ANCHOR A75

$1.00 IN CANADA 85¢

THREE WAYS OF THOUGHT IN ANCIENT CHINA

ARTHUR WALEY

A DOUBLEDAY ANCHOR BOOK

Three Ways of Thought in Ancient China

by

Arthur Waley

DOUBLEDAY ANCHOR BOOKS

DOUBLEDAY & COMPANY, INC., GARDEN CITY, N. Y., 1956

Cover Design by Seong Moy
Typography by Diana Klemin
Reprinted by arrangement with The Macmillan Company

Printed in the United States

CONTENTS

aries have loosened and dropped away, that begin in the Secret Darkness, that go back to the time when all was one—how can you hope to reach them by the striving of a petty intelligence or ransack them by the light of your feeble sophistries? You might as well look at Heaven through a reed or measure earth with the point of a gimlet. Your instruments are too small.

'Be off with you! But before you go I should like to remind you of what happened to the child from Shouling that was sent to Han-tan to learn the "Han-tan Walk." He failed to master the steps, but spent so much time in trying to acquire them that in the end he forgot how one usually walks, and came home to Shou-ling crawling on all fours.

'I advise you to keep away; or you will forget what you know already and find yourself without a trade.'

Kung-sun Lung's mouth gaped and would not close; his tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth and would not go down. He made off as fast as his legs would carry him.

Yoga

We have seen Lao Tzu sitting 'so utterly motionless that one could not believe a human being was there at all,' 'stark and lifeless as a withered tree.' Another Taoist adept, Nan-kuo Tzu Ch'i, was observed by his pupil Yen-ch'êng Tzu Yu to be sitting with his face turned upwards to Heaven, breathing gently through parted lips,[1] motionless as a ploughman whose mate has left him. 'What is this?' said Yen-ch'êng Tzu Yu.

[1] The word here used became in later Taoism the technical name of one of the six forms of expiration; see H. Maspero, *Journal Asiatique*, July–September 1937, p. 248 seq.

'Can limbs indeed be made to become as a withered tree, can the heart indeed be made to become as dead ashes? What is now propped upon that stool is not he that a little while ago propped himself upon that stool.'[1] It is evident that in these two passages some kind of trance-state is being described. But the language is conventional and imprecise. Much the same description is given of a man concentrated upon a practical task,[2] and again of a man asleep.[3] It is possible that many commonplace words had, in connection with mystic practices, a technical sense which now escapes us. One common and ordinary word, *yu*, 'to wander, to travel,' which in Confucian circles had the technical meaning 'to go from Court to Court as a peripatetic counsellor,'[4] had for the Taoists a very different meaning.

In the beginning[5] Lieh Tzu was fond of travelling. The adept Hu-ch'iu Tzu said to him, 'I hear that you are fond of travelling. What is it in travelling that pleases you?' 'For me,' said Lieh Tzu, 'the pleasure of travelling consists in the appreciation of variety. When some people travel they merely contemplate what is before their eyes; when I travel, I contemplate the processes of mutability.' 'I wonder,' said Hu-ch'iu Tzu, 'whether your travels are not very much the same as other people's, despite the fact that you think them so different. Whenever people look at anything, they are necessarily looking at processes of change, and one may well appreciate the mutability of outside things, while wholly unaware of one's own muta-

[1] II. a.
[2] XIX. c.
[3] XXII. c.
[4] Cf. *Mencius* VII. 1, IX. 1.
[5] I.e. before his conversion. See *Lieh Tzu*, IV. g.

bility. Those who take infinite trouble about external travels, have no idea how to set about the sight-seeing[1] that can be done within. The traveller abroad is dependent upon outside things; he whose sightseeing is inward, can in himself find all he needs. Such is the highest form of travelling; while it is a poor sort of journey that is dependent upon outside things.'

After this Lieh Tzu never went anywhere at all, aware that till now he had not known what travelling means. 'Now,' said Hu-chi'iu Tzu, 'you may well become a traveller indeed! The greatest traveller does not know where he is going; the greatest sight-seer does not know what he is looking at. His travels do not take him to one part of creation more than another; his sight-seeing is not directed to one sight rather than another. That is what I mean by true sight-seeing. And that is why I said, "Now you may well become a traveller indeed!" '

Yu, then, in its Taoist acceptation, is a spiritual not a bodily journey. There is naturally a constant play between these two senses of the word.

Shih-nan I-liao visited the lord of Lu, and found him looking sad. 'Why do you look so sad?' he asked. 'I study the Way of former kings,' said the lord of Lu, 'carry on the work of my ancestors, humble myself before the spirits of the dead, give honour to the wise. All this I do in my own person, never for a moment abating in my zeal. Yet troubles beset my reign. That is why I am sad.' 'My lord,' said Shih-nan I-liao, 'your method of avoiding troubles is a superficial one. The bushy-coated fox and the striped panther, though they lodge deep in the mountain woods, hide in caverns on the cliff-side, go out at night but stay at home all day, and even when driven desperate by thirst and hunger

[1] The word is applied to looking at waterfalls, views, etc.; but also to mystic contemplation.

keep always far from the rivers and lakes where food might easily be had—despite their quietness, caution, and the mastery of their desires, do not escape misfortune, but fall an easy prey to the trapper's net and snare. And this, not through any fault of theirs; it is the value of their fur that brings them to disaster. And in your case, my lord, is it not the land of Lu itself that is your lordship's fur, and the cause of your undoing?

'I would have you strip away not your fine fur only, but every impediment of the body, scour your heart till it is free from all desire, and travel through the desolate wilds. For to the south there is a place called the Land where Tê Rules. Its people are ignorant and unspoiled, negligent of their own interests, and of few desires. They know how to make, but do not know how to hoard. They give, but seek no return. The suitabilities of decorum, the solemnities of ritual are alike unknown to them. They live and move thoughtlessly and at random, yet every step they take tallies with the Great Plan. They know how to enjoy life while it lasts, are ready to be put away when death comes.

'I would have you leave your kingdom and its ways, take Tao as your guide and travel to this land.'

'It is a long way to go,' said the prince of Lu, 'and dangerous. There are rivers too swift for any boat, mountains that no chariot can cross. What am I to do?' 'Humility,' said Shih-nan I-liao, 'shall be your boat. Pliancy shall be your chariot.' 'It is a long way to go,' said the prince, 'and the lands through which it passes are not inhabited. There would be no villages where I could buy provisions or take a meal. I should die long before I reached my journey's end.' 'Lessen your wants, husband your powers,' said Shih-nan I-liao, 'and you will have no need to buy provisions on your way. You will cross many rivers and come at last to a lake so wide that, gaze as you will, you cannot see the further shore. Yet you will go on, without knowing whether it will ever end. At the shores of this lake all that came

with you will turn back. But you will still have far to go. What matter? "He who needs others is for ever shackled; he who is needed by others is for ever sad." . . . I would have you drop these shackles, put away your sadness, and wander alone with Tao in the kingdom of the Great Void.'

King Mu and the Wizard

In the time of king Mu of Chou there came from a land in the far west a wizard who could go into water and fire, pierce metals and stone, turn mountains upside down, make rivers flow backwards, move fortifications and towns, ride on the air without falling, collide with solids without injury. There was indeed no limit to the miracles that he could perform. And not only could he change the outward shape of material things; he could also transform the thoughts of men. King Mu reverenced him like a god, served him like a master, put his own State chambers at the wizard's disposal, gave him for sustenance the animals reared for Imperial sacrifice, and for his entertainment chose girls skilled in music and dancing.

But the wizard found the king's palace too cramped and sordid to live in; the choicest delicacies from the king's kitchen he pronounced to be coarse and rancid, and he would not eat them. The ladies from the king's harem he would not look at, so foul and hideous did he find them.

The king accordingly set about building a completely new palace, employing all the most skilful workers in clay and wood, the most accomplished decorators in whitewash and ochre; expending indeed so much upon the work that by the time it was complete all his Treas-

its arbours. Here as it seemed to him he lived for twenty or thirty years without a thought for his kingdom. At last the wizard again invited him to make a journey, and once more they travelled, till they had reached a place where looking up one could not see the sun or moon, looking down one saw neither river nor lake. So fierce a light blazed and flashed that the king's eyes were dazzled and he could not look; so loud a noise jangled and echoed that his ears were deafened and he could not listen. His limbs loosened, his entrails were as though dissolved within him, his thoughts were confused, his energy extinct. 'Let us go back,' he cried to the wizard, who gave him a push and soon they were falling through space.

The next thing that he knew was that he was sitting just where he had sat when the magician summoned him; the same attendants were still at his side, the wine that they had just served to him was still warm, the food still moist. 'Where have I been?' he asked. 'Your Majesty,' one of his servants answered, 'has been sitting there in silence.'

It was three days before the king was completely himself again. On his recovery he sent for the wizard and asked him to explain what had happened. 'I took you,' the wizard replied, 'upon a journey of the soul. Your body never moved. The place where you have been living was none other than your own palace; the grounds in which you strolled were in fact your own park.

'Your Majesty, between himself and the understanding of such things, interposes habitual doubts. Could you for a moment divest yourself of them, there is no miracle of mine, no trick with time, that you could not imitate.'

The king was very pleased, paid no further heed to affairs of State, amused himself no more with ministers or concubines, but devoted himself henceforth to distant journeys of the soul.

Yang-shêng

Yang-shêng, 'nurturing life,' that is to say conserving one's vital powers, is often divided by the later Taoists into four branches, (1) The Secrets of the Chamber, which enabled the Yellow Ancestor to enjoy twelve hundred concubines without injury to his health; (2) Breath Control; (3) the physical exercises[1] which, as in Indian *hatha yoga*, were associated with breath control; (4) Diet.

By some early Taoists, as we shall see, such practices were regarded as *yang-hsing*, 'nurturing the bodily frame,' not as *yang-shêng*, which to them implied an attitude towards life rather than a system of hygiene.

To have strained notions and stilted ways of behaviour, to live apart from the world and at variance with the common ways of men, to hold lofty discourse, full of resentment and scorn, to have no aim but superiority—such is the wont of the hermit in his mountain recess, of the man in whose eyes the world is always wrong, of those that shrivel in the summer heat or cast themselves into the seething pool.

To talk of goodness and duty, loyalty and faithfulness, respect, frugality, promoting the advancement of others to the detriment of one's own, to seek no end but moral perfection—such is the wont of those who would set the world in order, men of admonition and instruction, educators itinerant or at home.

[1] To the bird-stretchings and bear-hangings mentioned below a compilation of the 2nd century B.C. (*Huai-nan Tzu*, chap. 7) adds the Pigeon's Bath, the Monkey Dance, the Owl Gaze, the Tiger Regard.

To talk of mighty deeds, to achieve high fame, to assign to the ruler and his ministers the rites that each is to perform, to graduate the functions of the high and low, to care for public matters and these alone—such is the wont of those that frequent tribunal and court, of those whose only end is the aggrandizement of their master, the strengthening of his domain, who think only of victories and annexations.

To seek out some thicket or swamp, remain in the wilderness, hook fish in a quiet place, to seek no end but inactivity—such is the wont of wanderers by river and lake, of those that shun the world, of those whose quest is idleness alone. To pant, to puff, to hail, to sip,[1] to cast out the old breath and induct the new, bear-hangings and bird-stretchings, with no aim but long life—such is the wont of the Inducer, nurturer of the bodily frame, aspirant to P'êng Tsu's high longevity.

But there are those whose thoughts are sublime without being strained; who have never striven after goodness, yet are perfect. There are those who win no victories for their State, achieve no fame, and yet perfect its policies; who find quietness, though far from streams and lakes; who live to great old age, though they have never practised Induction (*tao-yin*). They have divested themselves of everything, yet lack nothing. They are passive, seek no goal; but all lovely things attend them. Such is the way of Heaven and Earth, the secret power of the Wise. Truly is it said, 'Quietness, stillness, emptiness, not-having, inactivity—these are the balancers of Heaven and Earth, the very substance of the Way and its Power.' Truly is it said, 'The Wise Man rests therein, and because he rests, he is at peace. Because he is at peace, he is quiet.' One who is at peace and is quiet no sorrow or harm can enter, no evil breath can invade. Therefore his inner power remains whole and his spirit intact.

Truly is it said, 'For the Wise Man life is conformity

[1] Technical names of breathing exercises.

to the motions of Heaven, death is but part of the common law of Change. At rest, he shares the secret powers of Yin; at work, he shares the rocking of the waves of Yang. He neither invites prosperity nor courts disaster. Only when incited does he respond, only when pushed does he move, only as a last resort will he rise. He casts away all knowledge and artifice, follows the pattern of Heaven. Therefore Heaven visits him with no calamity, the things of the world do not lay their trammels upon him, no living man blames him, no ghost attacks him. His life is like the drifting of a boat, his death is like a lying down to rest. He has no anxieties, lays no plans.

'He is full of light, yet none is dazzled; he is faithful, yet bound by no promise. His sleep is without dreams, his waking without grief. His spirit has remained stainless and unspoiled; his soul (*hun*) has not grown weary. Emptiness, nothingness, quiet—these have made him partner in the powers of Heaven.'

Truly it is said, 'Sadness and joy are the perverters of the Inner Power; delight and anger are offences against the Way; love and hate are sins against the Power. Therefore when the heart neither grieves nor rejoices, the Power is at its height. To be one thing and not to change, is the climax of stillness. To have nothing in one that resists, is the climax of emptiness. To remain detached from all outside things, is the climax of fineness.[1] To have in oneself no contraries, is the climax of purity.'[2]

Truly is it said, 'If the bodily frame of a man labours and has no rest, it wears itself out; if his spiritual essence is used without cessation, then it flags, and having flagged, runs dry.

'The nature of water is that if nothing is mixed with it, it remains clear; if nothing ruffles it, it remains

[1] *T'an*, the opposite of 'grossness.'

[2] In the sense of 'unmixedness.'

smooth. But if it is obstructed so that it does not flow, then too it loses its clearness. In these ways it is a symbol of the heavenly powers that are in man.'

Truly is it said, 'A purity unspoiled by any contamination, a peace and unity not disturbed by any variation, detachment and inactivity broken only by such movement as is in accord with the motions of Heaven—such are the secrets that conserve the soul. Does not he who possesses a sword of Kan or Yüeh put it in a case and hide it away, not daring to make use of it? A greater treasure still is the soul. It can glide hither and thither where it will. There is no point in Heaven above to which it cannot climb, no hollow in the earth into which it cannot crawl. It infuses and transforms the ten thousand creatures. For it there is no symbol; its name is "One with God" (*Ti*).

> 'Only the way of wholeness and integrity
> Can guard the soul.
> Guard it so that nothing is lost,
> And you will become one with the soul.
> The essence of this "one," blending,
> Will mingle with Heaven's law.'

It is of this that a rustic saying speaks, which says:

> The crowd cares for gain,
> The honest man for fame,
> The good man values success,
> But the Wise Man, his soul.

Therefore we talk of his simplicity, meaning that he keeps his soul free from all admixture; and of his wholeness, meaning that he keeps it intact and entire. He that can achieve such wholeness, such integrity we call a True Man.

The third chapter of *Chuang Tzu* is called 'Principles of Life Nurture.' It is extremely short and scrappy, and would appear to have been mutilated. Of its

three anecdotes only the first seems to be directly concerned with *yang-shêng:*

King Hui of Wei had a carver named Ting. When this carver Ting was carving a bull for the king, every touch of the hand, every inclination of the shoulder, every step he trod, every pressure of the knee, while swiftly and lightly he wielded his carving-knife, was as carefully timed as the movements of a dancer in the *Mulberry Wood*. . . . 'Wonderful,' said the king. 'I could never have believed that the art of carving could reach such a point as this.' 'I am a lover of Tao,' replied Ting, putting away his knife, 'and have succeeded in applying it to the art of carving. When I first began to carve I fixed my gaze on the animal in front of me. After three years I no longer saw it as a whole bull, but as a thing already divided into parts. Nowadays I no longer see it with the eye; I merely apprehend it with the soul. My sense-organs are in abeyance, but my soul still works. Unerringly my knife follows the natural markings, slips into the natural cleavages, finds its way into the natural cavities. And so by conforming my work to the structure with which I am dealing, I have arrived at a point at which my knife never touches even the smallest ligament or tendon, let alone the main gristle.

'A good carver changes his knife once a year; by which time the blade is dented. An ordinary carver changes it once a month; by which time it is broken. I have used my present knife for nineteen years, and during that time have carved several thousand bulls. But the blade still looks as though it had just come out of the mould. Where part meets part there is always space, and a knife-blade has no thickness. Insert an instrument that has no thickness into a structure that is amply spaced, and surely it cannot fail to have plenty of room. That is why I can use a blade for nineteen years, and yet it still looks as though it were fresh from the forger's mould.

'However, one has only to look at an ordinary carver to see what a difficult business he finds it. One sees how nervous he is while making his preparations, how long he looks, how slowly he moves. Then after some small, niggling strokes of the knife, when he has done no more than detach a few stray fragments from the whole, and even that by dint of continually twisting and turning like a worm burrowing through the earth, he stands back, with his knife in his hand, helplessly gazing this way and that, and after hovering for a long time finally curses a perfectly good knife and puts it back in its case.'

'Excellent,' said the king of Wei. 'This interview with the carver Ting has taught me how man's vital forces can be conserved.'[1]

The Taoist, then, does not wear himself out by useless conflict with the unchangeable laws of existence; nor does he struggle to amend the unalterable tendencies of his own nature:

When Prince Mou of Wei was living as a hermit in Chung-shan,[2] he said to the Taoist Chan Tzu, 'My body is here amid lakes and streams; but my heart is in the palace of Wei. What am I to do?' 'Care more for what you have in yourself,' said Chan Tzu, 'and less for what you can get from others.' 'I know I ought to,' said the prince, 'but I cannot get the better of my feelings.' 'If you cannot get the better of your feelings,' replied Chan Tzu, 'then give play to them. Nothing is worse for the soul than struggling not to give play to feelings that it cannot control. This is called the Double Injury, and of those that sustain it none live out their natural span.'

[1] The text of this story is very corrupt; but the general sense is clear. I have followed the renderings of Chu Kuei-yao and Kao Hêng.

[2] In southern Hopei. Cf. two other versions of this story, in *Huai-nan Tzu*, XII, and *Lü Shih Ch'un Ch'iu*.

The Taoist and Tao

Chuang Tzu in various places gives descriptions, generally in verse, of the Master Taoist, 'the supreme man,' 'the true[1] man,' 'the man of supreme inward power.'

'The great bushlands are ablaze, but he feels no heat; the River and the Han stream are frozen over, but he feels no cold. Fierce thunders break the hills, winds rock the ocean, but he is not startled.'

'He can climb high and not stagger; go through water and not be wet, go through fire and not be scorched.'

'The great floods mount up to Heaven, but he is not drowned; the great drought melts metal and stone, burns fields and hills, but he is not singed.'

Lieh Tzu asked Kuan Yin, saying, ' "The Man of Extreme Power . . . can tread on fire without being burnt. Walk on the top of the whole world and not stagger." May I ask how he attains to this?' 'He is protected,' said Kuan Yin, 'by the purity of his breath. Knowledge and skill, determination and courage could never lead to this. . . . When a drunk man falls from his carriage, however fast it may be going, he is never killed. His bones and joints are not different from those of other men; but his susceptibility to injury is different from theirs. This is because his soul is intact.[2] He did

[1] Or 'pure man,' using pure not in the moral sense but as it is used in the expression 'pure gold.' Cf. the Hindu term *Satpurusha*.

[2] Is impervious to disturbances from outside.

attempt to explain what the Taoists meant by Tao. I have purposely avoided doing so because I think that a better idea of this can be got from the anecdotes that I have translated than from any attempt at a definition. In *Chuang Tzu* there is, of course, no systematic exposition of what Tao is; there are only dithyrambic descriptions (chiefly in verse), similar to those in the better known Taoist book *Tao Tê Ching*, which I have translated in *The Way and Its Power*. Here are one or two such passages:

'Tao is real, is faithful, yet does nothing and has no form. Can be handed down, yet cannot be passed from hand to hand, can be got but cannot be seen. Is its own trunk, its own root.

'Before Heaven and Earth existed, from the beginning Tao was there. It is Tao that gave ghosts their holy power (*shên*), that gave holy power to Dead Kings. It gave life to Heaven, gave life to Earth. It can mount above the Pole-star without becoming high; it can sink below (the Springs of Death) without becoming deep. It existed before Heaven and Earth, yet has no duration; its age is greater than that of the Longest Ago, yet it does not grow old.

'Without it Heaven could not be high, Earth could not be wide, the sun and moon could not stay their course, the ten thousand things could not flourish.'

In another passage (which unfortunately, owing to corruption of the text, becomes unintelligible at the end) we learn Tao is 'in the ant, in the broken tile, in dung, in mire.' 'Do not seek precision,' says Chuang Tzu, speaking of the realm of Tao. . . . 'I myself have traversed it this way and that; yet still know only where it begins. I have roamed at

will through its stupendous spaces. I know how to get to them, but I do not know where they end.'

Dim Your Light

When Kêng-sang Ch'u, a pupil of Lao Tzu, went north and settled in Wei-lei, 'he would take no serving-man who betrayed any sign of intelligence nor engage any handmaiden who was in the least personable. The botchy and bloated shared his house, the dithering and fumbling waited upon him. After he had lived there for three years the crops in Wei-lei began to flourish marvellously. The people said to one another, "When he first came here, we thought him stupidly eccentric; but now the day is not long enough to count our blessings,[1] nay, the year is too short to hold them all. Certainly there must be a Sage among us, and perhaps it is he. Would it not be well if we planned together to set up a shrine where we could say our prayers to him and worship him as a god?" '

Kêng-sang, hearing of their intention to treat him as deity and ruler, was far from pleased. His disciples did not at all understand this. 'There is nothing in my attitude,' he said to them, 'which need surprise you. When the breath of spring is upon them, the hundred plants begin to grow; at the first coming of autumn, untold treasures mature. So long as the Great Way works unimpeded, spring and autumn cannot fail at their task. I have heard it said that where there is a Highest Man living among them the people herd blindly to their goal, ignorant of where they are going. But now it seems that the humble folk of Wei-lei have conceived the bright

[1] Cf. *Book of Songs*, p. 175 ('blessings so many that the day is not long enough for them all').

notion of setting me up on an altar, of ranging me among the Sages. Am I to consent to be a human sign-post? Were I to do so, I should indeed be unmindful of my master Lao Tzu's teaching.'

The story of Lao Tzu and Yang Tzu-chü, told above,[1] further illustrates the importance of seeming unimportant.

To be known is to be lost. The wise man 'hates that the crowd should come.' But to be known (like Colonel Lawrence) for your love of being unknown is to court a double notoriety:

Lieh Tzu set out for Ch'i, but turned back when he had only got half-way. 'Why did you start and then turn back again?' asked Po Hun Wu Jên, whom he chanced to meet on his return. 'I was upset by something that happened on the journey,' said Lieh Tzu. 'And what happened that upset you?' asked Po Hun Wu Jên. 'At five out of ten eating-houses where I went for food,' said Lieh Tzu, 'I was served before the other guests.' 'I do not see why that should have upset you,' said Po Hun Wu Jên. 'Because,' said Lieh Tzu, 'it meant that my inward perfection is not properly secured; its fiery light is leaking out through my bodily frame and turning men's thoughts astray, so that they defer to me in a way that gives offence to the honourable and aged and at the same time puts me in an unpleasant situation. True, an eating-housekeeper, trafficking in rice and soup, must lay in a stock greater than he can be sure of selling; his profits are necessarily small and his influence slight. But if even he can embarrass me in this way, how much the more am I in danger from such a one as the ruler of Ch'i, with his ten thousand war-chariots! He, no doubt, is worn out with the cares of national government, at his wits' end how to cope with all the business

[1] Page 17.

that confronts him. If I were to arrive in Ch'i he would at once load me with business, entrust me with all the most difficult tasks. That is why I was upset.' 'An admirable point of view,' said Po Hun Wu Jên. 'Persist in it and you will soon have disciples!'

Not long afterwards he called upon Lieh Tzu, and sure enough, there was a long row of shoes outside the door. Po Hun Wu Jên halted facing the door, planted his staff in the ground and rested his chin upon it, and after a while, without saying anything, he went away. The door-keeper told Lieh Tzu, who snatching up his slippers and carrying them in his hand ran barefoot to the door, and called out after Po Hun Wu Jên, 'As you are here, I hope, Sir, you will not go away without administering your dose.' 'It is all over,' said Po Hun Wu Jên. 'I told you before that you would soon have disciples, and now you have got them! It is not that you have been successful in attracting the attention of the world, but that you have been unsuccessful in distracting it. What good can they possibly do you? No man can be both admired and at peace. It is evident that you have aroused admiration, and this admiration (it goes without saying) has worked havoc upon your true nature. Remember the saying:

> 'Those who seek your society
> Tell you nothing;
> Such small talk as they bring
> Is but poison.
> Where none enlightens, none illumines,
> How can wisdom ripen?'

Buried among the People

There are those who 'betake themselves to thickets and swamps, seek their dwelling in desert spaces,

fish with a hook or sit all day doing nothing at all'; but the Taoist knows how to live in the world without being of the world, how to be at leisure without the solitude of 'hills and seas.' If he 'buries himself away' it is as a commoner among the common people.

When Confucius was going to Ch'u, he lodged at an eating-house in I-ch'iu. In the house next door there was a man and his wife with menservants and maidservants. . . . 'Who are all these people?' Tzu-lu asked of Confucius. 'They are the servants of a Sage,' said Confucius. 'Their master is one who has buried himself away among the common people, hidden himself among the rice-fields. His fame is extinct, but the sublimity of his disposition is unabated. His mouth still speaks; but his heart has long since ceased to speak. He found himself at variance with the world, and his heart no longer deigns to consort with it. He is one who walking on dry land is as though he were at the bottom of a pool. I wonder if it is Shih-nan I-liao?' 'I will go and invite him to visit us,' said Tzu-lu. 'Do nothing of the kind,' said Confucius. 'He knows that I have recognized him and will be sure that when I get to Ch'u I shall persuade the king of Ch'u to send for him. He looks upon me as a clever intriguer; and such a man as that, so far from desiring to meet such an intriguer, hates even to hear him speak. How can you imagine that you will find him still there?' Tzu-lu decided to go and look. It was as Confucius said; the house next door had been suddenly evacuated.

The Shih-nan I-liao (I-liao South of the Market) of the above story[1] had good reason to fear that his peace might be disturbed. In 479 B.C. Po-kung Shêng

[1] We have already seen how he tried to convert the duke of Lu to Taoism.

in-Chief was a scoundrel. 'It is quite true,' said the Taoist Hua Tzu, 'that those who advise you to attack Ch'i are scoundrels; and equally true that those who plead so eloquently for peace with Ch'i are also scoundrels. And anyone who stopped short at telling you that both were scoundrels would himself be a scoundrel too.' 'What then am I to do?' said the king. 'Seek Tao,' said Hua Tzu, 'that is all you need do.'

The Uncarved Block

P'u means wood in its natural condition, uncarved and unpainted. It is the Taoist symbol of man's natural state, when his inborn powers (*tê*) have not been tampered with by knowledge or circumscribed by morality. The Taoist cult of *p'u* is a philosophic restatement of ancient ritual ideas: 'If thou wilt make me an altar of stone thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it.'[1] The enemies of this simplicity are the sense-organs, with their separate and limited functions. 'The eye is a menace to clear sight, the ear is a menace to subtle hearing, the mind is a menace to wisdom, every organ of the senses is a menace to its own capacity. Sad is it indeed that man should look upon these seats of menace as his greatest treasure.'

What then is man's true treasure? It is his Inward Vision (*ming*), a generalized perception that can come into play only when the distinction between

[1] Exodus xx. 25.

'inside' and 'outside,' between 'self' and 'things,' between 'this' and 'that' has been entirely obliterated. Chuang Tzu's symbol for this state of pure consciousness, which sees without looking, hears without listening, knows without thinking, is the god Hun-tun ('Chaos'): 'Fuss, the god of the Southern Ocean, and Fret, the god of the Northern Ocean, happened once to meet in the realm of Chaos, the god of the centre. Chaos treated them very handsomely and they discussed together what they could do to repay his kindness. They had noticed that, whereas everyone else has seven apertures, for sight, hearing, eating, breathing and so on, Chaos had none. So they decided to make the experiment of boring holes in him. Every day they bored a hole, and on the seventh day Chaos died.'

Just as the Taoist cult of *p'u*, the uncarved Block, is founded on ancient ritual ideas, so too this fable is no doubt an adaptation of a very ancient myth. We can indeed get some idea of the sort of primitive myth which Chuang Tzu is here refining and interpreting by comparing the story of Hun-tun (Chaos) with the Australian myth of Anjir: 'In the beginning Anjir was lying in the shadow of a thickly-leaved tree. He was a black-fellow with very large buttocks, but peculiar in that there was no sign of any orifice. Yalpan happened to be passing by at the time and noticing this anomaly made a cut in the usual place by means of a piece of quartz-crystal.'[1] Approaching the myth of Hun-tun from a quite different point of view, M. Granet[2] regards it as an 'échange de prestations'; 'une opération chirurgicale mythique com-

[1] M. F. Ashley-Montagu, *Coming into Being among the Australian Aborigines*, p. 130.

[2] *Danses et Légendes*, p. 544.

it?' The gardener raised his head and gazed at Tzu-kung. 'What is it like?' he asked. 'It is an instrument carved out of wood,' said Tzu-kung, 'heavy behind and light in front. It scoops up the water like a bale, as quickly as one drains a bath-tub. Its name is the well-sweep.' A look of indignation came into the gardener's face. He laughed scornfully, saying, 'I used to be told by my teacher that where there are cunning contrivances there will be cunning performances, and where there are cunning performances there will be cunning hearts. He in whose breast a cunning heart lies has blurred the pristine purity of his nature; he who has blurred the pristine purity of his nature has troubled the quiet of his soul, and with one who has troubled the quiet of his soul Tao will not dwell. It is not that I do not know about this invention; but that I should be ashamed to use it.'

We must then 'bind the fingers' of the technicians, 'smash their arcs and plumb-lines, throw away their compasses and squares.' Only then will men learn to rely on their inborn skill, on the 'Great Skill that looks like clumsiness.' But the culture-heroes were not the only inventors who 'tampered with men's hearts.' Equally pernicious (as will be seen in the next section) were on the one hand the Sages, inventors of goodness and duty, and of the laws which enforce an artificial morality; and on the other, the tyrants, inventors of tortures and inquisitions, 'embitterers of man's nature.'

Government

Only a king who can forget his kingdom should be entrusted with a kingdom. So long as he is 'wander-

ing alone with Tao' all will be 'peace, quietness, and security.' But his subjects will not know why this is so; it will seem to them that 'it happened of its own accord.' Nor will the king know himself to be the saviour of men and things; he 'seeks Tao; that is all.'

One that is born beautiful, even if you give him a mirror, unless you tell him so will not know that he is more beautiful than other men. But the fact that he knows it or does not know it, is told about it or is not told about it, makes no difference at all to the pleasure that others get from his beauty or to the admiration that it arouses. Beauty is his nature. And so it is with the love of the Sage for his people. Even if they give him fame, unless someone tells him, he will not know that he loves his people. But the fact that he knows it or does not know it, is told of it or is not told of it, makes no difference at all either to his love for the people or the peace that this love brings to them. Love is his nature.

Ts'ui Chü said to Lao Tzu, 'You say there must be no government. But if there is no government, how are men's hearts to be improved?' 'The last thing you should do,' said Lao Tzu, 'is to tamper with men's hearts. The heart of man is like a spring; if you press it down, it only springs up the higher. . . . It can be hot as the fiercest fire; cold as the hardest ice. So swift is it that in the space of a nod it can go twice to the end of the world and back again. In repose, it is quiet as the bed of a pool; in action, mysterious as Heaven. A wild steed that cannot be tethered—such is the heart of man.'

The first to tamper with men's hearts was the Yellow Ancestor,[1] when he taught goodness and duty. The Sages Yao and Shun in obedience to his teaching slaved till 'there was no hair on their shanks, no down on their

[1] Yellow Emperor is the usual translation.

thighs' to nourish the bodies of their people, wore out their guts by ceaseless acts of goodness and duty, exhausted their energies by framing endless statutes and laws. Yet all this was not enough to make the people good. Yao had to banish Huan Tou to Mount Ch'ung, drive the San Miao to the desert of San Wei, exile Kung-kung in the Land of the North—things which he would not have had to do if he had been equal to his task. In the ages that followed bad went to worse. The world saw on the one hand the tyrant Chieh and the brigand Chih; on the other, the virtuous Master Tsêng[1] and the incorruptible Shih Yü. There arose at last the schools of Confucius and Mo Tzu.[2] Henceforward the pleased and the angry began to suspect one another, the foolish and the wise to despise one another, the good and the bad to disappoint one another, charlatans and honest men to abuse one another. Decay set in on every hand. Men's natural powers no longer came into play; their inborn faculties were wholly corrupted. Everywhere it was knowledge that was admired and the common people became knowing and sly.

Henceforward nothing was left in its natural state. It must be hacked and sawed into some new shape, slit just where the inked line had marked it, broken up with hammer and chisel, till the whole world was in utter chaos and confusion. All this came from tampering with the heart of man!

Those who saw the folly of such methods fled to the mountains and hid in inaccessible caves; the lords of ten thousand chariots sat quaking in their ancestral halls. Today, when those that fell by the executioner's hand lie pillowed corpse on corpse, when prisoners bowed down beneath the cangue are driven on in such flocks that they have scarcely room to pass, when the maimed and mutilated jostle one another in their throngs, the

[1] Disciple of Confucius.

[2] See below, p. 121.

Confucians and the followers of Mo Tzu can find nothing better to do, amid the shackled and gyved, than straddle their legs, bare their arms and go for one another as hard as they can. Is it believable that such impudence, such shamelessness can exist? Almost I could fancy that saintliness and wisdom were the clasp and catch that fastened the prisoner's cangue; that goodness and duty were the bolt and eye that fastened his gyves. Yes, almost I could believe that Tsêng and Shih were the whistling arrows that heralded the coming of brigand Chih and tyrant Chieh.

When Po Chü came to Ch'i, he saw the body of a malefactor, drawn and quartered. Binding together the severed limbs, as one wraps a child in its swaddling-clothes, he took off his Court dress, covered him with it, cried aloud and lamented, saying, 'Oh, Sir, do not think that you will be alone in your fate. Universal is the disaster that has befallen you, though it has touched you sooner than the rest. They say "Do not murder, do not steal." But it was they who set some on high, dragged down others to ignominy, putting before men's eyes what drives them to discontent. It was they who heaped up goods and possessions, putting before men's eyes what drives them to strife. Set up what drives a man to discontent, heap up what leads him to strife, weary his limbs with toil, not giving him day in day out a moment's rest, and what else can happen but that he should end like this?'

The 'no-government' doctrine of the beginning of this and similar passages in other Taoist books has often been compared with the modern anarchism of writers like Kropotkin. But there are important differences. The modern anarchists regard government and religious morality as devices invented by a privileged class in order to maintain its privileges; whereas Taoism looks upon the Sages as misguided

altruists. Moreover, one of the main tenets of modern anarchism is that no appeal must be made to the authority of 'metaphysical entities'; and it can hardly be denied that, whatever else it may be or may not be, Tao is undoubtedly a 'metaphysical entity.'

But anarchists and Taoists are in agreement upon one fundamental point: laws produce criminals; eliminate the Sages who produce laws, and 'there will be peace and order everywhere under Heaven.'

Once a follower of the great brigand Chih asked him whether thieves had any use for wisdom and morality. 'To be sure, they do,' said the brigand Chih, 'just as much as other people. To find oneself in a strange house and guess unerringly where its treasures lie hid, this surely needs Inspiration. To be the first to enter needs Courage; to be the last to leave needs Sense of Duty. Never to attempt the impossible needs Wisdom. To divide the spoil fairly needs Goodness. Never has there been or could there be anyone who lacked these five virtues and yet became a really great brigand.' . . .[1] Thus no great brigand existed till the Sages who taught these virtues came into the world. If we thrashed the Sages and let the brigands and assassins go, there would soon be peace and order everywhere under Heaven.

Knowing that there are dishonest people who pry into boxes, delve in sacks, raise the lids of chests, to protect their property householders provide strong ropes and solid locks; and in the common opinion of the world they act wisely in doing so. But suppose real brigands come. They will snatch up the boxes, hoist the sacks, carry away the big trunks on their backs, and be gone; only too glad that the locks are solid and the

[1] This story of 'honour among thieves' exists in many varying forms, for example in *Lü Shih Ch'un Ch'iu*, 54, *Huai-nan Tzu*, XII. 37, *Pao P'u Tzu*, XII.

ropes strong. The sole result of what before seemed wisdom was that the brigands were saved the trouble of packing.

Now I would go so far as to maintain that everything commonly regarded as wisdom is simply 'packing for brigands,' and everything that is commonly regarded as saintliness is simply 'storing loot for brigands.' How do I know that this is so? Throughout the whole length and breadth of the land of Ch'i (a territory so populous that in any village the sound of the cocks crowing and the dogs barking in the next village could be plainly heard), wherever net or snare was spread, wherever rake or ploughshare cleft the soil, within the four frontiers of all this great territory two thousand leagues square, not a shrine was set up, not a Holy Ground or Sheaf, not a rule was made in village or household, county or district, province or quarter, that did not tally with the ordinances of the Saviour Kings of old. Yet within the space of a single day T'ien Ch'êng Tzu slew the prince of Ch'i[1] and stole his kingdom. And not his kingdom only, but with it all the laws and policies of the Sages and wise men by which the princes of Ch'i had ruled their land. True, T'ien Ch'êng Tzu is known to history as a robber and assassin; but in his day he dwelt secure as any Yao or Shun. The small States dared not reprove him; the great States dared not punish him, and for twelve generations his descendants have held the land of Ch'i . . .

Dealing with the World

The Taoist does not 'hide himself away in the woods and hills.' What he hides is not his body, but his *tê*, his inborn powers. He knows how to 'follow others

[1] In 481 B.C.

without losing his Self.' And for this reason the art of the courtier, to which so much space is devoted by other writers of the third century, is not ignored by Taoist literature.

When Yen Ho was about to take up his duties as tutor to the heir of Ling Duke of Wei, he went to Ch'ü Po Yü for advice. 'I have to deal,' he said, 'with a man of depraved and murderous disposition. If I do not hinder him in his crimes, I shall be endangering my country; if I do hinder him, I shall endanger my own life. Such shrewdness as he has consists entirely in recognizing other people's shortcomings; it fails entirely to apprise him of his own. How is one to deal with a man of this sort?' 'I am glad,' said Ch'ü Po Yü, 'that you have asked this question. You will need much caution and care. The first thing you must do is not to improve him, but to improve yourself. It is essential that your outward conduct should be accommodating, and equally essential that your heart should be at peace. And yet, both these essentials have their danger. The outward accommodation must on no account affect what is within; nor must the peace that is within betray itself outside. For if what should be outward goes below the surface,

> "You will stumble, you will stagger,
> You will topple and expire."

Whereas if the inward peace of the heart betrays itself on the surface,

> "Comes recognition, comes fame,
> Comes bale and woe."

If the person of whom you speak behaves like a baby, you too must behave like a baby. If he has his foibles, you too must have your foibles. If he behaves like a cad, then you too must behave like a cad. And if you probe[1]

[1] Perform acupuncture; of course meant metaphorically.

him, do so in a part where his skin is not sore. Do you not know the story of the mantis in the wheel-rut, how it tried to stop the chariot by waving its arms, and did not realize that, useful though they had always proved, this was a task beyond what they could accomplish? The mantis's arms are the part upon which it has most right to pride itself. Be very careful not to meet a bad man's villainy by displaying to him what is best in you. For that way danger lies. Have you not heard how a keeper of beasts deals with his tigers? He never ventures to give them a live creature to eat, because when they have killed they become fierce. He never gives them a whole animal to eat, because when they rend flesh they become savage. He knows that what can be done with them when they are sated cannot be done when they are hungry. Tigers and men, though so different in species, have this at least in common: towards those that look after them their feelings will be friendly so long as they are humoured; and if despite what is done for them they turn savage, it is because their moods have not been studied.

'There was a man who dearly loved his horse. He carried away its droppings in a basket; he scooped up its stale in a clam-shell. One day a fly attached itself to the animal, and this man scotched it. Taken by surprise the horse began to plunge and rear, broke its halter, bruised its head, tore its breast. His intentions were for the creature's good; but it was his affection for it that proved the cause of its undoing. This should be a warning to you.'

But there is an art of 'living in the world' (the Buchmanites seem also to have discovered it) which might perhaps be better defined as living on the world. It is practised by the 'Man of *Tê*,' whose inward powers are so highly developed that the outward sources of his well-being are entirely unknown

to him: 'Whether at home or abroad, he takes no thought for the future; he is free alike from approval and disapproval, from admiration and disgust. . . . He seems as bewildered as an infant that has lost its mother, as helpless as a traveller who has lost his way; yet, though he has no idea where they come from, he is amply provided with all the goods and chattels a man can need; and though he does not know how they got there, he has always plenty of drink and food. Such is the description of the Man of *Tê*.'

I will close the section on Chuang Tzu with a story which has a certain current interest, for it was quoted at the Treasury by the representatives of the Chinese Government who came to England to raise a loan in 1938. The representatives of the Treasury (or so I was told by a Chinese friend) said they could not see that it was relevant:

Once Chuang Tzu was reduced to such extremities that he was faced with starvation and was obliged to go to the prince of Wei and ask for some millet. 'I am hoping before long,' said the prince of Wei, 'to receive the rent-money from the tenants in my fief. Then I shall be pleased to lend you three hundred pieces; will that be all right?' 'On my way here yesterday,' said Chuang Tzu, looking very indignant, 'I suddenly heard a voice somewhere in the roadway calling for help. I looked round, and there in the cart-track was a gudgeon. "Gudgeon," I said, "what are you doing there?" "I am an exile from the eastern seas," said the gudgeon. "Let me have a peck-measure of water, and you will save my life." "I am hoping before long," I said to it, "to go south to Wu and Yüeh. I will ask the king to dam the western river, so that it may flow your way. Will that be

The Better Feelings

The whole teaching of Mencius centres round the word Goodness (*jên*). Different schools of Confucianism meant different things by this term. But to Mencius, Goodness meant compassion; it meant not being able to bear that others should suffer. It meant a feeling of responsibility for the sufferings of others, such as was felt by the legendary Yü, subduer of the primeval Flood: 'If anyone were drowned, Yü felt as though it were he himself that had drowned him.' Or such as was felt (so it was said) in ancient times by the counsellor I Yin to whom if he knew that a single man or woman anywhere under Heaven were not enjoying the benefits of wise rule, 'it was as though he had pushed them into a ditch with his own hand; so heavy was the responsibility that he put upon himself for everything that happened under Heaven.'

According to Mencius, feelings such as this are not produced by education. They are the natural birthright of everyone, they are his 'good capacity,' his 'good knowledge,' his 'good feelings,' and the problem of education is not how to get them, but how to keep them. 'He who lets these feelings go and does not know how to recover them is to be pitied indeed! If anyone has a chicken or dog that has strayed, he takes steps to recover them; but people are content to let their good feelings go and make no effort to find them again. Yet what else

is education but the recovery of good feelings that have strayed away?' How these feelings are lost, how they are rubbed away by the rough contacts of daily life, is described by Mencius in the allegory of the Bull Mountain:

The Bull Mountain was once covered with lovely trees. But it is near the capital of a great State. People came with their axes and choppers; they cut the woods down, and the mountain has lost its beauty. Yet even so, the day air and the night air came to it, rain and dew moistened it till here and there fresh sprouts began to grow. But soon cattle and sheep came along and browsed on them, and in the end the mountain became gaunt and bare, as it is now. And seeing it thus gaunt and bare people imagine that it was woodless from the start. Now just as the natural state of the mountain was quite different from what now appears, so too in every man (little though they may be apparent) there assuredly were once feelings of decency and kindness; and if these good feelings are no longer there, it is that they have been tampered with, hewn down with axe and bill. As each day dawns they are assailed anew. What chance then has our nature, any more than that mountain, of keeping its beauty? To us, too, comes the air of day, the air of night. Just at dawn, indeed, we have for a moment and in a certain degree a mood in which our promptings and aversions come near to being such as are proper to men. But something is sure to happen before the morning is over, by which these better feelings are ruffled or destroyed. And in the end, when they have been ruffled again and again, the night air is no longer able to preserve them, and soon our feelings are as near as may be to those of beasts and birds; so that anyone might make the same mistake about us as about the mountain, and think that there was never any good in us

from the very start. Yet assuredly our present state of feeling is not what we begin with. Truly,

> 'If rightly tended, no creature but thrives;
> If left untended, no creature but pines away.'

Confucius said:

> 'Hold fast to it and you can keep it,
> Let go, and it will stray.
> For its comings and goings it has no time nor tide;
> None knows where it will bide.'

Surely it was of the feelings[1] that he was speaking.

How, then, can our 'good feelings,' at their height in the calm of dawn, be protected against the inroads of daily agitation? Naturally, by controlled breathing. The passage in which Mencius discusses his breath-technique is hopelessly corrupt and obscure. But that deep and regular breathing calms and fortifies the mind is a matter of common experience. That a definite technique of breath-control, practised over long periods, can reach a point at which ordinary consciousness is voluntarily suspended, would not be denied by anyone familiar with Zen or with Indian yoga. But how far Mencius went in yoga technique, what exactly was the nature of his 'flood breath,' *hao-jan chih ch'i*, it is impossible to say. He himself, when asked what the phrase meant, replied: 'It is difficult to say.' As it was capable of 'filling everything between Heaven and Earth' it was clearly envisaged as something supra-normal, something more than the air that goes in and out of the lungs. Yet it is wrong to call it spirit, energy, passion or the like; for none of these words include the idea of

[1] The innate good feelings.

'breath,' whereas Mencius's *ch'i*, whatever else it may be besides, is first and foremost 'breath.'

Government by Goodness

Goodness, as we have seen, depends on peace of mind, and Mencius realized that this again depends on economic security. 'If beans and millet were as plentiful as fire and water, such a thing as a bad man would not exist among the people.' Consequently the various (and partly identical) discourses of Mencius about Government by Goodness, supposed to have been addressed to the rulers of Wei, Ch'i and T'êng, consist largely of advice about land tenure, taxation and what we should call Old Age Pensions (*yang lao*, 'nourishing the aged').

The views of Mencius on land tenure, at any rate in the form in which they have reached us, are hardly less obscure than his views on breath-technique. In traditional theory, all land belonged to the Emperor. In practice, as the Emperor existed only in name, it belonged to the rulers of the various States, who retained a great deal of it themselves, and gave the use of the rest to nobles and gentlemen. Together with the right to use an estate went the right to employ the labour of the local peasants, who in return for a rent roughly amounting to a tenth of the produce of the estate—there were many variations of the system—had the right to the rest of the produce. Sometimes part of the estate was set aside as 'public land' and the whole of its produce went to the landlord;[1] in such cases the whole produce of the rest

[1] Who was very often the ruler himself.

of the estate (the 'private land') went to the peasants. No doubt there were wide variations of custom, locally and at different periods. But this seems to be the general picture.

A recent writer has stated that Mencius wanted to change this system into an 'economic institution having socialistic implications.' 'The land is to be given by the State to the people, who cultivate it in a condition of liberty.' There is not a single passage in *Mencius* which supports such an interpretation. Evidently the traditional system, such as I have outlined, was no longer fully observed in the three States which Mencius desired to reform. It had been devised at a time when agriculture was shifting and 'predatory'; after one plot had been cultivated for several seasons and ceased to give a good yield, it was simply abandoned, and fresh land was cleared and brought under cultivation. But when, in areas where no free land was left, agriculture became settled and stationary, it became necessary to let each plot in turn lie fallow for several seasons. The system of rent must have required adjustment to this new state of affairs; the taxation or non-taxation of fallow land must have been the crux of the problem. But this question is never definitely referred to by Mencius.

Agriculture is of course necessarily a co-operative business. An individual cannot support himself by ploughing, sowing and reaping unaided. And if this is true of cereal crops (wheat, barley, and the like), it is even more obviously true of rice-culture, with its complicated processes of replanting and irrigation. While agriculture is still in the predatory stage, while new fields are constantly being wrested from jungle or prairie by burning and hewing, the need for collaboration not merely of a whole family or household

but of larger groups is evident. It was commonly believed that in old days eight families had worked together, and Mencius wanted to revive this system of collaboration, at any rate in remoter country districts (where perhaps it had not fallen altogether into abeyance), and to encourage the general spirit of co-operation that went with it; 'the people make friends on their way to the fields and back again, they help one another in keeping watch and ward, assist and support one another in times of sickness; and so everyone becomes intimate and friendly.'

Contrasted with this system and utterly condemned by Mencius was the *kung*, the tribute system, in which each householder had to pay a fixed tribute of grain, determined by the average yield of the land he tilled. This meant that in bad years people had to borrow grain at high rates of interest in order to pay the full tribute.

The obligations of the peasant did not end with the paying of rent on the lands that he cultivated. His labour was also conscripted for the building of palaces, treasuries, arsenals, city walls, and defences of all kinds; and he was of course liable at any time to be called away on military service. Moreover there were taxes on produce sold in the markets, frontier tariffs on imports from other States, vast enclosures in which all hunting rights were reserved for the ruler, and similar fishing reserves.

Government by Goodness meant the abolition of market taxes and frontier taxes; the reduction to a minimum of parks and enclosures; the use of conscripted labour only at times of the year when agriculture was slack. It meant the abolition of savage penalties; it meant public support for the aged; it meant schools in which the teaching centred on

moral instruction. It is indeed a pity that Mencius tells us nothing about these schools save that they should exist; adding only some punning etymologies on the various names by which they had been known in the past.

Anyone who adopts these measures, even in a small State, will become a True King, that is to say, a monarch accepted by all China, dominating not by force but by goodness.

MENCIUS AND THE KINGS

The Kings of Wei

King Hui of Wei was an old man, probably getting on for seventy, when Mencius came to his Court. His long reign had been marked by disastrous wars,[1] in which his son had perished. His first question to Mencius was an unfortunate one. 'Sir,' he said, 'since you have thought it worth while to travel a thousand leagues to visit me, I feel sure that you have something to tell me which will be of profit to my kingdom.' To Mencius the word 'profit' represented expediency as opposed to right, worldliness as opposed

[1] See above, p. 60.

paces, but they ran away all the same.' 'Since that is your view,' said Mencius, 'your Majesty must not expect an increase in the number of his subjects at the expense of neighbouring kingdoms.'

Hui died in 320 B.C. and was succeeded by King Hsiang, who had not even the merit of being 'a little better than the rest.' On coming out from his first interview with the new king, Mencius said to someone whom he met: 'The moment I set eyes upon him I could see that he looked quite unfit to be a ruler of men, and on closer contact I found him wholly lacking in dignity. He asked me abruptly "How could we get a world settlement?" "By unification," I said. "Who is capable of uniting the world?" he asked. "If there were a single ruler," I said, "who did not delight in slaughter, he could unite the whole world." "And who would side with him?" he asked. "Everyone in the world," I replied. "Your Majesty knows how in the seventh and eighth months the new grain becomes parched. But soon the clouds roll up, heavy rain falls, and the young plants shoot up in lusty growth. When this is so, it is as though nothing could hold them back. Today among those that are the shepherds of men there is not in the whole world one who does not delight in slaughter. Should such a one arise, then all people on earth would look towards him with outstretched necks. If he were indeed such a one, the people would come to him as water flows downward, in a flood that none could hold back." '

King Hsiang is not mentioned again, and it is commonly supposed that Mencius left Wei soon after his accession.

About King Hsiang Mencius had, as we have seen,

no illusions from the start. But with the accession of Prince Hung to the dukedom of T'êng, a small principality close to Mencius's birthplace, it seemed as though 'government by goodness' was at last going to have its trial. On a very small scale, indeed; for T'êng was only about ten miles square. But that did not matter; it was large enough to turn into a 'good kingdom'; and 'should a True King (*wang*) arise,' he would certainly come to T'êng to take notes about its ways, and thus a little dukedom would become 'a tutor of kings.'

The Duke of T'êng

The relations between Mencius and the duke of T'êng had begun before his accession. Business had taken him to Ch'u in the South and he had gone considerably out of his way in order to visit Mencius, who was then living in Sung. Mencius discoursed to him upon the fundamental goodness of human nature, frequently citing the careers of the legendary monarchs Yao and Shun. On his way back the prince again visited Mencius, who assured him that there was 'only one Way,' applicable alike to the smallest principality or the mightiest kingdom.

When the old duke died, duke Wên (as the prince had now become) said to his tutor Jan Yu, 'Some time ago when I was in Sung I had a conversation with Mencius, which I have never forgotten. And now that unfortunately the great calamity[1] has befallen me, I should like you to go to him, that I may

[1] The death of his father.

have his advice before I take in hand what must be done.'[1]

So Jan Yu went to Tsou and asked Mencius for his advice. 'This is splendid!' said Mencius. 'The proper discharge of funeral duties towards a parent taxes a man to his utmost. . . . The rites to be practised in the case of a ruler I have never studied. However, I have heard it said that the three years mourning, with wearing of mourning robes of coarse cloth, and the eating of gruel, thick and thin—these are common to all, from the Son of Heaven downwards, and did not differ in any of the three dynasties.'

The duke accordingly embarked upon the 'three years mourning' as prescribed. But his ministers and the older members of his family were not at all in favour of it. 'None of the dukes of Lu, of whose family we are a cadet branch, ever carried out this "three years mourning," ' they protested. 'Nor did any of our own dukes in T'êng. It is not possible for you suddenly to revoke their institutions. Moreover it is written in the Records: In mourning and sacrifice the ancestors are to be followed.'

'I got it from someone,' said the duke, meaning that he had not simply invented the ritual out of his head, and he said to Jan Yu, 'In old days I am afraid I did not pay much attention to my studies and was more interested in driving and fencing. The consequence is that my uncles and the ministers do not think me capable of deciding a matter like this. I should be very sorry if I were not able to carry out this solemn duty as I wish. I want you to go to Mencius and ask him what I should do.'

'It is only by ignoring their protests,' said Mencius, 'that he can win them over. . . . What the superior

[1] With regard to the rites of mourning.

approves of, the inferior will end by approving even more than he. The gentleman's part is like that of the wind; the smaller man's part is like that of the grass. When the wind passes over it, the grass cannot choose but bend. This matter rests entirely in the prince's hands.'

When the tutor came back with this message, the prince said, 'It is quite true; it is really for me to decide.'

For five months he lived in a mourner's hut, without issuing instructions or admonitions of any kind. His ministers and relatives were much impressed, saying that he evidently understood these matters. When the time for the interment arrived, people came from far and wide to witness it. The sadness of his expression and the bitterness of his weeping and wailing gave great satisfaction to all who had come to condole with him.

The Three Years Mourning

The 'three years mourning' was one of the main tenets of the Confucian movement (until it became a State religion in Han times Confucianism was what we should call a 'movement,' in the sense in which the Chinese speak today of the New Life Movement, rather than a philosophic school). Naturally the Confucians represented it as a primeval institution, neglected only in a late and degenerate age. Their opponents, as in the passage above, decried it as an arbitrary innovation. In its full form the three years

sense) for three years;[1] but the source is a forgery of the 3rd century A.D. In any case the whole complex of Confucian reforms must be studied in its entirety. The Confucians demanded not only an exaggerated cult of dead parents but an extreme subservience to parents while alive.[2] They insisted at the same time upon a segregation of the sexes far stricter (as is evident from numerous anecdotes of the preceding centuries) than had hitherto been customary. These demands seem to hang together psychologically, and apart from the question of surviving Shang influence (a possibility which I do not deny), they should be studied in connexion with the whole process of social disintegration which followed the break-up of the early Chou empire.

Meanwhile, it is obvious that so inconvenient an institution, whatever its psychological or historical causes, would not have survived for centuries unless it had some kind of concrete social value. In the life of the official classes it certainly had such a value. It represented a sort of 'sabbatical' occurring as a rule towards the middle of a man's official career.[3] It gave

[1] *Shu Ching*. T'ai-chia. Earlier sources merely say that on his succession the new king turned out 'not to be clever' and was sent for three years to a country palace to be coached.

[2] Those who wish to derive 'filial piety' from Shang institutions can find no better proof than certain vague illusions, from the middle of the 3rd century B.C. onwards, to a Shang prince called Hsiao-chi who is supposed, from the contexts in which he is mentioned, to have shown filial piety towards his father, but not to have been loved in return.

[3] Many of Po Chü-i's best known poems, for example the 'Lazy Man's Song' and 'Fishing in the Wei River,' were written during his Three Years Mourning, which covered the years A.D. 811–813.

him a period for study and reflection, for writing at last the book that he had planned and never found time to begin, for repairing a life ravaged by official banqueting, a constitution exhausted by the joint claims of concubinage and matrimony.

An allowance was usually granted to support the mourner during this long holiday, and strange though this institution may at first sight appear to be, I am certain that if it were established in the West, civil servants would cling to it as tenaciously as did the bureaucracy of ancient China.

It may be noted, before leaving the subject of mourning, that what chiefly distinguishes Chinese mourning is the inordinate length of the mourning period. So lengthy an observance, carried out by so large a proportion of the population (and from the 1st century B.C. onwards it was, during many periods, actually practised by the whole official class), finds no parallel elsewhere. In many parts of the world, ten days has been considered sufficient; occasionally three months or a hundred days is the period of mourning, particularly in the case of important people. Even in Australia, where some very long mourning periods occur, I have seen none mentioned which extends into the third year. As regards the nature of the observances, however, China is not at all exceptional. Among the many score of practices which are mentioned in ritual literature or referred to in anecdotes, there is hardly one which is not familiar elsewhere. Two widely spread practices are mentioned in the following passage of *Mencius:* Tsêng Hsi, the father of Master Tsêng, was fond of jujubes, and after his death Master Tsêng could not bring himself to eat jujubes. 'Which taste nicer,' said the disciple Kung-sun Ch'ou, 'mince and roast-meat or jujubes?' 'Mince

wiched between Ch'i and Ch'u. Which ought I to serve, Ch'i or Ch'u?' 'Upon policies of that kind,' said Mencius, 'I can give no opinion. But if I must needs speak, there is one course that I would urge upon you. Dig out your moats, heighten your walls and guard them along with your people. Show that you are ready to die, and your people will not desert you. So much at least you may do.'

'I hear,' said the duke on another occasion, 'that the men of Ch'i are fortifying Hsieh[1] and am very much alarmed. What course ought I to pursue?' 'Of old,' said Mencius, 'when king T'ai dwelt in Pin, the men of Ti[2] attacked him. He withdrew from Pin and settled at the foot of Mount Ch'i. He would have been glad enough to stay where he was, but he had no choice in the matter. Do right yourself, and in days to come there will certainly be among your descendants one that will become a True King. A gentleman "when he makes the framework, leaves a loose thread hanging";[3] for he thinks of those who are to continue his task. Whether you fail or succeed depends upon Heaven. What other States do is their concern; yours is to do what is right with all your strength. That is all.'

And again; 'T'êng is a small country,' said the duke Wên. 'We have done our utmost to meet the demands of the large countries, but they are not satisfied. What course ought I to pursue?' 'Of old,' said Mencius, 'when king T'ai dwelt in Pin, the men of Ti attacked him. He offered them hides and silks; but they were not satisfied. He offered them dogs and

[1] Hsieh was fortified in 322 B.C.

[2] Regarded as barbarians.

[3] Metaphor of making straw sandals?

kings of antiquity destroyed the tyrants Chieh and Chou.

The duty of the other States to 'punish' any State which was being badly ruled is strongly emphasized by the Confucians and was acknowledged (though less emphatically) by their rivals the Mohists. But whereas when an individual was accused of crime, there existed an elaborate machinery by which to discover whether the allegation was well-founded, there was no inter-State Court which could investigate charges against a government, and the Righteous War principle became merely a moral cloak under which to cover acts of aggression. It was in fact a mechanism, familiar enough today, for bridging the gap between the amoralism of those who actually handle the affairs of a State and the inconvenient idealism of the masses.

The disciple Wan Chang was dismayed by the fate of Sung. Here was a small State which was attempting to put into practice Kingly Government, that is to say government by Goodness, as advocated by Mencius. According to the teaching of Mencius the result should have been that all the other States in China immediately put themselves under the leadership of Sung. In point of fact, quite the opposite had happened. Two of the largest States, Ch'i and Ch'u, after violent onslaughts of propaganda against Sung, were about to lead their armies against it. How, asked Wan Chang, did Mencius explain this apparent reversal of his principle?

Mencius replied by reiterating the stories of legendary ancient kings who had won the support of everyone under Heaven by putting into practice in their own small territory the humane precepts of Kingly Government. If Sung had failed to win such allegiance,

it could only be because Sung 'was not in point of fact practising Kingly Government or anything of the kind. For if the king of Sung were indeed practising such government, everyone within the Four Seas would raise his head and gaze towards him, wanting to have him and no other as lord and king. Then, mighty though the lands of Ch'i and Ch'u may be, what would Sung have to fear from them?'

To what extent Sung was attempting to practise Government by Goodness, as defined by Mencius, we have no means of judging. The interest of this passage to us is that it illustrates the overwhelming validity of the legendary past, even when confronted with recalcitrant facts of the moment. Mencius was at this time either in Sung or in any case not far off; yet instead of discussing or trying to ascertain what was actually happening in Sung, he cites legends of remote antiquity to prove that what is asserted to be happening now and close at hand cannot really be happening.

It is this ostrich-like attitude to 'the actual facts of the world as it now exists' that brought Confucianism into discredit as a practical morality and paved the way for the Realists.

Mencius and the King of Ch'i

The ambition of king Hsüan of Ch'i (319–301 B.C.),[1] like that of other Chinese rulers of the time, was to

[1] This chronology, different from that found in the current chronological tables, is now generally accepted. See Maspero, La Cronologie des rois de Ts'i, *T'oung Pao*, 1927.

for the reason, I could not understand my own feelings. But as soon as you explained them to me, something in my own heart at once clicked. Tell me, how can feelings of this sort help me to become a True King?'

'Suppose,' said Mencius, 'someone were to state to you that he was strong enough to lift three thousand catties, but not strong enough to lift one feather; or that his sight was so good that he could see the tip of a hair, but that he could not see a cartload of faggots, would you believe him?' 'No,' said the king. 'How can it be then,' asked Mencius, 'that your softness of heart is so great that it extends even to animals, and yet fails to bring any practical benefit to the people over whom you rule? In the case of the man who "cannot lift one feather," we can only say that he could if he would use his strength; in the case of the man who "cannot see a cartload of faggots," we can only say that he could if he used his eyes. If then your people do not find in you a protector, this can only be because you do not use your softness of heart. Thus if you have not risen to greatness as a True King, it is because you choose not to do so, not because you are unable to do so.'

'What is the difference in actual practice between choosing not to and not being able?' asked the king. 'Well, for example,' said Mencius, 'if someone said to you, "Take the Great Mountain under your arm and leap with it across the Northern Sea," and you say, "I am unable to," that really is being unable. But if someone older than you asks you to crack his joints and you say "I am unable to," that can in fact only be because you do not choose to. There can be no question of not being able to.

'Thus your failure to become a True King is not like the case of jumping over the Northern Sea with the Great Mountain under one's arm. It is like refusing to crack an old man's joints. . . . You have but to push your softness of heart far enough and you will become protector of all within the Four Seas. Restrict it, and

your own wife and children will be more than you can protect. It was so with the Ancients. If they far surpassed ordinary man, this was for one reason only: that which was good in them they continually pushed on to wider applications. But though your softness of heart makes you deal tenderly with animals, you do not go on to apply it in any way to your dealings with those over whom you rule. How is this? For example, you collect vast equipments of war, endanger your officers and ministers, arouse resentment among the rulers of other States. Are you any the happier for this?' 'No,' said the king. 'But I do not do it for pleasure. There are certain things that I want very much, and they cannot be got in any other way.' 'I should like to hear what those things are,' said Mencius.

The king smiled to himself, but did not answer.

'Perhaps,' said Mencius, 'you want richer and sweeter food to eat or lighter and warmer clothes to wear or brighter stuffs to look at or better music to listen to. Or perhaps you have not enough flatterers and favourites about you to carry out your orders. But those are things that the officers of your Court could easily supply. It cannot be to get these things that you prepare for war.' 'No, it is not for such things as that,' said the king. 'Well then,' said Mencius, 'it is not hard to guess what it is that you so much desire. You want to extend your territories, make vassals of Ch'in and Ch'u, rule the Middle Kingdom and hold down the barbarians on every side. I can only tell you that to seek ends such as these by the means that you employ is like trying to get fish off a tree.'

'Is it as bad as that?' said the king. 'As a matter of fact, it is worse,' said Mencius. 'For if you try to get fish from a tree, though you will certainly get no fish, there will at any rate be no evil consequences. But the quest of such ends as you have named by the means that you employ, if carried out with determination, cannot but lead to calamity.' 'In what way?' asked the king. 'Sup-

pose,' said Mencius, 'that the men of Tsou[1] went to war with the men of Ch'u,[2] who do you think would win?' 'The men of Ch'u would win,' said the king. 'Very well then,' said Mencius, 'let us accept that the small cannot contend with the large, the few with the many, the weak with the strong. Now the land that is within the Four Seas has nine divisions, each a thousand leagues square. The territories of Ch'i may, taken together, amount to as much as one of these nine divisions. Is it not clear that one part has about as much chance of subduing the other eight as Tsou has of beating Ch'u?

'No; there is nothing for it but to go back to the root of the matter. If you were this day to set up a form of government founded upon Goodness, at once all the officers under Heaven would want to be enrolled in your Court, all the ploughmen would want to plough up your freelands, all the merchants and tradesmen would want to bring their goods to your market, all travellers would want to use your roads, and all those anywhere under Heaven who had grievances against their ruler would want to lay their complaints before you. All would be so bent upon coming to you that no power could stop them.'

'I am not a clever man,' said the king, 'and all this is rather beyond me. But I hope that, if you keep me up to the mark and tell me clearly just what I am to do, I may be able despite my dullness to put your instructions into practice.'

'It is only people of the upper classes,' said Mencius, 'who can maintain fixed principles of right and wrong even if deprived of a settled livelihood. The common people, if deprived of a settled livelihood, lose all fixed principles, and when this happens they become completely licentious and depraved—there is nothing that they will not do. To allow them to fall into the net of

[1] A very small State.

[2] A very large State.

crime, and then proceed to inflict penalties upon them, this is trapping them as one traps wild animals. Is it thinkable that one who sets out to rule by Goodness could ever do such a thing as to set a trap for his people?

'No; an enlightened ruler in regulating the livelihood of his people will make sure that in the first place they are well enough off to look after their parents and able to support wife and child, that in good years they get as much as they can eat at every meal and that in bad years they shall at least be in no danger of starvation. Only when this has been assured does he "gallop on to goodness," and the people will have no difficulty in following him.

'As things are now, the livelihood of the people is not so regulated that any of these things is assured. With means so scanty as to keep them in constant dread of starvation, how can they be expected to have cultivated manners and morals?

'If you really want to carry this thing through, I must again recommend you to go to the root of the matter: for each family, five acres[1] of orchard, planted with mulberry-trees; and no one over fifty will lack silk clothing. Let them have chickens, pigs, dogs, and swine to breed, and if they are given sufficient time to look after them no one over seventy will go without flesh to eat. Give each family a hundred acres for its crops, and if they are allowed enough time to work the land, a household of eight persons will never suffer from hunger. Be sure that at the schools and colleges stress is laid upon the duty of children to parents and of the young to their elders in the same generation, and grey-haired men will no longer be seen going about the roads with burdens on their backs. One whose subjects wear silk and eat flesh when they are old, within whose frontiers the common people are never famished, never cold, cannot fail to become a True King.'

[1] An acre was 300 paces square.

Mencius went to P'ing-lu and said to the governor of the town: 'Supposing one of your bodyguard failed three times in one day to appear at his post, would you dismiss him or not?' 'I should not wait till the third time,' said the governor. 'Yet you yourself,' said Mencius, 'have failed to appear at your post time after time. Whenever the crops fail and there is famine in the land, the old and feeble among your people drop by the wayside and are rolled into the nearest ditch; while the able-bodied escape, some this way, some that, drifting off in their thousands.' 'It is not possible for me to do anything about it,' said the governor. 'Supposing,' said Mencius, 'someone undertakes to look after another man's cattle and sheep, he will make certain first of all that he can secure pasturing ground and fodder, and if this turns out to be impossible, I cannot help thinking he will return the cattle and sheep to their owner, rather than stand by and see them perish.'

'In that respect,' said the governor, 'I confess I am at fault.'

Not long afterwards Mencius had an audience with the king of Ch'i. 'I am personally acquainted with five of your city-governors,' he said to the king, 'and the only one who has ever admitted to me that he was in the wrong is K'ung Chü-hsin, governor of P'ing-lu.' He then told the king about his conversation with the governor. 'In this matter,' admitted the king, 'it is I myself who am to blame.'

The Yen Episode

As we have seen above[1] in 314 B.C. Ch'i (the State where Mencius was living) annexed the northern

[1] Page 62.

Great Men

The heroes of the day were men like the Wei general Kung-sun Yen and the itinerant politician Chang I, of whom I have spoken above.[1] 'Surely,' said Ching Ch'un (himself supposed to be an adept in inter-State intrigue), 'you would consider Kung-sun Yen and Chang I really great men? They have but to say one angry word, and all the princes tremble; they have but to keep quiet for a while, and the whole world breathes a sigh of relief.' 'What reason is there,' said Mencius, 'to call them great men? . . . He who is at home in the great house of the world, stands firm in the highest place of the world,[2] walks in the great highways of the world,[3] if successful, lets the people have the benefit of his success, if unsuccessful, practises the Way all alone; he whom riches and honours cannot corrupt nor poverty and obscurity divert, whom neither threats nor violence itself can bend—he it is that I call a great man.'

As opposed to the Great Man, the moral hero, is the 'great personage,' surrounded by a pomp and luxury which should not dazzle the true Confucian: 'Those who give counsel to a great personage should hold aloof and pay no heed to the splendours and luxuries that surround him. Halls hundreds of feet high, beams projecting a yard from the eaves, these are things that even if the choice were given us, we

[1] Page 65 and page 63.

[2] Is a man and not a woman or animal.

[3] And not on 'byways.' Cf. *Analects*, VI. 12.

We shall see[1] that Mo Tzu made a broad distinction between what is 'beneficial' and what is 'harmful.' Under the heading harmful he included all lavish ritual expenditure, in particular the wholesale waste of property that accompanied an orthodox Chinese burial. 'Even when an ordinary and undistinguished person dies,' says Mo Tzu, 'the expenses of the funeral are such as to reduce the family almost to beggary; and when a ruler dies, by the time enough gold and jade, pearls and precious stones have been found to lay by the body, wrappings of fine stuffs to bind round it, chariots and horses to bury with it in the tomb, and the necessary quantity of tripods and drums under their coverings and awnings, of jars and bowls on tables and stands, of halberds, swords, feather-work screens and banners, objects in ivory and in leather, have been made . . . the treasuries of the State are completely exhausted. Morover in the case of an Emperor, sometimes several hundred and never less than twenty or thirty of his servants are slain to follow him; for a general or principal minister sometimes twenty or thirty persons are slain, and never less than four or five.'

On top of this waste of life and wealth comes that 'long interruption of business,' as Mo Tzu calls it—the Three Years Mourning. 'The mourner,' says Mo Tzu, 'howls and sobs continuously on one note, soaks with falling tears his coat of rough cloth and his token of hemp,[2] lives in a hovel,[3] sleeps on a straw-

[1] See p. 135.

[2] What is referred to here is the hempen badge worn in lieu of a belt.

[3] Built as a lean-to against the side of the grave-mound. This practice is found in parts of Melanesia and Australia.

mattress with a clod of earth for his pillow. He continually and obstinately refuses food, till he is on the point of starvation, wears so little clothing that he is cold, his face becomes sunken and wrinkled, his skin sallow, his sight grows dim, his hearing dull, his limbs become so feeble that he cannot use them. A high officer must carry this so far that he cannot stand without being supported and cannot walk without a stick. Such is the observance of the Three Years Mourning. If these prescriptions were adopted and this rule carried out by ministers and officials they could not control their departments and offices, or see to it that new ground was brought under cultivation and stores and granaries were well stocked. If farmers observed these rules, they could not, rising early and coming back late at night, devote themselves as they should to ploughing, reaping, planting and tilling. If craftsmen observed these rules, they would be prevented from making boats and carriages, furniture and dishes. If wives observed these rules they could not, rising early and going to bed late, devote themselves as they should to spinning, hemp-twisting, or the weaving of silk and cloth. . . .

'Indeed, if elaborate burial and long mourning are encouraged by a government, the country will be impoverished, its population decline, and its administration be thrown into confusion. If the country is impoverished, its offerings of grain and liquor will be of low quality; if the population declines, there will be an insufficient number of people properly to serve God (Shang Ti) and the spirits; if the administration is in confusion, offerings and sacrifices will not be made at the proper times and seasons. If then the government encourages a practice that hinders the service of God and the Spirits, then God and the

Spirits will point at these people from on high, saying: "Is the existence of such men really of any advantage to us, or is it of no advantage at all; indeed, is it preferable to let them go on existing, or not to let them go on existing?" Then God and the Spirits will send down upon them crimes,[1] pestilences, calamities and afflictions, and will forsake them for ever.'

This sounds very Biblical. It is indeed the language of early Chou times and shows Mo Tzu's archaistic bent. The conception of God on High is exactly that of the early Songs and of the inscriptions on early Chou bronzes.

In a passage unusually spritely for him[2] Mo Tzu pours ridicule on the Summons to the Soul, an essential element in early Chinese death rites: 'When a parent dies, after the corpse has been laid out, but before it has been put in the coffin, they go up on to the roof, peer down into the well, scoop out the rats' holes, examine the washing-tub, to look for the deceased. If they really expect to find him, they must be consummate fools; while if they look knowing quite well that he is not there, what humbugs they must be!'

Mo Tzu condemned 'music.' But the Chinese word in question had a much wider sense than our term 'music.' What Mo Tzu had in mind were elaborate and costly dance rituals, demanding expensive costumes, the maintenance of large companies of dancers and musicians, all of which were paid out of the public funds. The orchestras included sets of metal

[1] Literally 'nets.' Sin is conceived of by many early peoples as a net in which God snares men. See *The Book of Songs*, p. 331.

[2] The passage of course may be the work of his followers.

bells on vast stands for the construction of which special levies were exacted:

'Duke K'ang[1] of Ch'i used to get up performances of the Wan[2] dance. The Wan dancers are not allowed to wear ordinary clothes or to eat common food. It is said that if they did not eat fine food and drink fine liquors, their complexions would not be worth looking at, and if they did not wear fine clothes, their movements would not be worth watching. So they are fed on nothing but meat and the choicest rice, clothed in nothing but patterned and embroidered stuffs. These people take no part in the production either of clothing or of food, but are clothed and fed by the industry of others. It is clear then that if rulers and their ministers encourage musical performances, the common people will go short of food and clothing, so great is the drain of such performances upon their resources. That is why Mo Tzu said that it is wrong to go in for music.'

Such performances and indeed all the amusements and pleasures of the Court were countenanced by the Confucians only on the condition that the people were allowed to share in them. In the following passage Mencius is speaking of music; but he also discusses hunting, and his moral is that the people will only tolerate the contrast between their own sordid existence and the brilliant life of the Court, if the ruler is seen to realize that they are capable of enjoying the same pleasures as himself, and is willing to let them share in these pleasures:

'I have just had an audience with the king,' said Chuang Pao, a minister at the Ch'i Court, to Mencius

[1] Reigned from 404–391 B.C.

[2] See *The Book of Songs*, p. 338.

one day, 'and he talked to me about his great fondness for music.[1] He asked me whether I thought it a good thing that a king should be fond of music, and I did not know what to reply.'[2] 'If the king were very fond of music,' said Mencius, 'there would soon be little amiss with the country of Ch'i.' Not long afterwards Mencius had an audience. 'Your Majesty,' he said, 'was telling Chuang Pao the other day how fond you are of music, or so I understood.' 'I did not mean,' said the king, blushing, 'that I can manage to like the music of the Former Kings, my ancestors. What I like is the popular music of the day.' 'If your Majesty were fond enough of music,' said Mencius, 'there would soon be little amiss with the country of Ch'i, no matter whether it was modern music or ancient music.' 'Please explain yourself,' said the king. 'Which is the pleasanter,' asked Mencius, 'to enjoy music alone or in company?' 'In company,' said the king. 'With just a few others, or with a great many?' asked Mencius. 'With a great many,' said the king. 'Well then,' said Mencius. 'I think I can explain to your Majesty my views about music. Suppose when you gave a musical performance, your subjects hearing the noise of your bells and drums, the sound of your pipes and flutes, were with one accord to feel headache, frown and say to one another, "All our king cares about is making music; else he would not bring us to such extremities that father and son cannot meet, elder brother and younger brother, wife and child are torn apart and scattered over the land. . . ."[3] What would be the reason that they felt like this? It could

[1] It should be remembered that the word includes dancing and miming, and that the word for 'pleasure' is written with the same character.

[2] These two clauses are accidentally inverted in the original.

[3] Owing to military levies, forced labour and so on.

happen only because you did not share your pleasure with the people.

'Suppose again, when you gave a musical performance, your subjects hearing the noise of your bells and drums, the sound of your pipes and flutes, were with one accord to feel delighted and say to one another with beaming countenances, "Our King must be in fairly good health, otherwise he would not be giving this performance. . . ." What would be the reason of their feeling so very differently in this case? It could happen only because you shared your pleasures with the people. Were your Majesty but to share your pleasures with those over whom you rule, you would become a king indeed.'[1]

The idea that the dead are pleased and placated by the performance of music and dances, so evident in earlier literature,[2] or that they may feel slighted if not accorded an elaborate burial is not found in Mo Tzu. But he makes them part of a threefold sanction for moral conduct. There are, he says, three classes of spirit (*kuei*): heavenly spirits, the spirits and divinities (*shên*) of hills and waters, and spirits which are the ghosts of dead human beings.[3] The existence of heavenly spirits (*t'ien kuei*), that is to say, of Heaven (*t'ien*), is not necessary to prove; for *t'ien* means not only Heaven and 'the sky,' but also 'the weather'; and no one would venture to deny the existence of the weather. With regard to other kinds of spirits the case was quite different. Many of Mo Tzu's contemporaries did not believe in them, and a special section of *Mo Tzu* is devoted to proving that they indubitably do exist. To this end Mo Tzu repeats a number

[1] A True King, ruler of all China. The kings of Ch'i had merely usurped the title of king.

[2] See *The Book of Songs*, p. 225, line 4.

[3] XXXI, near the end.

uses the term in a controversial sense, opposing it to the principle of the Confucians, according to which people were to be loved on a decreasing scale, beginning with parents, who were to be loved a great deal, and ending with remote persons such as the men of Yüeh, who were to be loved much less. Such a principle, said Mo Tzu, was the cause of all the wars and dissensions that were then rending China. If men loved the citizens of other States as much as they loved their parents, they would not consent to 'slay or enslave the grown men, carry off wives and children, horses and cattle, destroy their cities, upset their shrines.' The whole trouble indeed comes from having one moral standard in dealing with 'what is near' and another in dealing with 'what is far.'

If a ruler attacks a neighbouring country, slays its inhabitants, carries off its cattle and horses, its millet and rice and all its chattels and possessions, his deed is recorded on strips of bamboo or rolls of silk, carved upon metal and stone, inscribed upon bells and tripods, that in after days are handed down to his sons and grandsons. 'No one,' he boasts, 'ever took such spoils as I have done.' But suppose some private person attacked the house next door, slew the inhabitants, stole their dogs and pigs, their grain and their clothing, and then made a record of his deed on strips of bamboo or rolls of silk and wrote inscriptions about it on his dishes and bowls, that they might be handed down in his family for generations to come, boasting that no one ever stole so much as he, would that be all right? 'No,' said the lord of Lu. 'And looking at the matter as you have put it, I see that many things which the world regards as all right are not necessarily right at all.'

But, like the Confucians, Mo Tzu believed in the Righteous War, in which a good king, at the com-

mand of Heaven, punishes a bad one, and he even condemns the chivalrous etiquette of warfare,[1] upheld by the Confucians, on the ground that it handicaps the virtuous in their stern task: 'Suppose there is a country which is being persecuted and oppressed by its rulers, and a Sage ruler in order to rid the world of this pest raises an army and sets out to punish the evil-doers. If, when he has won a victory, he conforms to the doctrine of the Confucians, he will issue an order to his troops saying: "Fugitives are not to be pursued, an enemy who has lost his helmet is not to be shot at; if a chariot overturns, you are to help the occupants to right it"[2]—if this is done, the violent and disorderly will escape with their lives and the world will not be rid of its pest. These people have carried out wholesale massacres of men and women, and done great harm in their day. There could be no greater injustice than that they should be allowed to escape.'

Contrast with this the following anecdote from Mencius.

The men of Chêng sent Tzu-cho Ju-tzu to attack Wei. Wei sent Yu-kung Ssu to drive him away. Tzu-cho Ju-tzu said, 'today my fever is upon me and I cannot hold my bow. I am a dead man.' And he asked his groom, 'Whom have they sent to repel me?' 'Yu-kung Ssu,' said his groom. 'Then,' said Tzu-cho Ju-tzu, 'I am a live man.' 'But this Yu-kung Ssu is the best archer in Wei,' said the groom. 'How can you say that you are a "live man"?' 'For this reason,' said Tzu-cho Ju-tzu: 'Yu-kung Ssu learnt archery from Yin-kung T'o, and Yin-kung T'o

[1] For an admirable description of this etiquette, see Granet, *La Civilisation Chinoise*, p. 316 seq.

[2] This last sentence is corrupt, and the sense can only be guessed at.

Affinities of the Realists

The people whom I call the Realists are called in Chinese the *Fa Chia*, School of Law, because they held that law should replace morality. But hand in hand with their reliance on law, on punishments and rewards, went a number of other demands, summed up in the principle that government must be based upon 'the actual facts of the world as it now exists.'[1] They rejected all appeals to tradition, all reliance on supernatural sanctions and trust in supernatural guidance. For this reason the term 'Realist' seems to me to fit the general tendency of their beliefs better than 'School of Law,' which only indicates one aspect of their teaching. We might, if we wanted a narrower term, as an alternative to 'School of Law' call them the Amoralists.

Naturally the doctrine of the Realists was not an entirely new creation. We find when we come to examine it that it had, strangely enough, a good deal in common with Taoism, and stranger still, despite its bellicosity and amoralism, with the pacifist and profoundly moral doctrines of the Mohists. Fundamental to Realism was the rejection of private standards of right and wrong. 'Right' to them meant 'what the rulers want,' 'wrong' meant what the rulers do not want. No individual or school of thought must be allowed to set up any other standard or ideal.

[1] *Han Fei Tzu*, 46, p. 37.

be successfully ruled by kindness, the average man cannot be controlled except by law.

The People and the Law

What prevents the people spontaneously falling in with the ruler's plans, is that he takes a long view, whereas they take a short one. He knows that by sacrificing every other activity to food-production and preparation for war a State can become so strong that 'at every battle it will overthrow the enemy's army, at every attack capture a walled city,'[1] and at last secure complete submission on every hand. Then, as in the days of King Wu's victory over the Shang, a period of universal peace will set in, all weapons will be stored away, all warlike activity cease.

The ruler's subjects, on the other hand, are incapable of taking long views. What they hate is toil and danger, what they want is immediate ease and peace, and they are too stupid to see that ultimate safety can only be secured by immediate discomfort and danger. If the ruler pesters them with laws and regulations and threatens them with terrifying penalties, this is with the object of 'saving mankind from disorder and averting the calamities that hang over the whole world, preventing the strong from oppressing the weak, the many from tyrannizing over the few, enabling the old and decrepit to round off their days and the young orphan to grow up to manhood, ensuring that frontiers are not violated and that the horrors of slaughter and captivity are avoided.' No

[1] *Shang Tzu*, 17, p. 106.