII, 9r](#). uses these words with regard to the emperor Yü, ... adding that during one meal he had to rise ten times. The *Shi-chi* chap. 33, p. 3v. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. IV, p. 93](#)) refers them to *Chou Kung*. While washing his head, *Chou Kung* usually was disturbed by visitors three times.

<sup>3</sup> Great poet. See p. 1.123, Note 5.

<sup>4</sup> This poem so fascinated the emperor *Han Wu Ti*, that he summoned *Sse-Ma Hsiang Ju* to Court ([Giles, Bibl. Dict. No. 1753](#)).

<sup>5</sup> A title of certain officials of the imperial household.

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is wrong, and start from what is wicked, as a spring sends forth its waters, and vapours rise up. *Kuan Chung* as prime minister of Duke *Huan* brought about a confederacy of all the States <sup>1</sup>, and *Shang Yang* laid the p2.234 foundation of the imperial power of *Ch'in*, when he was minister of Duke *Hsiao* <sup>2</sup>. Yet both wrote books containing dozens of chapters <sup>3</sup>. *Sse-Ma Hsiang Ju* and *Yang Tse Yün* were their equals. Both being affected by external influences, their talents were called forth, and their talents being equal, their work was similar also. They were students and writers, but not because their minds had nothing else to think about.

The more one hears, the greater becomes his experience, and the harder his official duties are, the dryer is his knowledge. Unless one has rest, the thoughts do not come, and unless the thoughts come, the pencil is not quick at work. Simpletons and dullards may have a quiet home just fit for meditation, and be perfectly free from care, yet they are incapable of writing a single word. Those well gifted possess abilities, but it is not true that they have no time ; those without abilities cannot think, but it does not happen that somebody has knowledge, and cannot write. Persons with exceptional abilities may be anxious to write something, but find nothing to start from, whereas others with but little knowledge are able to record what they have learned by inquiry from others. Remarkable talents sometimes have no subject to write about, but they are never unqualified to speak, they may have nothing to look to, but it does not happen that they have no leisure for literary compositions.

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Some people are of opinion that writing requires the utmost concentration of the mental faculties, and that those authors who hold some office, are not apt to discharge their duties. A man's thoughts take a certain direction, consequently all his mental energy is used up in the pursuit of these thoughts. Writers are admirable in all they write or say, but in that their talents are exhausted, and their knowledge reaches its limit. In former times

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 2.026.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 1.463, Note 5.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 2.092, Note 5.

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many writers were in office, but to adjust what is scattered, and to join what is dispersed, to support the vacillating, and to bring peace to those in danger, exceeds the power of men of letters. They themselves have their troubles and their difficulties, which must have some cause. The cause are the hundreds of chapters <sup>p2.235</sup> and paragraphs which they have written. *Lü Pu Wei* composed a *Ch'un-ch'iu* <sup>1</sup>, and his whole family had to emigrate to *Shu* <sup>2</sup>, the Prince of *Huai-nan* wrote a book on Taoism, and misfortune overtook him, and destroyed his entire clan <sup>3</sup>, *Han Fei Tse* published a method of government, and he himself was thrown into prison in *Ch'in* <sup>4</sup>. Unable to preserve his own person, how could he have helped his State ?

Some people excel in one thing, but why should they not be deficient in another ? Some are deeply versed in composition, but why should they not be superficial in the administration ?

My answer is that people have their strong points, and likewise must have their weak ones ; they are skilful in one thing, and awkward in another. This is no inferiority, only their interest is not roused, nor any awkwardness, but the thing does not appeal to their imagination <sup>5</sup>. He whose desire centres in one thing, does not even perceive the *T'ai-shan*, and if his thoughts reach to a certain point, he has not the time to follow with his body.

As regards the much praised sharpness of the *Kan-chiang* sword <sup>6</sup>, when it is pointed it does not strike, and being fit to strike, it cannot be used for stabbing. Not that the blade is not sharp, but it cannot perform one and another thing.

Pulling the bow <sup>7</sup> for sparrows, one misses the wild swan, and shooting at

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<sup>1</sup> The *Lü-shih-ch'un-ch'iu*, p. 1.463, Note 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Lü Pu Wei* was banished to *Ssechuan* for his intrigues with the queen dowager and on suspicion of high-treason.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 1.338.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 1.170, Note 4.

<sup>5</sup> It is a useless attempt to deny this inferiority or awkwardness of men of genius in business. A great plus of mental power in one direction is usually counterbalanced by a minus in another.

<sup>6</sup> P. 1.504, Note 1.

<sup>7</sup> [ba], which the dictionaries only know as denoting the whirring of insects or the name of an insect. Here it seems to mean to make the bow-string whirl *i. e.*, to pull it, which is usually expressed by [ca].

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magpies, one misses the wild goose. Drawing square and round figures, one cannot complete them at the same time, and looking right and left, one does not see both sides simultaneously. Men may be able to do two things, but they cannot make them into one. Provided that the *Kan-chiang* sword be less pointed, then it strikes better, and if one gives up the magpies and p2.236 merely aims at wild geese, then, shooting aloft, he does not miss the mark.

Of those who rejected literary productions and exclusively devoted themselves to the administration, no other men have left traces of greater fame behind them than *Tse Ch'an* and *Tse Chien* <sup>1</sup>. The majority of ancient authors did excellent practical work, but they were not employed. *Kuan Chung* and *Yen Ying* were as great statesmen as writers <sup>2</sup>, *Shang Yang* <sup>3</sup> and *Yü Ch'ing* <sup>4</sup> were as active in literature as in the administration.

When *Kao Tsu* had won the empire military plans were still in vogue. *Lu Chia* wrote the 'New Words', yet the emperor made but a moderate use of the work. The *Lü* clan caused an insurrection <sup>5</sup>, and the *Liu* family <sup>6</sup> was on the point of revolting. If it had not been for the devices of *Lu Chia*, the imperial house would not have been safe <sup>7</sup>.

Talents and experience may both be used, but their use depends on circumstances. In revolutionary times, experience procures merit, when there is prosperity and progress, talents may be used to write books. Words are pronounced by opening the mouth, and by joining together written sentences, chapters are formed. In days of yore many persons have achieved merit by their words, and those who have ruined themselves by their writings are few.

*Lü Pu Wei* and the Prince of *Huai-nan* committed some other fault, and did

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<sup>1</sup> A disciple of *Confucius*, *Fu Pu Ch'i* who was governor of *Shan-fu* in *Shantung* and has become celebrated for his administration.

<sup>2</sup> We have a work, going by *Kuan Tse's* name, in 24 chapters, and a *Yen Tse ch'un-ch'iu* in 8 chapters.

<sup>3</sup> *Shang Yang* as well as the two afore-mentioned persons rank as 'jurists'. See p. 2.062, Note 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Yü Ch'ing*, politician at the court of King *Hsiao Ch'êng* of *Chao*, 265-245 B. C. who wrote a work entitled *Yü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*.

<sup>5</sup> The family of the empress *Lü Hou*.

<sup>6</sup> The family of *Han Kao Tsu*.

<sup>7</sup> The empress *Lü Hou* attempted to supersede the house of *Liu* by her own family, but did not succeed.

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not become guilty through their books. In the case that their works were composed by their companions <sup>1</sup>, they did not write them themselves, and yet, although they did not write them, they were visited with those conspicuous calamities.

p2.237 People who in ancient and modern times trespassed, were not always authors straining their brains and their knowledge to the utmost. *Tsou Yang* presented a report, and was thereby saved from punishment in *Liang* <sup>2</sup>. *Hsü Yüeh* sent in a memorial, and was made a secretary of a board <sup>3</sup>. Their accomplishments were such, that by their writings they won distinction among men ; how then could they be reproached with not being able to protect their own persons ?

The State of *Han Fei Tse*, son to *Han Tsao Hsin*, did not collapse before his death. *Li Sse*, as it were, was a great admirer of *Han Fei Tse*, and of opinion that his writings and his extraordinary talents could never again be equalled. The beautiful plants of spring, when injured, often die away, whereas deformed plants which suffered no damage may groom until autumn. Provided that *Han Fei Tse* had not perished, we do not know what would have become of *Ch'in* <sup>4</sup>.

One may cause the actions of a genius to be revered, but one cannot induce people to imitate him, and one may set up his words as a standard, but one cannot prevail upon people to adopt them.

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Some say that, in former times and at present, there are many writers who set about boring holes into the core of the Classics, and in their records vitiating the true doctrine of the Sages, wherefore they are called filings. They are likened unto the splinters of jewels, and there is a saying to the effect that a cart-load of filings does not make a road, as a boxful of splinters does not make a precious stone. Formerly, these men were in contiguity with the

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<sup>1</sup> It has been maintained that they did not write those books ascribed to them, but merely lent their names.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 1.67, Note 1.

<sup>3</sup> P. 1.147.

<sup>4</sup> The State of *Han* might have won the supremacy instead of *Ch'in*.

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Sages, and yet they were filings ; how much more must this be true of those distant in time and of later ages ? Their writings cannot but be worthless, and their words, but dull ; how could they be used and put into practice ?

I would reply as follows : Sages write the classics, and Worthies produce the commentaries, explaining the ideas of the classical authors, and setting forth the views of the Sages. Thus p2.238 the commentaries, needed for the classics, are all made by Worthies. But why are the classics and their commentaries alone held to be right, and all other books and records to be wrong ? Considering that the text of the commentaries to the classics is necessary for their explication, they think them right. Other books may dissent from the classics, or treat of new and other topics, therefore they regard them as wrong. Accordingly, the sole truth would be found in the Five Classics, and even though an assertion be true, they will not listen to it, except it be in the Five Classics.

Provided that the Five Classics, after having left the school of *Confucius*, down to the present day, had not been damaged, that they might be said to be of a piece, they would be trustworthy. But they have passed through the extravagant and depraved times of doomed *Ch'in*, had to bear the consequences of *Li Sse's* iniquitous advice, and were burned and proscribed. It is due to the goodness of *Fu Shêng* that the Classics were taken and concealed in some secret place <sup>1</sup>. After the rise of the *Han* dynasty, the Five Classics were recovered, but many books had been lost or were destroyed, and the rest was not intelligible. The chapters and paragraphs had been thrown into confusion and mixed up, and were not complete. *Ch'ao Ts'o* <sup>2</sup> and others separated the single words according to their own ideas. Thus the text was handed down from teacher to pupil, but how far its tenor was correct, nobody knew.

Doomed *Ch'in* was perverse, and brought confusion into the Classics, but, in spite of this perversity, it did not burn the works of the various schools of thought. The books of the various philosophers, one foot in length, and their lucubrations are all in existence. By studying them, we may correct the

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.447.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 1.448.



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statements made by others, and select passages for the instruction of the descendants of those writers. The descendants will write again as their forefathers have done. They are equally learned, and may commit their knowledge to writing. The thoughts, thus expressed, may be as far reaching as those of the Classics ; why then pretend that this sort of writings misses the truth inherent in the Classics ? Ergo the Classics are defective and incomplete. These writings are not short of one book, whereas in the Classics many chapters are wanting. Contrasting these two kinds of writings, which have more the character of filings ?

p2.239 The Changes take up the signs of things, the *Odes* are collected among the people, and then divided into chapters, the *Music* requires melancholy feelings <sup>1</sup>, and the *Rites* suppose a people living at peace. This subject matter must be there, before the chapters and sections of the Four Classics can be formed. The *Shuking* and the '*Spring and Autumn*' are culled from the State annals. These annals being extant, no extraordinary writings are required, for they embody the affairs of the people. These are the sources necessary for writing the Six Classics. Consequently, ordinary books may also be the beginning <sup>2</sup>, and the Classics the end, and the end may have lost the truth, whereas at the beginning the genuine principles are still preserved. If we compare these two kinds of writings, which are the splinters of jewels ?

Standing under the eaves, one knows that a house is leaking, in the wilderness one knows that the administration is deficient, and from the works of the various philosophers one learns that the Classics are full of mistakes. The text of the works of the philosophers is clear and to the point <sup>3</sup>. Those discoursing on the paragraphs and clauses of the Classics, do not attempt to explain and carefully to investigate them. One teacher hands them down to another. Those who first fixed the paragraphs and clauses cannot have had a very extensive sphere of ideas.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 2.257, Note 3.

<sup>2</sup> From which the Classics are compiled.

<sup>3</sup> This cannot, as a rule, be said of the Classics which without commentaries are hardly intelligible.

## 83. Book XIX, Chap. I

### *An-shu*. Critical Remarks on Various Books

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p1.461 The Confucianists look up to *Confucius* as the founder of their school, whereas the Mêhists regard *Mê Ti* as their master <sup>1</sup>. The Confucian doctrine has come down to us, that of *Mê Ti* has fallen into desuetude, because the Confucian principles can be put in use, while the Mêhist system is very difficult to practise. How so ?

The Mêhists neglect the burials, but honour the ghosts. Their doctrine is abnormal, self-contradictory, and irreconcilable with truth, therefore it is hard to practise. Which are its anomalies ?

Provided that ghosts are not the spirits of the departed, then they can have no knowledge of the honour shown them. Now the Mêhists aver, that the ghosts are indeed the spirits of the dead. They treat the souls well, and neglect the corpses. Thus they are generous to the spirits and mean with reference to their bodies. Since generosity and meanness do not harmonize, and the externals and internals do not agree, the spirits would resent it, and send misfortunes down upon their votaries. Though there might be ghosts, they would, at any rate, be animated by a deadly hatred. Human nature is such, that it likes generosity, and detests meanness. The feelings of the spirits must be very much the same. According to *Mê Tse's* precepts one would worship the ghosts, and pray for happiness, but the happiness obtained thereby would be very scarce, and misfortune on misfortune would be the result. This is but one instance among a hundred, but the entire Mêhist system is like that. The cause that it has lost its ground, and is not being handed down, is contained therein.

p1.462 The *Tso-chuan* of the *Ch'un-ch'iu* <sup>2</sup> was recovered from the wall of

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<sup>1</sup> *Mê Ti*, the philosopher of universal love, a younger contemporary of *Confucius*, 5th or 4th cent. B. C. Cf. *E. Faber, Lehre des Philosophen Micius*, Elberfeld 1877 (Extracts from his works).

<sup>2</sup> In the opinion of most Chinese critics the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, as we have it, has not been

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the house of *Confucius*. Under the reign of the emperor *Hsiao Wu Ti*, Prince *Kung of Lu* demolished the school of *Confucius* for the purpose of building a palace. There he found thirty books of the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, which had been concealed <sup>1</sup>. These were the *Tso-chuan*. *Kung Yang Kao*, *Ku Liang Ch'ih* <sup>2</sup> and *Hu Mu* <sup>3</sup> all transmitted the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, representing different schools, but the commentary of *Tso Ch'iu Ming* alone was in time the nearest to *Confucius* and did embody the right views :

The *Liki* was composed in the school of *Confucius*. The Grand Annalist (the author of the *Shi-chi*) was a man of great talents in the *Han* time. Now the statements of *Tso Ch'iu Ming* are in accordance with these two books <sup>4</sup>, whereas the writings of *Kung Yang Kao*, *Ku Liang Ch'ih* and *Hu Mu* differ very much. Besides these writers are too far remote from *Confucius*. It is much better to be near, than to be distant, and better to see, than to know by hearsay.

*Liu Tse Chêng* mocked at the *Tso Chuan* <sup>5</sup>, whereas his servants, his wife, and his sons used to recite it. At *Kuang Wu Ti's* <sup>6</sup> time *Ch'ên Yuan* and *Fan Shu* <sup>7</sup> reported to the throne on the *Tso-chuan*, collecting all the facts and giving their opinions on the pros and cons. Then the fame of *Tso Ch'iu Ming* became established. *Fan Shu* soon after was dismissed for an offence. *Ch'ên Yuan* and *Fan Shu's* were the most talented men of the empire. In their arguments on the merits of the *Tso Chuan* they display a remarkable vigour. *Ch'ên Yuan* used to express himself very cautiously and *Fan Shu's* criticisms were silenced <sup>8</sup>. Hence it became evident that *Tso Ch'iu Ming* gives us the truth.

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preserved, but was reconstructed from the *Tso-chuan* or from the other commentaries. This view is supported by what *Wang Ch'ung* says here. See on this question *Legge, Prolegomena to his translation of the Ch'un-ch'iu*, p. 16 seq.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. above pp. 1.448 and 1.456.

<sup>2</sup> *Kung Yang* and *Ku Liang* are the surnames, *Kao* and *Ch'ih* the personal names.

<sup>3</sup> *Hu Mu's* commentary is not mentioned in the Catalogue of the *Han-shu*.

<sup>4</sup> To wit the *Liki* and the *Shi-chi*.

<sup>5</sup> *Liu Tse Chêng* = *Liu Hsiang*, 80-9 B.D., was an admirer of the commentary of *Ku Liang*, whereas his son *Liu Hsin* stood up for the *Tso-chuan*.

<sup>6</sup> 25-57 A. D.

<sup>7</sup> *Fan Shu* alias *Fan Shêng*.

<sup>8</sup> *Fan Shu* in his report to the throne had attacked the *Tso-chuan* on fourteen points.

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p1.463 To relate marvellous stories is not at all in the style of *Confucius*, who did not speak of strange things. The *Lü-shih-ch'un-ch'iu* <sup>1</sup> e. g. belongs to this class of works <sup>2</sup>. The *Kuo-yü* is the exoteric narrative of *Tso Ch'iu Ming*. Because the text of the *Tso-chuan* Classic is rather concise, he still made extracts and edited the text of the *Kuo-yü* to corroborate the *Tso-chuan*. Thus the *Kuo-yü* of *Tso Ch'iu Ming* is a book which the Literati of our time regard as genuine.

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*Kung Sun Lung* wrote a treatise on the hard and white <sup>3</sup>. He split words, dissected expressions, and troubled about equivocal terms. His investigations have no principles and are of no use for government.

*Tsou Yen* in *Ch'i* published three works which are vague and diffuse <sup>4</sup>; he gives very few proofs, but his words startle the reader. Men of great talents are very often led astray by their imagination and show a great lack of critical acumen. Their style is brilliant, but there is nothing in it, and their words are imposing, but their researches are conspicuous by the absence of sober judgment.

When *Shang Yang* <sup>5</sup> was minister of *Ch'in*, he developed the system of agriculture and fighting, and, when *Kuan Chung* <sup>6</sup> held the same position in *Ch'i*, he wrote the book on weight. He made the people wealthy, the State prosperous, the sovereign powerful, and the enemies weak, and adjusted rewards and punishments. His work <sup>7</sup> is classed together with that of *Tsou Yen*, but the Grand Annalist has two different records about them <sup>8</sup>. People

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<sup>1</sup> An important work on antique lore composed under the patronage of Prince *Lü Pu Wei* in the 3d cent. B. C.

<sup>2</sup> Works relating marvellous stories.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. my paper on the *Chinese Sophists*, *Journal of the China Branch of the R. As. Soc.*, *Shanghai* 1899, p. 29 and appendix containing a translation of the remains of this philosopher.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 1.253.

<sup>5</sup> *Wei Yang*, Prince of *Shang*, a great reformer of the civil and military administration of the *Ch'in* State, which he raised to great power. Died 338 B. C.

<sup>6</sup> One of the most celebrated statesmen of antiquity, who died in 645 B. C.

<sup>7</sup> A speculative work which passes under the title of *Kuan Tse*. The one still in existence is perhaps a later forgery.

<sup>8</sup> *Sse Ma Ch'ien* extols *Kuan Chung* (*Shi-chi* chap. 62, p. 2v) and finds fault with

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are perplexed thereby, and at a loss, which view to take.

p1.464 *Chang Yi* was a contemporary of *Su Ch'in*. When the latter died, *Chang Yi* was certainly informed of it. Since he must have known all the details, his words ought to have served as basis to fix the truth. However, the reports are not clear, there being two versions. *Chang Shang* of *Tung-hai* <sup>1</sup> also wrote a biography. Was *Su Ch'in* an invention of *Chang Shang*, for how is it possible that there is such a discrepancy between the two versions ?

In the Genealogical Tables of the Three Dynasties <sup>2</sup> it is said that the Five Emperors and Three Rulers were all descendants of *Huang Ti*, and that from *Huang Ti* downward they were successively born without being again informed by the breath of heaven. In the special record of the *Yin* dynasty <sup>3</sup> we read, however, that *Chien Ti* <sup>4</sup>, the mother of *Hsieh* <sup>5</sup>, while bathing in a river, met a black bird, which dropped an egg. She swallowed it, and subsequently gave birth to *Hsieh* <sup>6</sup>.

In the special record of the *Chou* <sup>7</sup> dynasty we find the notice that the mother of Lord *Chi*, *Chiang Yuan* <sup>8</sup>, while going into the country, saw the footprints of a giant. When she stepped into them, she became with child, and gave birth to Lord *Chi* <sup>9</sup>.

Now we learn from the Genealogical Tables that *Hsieh* and Lord *Chi* were both descendants of *Huang Ti*, whereas we read in the records of the *Yin* and *Chou* dynasties that they were conceived from the sperm of the black bird and the giant. These two versions ought not to be transmitted

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*Shang Yang* (*Shi-chi* chap. 68, p.9), although, in *Wang Ch'ung's* opinion, their deeds and their theories are very similar. It must be noted, however, that *Shang Yang's* criminal laws were very cruel. *Wang Ch'ung*, who is to a certain extent imbued with Taoist ideas, feels a natural aversion to all forms of government, and to legislation in particular.

<sup>1</sup> A place in *Kiangsu*.

<sup>2</sup> *Shi-chi* chap. 13.

<sup>3</sup> *Shi-chi* chap. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Second wife of the Emperor *Ku*.

<sup>5</sup> The first ancestor of the *Yin* dynasty.

<sup>6</sup> *Shi-chi* chap. 3, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> *Shi-chi* chap. 4, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> First wife of the Emperor *Ku*.

<sup>9</sup> *Hou Chi* = 'Lord of the Soil', the ancestor of the *Chou* dynasty.

## Lun-hêng

simultaneously, yet the Great Annalist recorded them both indiscriminately. The consorts of emperors should not stroll into the country or bathe in a river. Now the one is said to have bathed in a river, and to have swallowed the egg of a black bird, and the other went into the country, and there walked in the footprints of a giant. That is against all the laws of decorum and a mixing up of the distinctions between right and wrong.

p1.465 The 'New Words' <sup>1</sup> is the work of *Lu Chia* <sup>2</sup>, which was appreciated very much by *Tung Chung Shu* <sup>3</sup>. It deals with sovereigns and subjects, good and bad government, the words are worth remembering, the facts related, excellent, and show a great amount of knowledge. They may supplement the Classics ; although there is not much to be added to the words of the old sages, at all events there is nothing amiss with *Lu Chia's* words. The utterances of *Tung Chung Shu*, on the other hand, about the rain sacrifices responding to heaven and the earthen dragon attracting the rain are very obscure <sup>4</sup>.

Droughts will happen in consequence of the rain sacrifices (being in disorder), but have nothing to do with the state sacrifices of the *Hsia* dynasty. Was the marquis of *Chin* responsible, or was his administration defective, so that the *Yang* and the *Yin* were not in harmony ? *Chin* had dropped the state sacrifices of the *Hsia*. When the marquis of *Chin* was laid up with sickness, he took the advice of *Tse Chan* of *Chêng* and instituted the *Hsia* sacrifices, whereupon he recovered from his disease <sup>1</sup>. Had in fact the rain sacrifices not been in order, or the dragon neglected, the same misfortune would have befallen *Chin* again. Provided the drought was attracted by the administration, the latter should have been reorganised, but what would be the use of making provisions for the rain sacrifices or the dragon, if the administration was defective ?

*Kung Yang* in his commentary on the *Ch'un-ch'iu* says that during the time

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<sup>1</sup> *Hsin-yü*. The work still exists.

<sup>2</sup> *Lu Chia* lived in the 2nd cent. B. C. at the beginning of the *Han* dynasty. Twice he was sent as envoy to the southern *Yüeh*. Cf. p. 1.383.

<sup>3</sup> An author of the 2nd cent. B. C. He wrote the *Ch'un-ch'iu-fan-lu*, the 'Rich Dew of the Spring and Autumn', which has come down to us.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 1.206.

## Lun-hêng

of extraordinary heat, it suffices to reform the government, when the *Yin* and the *Yang* fluids mix, and dryness and moisture unite ; such being the law of nature. Wherefore must the rain sacrifices still be prepared then, and the dragons be put up ? Do the spirits delight in these offerings ? If, when the rain comes, the broiling heat did not relax, nor the disastrous drought cease, where would be the effect of the changes and reforms ?

Moreover heat and cold are the same as dryness and moisture ; all are the results of government, and man is responsible for them. It is difficult therefore to see the reason, why in time of drought people pray for happiness, but not in cold or hot weather. In case <sup>p1.466</sup> that there is a retribution, we ought to have recourse to the rain sacrifices and to the dragon for heat and cold as well. Men of superior intellect and great knowledge, however, do not believe in either of these theories.

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*Tung Chung Shu* does not call himself a scholar in his books, probably thinking that he surpassed all the others. Among the prolific writers of the *Han* time *Sse Ma Ch'ien* and *Yang Tse Yün* <sup>2</sup> are the *Yellow River* and the *Han* <sup>3</sup>, all the rest like the *Ching* and *Wei* <sup>4</sup> rivers. Yet *Sse Ma Ch'ien* gives us too little of his own judgment, *Yang Tse Yün* does not speak on common topics, and *Tung Chung Shu's* discussions on the Taoist doctrines are very strange. These are the three most famous men of the north.

The *Chan-shu* <sup>5</sup> states that *Tung Chung Shu* disturbed their books, which means the sayings of *Confucius*. The readers either hold that 'to disturb our books' means that he throws the works of *Confucius* into disorder, or they suppose that 'luan' is equivalent to 'adjust', and that he adjusts the writings of *Confucius*. In both cases it is the same word 'luan', but between order and disorder there is a great distance. Yet the readers do not equally apply their minds, nor thoroughly study the question, hence their wrong statements. To

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 1.214.

<sup>2</sup> The philosopher *Yang Hsiung*. Cf. p. 1.124.

<sup>3</sup> The largest affluent of the *Yangtse*.

<sup>4</sup> Both tributaries of the *Yellow River* in *Kansu* and *Shensi*, which joined together, fall into the *Huang Ho* near its elbow in *Shensi*.

<sup>5</sup> *Vid.* p. 1.319.

## Lun-hêng

say that *Tung Chung Shu* carried disorder into the writings of *Confucius*, would imply an extraordinary talent, and to say that he adjusted these writings, would likewise imply a wonderful knowledge. Nobody ever said of *Sse Ma Ch'ien* or *Yang Tse Yün* that they belonged to the school of the Sage or not, or that they disturbed or adjusted the works of *Confucius*. Most people now-a-days do not think enough and, when treating a problem, lose sight of the principal facts. Therefore we have these two doubtful views, between which the scholars are vacillating.

The work of *Tung Chung Shu* is not antagonistic to the Confucian school, neither does it equal the writing of *Confucius*. Therefore the statement that it invalidates those writings is preposterous. On the other hand the writings of *Confucius* are not in confusion, consequently the assertion that it brings these writings into good order is wrong likewise.

p1.467 *Confucius* said <sup>1</sup>,

— When the music-master *Chih* <sup>2</sup> began and then came the finish (luan) of the *Kuan-chü* <sup>3</sup>, how magnificent it was and how it filled the ears !

The finish (luan) in our case refers to the sayings of *Confucius*. *Confucius* lived under the *Chou* and laid the foundation (of the Confucian doctrine) ; *Tung Chung Shu* under the *Han* finished it, in so far as it was not yet complete, and *Sse Ma Ch'ien* supplemented it here and there. That is the idea. In the collections of irregular verse and dithyrambs <sup>4</sup> every song has a refrain (luan), which amounts to the same. Since it was *Tung Chung Shu* who gave the last touch to the *Analects* of *Confucius*, we should not be surprised that his remarks on the offering of the rain sacrifice and the use of dragons have some meaning.

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*Yen Yuan* said,

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects VIII, 15 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> The music-master of *Lu*.

<sup>3</sup> The first Ode of the *Shiking*. [[Legge](#)] [[Couvreur](#)] [[Granet](#)].

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the great number of such collections enumerated in the Catalogue of the *Han-shu*, chap. 30.



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— What man is *Shun*, and who am I ? <sup>1</sup>

Among the Five Emperors and Three Rulers *Shun* was his only ideal. He knew that he was pursuing the same goal. The ideals of the wise and virtuous and the aims of the silent scholar are in fact identical.

What *Tung Chung Shu* says about morals, virtue, and government deserves the highest praise, but as regards researches into every day life and discussions of the most common errors, *Huan Chün Shan* <sup>2</sup> stands unrivalled. *Tung Chung Shu's* writings may be equalled, but it would be very difficult to challenge *Huan Chün Shan*. A Bayardo has his special features distinguishing him from other horses, or is a noble steed with a peculiar gait. There may be horses capable of running a thousand li, they will never be called Bayardos, because the colour of their hair differs from that of Bayardo. There may be men whose writings could be compared with those of *Tung Chung Shu*, or whose essays would rank close after those of *Huan Chün Shan*, yet they would not be like <sup>p1.468</sup> the two scholars, their names would always be different. A horse might learn to make a thousand li, it would not become a Bayardo or a Bucephalus thereby, and a man might aspire to sagehood and knowledge, he would not become a *Confucius* or a *Mê Ti* for the following reason :

It is very difficult to equal *Huan Chün Shan's* writings. When two blades cut one another, we see, which is sharp and which blunt, and, when two treatises are compared together, one finds out, which of the two is right and which wrong. This is the case of the 'Four Difficulties' <sup>3</sup> by *Han Fei Tse*, the treatise on 'Salt and Iron' <sup>4</sup> by *Huan K'uan* <sup>5</sup>, and the 'New Reflections' <sup>6</sup> by *Huan Chün Shan*.

The statements of the people are often doubtful and untrue, yet some

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<sup>1</sup> Quotation from *Mencius* III, Pt. I, 1 [[Couvreur](#)] ([Legge Vol. II, p. 110](#)).

<sup>2</sup> *Huan Chün Shan* = *Huan Tan*, a great scholar of the 1st cent. B.D. and A. D. People admired his large library. He incurred the displeasure of *Kuang Wu Ti*, whom he rebuked for his belief in books of fate, and was sentenced to banishment.

<sup>3</sup> Four chapters of *Han Fei Tse's* work, forming chap. 15 and 16, Nos. 36-39.

<sup>4</sup> *Yen-t'ieh-lun*, a treatise on questions of national economy.

<sup>5</sup> *Huan K'uan*, also called *Chên Shan Tse*, lived in the 1st cent. B. C.

<sup>6</sup> *Hsin-lun*.

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mistaken critics regard them as true, which leads to great dilemmas. If a judge deciding a case has his doubts about it, so that though giving his judgment, he would hesitate to inflict a punishment, truth and untruth would not be determined, and right and wrong not established. Then people would be entitled to say that the talents of the judge were not sufficient for his post. If in ventilating a question one does not do it thoroughly, merely noting two doubtful opinions and transmitting them both, one does not do much to settle the question. Would it not be better then to break through the confusion and cut the Gordian knot, for words must be intelligible, and expressions convey a meaning ?

*Confucius* wrote the *Ch'un-ch'iu* in such a way that he recommended the slightest good thing and blamed the smallest evil. Whenever there was anything praiseworthy, his words served to set forth its excellence, and whenever there was anything open to blame, he pointed out its badness with a view to stigmatise the action. The 'New Reflections' fall in with the *Ch'un-ch'iu* in this respect. But the public prizes antiquity, and does not think much of our own times. They fancy that the modern literature falls short of the old writings. However, ancient and modern times are the same. There are men of great and of small talents, and there is truth and falsehood. If irrespective of the intrinsic value they only esteem what is old, this would imply that the ancients excelled our modems. Yet men like *Tsou Po Ch'i* of p1.469 *Tung-fan*, *Yuan T'ai Po* and *Yuan Wên Shu* of *Lin-huai* <sup>1</sup>, *Wu Chün Kao* and *Chou Ch'ang Shêng* of *Kuei-chi* <sup>2</sup>, though they never attained the dignity of state-ministers, were all men of stupendous erudition and abilities and the most elegant and dashing knights of the pen <sup>3</sup>.

The *Yuan-sse* of *Tsou Po Ch'i*, the *Yi-chang-chü* of *Yuan T'ai Po*, the *Hsien-ming* of *Yuan Wen Shu*, the *Yüeh-yo* of *Wu Chün Kao*, and the *Tung-li* of *Chou Ch'ang Shêng* could not be surpassed by *Liu Tse Chêng* or *Yang Tse Yün*. Men of genius may be more or less gifted, but there are no ancients or moderns ; their works may be right or wrong, but there are no old or new ones.

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<sup>1</sup> A region in *Anhui*.

<sup>2</sup> A city in *Chekiang*.

<sup>3</sup> Nothing is known of these authors or their writings. The cyclopedias do not even mention their names.

## Lun-hêng

Although no special works have been written by men like *Ch'ên Tse Hui* of *Kuang-ling* <sup>1</sup>, *Yen Fang*, *Pan Ku* <sup>2</sup>, at present clerk of a board, the officer of the censorate, *Yang Chung*, and *Chuan Yi*, their verses and their memorials are written in the most fascinating and brilliant style. Their poetry resembles that of *Ch'ü Yuan* <sup>3</sup> and *Chia* <sup>4</sup>, their memorials those of *T'ang Lin* and *Ku Yung* <sup>5</sup>. Placed side by side, the beauty of their compositions proved to be the same. At present they are not yet illustrious, but after a hundred generations they will be on a par with *Liu Tse Chêng* <sup>6</sup> and *Yang Tse Yün* <sup>7</sup>.

*Li Sse* freely culled from the works of *Han Fei Tse*, and *Hou P'u Tse* did much to divulge the *T'ai-hsüan-ching* of *Yang Tse Yün*. *Han Fei Tse* and *Li Sse* belonged to the same school, and *Yang Tse Yün* and *Hou P'u Tse* lived at the same court <sup>8</sup>. They had an eye for what was remarkable and useful, and were not influenced in their opinions and judgments by considerations of time. Searching truth and seeking whatever was good, they made it their principle not to look too far for it, and not to despise those with whom <sup>p1.470</sup> they were working shoulder to shoulder. They had a great partiality for everything uncommon, and quite uncommon was the fame which they won thereby. *Yang Tse Yün* revised the *Li-sao*. He could not completely change a whole chapter, but whenever he found anything wrong, he altered it. Though it be impossible to read all the thirteen thousand chapters contained in the list of the Six Departments of Literature <sup>9</sup>, one may know at least their purport and

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<sup>1</sup> A place in *Kiangsu*.

<sup>2</sup> The historian *Pan Ku*, author of the *Han-shu* 'History of the Former Han Dynasty', who died 92 A. D.

<sup>3</sup> Who wrote the famous poem *Li-sao* cf. p. 1.113.

<sup>4</sup> *Chia Yü*.

<sup>5</sup> *Ku Yung* lived in the 1st cent. B. C. As censor he remonstrated against the abuses of the court, and presented over forty memorials upon divine portents.

<sup>6</sup> *Liu Tse Chêng* = *Liu Hsiang*, 80-9 B. C., is a celebrated writer of the *Han* time, who did much for the preservation of ancient literature. Besides he wrote works on government and poetry.

<sup>7</sup> *Wang Ch'ung's* prediction has not proved true. The authors of his time, whom he praises so much, are all forgotten, *Pan Ku* alone excepted.

<sup>8</sup> At the court of the Emperor *Ch'êng Ti* 32-7 B. C.

<sup>9</sup> In the Catalogue of Literature, forming chapter 30 of the *Han-shu*, *Liu Hsin* divided the then existing body of literature under 7 heads: Classics, works on the six arts, philosophy, poetry, military science, divination, and medicine. Owing to the decline of the healing art under the *Han* dynasty, the last division was dropped, and no titles of medical books are given. There remained but the six divisions, mentioned in the text.

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take up for discussion some of those passages which give no proper sense.

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Under these divisions were comprised 38 subdivisions with 596 authors, whose names and works are given in the Catalogue. Their writings contain 13,269 chapters or books.

## 84. Book XIX, Chap. II

### *Tui-tso. Replies in Self-Defense*

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p1.083 Some one might put the following question : The worthies and sages were not born for nothing ; decidedly their minds were required. How is it that from *Confucius* and *Mê Ti* down to *Hsün Tse* <sup>1</sup> and *Mencius* they all acted as teachers and left their works to posterity ?

Our reply is that the sages wrote the Classics, and the worthies composed their records. They rectified the depraved customs, and enjoined upon the people to revert to truth and sincerity. The thirteen thousand chapters of the Six Departments of Literature <sup>2</sup> increased the good and diminished the evil, sometimes restricting, sometimes expanding, and urging on the stragglers, with a view to leading them back from their by-paths into the right way.

*Confucius* wrote the *Ch'un-ch'iu* in consequence of the depravity of the people of *Chou*. He, therefore, established the smallest merit, and blamed the slightest wrong ; he removed every disorder, and re-established propriety. The ways of men as well as those of the sovereign were well ordered by him. To check extravagant and mean practices one must take every precaution, and use every means. When a dyke breaks, and no measures are taken, there will be a disastrous inundation. When a net opens, and is not shut again, the animals caught in it are lost. Had the ways of *Chou* not degenerated, the people would not have been uncultured, and had the people not been uncultured, the *Ch'un-ch'iu* would not have been written.

If the doctrines of *Yang Chu* and *Mê Ti* <sup>3</sup> had not perverted the traditions, the records of *Mencius* would not have been published. Had the *Han* State not been small and weak, and its system of government corrupt, *Han Fei Tse's*

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<sup>1</sup> The philosopher *Hsün Tse* : *Sun Ch'ing*, cf. Chap. 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Vid.* Chap. 83 and the Catalogue of Literature, *Han-shu* chap. 30.

<sup>3</sup> The philosophers of egoism and altruism, both combated by *Mencius*.

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book would not have appeared <sup>1</sup>. Had *Kao Tsu* not contested that the conquerors of p1.084 empires had not alighted from their horses nor changed their martial habits, *Lu Chia* would not have written his memorials <sup>2</sup>. If the truth had not been lost everywhere, and scientific researches not been in a state of great confusion, the discussions of *Huan Tan* would not have come forth.

Ergo, when worthies and sages write something, they do not do so for nothing, but have their good reasons. Thus their writings are by no means purposeless, but conducive to reforms, and their reforms to re-establish the right principles.

Accordingly the *Han* created the censorate to review books and examine their contents. *Tung Chung Shu* wrote a book on magical arts, in which he spoke much about calamitous events as being caused by the faults of the government. When the book was complete, and the text revised, it was presented to the Imperial Court of the *Han*. *Chu Fu Yen* from jealousy slandered the book in a memorial to the throne. The emperor handed *Tung Chung Shu* over to the tribunal, and the judges declared that he was very stupid, and deserved to die, but the emperor pardoned him. *Hsiao Wu Ti* did not punish *Tung Chung Shu* for his remarks on calamities, on the contrary, he honoured him. How much more would he have done so for *Tung Chung Shu's* inoffensive utterances, for his researches into the nature of the fundamental principles and his collection of old and true sayings ?

As long as a wise man holds an official position in this world, he is perfectly loyal to his sovereign, and propagates his reforms to enlighten the government. When he has retired, he still teaches and criticises to rouse the

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<sup>1</sup> The philosopher *Han Fei Tse* was the son of a Duke of the *Han* State.

<sup>2</sup> An allusion to an event in the life of *Lu Chia*, narrated in his biography, *Shi-chi* chap. 97 p. 7. When *Lu Chia* had returned from his successful mission to the King of *Yüeh*, whom he induced to acknowledge the suzerainty of the *Han*, *Kao Tsu* conferred a high rank upon him. Subsequently, when relating his adventures, *Lu Chia* would always refer to poetry and history. The emperor displeased with these utterances, told him that he had won his laurels on horseback, why must he make such a fuss about literature. Then *Lu Chia* showed him, how former conquerors had lost the empire again, if they had not consolidated their power by the arts of peace. This conversation with the emperor led to the composition of a series of memorials, in which *Lu Chia* developed his ideas about government. This collection of memorials received the title 'New Words', *Hsin-yü*, cf. Chap. 83.

## Lun-hêng

simple-minded who have gone astray. They cannot find their way back to the right path, their principles are shallow, and their doings wrong. Unless we scholars hurry to their rescue, they come to perdition, and do not awake from their slumber. This has prompted me to write the *Lun-hêng*.

p1.085 In a great many books reality has no place left : falsehood and immorality triumph over truth and virtue. Therefore, unless such lies be censured, specious arguments cannot be suppressed, and, as long as they spread, truth does not reign. For this reason the *Lun-hêng* weighs the words, whether they be light or heavy, and holds up a balance for truth and falsehood. It does not trouble about polishing the phrases and embellishing the style, or consider this of great importance.

It has its *raison d'être* in the innate human weakness. Consequently it criticises the common people most vigorously. By nature these people are very prone to strange words and to the use of falsehoods. Why ? Because simple truisms do not appeal to the imagination, whereas elegant inventions puzzle the hearers, and impress their minds. Therefore, men of genius, who are fond of discussions, will magnify and exaggerate the truth, and use flowery language. Masters of style, they simply invent things, and tell stories, which never happened. Their hearers believe in them, and are never tired of repeating them. Their readers take these stories for facts, and one transmits them to the other in an unbroken chain so, that at last the words are engraved on bamboo and silk. Being repeated over and over again, these stories impose even upon the wise. May be that even His Majesty honours such a man as a teacher, and spreads his forgeries, and that magistrates and wearers of red girdle pendants <sup>1</sup> all read these inventions.

He who knows how to discriminate between truth and falsehood, must feel a pang at it ; why should he not speak ? *Mencius* was grieved that the discussions of *Yang Chu* and *Mê Ti* did great harm to the cause of Confucianism, therefore he used plain and straight-forward language to recommend what was right, and to reject what was wrong. People fancied that he was a controversialist, but *Mencius* replied,

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<sup>1</sup> Princes and nobles.

## Lun-hêng

— How should I be a controversialist ? I cannot do otherwise <sup>1</sup>.

Now I also cannot do otherwise. Lies and folly appear in the garb of truth, veracity and sincerity are superseded by imposture. People are in a state of apathy, right and wrong are not determined, purple and vermilion confounded <sup>2</sup>, and tiles mixed up with jade-stones. As regards my feelings, how could my heart endure such a state ? The lackey in *Wei* riding the outer horse <sup>p1.086</sup> transgressed his functions, crying out for the carriage. His sympathy carried him away, for he was apprehending a danger for his prince <sup>3</sup>. Critics commiserate the world, and feel sorry for its deceptions, a sentiment similar to that of the outrider in *Wei*. A sorrowful mind and a melancholy spirit disturb the tranquil fluid in our breast, which tells upon our years, shortens our span, and is not beneficial to our life. It is a greater misfortune than that suffered by *Yen Hui* <sup>4</sup>, and against the rules of *Huang Ti* and *Lao Tse*, and nothing which men like to do. But there was no help, therefore I wrote the *Lun-hêng*. Its style is indifferent, but the meaning all right, the diction bad, but the feeling good. The *Chêng-wu* <sup>5</sup> treats of the system of government ; all the chapters of the *Lun-hêng* may be read by ordinary people, for it is like writings of other scholars.

As for the Nine Inventions and the Three Exaggerations, and the essays on Death and on Ghosts <sup>6</sup>, the world has long been led astray by the errors exposed therein, and people did not become aware of it.

When a ruler goes wrong, representations must be addressed to the highest place, when the citizens are blindfold, one speaks to them. If this be of effect, their leader will learn also. I fervently desire to rouse the misguided minds, and to teach them, how to tell the full from the hollow. As soon as the difference of reality and emptiness is fully understood, specious arguments will be discarded, and then the progress made in true and real knowledge will

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<sup>1</sup> *Mencius* Bk. III, Pt. II, chap. IX, 1. [[Legge](#)] [[Couvreur](#)]

<sup>2</sup> Vermilion is regarded as a primary colour, and much liked, purple as secondary, and not much esteemed.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 1.154.

<sup>4</sup> The favourite disciple of *Confucius*, who died very young, cf. Chap. 28.

<sup>5</sup> Another of *Wang Ch'ung's* works, which has been lost.

<sup>6</sup> *Lun-hêng* N.16-24, N. 25-27, N. 62 and 65 (cf. p. 48 seq. and p. 57 seq.).



## Lun-hêng

daily increase.

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Some say that the sages create, whereas the worthies relate, and that, if worthies create, it is wrong. The *Lun-hêng* and the *Chêng-wu* are creations, they think. These works are neither creations nor relations. The Five Classics can be regarded as creations. The History of the Grand Annalist <sup>1</sup>, the Introduction of *Liu Tse Chêng* <sup>2</sup>, and the Records of *Pan Shu P'i* <sup>3</sup> may be called <sub>p1.087</sub> relations, and the 'New Reflections' <sup>4</sup> of *Huan Chün Shan* and the 'Critical Reflections' <sup>5</sup> of *Tsou Po Ch'i* <sup>6</sup>, discussions. Now the *Lun-hêng* and the *Chêng-wu* are like the two Reflections of *Huan Chün Shan* and *Tsou Po Chi*, and not what they call creations.

To produce something new that did not exist in the past, as *T'sang Hsieh* <sup>7</sup> invented writing and *Hsi Chung* <sup>8</sup>, chariots, is creating. The *Yi-king* says of *Fu Hsi* that he created the eight diagrams. They did not exist before, and *Fu Hsi* made them <sup>9</sup>, hence the term creating is used. *Wên Wang* evolved these eight pictures, and brought their number up to sixty-four, which is called amplifying. To say that the composition of the *Lun-hêng* is similar to that of the sixty-four figures is not correct either. In regard to the sixty-four diagrams, these figures were increased by an amplification of their forms, and their number was thus augmented. Now in the *Lun-hêng* the current literature is taken up with the object of defining right and wrong and distinguishing between truth and falsehood. It is not an original production of something that did not exist previously. The Confucianists take the sayings of former

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<sup>1</sup> The *Shi-chi*.

<sup>2</sup> The *Hsin-hsü*.

<sup>3</sup> *Pan Shu P'i* = *Pan Piao*, the father of the historian *Pan Ku*. He also was devoted to the study of history, and intended to continue the *Shi-chi*, which was finally done by his son.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Chap. 83.

<sup>5</sup> *Chien-lun*.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Chap. 83.

<sup>7</sup> A mythical personage.

<sup>8</sup> Another legendary person, who is said to have been a descendant of *Huang Ti* and director of chariots under *Yü*.

<sup>9</sup> *Vid.* Chap. 81, where *Wang Ch'ung* maintains that *Fu Hsi* did not make the diagrams, but received them in a supernatural way.

## Lun-hêng

teachers and criticise them, as clerks subject the decisions of the lord chief-justice to a new examination. If the term creating be applied to the *Lun-hêng*, would the same word be used of the Confucianists and the clerks ?

In their reports to the throne and their memorials the memorialists use to propose useful measures. There is always the desire to help the government. Now the creators of classical works are like those memorialists. Their words proceed from the innermost heart, and it is their hand which reduces them to writing. Both cases are identical. In regard to those who address the emperor one speaks of memorialising, whereas for those records another word has been adopted *viz.* writing.

During the first years of *Chien-Ch'u* <sup>1</sup>, there was a great dearth in *Chung-chou* <sup>2</sup>. The people from *Yin-ch'uan* <sup>3</sup> and *Ju-nan* <sup>4</sup> had to p1.088 leave their homes, and were scattered in all directions. His Holy Majesty felt very much distressed, and many edicts were issued. The writer of the *Lun-hêng* presented a report <sup>5</sup> to the prefect, urging that all dissipations and extravagancies should be prohibited in order to provide for the time of need. His suggestions were not accepted however. He went home and entitled the draft of his report 'Provisions for Times of Want'.

When the grain is used for the distillation of wine, robbery is rampant, and as long as there is much drunkenness, robberies never cease. In a memorial sent to the prefect the writer proposed that the use of spirits should be interdicted, and afterwards gave to this report the name 'Prohibition of Spirits'. From this it may be seen that the writing of the classical authors is like that of memorialists. Those reports are regarded as independent creations presented to the emperor. Reports and memorials to the throne are always creations.

In the *Ch'êng* of *Chin*, the *T'ao-wu* of *Ch'u* <sup>6</sup>, and the *Ch'un-ch'iu* of *Lu*

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<sup>1</sup> The first year of the emperor *Chang Ti* : 76 A. D.

<sup>2</sup> An old name for *Honan*.

<sup>3</sup> A circuit in *Anhui*.

<sup>4</sup> A place in *Honan*.

<sup>5</sup> A report for the emperor, which *Wang Ch'ung*, not being of sufficiently high rank, could not present directly.

<sup>6</sup> The official chronicles of these two States. (Cf. Chap. 81.)

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persons and things are all different. As regards the diagrams *ch'ien* and *k'un* of the *Yiking*, the *yuan* <sup>1</sup> of the *Ch'un-ch'iu* and the mystical principle of *Yang Tse Yün*, they use diverse terms for divination and time periods. From this we may infer that the *Lun-hêng* and the *Chêng-wu* have the same aim as the memorials of *T'ang Lin* and the essays of *Ku Yung*.

The *Han* time is very rich in literary talents, and the number of essays is especially large. *Yang Ch'êng Tse Chang* produced the *Yüeh-ching* <sup>2</sup> and *Yang Tse Yün* the *T'ai-hsüan-ching*. These two books were current in the court and read in the side-halls. The impression they caused was enormous, they were not relations but creations, and people doubted, whether the ingenious authors were not sages. The court found nothing to blame in them. Now, fancy the *Lun-hêng* with its minute discussions and thorough arguments, intended to explain the common errors and elucidate the right and wrong principles so, that future generations can clearly see the difference between truth and falsehood ! Lest all this be lost, I have committed it to the writing tablets : remarks on chapters and passages of the classics of our ancestors, and on queer sayings of former <sup>p1.089</sup> masters. I offer critical remarks and reject many common traditions. The delusion caused by such traditions and the spread of so many lying books give endless pain to the knowing. *Confucius* said :

— When a man is touched by poetry, he cannot remain silent.  
When I am moved, I cannot keep quiet, but must speak.

Jade is being confounded with stones. People cannot distinguish it, as for instance the inspector of works in *Ch'u* took jade for a stone, and suddenly ordered *Pien Ho* to have his foot cut off <sup>3</sup>. Right is being turned into wrong, and falsehood into truth. How is it possible not to speak of it ?

As the common traditions are full of exaggerations, so the common books teem with falsehoods. *Tsou Yen* e. g. pretends that our world <sup>4</sup> is one

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<sup>1</sup> A term employed for the first year of a sovereign, also denoting the original fluid of nature.

<sup>2</sup> The 'Classic of Music'.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 1.113.

<sup>4</sup> China.

## Lun-hêng

continent, and that beyond the four seas there are still nine other continents like our world <sup>1</sup>. *Huai Nan Tse* says in his book that, when *Kung Kung*, fighting for the throne with *Chuan Hsü*, was not victorious, he ran against Mount *Pu-chou* in his wrath so, that he caused the 'Pillar of Heaven' to break, and the confines of the earth to be smashed <sup>2</sup>. In *Yao's* time ten suns appeared simultaneously. *Yao* shot an arrow at nine of them <sup>3</sup>. During the battle fought by the Duke of *Lu-yang* <sup>4</sup> the sun went down. Swinging his spear he beckoned to the sun, when he came back. There are a great many books and records of a similar nature in the world. Truth and reality are drowned in a flood of inventions and fabrications. Can we remain silent, when our heart swells to overflowing, and the pencil trembles in our hand ?

Discussing a question we must examine into it with our mind, and demonstrate it by facts, and, if there be any inventions, proofs must be given. As the history of the Grand Annalist testifies, *Hsü Yu* <sup>5</sup> did not hide, nor did *Tan*, the crown-prince of *Yen*, cause the sun to revert to the meridian. Nobody can read these passages without applauding.

p1.090 I composed the *Chêng-wu* for the purpose of showing to the incumbents of the prefectures and the district magistrates, what is of paramount importance in the administration, and with a view to induce all people to reform and gratefully acknowledge the kindness of the government. The nine chapters of the *Lun-hêng* on Inventions and the three chapters on Exaggerations are intended to impress upon people that they must strive for truthfulness, and the chapters on Death and Ghosts <sup>6</sup> shall induce them to give their dead a simple burial.

*Confucius* avoided all pomp, but people were very extravagant in burying

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chap. 31.

<sup>2</sup> *Vid.* Chap. 31.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Chap. 32.

<sup>4</sup> A city in *Honan*. We learn from the *Lun-hêng* V, 6v. (*Kan-hsü*) that this battle was fought by Duke *Hsiang* of *Lu* against *Han*. This prince reigned from 572 to 541. *Huai Nan Tse* VI, 1v., however, from whom this passage is quoted, speaks of the Duke of *Lu-yang* and the commentary remarks that this was a grandson of King *P'ing* of *Ch'u* (528-515), called *Lu-yang Wen Tse* in the *Kuo-yü*.

<sup>5</sup> A legendary hermit of *Yao's* time. (Cf. Chap. 29.)

<sup>6</sup> Cf. [Forke](#), pp. 057 and 058.

## Lun-hêng

the dead and decorating the coffin. *Liu Tse Chêng* was in favour of simple funerals, but people would put costly things into the graves, and spare no money. *Kuang Wu Ti* regarded straw carriages and reed horses as sufficiently good objects for the sacrificial worship of the dead. Why do the common books and traditions not mention this? The belief in the talk on death has defiled them.

Now I have written the essays on Death and on the False Reports about the Dead <sup>1</sup> to show that the deceased have no consciousness, and cannot become ghosts, hoping that, as soon as my readers have grasped this, they will restrain the extravagance of the burials, and become more economical. Such would be the advantage derived from the *Lun-hêng*. Provided that my words have this effect, what would it matter, if my work were a creation?

The writing of *Ts'ang Hsieh* is universally used to record things, the carriages of *Hsi Chung* for locomotion, the clothes of *Po Yü* as a protection against heat and cold, and the tiled houses of *Chieh* to keep off wind and rain <sup>2</sup>. If, irrespective of their usefulness or obnoxiousness, such things be solely found fault with for being innovations, then men like *Ts'ang Hsieh* would have to be condemned, and the fifteen dynasties at the beginning of history all be blame-worthy <sup>3</sup>. Provided that a thing be useful, there is no harm, even if it should be an innovation, and if there be no harm, what can be amiss? In ancient times great public entertainments were given by imperial order with the object of seeing the customs and learning <sup>p1.091</sup> the feelings of the people. Then the Odes <sup>4</sup> originated among the people. The holy emperors might have said,

— Ye, people, how dare you produce such novel things?,

and have thrown them into prison, and destroyed their Odes. This was not done, and the Odes were thus handed down. Now the *Lun-hêng* and the

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<sup>1</sup> *Lun-hêng* N. 62 and 63.

<sup>2</sup> The tyrant *Chieh* is reported to have built the first brick houses (*Ti-wang-shi-chi*).

<sup>3</sup> The ten dynasties of the fabulous age of Chinese history together with the Five Emperors and their houses, whom Chinese fancy has credited with the invention of all the fundamental institutions of civilisation, such as house building, dress making, writing, etc.

<sup>4</sup> The Odes of the *Shiking*.

## Lun-hêng

*Chêng-wu* are like the Odes. I trust that they will not be condemned, before they have been perused.

This is the origin of the *Lun-hêng*. The reason why people so often take exception to new productions is that they often contain so many unfounded assertions and disparaging remarks on others. The *Lun-hêng* aims at truth and dislikes all wild speculations. The chapters entitled : *Ch'i-shih* <sup>1</sup>, *Hsüan Han*, *Hui kuo*, and *Yen fu* <sup>2</sup> are full of praise and well-deserved applause <sup>3</sup>, and not disparaging at all. Such a creation might well escape reproach.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Equality of the ages'.

<sup>2</sup> Contained in Books XVIII and XIX, N. 56-59.

<sup>3</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* eulogises the emperors of his own time, and places them on a level with the model sovereigns of antiquity.

85. Book XXX, Chap. I

*Tse-chi*. Autobiography

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p1.064 *Wang Ch'ung* is a native of *Shang-yü-hsien* <sup>1</sup> in *Kuei-chi* <sup>2</sup>. His style is *Chung Jên*. His family hails from *Yuan-ch'êng* <sup>3</sup> in the *Wei* <sup>4</sup> circuit. One of his clan, *Sun-yi*, served his whole life as a soldier, and distinguished himself so much, that he was appointed warden of the southern part of *Kuei-chi*, but, when one year a disturbance broke out, which disorganised the State, he continued to reside there, and became a farmer and cultivator of mulberry-trees.

His great grand-father was very bold and violent, and, when in a passion, cared for nobody. In a year of dearth he behaved like a ruffian, and wounded and killed people. Those whom he had wronged, and who were waiting for an opportunity to wreak their vengeance, were very numerous. As in *Kuei-chi* revolts were of constant occurrence, and there was danger that his enemies would seize upon him, the grand-father *Fan* removed his family and his household from *Kuei-chi*, and settled in *Ch'ien-t'ang-hsien* <sup>5</sup>, where he lived as a merchant. He had two sons, the elder was called *Mêng*, the younger *Sung*. *Sung* is the father of *Wang Ch'ung*.

The grand-father had a violent temper, which in his sons, *Mêng* and *Sung*, became so intense, that many people in *Ch'ien-t'ang* had to suffer from their vehemence. At last they became involved again in a feud with *Ting Po* and other influential families, in consequence of which they emigrated with their families to *Shang-yü*.

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<sup>1</sup> In *Shao-hsing-fu* (*Chekiang*).

<sup>2</sup> Under the *Han* dynasty *K'uei-chi* comprises *Chekiang*, the South of *Anhui*, and the North of *Fukien*.

<sup>3</sup> In *Ta-ming fu* (*Chili*).

<sup>4</sup> A circuit comprising parts of *Chili* and *Honan*.

<sup>5</sup> In the *Hang-chou* prefecture of *Chekiang*.

## Lun-hêng

In the third year of *Chien-wu* <sup>1</sup>, *Wang Ch'ung* was born. When playing with his companions, he disliked all frivolous games. His comrades would entrap birds, catch cicadas, play for money, and gambol on stilts. *Wang Ch'ung* alone declined to take part in their games to the great amazement of his father.

p1.065 At the age of six, he received his first instruction, and learned to behave with politeness, honesty, benevolence, obedience, propriety, and reverence. He was grave, earnest, and very quiet, and had the will of a great man. His father never flogged him, his mother never gave him a harsh word, and the neighbours never scolded him. When he was eight years old, he went to school. There were over one hundred small boys in this school. As a punishment for faults committed they used to be stripped, or were whipped for bad writing. *Wang Ch'ung* made daily progress, and never committed any offence.

When he could write sentences, his teacher explained to him the *Analects* and the *Shuking*, of which he daily read a thousand characters. When he knew the Classics, and his virtue had thus been developed, he left his teacher, and devoted his private studies to writing and composing so, that every one was astonished, and the extent of his reading widened day by day. But he did not make bad use of his talents, and though he possessed great dialectical skill, he was not fond of disputations. Unless he found the proper audience, he did not speak the whole day. His speech was quaint and not like that of others, but those who listened to him to the end, agreed with him. Such were also the productions of his pen, and so were his conduct, and his behaviour towards his superiors.

In a district he rose to the rank of a secretary, and held the same office in the department of a military governor. In a prefecture he was one of the five chief secretaries <sup>2</sup>, and in a department he was appointed assistant-magistrate. He did not strive for fame, and did not regulate his conduct in

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<sup>1</sup> 27 A. D.

<sup>2</sup> A prefecture or a circuit — of which there were 36 during the *Han* epoch — was divided into 5 regions : the centre and four quarters. Each region was superintended by a chief secretary of the prefect, who had the jurisdiction over his region.



## Lun-hêng

accordance with his personal profits. He always spoke of people's merits and seldom of their faults. Those who had not yet got on in their career, were specially recommended by him, and he exposed only the faults of those who had secured a position. When he thought anything wrong, he did not praise it, and when a fault was not done away with, he did not again condemn the man. He could pardon the great faults of a man, and also pitied his minor mistakes. His desire was to be unimpeachable himself, but he did not wish to shine. He endeavoured to base his claims on recognition upon his actions, and was ashamed to presume upon his talents.

p1.066 In public meetings he did not speak, unless he was asked, and in the presence of princes and generals he only replied, when he was addressed. In the country he attempted to follow the example of *Chü Po Yü* <sup>1</sup>, and in the court he wished to imitate *Shih Tse Yü* <sup>2</sup>.

When insulted, he did not white-wash himself, and, when in his career he was not promoted, he did not feel grieved. Although he was poor and had not an acre to dwell upon, his mind was freer than that of kings and dukes, and though he had no emoluments counted by pecks and piculs, he felt, as if he had ten thousand *chung* <sup>3</sup> to live upon. Obtaining an appointment, he was not overjoyed, and losing it, he did not feel distressed. He enjoyed a tranquil happiness, but his desires did not run riot, and though he was living in a state of poverty, his energy was not broken. The study of ancient literature was his debauchery, and strange stories his relish. In the current books and common sayings he found much, in which he could not acquiesce. A recluse in his solitary retirement, he tried to find truth and falsehood.

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<sup>1</sup> A disciple of *Confucius*, whom the master esteemed very much.

<sup>2</sup> *Shih Tse Yü* — *Shih Yü*, a high officer in *Wei*. When Duke *Ling* of *Wei* (533-492) did not employ *Chü Po Yü*, *Shih Tse Yü* remonstrated with the duke, but in vain. Soon afterwards he fell sick. Feeling his end coming, he told his son to place his corpse under the window, without performing the usual funeral rites, because he did not deserve them, not having been able to convince the duke of what was right. When the duke paid his condolence, the son informed him of what his father had said. The duke repented, and then appointed *Chü Po Yü*. When *Confucius* heard of this, he exclaimed — How upright was *Shih Tse Yü*, who still as a corpse admonished his sovereign. *Chü Po Yü* was of a different turn of mind. *Confucius* said of him that, when bad government prevailed, he could roll his principles up, and keep them in his breast. ([Analects XV, 6 \[Couvreur\]](#).)

<sup>3</sup> One chung=4 pecks.

## Lun-hêng

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*Wang Ch'ung* had a pure and sterling character. He made friends wherever he went, but did not contract these friendships carelessly. The position of his friends might be ever so low, and in years they might be ever so young, provided only that they rose above common-place mediocrity, he would seek their friendship. He had a great admiration for superior men, and liked to associate with distinguished people, but would not lightly become intimate with men of common gifts. In case these latter slandered him for a slight fault or any insignificant mistake, he would not clear himself of these accusations, nor did he bear any grudge against them.

p1.067 Some one might ask, why a man of remarkable gifts and extraordinary literary talent should not defend himself against false incriminations. *Yang Shêng* and others were foul-mouthed and glib-tongued ; but *Tsou Yang* vindicated himself and came out of jail again <sup>1</sup>. When a man's conduct is perfect, people should not attempt to find flaws in it, and when somebody exerts himself to come to the front, they should not keep him down.

I reply that none but the pure remark dust, and none but the exalted perceive dangers. Only those living in abundance, feel restraints, and those in opulence know what is want. The scholars at present talk too much of themselves, therefore they are slandered by others, which is their due. Desirous to get on, they show themselves, and resenting neglect, they assert themselves. Being free of these desires and resentments, I keep quiet.

The slanders of *Yang Shêng* were probably promoted by somebody, and when *Tsou Yang* was delivered, some one saved him. *Confucius* spoke of destiny and *Mencius* of heaven. Luck and mishap, quietude and danger do not depend on man. The ancients knew this, therefore they ascribed these things to destiny and attributed them to time. Placid, tranquil, and equanimous, they did not complain of injustice. When happiness came, they did not imagine

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<sup>1</sup> *Tsou Yang* lived under the reign of *Ching Ti* (156-141 B. C.). At the court of King *Hsiao* of *Liang* he was denounced by *Yang Shêng* and others, and thrown into prison, but by a memorial, which from his confinement he sent to the king, he obtained his release, and was re-instated into all his honours.

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that they themselves had brought it about, and when misfortune befell them, they did not consider it their own doing. When they were successful, their joy was not immoderate, and when they suffered reverses, their courage did not fail them. They did not hate need, and therefore crave for plenty, nor did they brave dangers to win peace. Their wisdom they did not sell for wages, and they did not decline honours to become famous. Not being bent on success, they did not try to show off, and not resenting reverses, they did not complain of others. Tranquillity and excitement were the same to them, life and death equal, luck and mishap identical, and victory and defeat one. Meeting even ten *Yang Shêngs*, they would have said that it mattered not ; they left everything to heaven, and therefore did not wish to shine.

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*Wang Ch'ung* was of a cheerful and easy-going disposition, and did not strive for wealth and honour. When his superiors took notice of him, and promoted him above the heads of others, p1.068 he did not cling to his high post, and, when they ignored, denounced, and degraded him, he did not pine at his low rank. When in the district magistrate's office, he had no ambition and no repugnance.

Some one might object that to act like this is easy enough, but that the difficulty lies with the heart. Meeting with congenial friends, scholars do not care for the place, but whose example can they follow, when they have dirty and distasteful business to do ?

There is no better paragon than *Confucius*, I should say. *Confucius* as an official had no aversions. In charge of the public fields and as keeper of the granaries he was not low-spirited, and when he was superintendent of works and minister, his face was not beaming with joy. *Shun* tilled the land on the *Li-shan* <sup>1</sup>, as though he should continue to do so for ever, and when he had received the empire from *Yao*, he behaved, as if he had obtained it later on as a matter of course. We must be sorry that our virtue is not quite perfect, but not regret our humble rank, and we may be abashed, if our name is not without blemish, but should not feel chagrined, because we do not advance in

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<sup>1</sup> It is not certain where this Mount *Li* was situated. Various places are assigned to it.

## Lun-hêng

our career. Marble may be kept in the same box with tiles, and moon-stones in the same bag with pebbles. Being both of precious stuff, they are not injured by being mixed with other things in the world. For him who knows what is good, good things shine even in base places, whereas to those who cannot make these distinctions, they look common even in a prominent place. As long as the deeds of people in low and high spheres can be measured, and as the virtues of men in humble positions, and of noble rank can be compared, it is all right.

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The world courts those who have been successful, and disdains those who have failed. It hails the victor, and spurns the defeated. As long as *Wang Ch'ung* was rising, and holding rank and office, all the people swarmed around him like ants, but, when he had lost his position and was living in poverty, his former friends abandoned him. He pondered over the heartlessness of the world and in his leisure he wrote twelve chapters 'Censures on Common Morals' <sup>1</sup>, hoping that the reading of these books would rouse the public conscience. For this purpose he expressly wrote <sup>p1.069</sup> it in an easy, popular style. Should anybody condemn it as shallow, I would reply that if the style of the Sacred Institutions <sup>2</sup> be employed for the Lesser Odes <sup>3</sup>, or if an elegant speech be addressed to rustics, they would not understand anything, and therefore not agree. Thus *Su Ch'in* <sup>4</sup> spoke very elegantly in *Chao*, but *Li Tui* was not enchanted at all. *Shang Yang* <sup>5</sup> spoke in *Ch'in*, as if he had addressed an emperor, but Duke *Hsiao* <sup>6</sup> did not follow his advice. If no attention be paid to the individuality and inclinations of the bearers, one may exhaust the eloquence of *Yao* and *Shun*, it would be like giving an ox wine to drink and feeding a horse on preserved meat. A refined, rhetorical, and scientific style is fit for the upper classes of society, but out of place for small-minded people. It happens very seldom, that those who must

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<sup>1</sup> *Chi su chieh yi*.

<sup>2</sup> Parts of the *Shuking*.

<sup>3</sup> The minor odes of the *Shiking*.

<sup>4</sup> A politician of the 4th cent. B. C. (Cf. Chap. 83.)

<sup>5</sup> *Vid.* p. 1.171, Note 2.

<sup>6</sup> Duke *Hsiao* of *Ch'in*, 361-537 B. C.

## Lun-hêng

hear something  *nolens volens*, take it to heart.

When *Confucius* had lost a horse in the country, the country-people locked it up, and did not return it. *Tse Kung* spoke to them in well turned sentences, but only made them angry, but when the groom addressed them in a familiar, jocular tone, they relented <sup>1</sup>.

To use high-flown expressions at all costs instead of the plain and simple language of the people is like mixing an elixir, as the spirits use, to cure a cold or a cough, and to put on a fur-coat of sable or fox to fetch firewood or vegetables. As regards propriety, a thing is often out of place, and many an action is often better left undone. To give a decision, and understand a grievance, one must not be a *Kao Yao* <sup>2</sup>, and to cook sunflower-seed and onions, no *Yi Ti* <sup>3</sup> or *Yi Ya* <sup>4</sup> is required. In a side-alley one does not play the music of *Shun*, and *Wu*, and to the Village Mother <sup>5</sup> one does not sacrifice a whole ox. What is unnecessary, is also inadequate.

p1.070 To carve a fowl with a butcher's knife, to reap sun-flowers with a *Shu* <sup>6</sup> spear, to cut chop-sticks with an iron halberd, and to pour a glassful into a basin or a tureen would be incongruous, and few would recommend it. What is the principle of debating ? To illustrate deep thoughts by simple ones. And how do we prove that we possess knowledge ? By illustrating difficult points by easy ones. Sages and worthies use to weigh, what suits the different talents. Hence the difference of style, which may be difficult or easy.

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Since *Wang Ch'ung* deplored the popular feeling, he wrote his *Censures on Public Morals*, and also lamenting the vain efforts of the emperor's government, which was endeavouring to govern the people, but could not find

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<sup>1</sup> This adventure is related by *Huai Nan Tse* (quoted in the *Pei-wên-yün-fu*) likewise, who adds that the horse of *Confucius* was retained by the peasants, because it had eaten their corn.

<sup>2</sup> A minister of *Shun*.

<sup>3</sup> *Yi Ti*, the inventor of wine, who presented the first cup to Great *Yü*.

<sup>4</sup> *Yi Ya*, the famous cook of Duke *Huan* of *Ch'i*, 7th cent. B. C. (Cf. [Mencius, Bk. VI, Pt. I, chap. 7, Legge Vol. II, p. 281.](#)) [[Couvreur](#)]

<sup>5</sup> The matron-saint of a village.

<sup>6</sup> An old State in *Anhui*.

## Lun-hêng

the right way, nor understand what was required, and mournful and disheartened did not see its course, he wrote the book on government <sup>1</sup>. Furthermore disgusted with the many deceitful books and popular literature devoid of veracity and truthfulness, he composed the Disquisitions (*Lun-hêng*).

The worthies and sages are dead, and their great doctrine has split up. Many new roads have been struck out, on which many people have stumbled. Every one must have his own school. Intelligent men have seen this, but were unable to find the right way. Old traditions have been transmitted, either written down, or spread by hearsay. Since they were dating from over a hundred years backwards and growing older from day to day, people have regarded them as antique lore and therefore near the truth, and this belief became so rooted in their minds, that they themselves were incapable of eradicating it again.

For this reason the Disquisitions have been written to show the truth. They are in a lively style and full of controversy. Every specious and futile argument has been tested, semblance and falsehood have been rejected, and only what is real and solid has been preserved. Loose manners have been suppressed, and the customs of *Fu Hsi's* time <sup>2</sup> revived.

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*Wang Ch'ung* writings are lucid and easy to understand. There are those who pretend that the words of a good debater must be profound, and the compositions of an able writer obscure. The p1.071 style of the classic literature and the sayings of worthies and sages are grand and majestic, beautiful and refined, and difficult to grasp at first. Those who study their whole life, learn to understand them with the necessary explanations. The genius of the first thinkers being so wonderful, their expressions cannot be the same as those of ordinary people. Gems, they say, are concealed in stones, and pearls in fish-maws. Only jewel-lapidaries and pearl-experts can find them. These precious things cannot be seen, because they are hidden,

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<sup>1</sup> *Chêng-wu*.

<sup>2</sup> The Golden Age.

## Lun-hêng

and thus truisms must be profound and deep, and hard to grasp.

The 'Censures on Morals' are intended to rouse people, therefore the meaning is perspicuous and the style quite plain. But why must the *Lun-hêng* be like this tao ? Is the talent of the author so shallow, that it was absolutely impossible to hide anything ? Why is the style so perspicuous, and quite a different principle followed than in the classical literature ?

My reply is as follows. A gem is concealed in a stone and a pearl in a fish-maw, and therefore they are covered and in the dark. But, when the colour of the gem beams from the heart of the stone, and the lustre of the pearl breaks through the fish-maw, are they still hidden ? They are like my thoughts, before they have been fixed in books. Enshrined in my bosom, they are like gems or pearls in their concealment, shining forth, brilliant as the splendour of the heavenly bodies, and clear as the distinct lines of the surface of the earth.

Lest things should remain doubtful and obscure to us, we can describe them all by names, and, provided that the names are clear, all the things become defined. The *Lun-hêng* discusses these questions impartially.

In speaking, it is essential to use clear words, and in writing, to employ plain signs. The style of eminent scholars is refined, but their words can always be understood, and their meaning always be caught. Their readers are suddenly enlightened like blind men who recover their sight, or stirred up like deaf men who suddenly learn to hear. When a child who has been blind for three years, unexpectedly sees his parents, he would not, at once, know them on perceiving them, why then should he give utterance to his joy ?

Let a huge tree stand by the road-side, and a long ditch run along a bank, then the locality is well defined, and everybody knows it. Now, should the tree not be huge any more and disappear, and the ditch not be long and be hidden, and the place be shown to people, even *Yao* and *Shun* would be perplexed.

p1.072 The human features are divided into more than seventy different classes. The flesh of the cheeks being pure and white, the five colours can be clearly discerned, and the slightest sorrow, pleasure, and other emotions, all

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find expression in the features. A physiognomist will not once be mistaken in ten cases. But if the face be blackened and begrimed, or covered with a layer of dirt so, that the features are hidden, then physiognomists will give wrong answers nine times out of ten.

The style is formed of words. It may be shallow, perspicuous, and distinct, or deep, abstruse, elegant, and polished. Who shall distinguish it ?

We speak to express our thoughts, and from fear, that our words might be lost, we commit them to writing. Writing having the same purpose as speaking, wherefore should it conceal the meaning ?

A judge must hate wrong. Now, would a magistrate, who while deciding a doubtful case gives a confuse and unintelligent verdict, be a better official than another, who clearly distinguishes every point, and can easily be understood ?

In oral discussions, one makes clear distinctions out of regards for the audience, and in written disputations one elucidates one's meaning to be understood. In historical works, a clear and intelligible style is most appreciated, and of profound productions, full of beautiful thoughts, but hard to read, there are only pieces of irregular verse and dithyrambs. As for the classical and semi-classical works and the words of the worthies and sages, the ancient and modern languages are different, and speech varies in the different parts of the empire. At the time, when these men spoke, they did not wish that their words should be difficult to understand, or that their meaning should be hidden. If later ages did not understand them, this is owing to the remoteness of time. Therefore one may speak of the difference of language, but not of genius or shallowness of style. If the reading offers great difficulties, the works may be considered as not very cleverly written, but this should not be reputed a great wisdom.

*Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* reading *Han Fei Tse's* work exclaimed with a sigh :

— Alas ! that I am alone, and have not got this man <sup>1</sup> !

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<sup>1</sup> According to the *Shi-chi* chap. 63 p. 11v (Biography of *Han Fei Tse*) the emperor said : — Alas ! If I could see this man, I would be willing to live and die with him !



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They were contemporaries, he could understand his words and p1.073 reflect upon what he said. If the book had been so profound and exquisite, that he wanted a teacher to comprehend it, he would have flung it to the ground, and it was no use sighing <sup>1</sup>.

An author wishes his work to be intelligible, but difficult to write, and he does not care, if it be hard to grasp, but easy to write. In lectures one aims at perspicuity, that the hearers can follow, and does not affect obscurity and ambiguity to baffle the readers. *Mencius* knew an intelligent man by the sparkling of his eyes <sup>2</sup>. One learns to know what a text is worth by its lucidity.

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The book of *Wang Ch'ung* is of another type than the usual writings. The following objection might be raised against it :

In literature it is of importance to conform to the public feeling, and not to be in opposition to received ideas. Then not one out of a hundred readers will find anything to blame, and not one out of a thousand hearers will take exception. Therefore *Kuan Tse* <sup>3</sup> said that, where somebody is speaking in a house, the audience must fill the whole house, and, when he speaks in a hall, the entire hall should be full. Now *Wang Ch'ung's* arguments are not in accordance with public opinion. Consequently his words controvert all common ideas, and do not tally with the general views.

I reply that in arguing, the essential thing is truth, not elegance, that the facts should at all events be correct, and that *consensus* is not the highest aim. Investigating a question, one discusses the *pros* and *cons*, how would it be possible not to deviate from old ideas and perhaps offend the ears of the common hearer ? When the general feeling is wrong, it cannot be followed. One denounces and discards that which is false, and keeps and establishes that which is true. If we were to go by majority, and conform to the public

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<sup>1</sup> *Han Fei Tse* was sent as envoy from his native State (*Han*) to *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti*, who first appreciated him very much and wished to appoint him to some high post. By the intrigues of *Li Sse*, however, he was induced to imprison him, and to condemn him to death. The emperor afterwards repented, and cancelled the death warrant, but it was too late, for meanwhile *Han Fei Tse* had taken poison. (Cf. p. 1.170.)

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Chap. 13.

<sup>3</sup> The philosopher *Kuan Chung*.

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feeling, we could only follow the good old rules and precedents, and recite them over and over again, but how could there be any discussion ?

p1.074 When *Confucius* was attending the court and sitting next to Duke *Ai* of *Lu*, the duke favoured him with a peach and millet. *Confucius* first ate the millet and then the peach. This, we must admit, was the right order of eating the two courses. The courtiers, however, all covered their mouth and laughed. They had, for a long time, been used to another custom. Now I, in fact, resemble *Confucius* eating the two dishes in the order described above. Ordinary people take exception like the courtiers laughing in their sleeves.

Beautiful festive songs were considered as too melancholic, in *Chêng* <sup>1</sup> and pantomimes, at great celebrations, found no favour in *Chao*.

The five Leading Princes <sup>2</sup> declined to cast a look upon the Canons of *Yao* and *Shun*, and *Chi* and *Mêng* <sup>3</sup> would not read the works of *Confucius* and *Mê Ti*. Plans for securing the peace in times of danger are scoffed at in side-alleys, and schemes of reform ridiculed by common people. If there were an exquisite dish, vulgar people would not taste it, though *Yi Ti* and *Yi Ya* <sup>4</sup> might eat it with the greatest relish, and if there were a precious jade-stone, ordinary people would throw it away, whereas *Pien Ho* <sup>5</sup> would hoard it up as a treasure. Who would be right, who wrong, and who could be trusted ? Propriety and common usage are always in opposition, when has it not been so ? When Duke *Wên* of *Lu* infringed the rule of sacrifices <sup>6</sup>, five men resisted him.

Great scholars will never give up researches of the above mentioned kind,

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<sup>1</sup> In *Chêng* licentious music, but not the serious songs of the Book of Odes were appreciated.

<sup>2</sup> The five leaders of the empire, the most powerful princes during the 7th cent. B.C. to wit : Duke *Huan* of *Ch'i*, Duke *Wên* of *Chin*, Duke *Hsiang* of *Sung*, Duke *Chuang* of *Ch'u*, and Duke *Mu* of *Ch'in*. They were more bent on conquest than interested in the moral laws expounded in the Canons of *Yao* and *Shun* in the *Shuking*.

<sup>3</sup> The chiefs of two noble families in *Lu*, contemporaries of *Confucius*.

<sup>4</sup> *Vid.* p. 1.069.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. p. 1.089.

<sup>6</sup> Duke *Wên* placed the tablet of his deceased father above that of his uncle in the ancestral temple. The latter, Duke *Min*, was a younger brother of Duke *Hsi*, but he preceded in reign. For more details *vid.* *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Wên* 2nd year [[Couvreur](#)].

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and common people will always dislike them. And so will the *savants* enjoy and appreciate books, which bewilder the masses, and which the narrow-minded will flee.

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*Wang Ch'ung's* book cannot be free from imperfection. Some say that in speaking he does not choose the words, nor in writing, the phrases. Compositions must be tastefully written, and discussions <sup>p1.075</sup> ingeniously conducted. When such words strike the ear, they cause a pleasant feeling in the heart, and when the eye fans on writing, the hand does not lay the book aside again. Such disputations are always listened to, and excellent compositions always appreciated. Now, since this new book chiefly consists of comparisons and strictures on the depravity of the age, and does not praise what is good, it does not please the reader. The tunes played by the music-master *K'uang* <sup>1</sup> were always full of feeling, and the delicacies prepared by *Yi Ti* and *Yi Ya* were never tasteless. When a clever man writes a book, it is without a flaw. *Lü Shih* <sup>2</sup> and *Huai Nan* made an advertisement on the market gates, and the readers did not find fault with one word in their books <sup>3</sup>. Now the *Lun-hêng* does not possess the beauties of these two books. It is long enough, but open to objections in many respects.

In reply I beg to state that he who cherishes veracity does not trouble much about beauty, and that regulating the conduct, he does not polish his words. Luxuriant grass has often abundance of blossoms, and mighty forests have many dry branches. The purport of words is to clearly show the nature of things, how can they be polished and above all censure? Saving a man from fire or out of water, we do not care, whether we do it in a beautiful style or not, and, when we debate on a question, our words must not necessarily be ingenious. Plunging into a lake to seize turtles, we have no time to think, whether we place our feet right, and catching dragons in deep water, we have

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<sup>1</sup> The music-master of the Duke of *Chin*, (cf. Chap. 64).

<sup>2</sup> *Lü Pu Wei*, the author of the *Lü Shih Ch'un-ch'iu*.

<sup>3</sup> It is related of *Lü Pu Wei* that he placed a copy of his work in the market place and offered a reward of a thousand chin to any one who could alter one character in it. The same is not known of *Huai nan Tse*.

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no time to care for the position of our hands.

In spite of bad style and faulty terms the meaning may be excellent and far reaching sometimes, and sweet words and beautiful expressions give often a very poor sense. When a thousand *chung* of grain are cleansed, more than half are husks, and examining a hundred thousand cash, one finds that the broken coins exceed ten thousand. Fine soups are often insipid, and the best jewels have their flaws. A slipshod production may possess great beauties, and a great artist do very second-rate work. Every discussion has its weak points, and in the ablest production some deficiencies can be detected.

p1.076 Golden words come from noble houses, and foul productions from poor families, they think. — *Huai Nan Tse* and *Lü Shih* <sup>1</sup> did not encounter any difficulties, because they were descendants of rich houses and of high rank. Since they were noble, they could well advertise on the market place, and being so wealthy, they could easily make the alternate promise of a thousand *chin*. Their readers were intimidated and in awe, and would never have ventured to criticise one character, even if it had been quite out of place.

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When *Wang Ch'ung's* book was completed, it was compared by some with the works of the ancients, and found to be quite different from the writings of previous authors. Some hold that the book may be said to be written partly in a slovenly style. Sometimes it is terse, at others diffuse, sometimes concise, sometimes prolix. When a problem is being discussed or a question investigated, the author is too summary or too loquacious, half sweet, half sour. The Classics he does not resemble, with the semi-classics he does not agree, nor does he harmonize with either *Yang Ch'êng Tse Chang* or *Yang Tse Yün* <sup>2</sup>. Since he is unlike the ancient authors, how can he be considered a good writer, or his book be reputed an able production ?

I answer that, if anybody puts on an alien appearance forcibly to be like

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<sup>1</sup> Both were princes.

<sup>2</sup> *Vid.* p. 1.088.

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somebody else, his own shape is lost, and if he changes his style to resemble others, he loses his peculiar character. The sons of a hundred persons have not the same parents. Being all born in different families, they cannot be similar. Each one distinguishes himself by his peculiar gifts. If writings could only then be considered good, when they are conform to a certain standard, this would be like substituting one workman for another and declaring his work to be a master-piece, provided that in hewing he did not cut his own hand.

All literary men have their own specialties. The one polishes his phrases to produce an elegant composition, the other combats all errors to establish the truth. Their ultimate aims are the same, and the words follow of themselves. Thus the deeds of the Five Emperors were not different, and there was no conflict between the actions of the Three Rulers. Beautiful looks are not <sup>p1.077</sup> the same, but their aspect is always pleasing to the eye ; sentimental airs are not identical, but their music is always gratifying to the ear. Wines have different flavours, but they all inebriate, the tastes of various cereals vary, but they all appease our hunger. If conformity to old standard be required of a literary production, then we would be entitled to expect that *Shun* also should have eye-brows with eight colours <sup>1</sup> and *Yü* eyes with double pupils <sup>2</sup>.

*Wang Ch'ung's* book is very voluminous. Some say that in writing the chief thing is to be brief and clear, and that in speaking one must be short and plain. The words of a good debater are succinct, but to the point, the style of a good writer is concise, but perspicuous. Now *Wang Ch'ung's* new work contains more than ten thousand sentences. For a reader it is impossible to work through such an enormous mass, and there are so many chapters, that they cannot all be transmitted. The author of so much bad stuff may well be called a fool. Short sentences are easy to enunciate, whereas a bulky work presents great difficulties. Gems are few, stones many ; that which occurs in great number, is not precious. Dragons are rare, fish numerous ; that which is of rare occurrence, is justly deemed divine.

I admit that there is such a saying. Concise language is not long, but

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<sup>1</sup> Like *Yao* (cf. Chap. 11).

<sup>2</sup> As *Shun* had (*loc. cit.*).

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beautiful language must not be concise. If they are useful to the world, a hundred chapters do no harm, while one paragraph, if useless, may be superfluous. If there are several things, all useful, the longer rank before the shorter. Who is richer, he who has piled up a thousand *chin*, or he who possesses a hundred ?

Longer works are preferable to shorter ones, and a small amount of wealth is better than poverty. Most people have not a single book, I possess a hundred chapters : others have not one character, I have more than ten thousand sentences. Who is the cleverer ?

Now they do not say that my words are wrong, but that they are too many ; they do not say that the world does not like good things, but that it cannot take them all in. The reason why my book cannot be so concise is that for building many houses a small ground would not be sufficient, and that for the registration of a large populace few registers would be inadequate. At present, the errors are so many, that the words necessary to point out the truth, show what is right, and controvert what is false, cannot well be brief and succinct.

p1.078 *Han Fei Tse's* work is like the branch of a tree. The chapters are joined together by tens, and the sentences count by ten thousands. For a large body the dress cannot be narrow, and if there be many subjects, the text must not be too summary. A great variety of subjects requires abundance of words. In a large extent of water, there are many fish, in an emperor's capital, there is plenty of grain, and on the market of a metropolis, there is a throng of people.

My book may be voluminous, but the subjects treated are manifold. *T'ai Kung Wang* <sup>1</sup> in ancient times and recently *Tung Chung Shu* <sup>2</sup> produced books containing more than a hundred chapters. My book also contains more than a hundred chapters. Those who contend that they are too many, only mean to say that the author is of low origin, and that the readers cannot but take exception to it.

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<sup>1</sup> *T'ai Kung Wang* is the full appellation of *Wên Wang's* minister, usually called *T'ai Kung*, on whom cf. Chap. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 1.039 and Chap. 83.

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When we compare a river, whose waters overflow the banks, with others, which is the biggest ? And, when the cocoons of a certain species of worms are especially heavy and big, which worms yield most silk ?

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*Wang Ch'ung* was not lucky in his official career, and only wrote books and this autobiography. Some one might find fault with him, arguing thus :

The important thing is always that a man of great talent should make a good career. When he finds employment, and his words are listened to, he can distinguish himself by his work, and thus rise to high honour. Now, you are living in misery, and your career has been spoiled. You had no opportunity of trying your talents in practice, or using your strength in the fulfilment of official duties. Therefore you only committed your speculations to writing and made your notes. What use are your beautiful words to yourself, and what aim are you pursuing with your extensive writings ?

Nobody was ever more talented than *Confucius*, and yet his talents were not appreciated. He was expelled, and a tree felled over him. He had to hasten the washing of his rice <sup>1</sup> and was p1.079 surrounded. His traces were obliterated, he was tormented by hunger between *Ch'ên* and *T'sai*, and his disciples looked starved <sup>2</sup>. Now, my talents do not come near those of *Confucius*, but my hardships do not equal his. Am I to be despised therefore ?

Besides the successful are not always clever, or the distressed, simpletons. The lucky win, and the unlucky lose. With a liberal fate and good fortune, even a vulgar person becomes noble and genteel, with a niggardly fate and bad fortune, the most remarkable man remains wretched and miserable. If talents and virtue were to be measured by success, then the great lords invested with the domain of a town, and living on the soil, would all be wise men.

*Confucius* and *Mê Ti* were noble of themselves, but their rank was low. If,

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<sup>1</sup> When forced to leave *Ch'i*. (Vid. [Mencius Bk. V, Pt II, chap. I, 4, Legge Vol. II, p. 247.](#)) [[Couvreur](#)]

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Chap. 26.

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therefore, people are living in pure spheres, but do black deeds, or if they have a yearly income of a thousand *chung* to live upon, but not a single accomplishment, we can only smile. Provided that our virtue be high and our name untarnished; then our office may be low and our income meagre, it is not the fault of our talents, and we should not feel oppressed by it.

Scholars would like to share the hut with *Hsien*<sup>1</sup>, but not to be put on a level with *T'se*<sup>2</sup>, they would gladly wander about with *Po Yi*, but decline to associate with robber *Chê*. Great scholars have other ambitions than their people. Therefore their fame is not that of the world. Their bodies decay like grass and trees, but their glory shines as long as the sun and the moon send their rays. Their condition may be as poor as that of *Confucius*, provided only that their writings rank with those of *Yang Hsiung*. That is my ideal. Outward success, but a limited knowledge, a high post, but little virtue that is the ambition of others, I would consider it a bondage.

If somebody has the luck to be heard with his advice, and lives in honour and well being, all this is gone after a hundred years like other things. His name does not come down to the next generation, and not a word from his hand is left in any document. He has had stores full of emoluments perhaps, in the <sup>p1.080</sup> realms of literature and virtue he leaves no riches. That is not what I prize. Vast virtue of the highest excellence, abundance of extensive knowledge, a pencil dripping with characters like rain, and an overflowing spring of words, rich talents, a wonderful erudition, generous deeds, and a noble mind, with such qualities a man's body may belong to one generation, his name will be transmitted for a thousand years. That seems extraordinary and desirable to me.

*Wang Ch'ung* is from a simple family, in which he stands quite alone. A caviller might say :

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<sup>1</sup> *Hsien*=*Yuan Sse*, a disciple of *Confucius*, noted for his contempt of wordly advantages. Made governor of a town, he declined his official allowance (*Analects VI,3 [Couvreur]*) *Chuang Tse* makes him live in a mud hut. He contrasts him with *T'se*, another follower of *Confucius*, who came driving up to his door in a fine chariot and in a white robe lined with purple.

<sup>2</sup> *T'se* = *Tuan Mu Ts'e* or *Tse Kung*, a disciple of *Confucius*, who became a high official, and very wealthy (vid. Chap. 8 and 28). He was a swell, just the reverse of *Hsien*.



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— Your ancestors have not left you a treasure of pure virtue, nor a collection of literary works. You may yourself write the most brilliant essays, you have no basis to stand upon, and therefore no claim to our admiration.

When a force bursts upon us quite suddenly, not by degrees, we call it a phenomenon. When a creature is born from quite dissimilar parents, we call it a wonder. When something quite unusual appears all at once, it is regarded as a supernatural appearance, and when something different from anything else quite abruptly comes forth, it is termed a miracle.

Who are your ancestors ? Their names have not been recorded in former times. You did not spring from a learned family, whose members have already walked the path of literature, and you write disquisitions of several thousand or ten thousand sentences. This must be considered a supernatural phenomenon. How could we appreciate such writings, or think them able productions ? <sup>1</sup>

I beg to reply that a bird without a pedigree is a phoenix, an animal without a family, a unicorn, a man without an ancestry, a sage, and a thing without a peer, a jewel. And so it is with men of great talents, who are browbeaten and viewed with disfavour by their age. Scholars of worth appear single, and precious things grow solitary. How could literature be inherited ? If a man could learn to become a sage, then the water of the *Fêng* river <sup>2</sup> would have a source, and auspicious grain an old stem.

p1.081 When a remarkable scholar appears and puts forward his noble doctrines, he does not fall under the general rule, and his capacity cannot be measured by the bushel. Therefore events which seldom happen are recorded on tablets and books, and rare things engraved on bronze vases. The Five

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<sup>1</sup> The Chinese are in awe of, but do not like wonders, miracles, monsters, in short all that is against the regular course of nature. So they are prejudiced against *Wang Ch'ung*, because he is a homo novus. Not being a descendant from a literary or a noble family, he should not attempt to rise above the average of his fellow-citizen.

<sup>2</sup> The source of the *Fêng*, an affluent of the Wei in *Shensi* is well known. I presume that for 'Fêng river' we ought to read 'Wine Spring'. The phonetic element for *Fêng* and *Li* 'Wine' is very similar, and the Wine Springs are often mentioned as auspicious omens in connection with phoenixes, unicorns, and auspicious grain.

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Emperors did not rise in one generation, and *Yi Yin* <sup>1</sup> and *T'ai Kung Wang* <sup>2</sup> did not issue from one family. There was a distance of thousand Li between them, and one lived several hundred years after the other. When scholars of note quietly develop their marvellous faculties, they do not become famous as descendants of noble lines.

The calf of a black cow may be brown, this does not affect the nature of the animal. The ancestors of a scholar may be coarse, provided that he himself is pure, it has no influence upon his character. *Kun* <sup>3</sup> was wicked, and *Yü* a sage, *Sou* <sup>4</sup> was perverse, and *Shun* divine. *Po Niu* <sup>5</sup> was visited with a horrible disease, and *Chung Kung* <sup>6</sup> was clean and strong. *Yen Lu* <sup>7</sup> was vulgar and mean, and *Yen Hui* outvied all his companions. *Confucius* and *Mé Ti* had stupid ancestors, and they themselves were sages. The *Yang* family had not been successful, when *Yang Tse Yün* rose like a star, and the house of *Huan* had been tolerably well off, until *Huan Chün Shan* <sup>8</sup> took his brilliant flight. A man must have been imbued with more than the ordinary dose of the original fluid to become an able writer.

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In the third year of *Yuan-ho* <sup>9</sup>, *Wang Ch'ung* emigrated to *Tan-yang* <sup>10</sup>, *Chiu-chiang* <sup>11</sup>, and *Lu-chiang* <sup>12</sup> in the province of *Yang-Chou* <sup>13</sup>, and was appointed sub-prefect. His abilities were small, and his office <sup>p1.082</sup> was important. His chief duties were in connection with official correspondence. All plans of writing anything he had given up for many years. In the second year

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<sup>1</sup> Minister of T'ang, the founder of the *Shang* dynasty.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 1.078.

<sup>3</sup> *Yü's* father.

<sup>4</sup> *Ku Sou*, *Shun's* father.

<sup>5</sup> A disciple of *Confucius*, who suffered from leprosy (cf. Chap. 28).

<sup>6</sup> Another disciple of *Confucius*, a relation of *Po Niu*, both belonging to the *Jan* clan.

<sup>7</sup> *Yen Hui's* father.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. [Forke](#) p. 39 and Chap. 83.

<sup>9</sup> 86 A. D.

<sup>10</sup> Under the *Han* a circuit comprising parts of *Kiangsu* and *Anhui*.

<sup>11</sup> A circuit in *Anhui*.

<sup>12</sup> Another circuit in *Anhui*.

<sup>13</sup> A very large province under the *Han* dynasty, comprising nearly the whole territory of the modern provinces of *Kiangsu*, *Anhui*, *Kiangsi*, *Fukien*, and *Chekiang*.

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of *Chang-ho* <sup>1</sup>, his business in the province ceased. He lived at home, and gradually advanced in age, till he reached about seventy years. Then he gave up his official carriage, and his official career was definitely closed. He could not help it. He had many annoyances, and his body felt the infirmities of age. His hair grew white, his teeth fell out, he became older from day to day, and his comrades dispersed. He had nothing to rely upon, was too poor to nurse himself, and had no joy left. But time went slowly on, the *kêng* and *hsing* years <sup>2</sup> came to an end, but though he was afraid that his death was near at hand, he was still full of silly ideas. Then he wrote a book on *Macrobotics* <sup>3</sup> in sixteen chapters.

To keep himself alive, he cherished the vital fluid. As a stimulant for the appetite he used wine. Closing eyes and ears against external influences, he spared his energy as a means of self-protection. Using medicines he kept up his forces, and by following this method he hoped to prolong his days. For a while he did not age, but when it was too late, there was no return.

This book was left as a guide to posterity. But the duration of human life is limited. Men like animals live for a while and die. We can only remember the years gone by, who can order them to stand still ? We must go down to the yellow sources, and become earth and ashes. From *Huang Ti* and *T'ang* down to the *Ch'in* and *Han* many have been guided by the holy doctrine and have found the truth by their genius, just like a scales and bright like a mirror, yet young and old they have lived and died, of old and now all have been included. Life cannot be prolonged, alas !

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<sup>1</sup> 88 A. D.

<sup>2</sup> The cyclical years *kêng-yin* : 90 A. D. and *hsing-mao* : 91 A. D.

<sup>3</sup> *Yang king shu*.