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**WANG CH'UNG**

**LUN-HÊNG**

Miscellaneous essays

Traduits et annotés  
par

**Alfred FORKE**

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**Lun-hêng**  
Miscellaneous essays

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LUN-HÊNG**

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## CHAPTER I

### Coincidences

#### 10. III, I. *Ou-hui*

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

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

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

*Kuan Lung Fêng*<sup>8</sup> met with a violent death, and *Chi Tse*<sup>9</sup> and *Pi Kan*<sup>1</sup>

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

<sup>2</sup> On *Wu Tse Hsü* and *Ch'ü Yuan* see Vol. I, p. 140, Note 2.

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

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>9</sup> Cf. p. 31, Note 2.

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both expired in jail. At that time the corruption of *Chieh* and *Chou* was at its height, and the spans of the two men were to terminate. The words of *Yi Yin* <sup>2</sup> were listened to, and the advice of <sup>p2.002</sup> *Lü Wang* <sup>3</sup> was accepted. That was the period, when *T'ang* and *Wu* were going to rise, and the time, when the two statesmen were to be employed.

The destiny of a subject may be lucky or unlucky, and a virtuous or a vicious sovereign meets with him. *Wên Wang's* time was to be glorious, and it was *Lü Wang's* fate to become exalted. *Kao Tsung's* <sup>4</sup> reign was to be peaceful, and *Fu Yüeh's* <sup>5</sup> virtue to chime in with it. Not that *Wên Wang* and *Kao Tsung* were born for their two subjects, or that *Lü Wang* and *Fu Yüeh* were created for their two sovereigns. The sovereign being wise, and the minister virtuous, they heard of each other's fame. Everything being adjusted above, and well ordered below <sup>6</sup>, their lots came to be linked together.

When *Yen Yuan* <sup>7</sup> died, the Master said,  
— Heaven is destroying me <sup>8</sup>,  
and at the death of *Tse Lu* he exclaimed,  
— Heaven has cursed me.

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

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

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<sup>1</sup> A nobleman put to death by the emperor *Chou*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 31, Note 1.

<sup>3</sup> The counsellor of King *Wu*, more generally known by the name of *T'ai Kung*, his surname being *Lü Shang* (*Giles, Biogr. Dict.* No. 1862).

<sup>4</sup> *Kao Tsung* = *Wu Ting*, an emperor of the *Shang* dynasty. Cf. Vol. I, p. 317, Note 2.

<sup>5</sup> *Fu Yüeh*, originally a poor man, became minister of the emperor *Kao Tsung*.

<sup>6</sup> Sovereign and minister both doing their duty.

<sup>7</sup> *Yen Yuan* = *Yen Hui*, a disciple of *Confucius*. See Vol. I, p. 151.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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<sup>1</sup> The story is told in full Vol. I, p. 321 and on p. 163.

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

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

<sup>4</sup> *Shun's* territory *Yü*.

<sup>5</sup> The emperor *Yü*.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I have translated [] by 'opposed to'. *Shên* W.S.W. is exactly opposite to *yin* E.N.E. The expression seems to refer to the supposed antagonism of the cyclical signs and their attributes. Cf. Vol. I, p. 105 and chap. XXXIX.

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

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The moon fades in heaven, and shells shrink in the sea <sup>1</sup>. The wind follows the tiger, and the clouds accompany the dragon <sup>2</sup>. Belonging to the same sort and permeated by a similar fluid, their natures can mutually affect one another. When, however, creatures <sub>p2.005</sub> and things fall in together, and good or bad luck happen simultaneously, there is no influence exercised by one fluid upon another.

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

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

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

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

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 279, Note 2.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 306.

<sup>2</sup> This story is told in full in Vol. I, p. 307.

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



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dismissed, some villain has defamed talent.

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

— It is fate<sup>3</sup>.

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>3</sup> See [Analects XIV, 38 \[Couvreur\]](#) and p. 10, Note 4.

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

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 422.

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

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

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

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

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

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 226 and 307.

<sup>2</sup> The relations between *Han An Kuo* and *I K'uan* are related in Vol. I, p. 309.

<sup>3</sup> The famous 'Orphan of *Chao*' who later on became the hero of the well known drama translated by Stanislas Julien, which is not a mere copy of the 'Mysterious Box', as v. *Gottschall* (*Das Theater and Drama der Chinesen*, Breslau 1887, p. 108) seems to intimate, the subject being much older and semi-historical. For more details see Vol. I, p. 177.

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

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

## CHAPTER II

### Periods of Government

#### 53. XVII, III. *Chih-ch'i*

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p2.009 The world is convinced that, when in ancient times the monarch was wise, truth and virtue were practised, and that when they were practised success was achieved and the government well ordered. When the ruler of men was degenerate, truth and virtue declined, and, in consequence of this decline, all success was lost and government thrown into confusion. All thinkers of ancient and modern times hold this view, for they notice that the wisdom of *Yao* and *Shun* brought about universal peace, whereas the lawlessness of *Chieh* and *Chou* resulted in rebellion and in their destruction. But if we thoroughly go into the question we find that fate has its proper time, which comes spontaneously, and that virtue has no influence upon it <sup>1</sup>.

All officials, those with an income of more than a hundred piculs as well as those living on less than a pint <sup>2</sup>, while in office, govern the people. They exercise their authority, instruct, and admonish, but whether these instructions have any effect, and whether the people are well governed or in revolution, depends on fate.

Some persons may have great talents and lead a pure life, but when called to office, they soon are cashiered, whereas others with very little knowledge and a scandalous conduct govern the people and remain in office. In remote antiquity promotion and degradation of able and incompetent men was merely based on success. Rewards were bestowed on the successful, and penalties inflicted on the unsuccessful. Much consideration was shown for fate, and a great partiality to fortune, but neither were talents investigated

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<sup>1</sup> *Wang Ch'ung's* view that fate is not affected by human activity is as one-sided as that which he impugns *viz.* that virtue can do everything. Human energy is but one of the many circumstances co-operating in what we call fate, but a very important one which cannot be neglected.

<sup>2</sup> In former times Chinese officials were paid in grain instead of money, a system not quite abolished even at present.

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nor capacities much appreciated.

Dialecticians use this method of inquiring into the achievements, and determine people's virtue by their success. Thus they hold that the tranquillity of the people, and the peace of the State are p2.010 due to a wise ruler, and that rebellions and other dangers of a country are the upshot of his depravity. Therefore, when revolutions and other calamities unexpectedly break out, these critics bring them home to the sovereign, charging him with misrule. The prince acquiesces and takes the guilt upon himself. Sorrow and pain shake his body, but the difficulties are not removed thereby. Without reason they harass the mind of the ruler, and overwhelm an enlightened monarch with undeserved reproaches. These ideas are being transmitted and universally accepted <sup>1</sup>.

A wise ruler may govern a people who are to live in peace, but he cannot reform an age destined to revolt. A physician clever in using his needles <sup>2</sup> and medicines, is successful with his methods, if he happens to find a patient whose end has not yet arrived, and comes across a disease which is not mortal. If the man's life is ended and his sickness fatal, he can do nothing even though he be a second *Pien Ch'io* <sup>3</sup>. A worn-out life and a fatal disease are incurable as a people in rebellion cannot be pacified. The action of the drugs cures a disease as admonitions serve to pacify the people. Both cases are subject to destiny and time, and cannot be forced at all cost.

[The *Kung-po Liao*, having slandered *Tse Lu* to *Chi Sun*, *Tse Fu Ching Po* informed *Confucius* of it . . . . *Confucius* said,

— If my principles are to advance, it is so ordered. If they are to fall to the ground, it is so ordered.] <sup>4</sup>

Consequently, the advance of the doctrine no less than the peace of the

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<sup>1</sup> Up to the present day, the Emperor feels himself responsible for the happiness of his State and looks upon an unlucky war or other misfortunes as punishments inflicted upon him by Heaven for his sins. On the other side, he and the manes of his ancestors get the credit for all success.

<sup>2</sup> Needles for acupuncture, not for sewing, for there is no cutting in Chinese medicine.

<sup>3</sup> A celebrated physician of the 5th cent. B. C. Cf. Vol. I, p. 223, Note 2 and *Giles, Biogr. Dict.* No. 396.

<sup>4</sup> [Analects XIV, 38 \[Couvreur\]](#).

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people depend on fate and time, and not on human force. Revolutions, the opposition of the citizens, and the danger of the State are commonly caused by calamities which come down from Heaven above. The virtue of a wise ruler is unfit to cope with, and disperse them.

It is mentioned in the *Shiking* <sup>1</sup> that King *Hsüan* met with a great drought. The words are, '[Of the remnant of *Chou*, among the black-haired people, there will not be half a man left.]' That means that not a single person was left, but was affected by this <sub>p2.011</sub> disaster. King *Hsüan* <sup>2</sup> was a wise man who regretted the insufficiency of his virtue.

There has never been anybody more benevolent and kind-hearted than *Yao* and *T'ang*. But *Yao* met with the Great Flood, and *T'ang* fell in with a great drought <sup>3</sup>. Inundations and droughts are the worst calamities. Since the two Sages were visited with them, were they brought about by their administration ? No, the fixed periods of Heaven and Earth made it so.

From the inundation and the drought of *Yao* and *T'ang* we draw the conclusion that the calamities of other kings are not caused by their virtue. That being the case, their happiness and felicity cannot be the result of their virtue either.

A wise ruler's government of his State is like a kind father's administration of his family. The latter gives his instructions to all equally and issues his commands, thus making his sons and grandsons dutiful and virtuous. His descendants being dutiful and virtuous, the family flourishes. When all the citizens live in peace, the State prospers. But prosperity is always succeeded by a decay, and progress, attended by a decline. As prosperity and progress are not brought about by virtue, decline and decay cannot be due to virtue either. Prosperity and progress, decay and decline are all dependent on Heaven and time.

This is the real nature of goodness and badness, but we have not yet spoken of the manifestations of joy and sorrow. A family is not at peace, nor

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<sup>1</sup> *Shiking* III, Bk. III, Ode IV, 3 ([Legge, Classics Vol. IV, Part II, p. 530](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> King *Hsüan* of the *Chou* dynasty, 827-781 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 16.

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are its members cheerful unless there be sufficient wealth, and ample means to supply its wants. Affluence is the outcome of a generous fate and not to be obtained through wisdom and benevolence. Everybody knows that affluence, peace, and contentment are consequences of a happy destiny, but ignores that the tranquillity of a State, and the success of its institutions are but lucky circumstances.

Consequently good government is not the work of worthies and sages ; and decay and disorder, not the result of viciousness. When a State is doomed to fall to pieces, worthies and sages cannot make it thrive, and when an age is to be well governed, no wicked people can throw it into disorder. Order and disorder depend on time, and not on government ; the tranquillity and the troubles of a State are determined by its destiny, and not by its culture. Neither a wise nor an unwise ruler, neither an enlightened nor an unenlightened government can be beneficial or deleterious.

p2.012 The world praises the era of the Five Rulers, when the whole empire was enjoying peace, people had provisions for ten years, and every one behaved like a man of honour. It may be that this was not the case and merely an exaggeration of the time, or it was really the effect of the then government, but how can we know ?

What are the causes of disorder ? Are they not the predominance of robbery, fighting, and bloodshed, the disregard of the moral obligations by the people, and their rebellion against their ruler ? All these difficulties arise from a want of grain and food, in so far as people are unable to bear hunger and cold. When hunger and cold combine, there are few but violate the laws, and when they enjoy both warmth and food, there are few but behave properly <sup>1</sup>.

It has been said that, when the granaries and store-houses are full, people know the rules of propriety, and when clothes and food suffice, people are sensible of honour and disgrace. Altruism grows from opulence, and strife springs from indigence. There being abundance of grain and plenty of food,

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<sup>1</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* here anticipates the theory of many modern historians who ascribe great political changes not to the preponderating influence of some individuals, the great men of history, but to the economical conditions of the people.

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moral feelings emanate, and by paying due consideration to propriety and justice, the foundations of peace and happiness are laid. Thus, in the spring of a year of dearth, not even relatives are fed, whereas in the autumn of a year of plenty, even neighbours are invited to take their share. Not to feed one's own relations is wicked, and to invite even one's neighbours, a great kindness. Good and bad actions are not the upshot of human character, but of the state of the year, its dearth and affluence.

From this point of view, moral conduct is conditioned by the grain supply, and the grain produce depends on the year. When a year is conspicuous by floods or droughts, the Five Grains do not grow. Not the government is responsible for this, but time and circumstances. If inundations and dryness be held to be the result of government, there were never worse rulers than *Chieh* and *Chou*. In their time there ought to have been constant floods and droughts, but their reigns were not visited with famines or dearth. Calamities such as these have their periods which sometimes, contrariwise, just fall in the reigns of wise sovereigns.

On mature consideration it will be admitted that the Great Flood of *Yao* and the Great Drought of *T'ang* were both accidents <sup>p2.013</sup> and not occasioned by bad government. If, however, the disasters of all the other kings be taken for echoes of their wickedness, it would be an exaltation of the excellence of *Yao* and *T'ang* and a depreciation of the other princes. One case gives us a key to a hundred, and the knowledge of wickedness enlightens us upon virtue. *Yao* and *T'ang* may serve us as guides *vis-à-vis* of other rulers. The extraordinary calamities of the latter cannot be caused by their administration. Looking upon them as natural calamities, we get a clearer conception of happiness and misfortune, and it becomes evident that, if the Five Rulers bring about universal peace, they do not do it through their administration.

People about to die from plague show a lugubrious expression, boding ill, in their features beforehand. Their disease arises from contagion by miasms, and unless it be cured they die, their span thus coming to an end. The convulsions, and the final catastrophe of a State show similar symptoms. Extraordinary changes appear in Heaven and on Earth just as in the case of

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persons dying from plague the mark of death is visible on their faces. Floods, droughts, and other disasters are like the miasms engendering sickness, and unless these calamities be removed, they conduce to the ruin of the State as the disease not cured leads to the death of the individual.

Would those who maintain that phenomenal changes are a test of government, admit that, if worthies catch the plague and have that lugubrious look, it is all caused by their dealings ? If floods and droughts be looked upon as sequences of lawlessness, can worthies, attacked by a disease, be said to have contracted it through their disorderly conduct ? Death is regarded as the greatest evil, but when worthies die of sickness, must this be considered the heaviest possible punishment inflicted upon them ?

Worthies are taken ill and die early, and wicked people may be strong and robust and become very old. Human diseases and death are not a retribution for evil doing, and so the disorder and the ruin of a State have nothing to do with the goodness or the badness of its government. Bad characters are strong and become old, and iniquitous governments enjoy peace and remain unharmed. Consequently, it is plain that misfortunes and disasters are not sufficient indications of depravity, and happiness and lucky auguries are inadequate proofs of virtue.

p2.014 Amongst the celestial phenomena there are partial eclipses of the sun and the moon. Every forty-two months there is an eclipse of the sun, and every fifty-six months, one of the moon <sup>1</sup>. These eclipses occur at fixed intervals and have no connexion with the government. The hundred phenomena and the thousand disasters manifest themselves in a similar way, and are not brought about by the ruler of men or any administrative measures.

When *Jupiter* injured the tail of the 'Bird', *Chou* and *Ch'u* suffered misfortune, and a disaster was sent down on *Sung*, *Wei*, *Ch'ên* and *Chêng*, when a featherlike air put in an appearance <sup>2</sup>. It does not follow that, at this

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<sup>1</sup> In Vol. I, p. 270 *Wang Ch'ung* says that, on an average, an eclipse of the sun occurs every 41 or 42 months and of the moon every 180 days.

<sup>2</sup> See Vol. I, p. 118.



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junction, the policy of these six States was mistaken. The city of *Li-yang* sank during one night, and was turned into a lake <sup>1</sup>. At that time, the high officers of *Li-yang* must not have been deceitful and perverse.

Success and discomfiture emanate from Heaven, and good and bad luck are governed by time. Ere man sets to work the heavenly fluid is already apparent ; if this is not time, what else is it ?

The Five Grains grow on earth, sometimes in abundance, and sometimes in insufficient quantities. The grain is sold in the market, sometimes dear and sometimes cheap. Rich harvests are not of necessity attended by low prices, nor does a scarcity of production lead to a rising of the prices. Abundance and scarcity have their years, dearness and cheapness, their time. When there is to be dearness and abundance simultaneously, the grain price rises, and when there is to be cheapness and scarcity, it falls. The price of grain does not depend on the state of the harvest, no more than the conditions of a State turn on moral qualities <sup>2</sup>.

If a wise ruler happens to rise in an era pre-ordained for order, virtue of itself shines above, and the people behave well below. The age is tranquil, the people at ease, and bliss and felicity never cease. The world then imagines all this to be the work of the wise ruler. If an unprincipled sovereign happens to be born during a period fraught with disturbances, the age is stirred up, the citizens revolt, and there is no end of calamities. In consequence whereof the State is ruined, the sovereign destroyed, and his descendants p2.015 extinguished. The world invariably sees in this the effect of wickedness. They understand the outward appearances of goodness and badness, but are ignorant of the intrinsic nature of happiness and misfortune.

Happiness and misfortune do not hinge on goodness or badness, and goodness or badness cannot be called to witness in case of happiness and misfortune. Sometimes high functionaries, having taken over a new office, have not yet been active, or the administration, following old precedents, has

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 136.

<sup>2</sup> Neither of these two statements will be unreservedly admitted : The prices, to a great extent, depend on the harvest, and the welfare of a State, on the moral qualities of its citizens, although there may be still other causes at work.

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not been changed. Yet robbery is either rampant or not, and calamities may happen, or may not happen. What is the reason of this ?

Great officers, destined to high honours, use a time of general peace as a stepping stone for their advancement, whereas those doomed to baseness and loss of office, begin their career in times of troubles, and thus are degraded and cashiered. From our actual high officers we may draw an inference on the ancient monarchs, and thus discourse on safety and danger, prosperity and decay.

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## CHAPTER III

### Sympathetic Emotions

55. XVIII, II. *Kan-lei*

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p2.016 When the *Yin* and the *Yang* are at variance, calamitous changes supervene. Either they arise from the unexpiated guilt of former generations <sup>1</sup>, or it is the spontaneous action of the fluids. Worthies and sages feel an emotion by sympathy <sup>2</sup>, and, in their agitation, think out for themselves the reason for the calamity, implying some wickedness, having happened. They incriminate themselves, and from fear that they themselves are culpable take every precaution. It does not follow that this apprehension is based on facts <sup>3</sup>, as the following reflection will prove :

*T'ang* being visited by a drought, impeached himself of five faults. Now, a sage is perfect, and his dealings without blemish ; why then must he accuse himself of five faults ? But, as the *Shuking* has it, *T'ang* inculpated himself, and Heaven responded with rain. Originally *T'ang* was innocent, but he brought the five charges against himself <sup>4</sup>. Why then did Heaven send the

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<sup>1</sup> This is not in accordance with *Wang Ch'ung's* system advocating spontaneity and must be taken merely hypothetically as one of two possibilities, either .... or.

<sup>2</sup> Sages have many affinities with Heaven which manifests itself by them. Therefore Heaven being agitated, they are agitated too.

<sup>3</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* goes on to prove that all these apprehensions and self-reproaches are baseless.

<sup>4</sup> No such passage is to be found in our text of the *Shuking*, but in the *Ti-wang-shi-chi* of the 3d cent. A. D. quoted in the *T'ai-p'ing yü-lan* chap. 83, p. 2r. we read, « After *T'ang* had destroyed *Chieh* there was a great drought for seven years, so that the *Lo* dried up. He ordered tripods to be brought and thus prayed to the Mountains and Rivers :

— Have my desires been dissolute ? Have I caused pain to the people ? Has there been bribery ? Have calumniators been predominant ? Has there been too much building of palaces ? Has the society of women been sought too much ? What is the cause of this absolute want of rain ?'

The historiographer of *Yin* divined and said that a man ought to be sacrificed.

— It is for the people that I pray for rain, replied *T'ang*. If a man is to be immolated I wish to be the one.

Then he fasted, cut his hair, and pared his nails to take the place of the victim. At an altar in a mulberry grove he prayed,

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rain ? p2.017 If the drought was caused by innocence, it is obvious that rain cannot be obtained by self-accusation. From this point of view, the drought did not happen for *T'ang's* sake, and the rain was not a response to his self-indictment, but the previous drought and the subsequent rain were the effect of the spontaneous fluid. So much about this passage of the *Shuking*.

But other difficulties arise : At the great rain sacrifice of the Spring and Autumn period, *Tung Chung Shu* put up a clay dragon. All are agreed that this refers but to a limited space of time <sup>1</sup>. No rain having fallen for awhile, out of fear they made the offering, imploring the *Yin* and praying for happiness, full of sympathy for the distress of the people.

*T'ang* having met with a drought lasting seven years, accused himself of the five faults. Which time was this ? Did he impeach himself at once, on falling in with the drought, or did he but do so after the drought had lasted seven years ? If we say that he did so at once, and it rained but seven years later, why did Heaven responding to his sincerity, put him off so long at first ? And if we hold that he impeached himself after seven years, why was his compassion with his people so much delayed ? The story neither tallies with the ceremony of the rain sacrifice, nor does it show any affection for the people, therefore we cannot believe the words of the *Shuking*.

Thunder and rain overtaking King *Ch'êng* of the *Chou* dynasty fall under the same head. We learn from the chapter 'The Metal-Bound Coffin' <sup>2</sup> that, [in autumn, before the big crop was harvested Heaven hurled down tremendous thunders and lightnings, and that, owing to the storm, all the grain lay down, and huge trees were up-rooted, so that all inhabitants were exceedingly

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— I, the young man, have come and dare to offer myself as a black victim. I here declare before august Heaven and Earth, *if the ten thousand regions have any sins, may they fall upon my person, and if I have any guilt, may it not involve the ten thousand regions.* May not the imprudence of one single man induce God and the Spirits to injure the life of the people.

He had not yet finished these words, when a mighty rain poured down over several thousand miles'.

Here *T'ang* impeaches himself with six, not with five faults. Only the words in Italics occur in the *Shuking*, *T'ang-ka'o*, with some variations. The gist of the above quotation is also given by *Legge*, *Chinese Classics* Vol. III, Part I, p. 190, Concluding Note. [[Couvreur](#)]

<sup>1</sup> With the object of attracting rain. Cf. chap. XXXII.

<sup>2</sup> Part V, Book VI of the *Shuking* [[Legge](#)] [[Couvreur](#)].

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frightened.] <sup>1</sup> At this time the duke of *Chou* died <sup>2</sup>. The Literati contend that King *Ch'êng* was in doubt about the duke of *Chou*, whether he should bury him with imperial honours, the duke being but a minister, or whether he should follow the rites prescribed for a minister, the deserts of the duke being equal to those of an emperor. While he was thus wavering with regard to the funeral of the duke, Heaven sent a big thunder-storm with rain, manifesting its anger by this phenomenon, in order to illustrate the achievements of the sage.

The archæologists maintain that at the decease of *Wu Wang*, when the Duke of *Chou* had become regent, evil reports were spread about him in *Kuan* and *Ts'ai* <sup>3</sup>. The king mistrusted him, and the duke fled to *Ch'u* <sup>4</sup>. Thereupon, Heaven sent a tempest with rain to undeceive King *Ch'êng*. Thus, the phenomenon of thunder and rain was either due to the king's misgivings about the burial or to his belief in those slanderous reports. The two schools could not make it out.

If we accept the statement about the funeral we find that in autumn and summer the *Yang* fluid is at its cynosure, and there is any amount of rain and thunder-storms, and, as regards the up-rooting of trees and the lying down of the corn, they are, likewise, of frequent occurrence.

During the tempest King *Ch'êng* took alarm. He opened the book in the metal-bound coffer, and learned the merits of *Chou Kung*. Holding the book in his hands, he bewailed his error and reproached himself most severely <sup>5</sup>. This self-impeachment took place when, accidentally, Heaven sent a contrary wind. The scholiasts of the *Shuking* then fancied that Heaven was indignant on account of the Duke of *Chou*.

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<sup>1</sup> Quotation from *Shuking* Part V, Book VI, 16 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part II, p. 359](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> This is in accordance with the *Shi-chi* chap. 33, p. 6r. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. IV, p. 100, Note 1](#)), but not with the *Shuking*, where the Duke of *Chou* is supposed to be banished, but still alive.

<sup>3</sup> Territories in modern *Honan* which were given as fiefs to the two younger brothers of *Wu Wang*, who spread the reports about the Duke of *Chou*. Cf. *Shi-chi* chap. 4, p. 15v. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 245, Note 2](#)).

<sup>4</sup> The *Shuking* only says that for two years *Chou Kung* resided in the east. According to the *Shi-chi loc. cit.* the calumnies had no effect.

<sup>5</sup> See *Shuking loc. cit.* Book VI, 18 [[Legge](#)] [[Couvreur](#), § 18].

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During a thousand autumns, and ten thousand summers there is never a cessation of tempests and rain. If both be regarded as manifestations of Heaven's anger, is august Heaven irate year after year ? In the first month, the *Yang* fluid pours out, and the sound of thunder is first heard. In summer and autumn, the *Yang* reaches its climax, and there is crashing of thunder. Provided that the thunder of summer and autumn be deemed an expression of Heaven's great wrath, is the thunder in the first month a manifestation of its minor irritation ?

p2.019 Thunder being expressive of Heaven's anger, rain must be accounted a blessing. Now flying into a passion on account of the Duke of *Chou*, Heaven ought to have thundered, but not to have rained. Since rain fell simultaneously, was Heaven pleased and angry at the same time ?

*Confucius* did not cry and ring on the same day <sup>1</sup>, and according to the Rites of the *Chou* <sup>2</sup> on the *tse mao* days <sup>3</sup>, when millet and vegetable soup were eaten, sorrow and joy were not uttered simultaneously. Sorrow and joy were not uttered simultaneously, and cheerfulness and anger should be combined ?

When *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* sacrificed in the east on Mount *T'ai*, a tempest with rain broke loose <sup>4</sup>, and when dame *Liu* reposed on the banks of a big pond, a tempest and rain darkened the sky <sup>5</sup>. *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti*, in spite of his villainy, would rank with the former sages, and looked upon his own outrageous reign as a time of universal peace. It may be that this roused the indignation of Heaven. When dame *Liu* reposed near the big pond, she dreamed that she met with a spirit. At that time she begot *Kao Tsu*. Why was Heaven so furious at the birth of a sage, that it sent thunder and rain ?

In *Yao's* time a storm caused great havoc, and *Yao* had this big storm fettered in the wilds of *Ch'ing-ch'iu* <sup>6</sup>. When *Shun* entered a big mountain

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects VII, 9 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> The *Liki*.

<sup>3</sup> Days designated by these cyclical signs in the calendar.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Shi-chi* chap. 28, p. 11v. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. III, p. 439](#)), and Vol. I, p. 334, Note 4.

<sup>5</sup> See Vol. I, p. 177.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted from [Huai Nan Tse VIII, 6v](#). *Yao's* assistant *Yi* bound the storm, which must

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forest, there was a fearful wind, thunder, and rain <sup>1</sup>. *Yao* and *Shun* were the exalted rulers of their age ; how have they sinned against Heaven, that it caused wind and rain ?

At a time of great dryness, in the *Ch'un-ch'iu* epoch, the rain-sacrifice was performed. *Tung Chung Shu*, moreover, put up a clay-dragon to attract the fluid by sympathy <sup>2</sup>. If Heaven responded to the rain dragon, it must have produced a tempest with rain, because the rain of summer and autumn always comes accompanied by thunderstorms. In case this method of the *Ch'un-ch'iu* epoch p2.020 of *Tung Chung Shu* be followed, does the dragon at the great rain-sacrifice attract Heaven's anger ?

When the music-master *K'uang* played the song 'White Snow', a flash of lightning was seen, and when he thrummed a tune in A major, a violent storm with rain broke loose <sup>3</sup>. Provided that a tempest and rain be indicative of Heaven's wrath, why did it dislike 'White Snow' and A major so much as to resent the music-master's playing them ? This is a difficulty about thunder and rain.

Another question may be asked : Because King *Ch'êng* would not grant *Chou Kung* imperial funeral honours, Heaven sent thunder and storm, curbed down the corn, and up-rooted trees. The king took the hint, and holding the book, deplored his fault, when Heaven sent a contrary wind, and the lying grain rose up again. Wherefore did it not stop the storm at once and thereby uplift the big trees again, and why were the inhabitants expected to raise them up and replace them ? <sup>4</sup>

*Reply* : Heaven could not do it.

*Question* : Then, are there things which Heaven is unable to do ?

*Reply* : Yes.

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be conceived as the storm-god, *Fêng-po*.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from *Shuking* Part II, Book I, chap. 3 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 32](#)) [*Couvreur*].

<sup>2</sup> See above p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> For this story see Vol. I, p. 222 where all the details are given.

<sup>4</sup> As is related in the *Shuking loc. cit.*

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*Objection* : When *Mêng Pên* <sup>1</sup> pushed a man he fell down, and when he took hold of him, he rose again. He took a man, and made him stand upright. If Heaven could merely pull out trees, but not uplift them again, its strength would be inferior to that of *Mêng Pên*.

During the *Ch'in* time three mountains disappeared <sup>2</sup>. They, also, say that they were transferred by Heaven. Now, how can the weight of trees be compared with that of three mountains ? That Heaven could transfer the three mountains, and was incapable of raising big trees, is not what we should expect from its strength. If the three mountains are believed not to have vanished by Heaven's instrumentality, does it produce but thunder and rain ?

*Reply* : Heaven wished to induce King *Ch'êng* to bury the Duke of *Chou* in accordance with imperial rites, for the duke was possessed of the virtue of a sage, and he had the deserts of an emperor. The Classic says, [Then the king found the words spoken by *Chou Kung*, at his death, about his meritorious deed of taking <sup>p2.021</sup> the place of King *Wu*... and that now Heaven had moved its terrors to display the virtue of the Duke of *Chou*] <sup>3</sup>.

*Objection* : *Yi Yin* as prime minister to *T'ang* defeated the *Hsia* dynasty. He promoted the welfare of the people and kept off distress, so that universal peace reigned all over the world. After *T'ang's* death, he again became minister to *T'ai Chia*. Because the latter was lazy and dissolute, he banished him into the *T'ung* <sup>4</sup> palace, and conducted the government for three years <sup>5</sup>. Then he retired, after having restored the king to his dignity. *Chou Kung* said, ' *Yi Yin* followed the example of august Heaven' <sup>6</sup>. Heaven should have made it public. Why did Heaven not cause thunder and rain at *Yi Yin's* death ?

*Reply* : According to the 'Hundred Chapters on Rain', when *Yi Yin* died

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<sup>1</sup> A man celebrated for his strength. Cf. Vol. I, p. 380, Note 4.

<sup>2</sup> See Vol. I, p. 276.

<sup>3</sup> *Shuking* Part V, Book VI, 16 and 18. ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part II, p. 359](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>4</sup> A place said to have been situated in *P'u-chou-fu* (*Shansi*).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Shuking* Part IV, Book V, 9 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 203](#)) [[Couvreur](#)] and *Shi-chi* chap. 3, p. 6r. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 189](#)).

<sup>6</sup> *Shuking* Part V, Book XVI, 7 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part II, p. 477](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].



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there was a great mist for three days.

(*Objection*) : A great mist for three days is an abnormal fluid and not a phenomenon expressive of Heaven's anger. *Chang Pa* of *Tung-hai*<sup>1</sup> is the author of this 'Rain Book'. Although his statement be not trustworthy, yet we shall use it as the basis of our inquiry :

Heaven produced thunder and rain for the purpose of rousing King *Ch'êng*. Did the thunder cease before the king had opened the metal-bound trunk, or after he had opened it ?

*Reply* : Thunder ceased before he had opened the trunk. It was in the trunk that he found the book wherefrom he learned the merits of the duke. Having become aware of his mistake, he deplored it and resolved to bury the duke with imperial honours. When he went out into the suburbs and saw the phenomenal changes, Heaven had already stopped the rain and blown a contrary wind, and all the grain had risen up again<sup>2</sup>. Consequently, p2.022 thunder and rain had already stopped before King *Ch'êng* was sensible of his fault.

*Objection* : If for *Yi Yin's* sake there were three foggy days, why did not Heaven send thunder and rain for three days, and had not the king to become enlightened first before they ceased ?

Under the *régime* of *T'ai Mou* a mulberry and a paper-mulberry grew together in the court, which after seven days showed a circumference of a span. *T'ai Mou* meditated on government, when the two trees faded away<sup>3</sup>. In the time of Duke *Ching* of *Sung*, *Mars* occupied the place of the 'Heart' constellation. The duke uttered three excellent maxims, whereupon *Mars* passed through several mansions<sup>4</sup>. Had *T'ai Mou* not reflected on

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<sup>1</sup> A scholar of the 1st cent. B. C. *Vid.* Vol. I, p. 448.

<sup>2</sup> See *Shuking loc. cit.* Book VI, 19 [*Legge*] [*Couvreur*, §19], where we have a different reading : [] 'Heaven sent down rain' instead of [] 'Heaven stopped the rain', of our text, which latter is preferable.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 328, where the same story is told of the *Shang* emperor *Kao Tsung* = *Wu Ting*, 1324-1266 B. C. and p. 161 Note 4 where it is likewise ascribed to *Kao Tsung*. *T'ai Mou* reigned from 1637-1563 B. C. According to the *Shi-chi* chap. 3, p. 7r. (*Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 190*) this prodigy happened under *T'ai Mou*, not *Kao Tsung*.

<sup>4</sup> See Vol. I, p. 328, Note 5 and p. 153.

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government, and Duke *Ching* not made the three utterances, the mulberry and the paper-mulberry would not have vanished, nor would *Mars* have shifted its place, for it was by means of these calamitous changes that Heaven made its admonitions. That these calamities should not be removed before its admonitions had been taken notice of, was wisely ordained by Heaven <sup>1</sup>. Now Heaven in its anger caused thunder and rain to reprove King *Ch'êng*, but thunder and rain stopped before the king had caught the intimation. What is the reason of this haste ?

*Another objection* : It is customary to style the sons of princes : 'Son of a Lord' and their grandsons : 'Grandson of a Lord'. All of them live on fiefs, and distinguish themselves from common folk. The sons as well as the grandsons of lords are nearly related to the chief of the house and noble. They are called lords with full right, and live on their domains. Their title agrees with the real state of affairs, and there is conformity of essence and outward appearance. Heaven exhibited the virtue of *Chou Kung*, and ordered King *Ch'êng* to bury him in imperial style. Why then did it not command the king to call *Chou Kung* King *Chou*, to be in accordance with imperial honours ?

*Reply* : King is the title of the highest nobility to which a minister has no right.

p2.023 *Objection* : But do not ministers, also, obtain the title of king ? When King *Wu* had defeated *Chou*, and returned from his expedition he carried back the title of king <sup>2</sup> to *T'ai Wang*, *Wang Chi*, and *Wên Wang*, all three of them feudal lords and ministers to boot, but the title of king was conferred upon them. Why could this only be done in the case of these three personages, but not for the Duke of *Chou* ? If Heaven intended to make the Duke illustrious, how could it manifest it ? Did these three men bear the marks of royalty ? However, royal merits were also achieved by *Chou Kung*.

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<sup>1</sup> An argument merely used rhetorically to combat the view that thunder and rain stopped before King *Ch'êng* had repented, for *Wang Ch'ung* holds that Heaven never acts on purpose.

<sup>2</sup> Expression quoted from the *Chung-yung* XVIII, 3 (*Legge, Classics* Vol. I, p. 401). The three persons raised to royal dignity after their death are the father and the ancestors of the founder of the *Chou* dynasty. A similar practice has been followed by later dynasties, the reigning *Manchu* dynasty included.

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The *Yangtse* rises from the *Min*<sup>1</sup> mountains, and in its course forms currents and rapids. But can these currents and rapids be placed on a par with the source from which it flows ? For whom did the aromatic liquor arrive, and who was presented with the white pheasants, the three kings<sup>2</sup> or the Duke of *Chou* ?<sup>3</sup>

The merits and the virtue of the duke of *Chou* eclipsed those of the three kings, yet the title of king was not bestowed upon him. Was Heaven displeased with the inconsiderate use men made of this title ? At the decline of the *Chou* dynasty, the rulers of six States styled themselves kings, those of *Ch'i* and *Ch'in* became even emperors. At that time Heaven did not prevent it nor cause any change displaying its anger, however, when *Chou Kung* was not interred with imperial rites, it sent thunder and rain to reprimand King *Ch'êng*. Why was there such a lack of uniformity concerning the pleasure and displeasure of Heaven ?

*Another objection* : *Chi Sun* of *Lu* had presented *Tsêng Tse* with a fine mat. When *Tsêng Tse* fell sick he slept upon it. His attendant observed, 'How beautifully figured and lustrous is this mat ! It is the mat of a great officer. *Tsêng Tse* felt ashamed and bade *Yuan* change the mat, for, according to custom, a scholar should not sleep on a mat of a great officer<sup>4</sup>. Now, *Chou Kung*, a minister, being buried like an emperor, would his soul, provided it still possessed consciousness, feel at ease ?

p2.024 *Reply* : Why should it not acquiesce in what King *Ch'êng* did, and Heaven admitted ?

*Objection* : Was the mat of a great officer presented by *Chi Sun* woven by *Tsêng Tse* himself ?<sup>5</sup> Why did he alone not feel at ease ?

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<sup>1</sup> A range of mountains in the north of *Szechuan*.

<sup>2</sup> The Ancestral King, King *Chi*, and King *Wên*, mentioned above.

<sup>3</sup> White pheasants and aromatic plants were presented as tribute to the Duke of *Chou* by the *Yüeh-shang* and the *Japanese*. Cf. Vol. I, p. 505.

<sup>4</sup> This episode is found in the *Liki* Book II, Sect. I, Part I, 18 ([Legge, Liki Vol. I, p. 128](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>5</sup> *Tsêng Tse* was not directly responsible for the mat, the *soi-disant* too great honour was conferred upon him by the chief of the *Chi* family, just as the excessive funeral rites were performed by King *Ch'êng* for *Chou Kung*.

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[The Master being very ill, *Tse Lu* sent the disciples to act as officers to him. During a remission of his illness, he said,

— Long has the conduct of *Yu* been deceitful ! By pretending to have officers when I have them not, whom should I impose upon ? Should I impose upon Heaven ?] <sup>1</sup>

*Confucius* blamed *Tse Lu* for calling upon the disciples to act as officers to him, although he was not a sovereign. To do something recklessly and contrary to the wish of Heaven is imposing upon Heaven. *Chou Kung* was not a son of Heaven either. If we credit him with the same feelings as *Confucius*, he certainly cannot have felt at ease.

[The chief of the *Chi* family was about to sacrifice to the *T'ai* mountain . . .  
.<sup>2</sup> *Confucius* said,

— Does *Tsêng* say that the *T'ai* mountain is not so discerning as *Lin Fang* ? <sup>3</sup> ] <sup>4</sup>

He was of opinion that even *Tsêng Tse* with his small abilities would repudiate such an idea as improper. *Chou Kung* was a sage of first order, how could he have acquiesced in an imperial burial ? Should the Duke of *Chou* be held to be less critical than *Tsêng Tse* ? From this point of view, *Chou Kung* could not feel at ease. A great man equals Heaven and Earth in virtue <sup>5</sup>. If *Chou Kung* was dissatisfied, Heaven would have been dissatisfied too, why then should it have caused thunder and rain to reprove King *Ch'êng* ?

*Another question* may be asked : 'Life and death depend on destiny ; wealth and honour proceed from Heaven' <sup>6</sup>. How could there be a substitution for *Wu Wang's* life ?

*Reply* : When *Wu Wang* dreamed of the nine twelve-months, Heaven took

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from [Analects IX, 11](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> It was improper for a nobleman to offer a sacrifice reserved for the king.

<sup>3</sup> A man of *Lu* who once asked *Confucius* about ceremonies.

<sup>4</sup> Quotation from [Analects III, 6](#) [[Couvreur](#)]. There is a great discrepancy in *Legge's* translation, who takes [ ] for a particle, whereas *Wang Ch'ung* explains it as a name viz. that of *Confucius's* disciple *Tsêng Tse*.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 128.

<sup>6</sup> See Vol. I, p. 136.

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several years from *Wên Wang* which it added to p2.025 *Wu Wang's* span <sup>1</sup>. In the second year after the destruction of the *Yin* dynasty, the term of these nine twelve-months was not yet up. *Wu Wang* was suffering, therefore *Chou Kung* prayed for him. As a rule, man's life cannot be prayed for, only in the case of *Wu Wang* it was possible. But it was an unusual device, and, for that reason, preserved in the metal-bound trunk. It could not be repeated, and therefore was concealed and stored away.

*Objection* : — Did *Wu Wang* obtain the years of *Wên Wang* already during the dream on the nine twelve-months, or not yet ?

*Reply* : He did obtain them.

*Objection* : If he had already received the years of *Wên Wang*, his life ought to have been prolonged of itself, and, in the second year after the overthrow of the *Yin*, he was not going to die, in spite of his sickness. Why, then, did the Duke of *Chou* still need pray, and take his place ?

*Reply* : When a sovereign raises somebody to a high post, he does not forthwith give it him though it be already resolved upon, for the clerks must first have made the necessary entries into the archives, before the monarch can give his formal sanction. Although Heaven had taken away the years from *Wên Wang* to add them to those of *Wu Wang*, the Duke of *Chou* had to pray for him before he definitely obtained them.

*(Objection)* : Fate regulating the length of life is a very subtle essence, and not to be obtained in a dream.

*Reply* : By the dream of the nine twelve-months it could be obtained.

*Objection* : As regards this dream of the nine twelve-months, *Wên Wang* dreamed that he gave nine twelve-months to *Wu Wang* <sup>2</sup>, and *Wu Wang*, that God granted him nine twelve-months. Consequently, Heaven had already granted, and *Wu Wang* obtained them ; what need was there for a further prayer ?

A person going to be called to office receives his new dignity in a dream,

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<sup>1</sup> See Vol. I, p. 316, Note 3.

<sup>2</sup> Only the dream of *Wu Wang* is mentioned in the *Liki*, not that of *Wên Wang*.

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beforehand, and afterwards is appointed without further recommendation, for a presage is seen in advance and necessarily followed by its realisation.

The ancients called a year a twelve-month <sup>1</sup>. The acquisition of nine twelve-months is like a man's dream of promotion. If the <sup>p2.026</sup> Duke of *Chou* relying on the dream that was bound to be realised, invoked Heaven, how could his merit be reputed very great ?

*Another question* : People admire him to whom they must look up to and in whom they trust, irrespective of the greatness of his achievements or the number of his perfections. Had *Chou Kung* not become the substitute of King *Wu*, and King *Wu* died of his illness, would *Chou Kung*, conjointly with King *Ch'êng*, have been qualified to bring about universal peace all over the empire ?

*Reply* : Indeed, *Chou Kung* supporting King *Ch'êng*, there would' have been no troubles in the empire. If *Wu Wang* had not found a substitute, and subsequently had died of his disease, *Chou Kung*, no doubt, would have been able to secure a general peace.

*Objection* : Under these circumstances, the life of King *Wu* was of no advantage, and his death, no great loss, since to achieve success the Duke of *Chou* was required.

When the *Chou* dynasty was on the decline, and the princes in open revolt, *Kuan Chung* <sup>2</sup> united them, and rectified the empire. *Confucius* said,

[— But for *Kuan Chung*, we should now be wearing our hair unbound, and the lappets of our coats buttoned on the left side <sup>3</sup> ] <sup>4</sup>.

If it had not been for *Kuan Chung* who united the princes, the *I* and the *Ti* would have continued their incursions into China until they had extinguished it. This disgrace threatened if it had not been for *Kuan Chung*.

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<sup>1</sup> [ ] *ling*. This explanation is also taken from the *Liki loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Famous minister of Duke *Huan* of *Ch'i*, 7th cent. B. C.

<sup>3</sup> *i. e.*, we would be savages, following their customs.

<sup>4</sup> Quotation from [Analects XIV, 18](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

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*Ch'êng Liang* magnifying the accomplishments of *Kuan Chung*, placed him on a level with the Duke of *Chou*. When *Kuan Chung* expired, Duke *Huan* did not bury him with the ceremonies customary for a prince. Heaven ought to have been angry as in the case of the Duke of *Chou* ; why did it not produce a faint sound of thunder, and send down a little rain at least ? Did it regard *Chou Kung* as a sage, and *Kuan Chung* not as a wise man ?

*Kuan Chung* possessed a stand for inverted cups, and the *San-kuei* tower <sup>1</sup>. *Confucius* censured him, and did not take him for a wise man <sup>2</sup>. Such stands, and the *San-kuei* tower were privilege of princes as a burial, according to the ritual of the son of Heaven, is a royal prerogative. Both were ministers, and in this capacity not entitled to such honours.

p2.027 A great man agrees with Heaven and Earth in virtue <sup>3</sup>. *Confucius* is such a great man. He criticized *Kuan Chung* for claiming rites not belonging to him. If Heaven desired *Chou Kung* to encroach upon the royal institutions, this would not prove the conformity of its virtue with that of *Confucius*. The statement of the commentators of the *Shuking*, therefore, cannot be correct.

The observation of the foot-prints of birds gave rise to the invention of writing, and the aspect of creeping plants flying about led to the construction of carts. Heaven did not convey its commands to *Ts'ang Hsieh* <sup>4</sup> by the foot-prints of birds nor impress *Hsi Chung* <sup>5</sup> with the flying creepers, but these creepers deeply affected *Hsi Chung*, and *Ts'ang Hsieh* was struck at the foot-prints.

When Duke *Wên* of *Chin* returned to his country <sup>6</sup> he gave orders for the removal of *Mi Mê* (?) <sup>7</sup> This made such an impression upon his uncle *Fan*, that

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<sup>1</sup> The name of an extravagant tower built by *Kuan Chang*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. [Analects III, 22](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>3</sup> See above p. 24, Note 6.

<sup>4</sup> The inventor of writing, cf. Vol. I, p. 87, Note 4.

<sup>5</sup> The inventor of carriages, cf. Vol. I, p. 87, Note 5.

<sup>6</sup> In B. C. 636 after nineteen years of exile.

<sup>7</sup> I could not find any reference to this in the *Tso-chuan* or the *Shi-chi*, nor do the encyclopedias know a man of the name of *Mi Mê*. Both words are family names, and *Mi* is also an old State in *Hupei* and *Hunan*. If we take *Mê* to be the surname of the person, *Mi* might be his country. The two historical works only inform us that *Fan* proposed leaving his nephew, but was reconciled. *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Hsi* 24th year [[Couvreur](#)].

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he quitted his post and returned home. Duke *Wên*, having *Mi Mê* dismissed, did not intend to expel his uncle *Fan*, but *Fan* felt abashed, likening himself to *Mi Mê*.

*Hua Ch'ên*<sup>1</sup> of *Sung*, despising the weakness of his clan, employed six ruffians, attached to his family, to murder *Hua Wu*<sup>2</sup> in *Sung* with a long spear. They had been ordered to do the deed behind the house of *Ho*, Master of the Left. The Master of the Left was afraid, and said to them,

— The old man has committed no crime.

Subsequently, the Master of the Left bore a grudge to *Hua Ch'ên*, who took his precautions. The people pursued a mad dog, which entered the premises of *Hua Ch'ên*. The latter, under the delusion that the Master of the Left was coming to attack him, climbed over the wall and made his escape<sup>3</sup>.

p2.028 *Hua Ch'ên*, of himself, killed *Hua Wu*, and the Master of the Left became afraid ; the people, of themselves, pursued the mad dog, and *Hua Ch'ên*, of himself, ran away. The fright of King *Ch'êng* was of this kind. He had misgivings about his not burying the duke with imperial honours, and when he met with thunder and rain his fears knew no bounds. It is by no means evident that by way of thunder and rain, Heaven intimated its disapproval to the king, but when they came King *Ch'êng* took alarm and impeached himself. His emotion is like the feeling of *Ts'ang Hsieh* and *Hsi Chung* ; and his alarm, like the agitation of the Master of the Left and of *Hua Ch'ên*.

Harbouring thoughts of distrust and discomfort, and falling in with a vehement outburst of the elements, one sees in it the proof of some affinity, and Heaven's wrath becomes a well established fact. Noticing such an affinity of events, one is affected even in silence and solitude, and how could King *Ch'êng* be expected to have remained free of terror, being already afraid and, in addition, hearing the noise of thunder and rain shaking the roof of his

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<sup>1</sup> A minister in *Sung*.

<sup>2</sup> The steward of *Hua Ch'ên's* nephew.

<sup>3</sup> The gist of this account is contained in the *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Hsiang* 17th year (*Legge, Classics Vol. V, Part II, p. 473*) [[Couvreur](#)], but the two versions differ in some details. In the Classic the Master of the Left does not menace *Hua Ch'ên* and even intercedes for him with the duke. Nothing is said about his climbing over a wall.



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carriage ?

When there were incessant thunderclaps and the storm was raging, *Confucius* would change countenance. According to the Rites a superior man, hearing thunder, must sit up in full dress and with his hat on, though it be night <sup>1</sup>, out of respect for the thunder and in awe of the elements.

A sage is a superior man with untarnished virtue, and yet, conforming to Heaven, he is agitated. How, then, should King *Ch'êng* already troubled with doubts about *Chou Kung*, not tremble with fear, upon hearing the sudden outburst of thunder and rain ?

Thunder and rain would seem to be produced by the heavenly fluid, and the fright of King *Ch'êng*, to result from the influence of similar objects upon his mind. The principle of Heaven is inaction. If Heaven by thunder and rain did scold at, and vent its anger against mankind, then it might, as well, kill the vicious by thunder and rain. In ancient times, there were a great many wicked people, why were they not exterminated with thunder and rain ? Why had sages to be called upon to raise troops and move armies <sup>2</sup>, and to take the trouble of blunting their swords in killing their adversaries, whereas it would have been so easy to destroy <sup>p2.029</sup> them with one flash of lightning ? Would Heaven not have shunned the difficulty of crushing the enemies by force of arms ?

Some narrate of the emperor *Ti Yi* <sup>3</sup>, the father of *Chou*, that he was in the habit of shooting at Heaven <sup>4</sup>, and flogging the Earth. On an excursion between the *Ching* and the *Wei* <sup>5</sup>, he was struck by lightning and killed <sup>6</sup>. Thus Heaven destroys depraved characters by a thunderbolt.

However, how could the wickedness of *Ti Yi* be compared with that of

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<sup>1</sup> *Vid.* Vol. I, p. 295 seq.

<sup>2</sup> Like *T'ang* who overthrew the *Hsia* and *Wên Wang* who destroyed the *Shang* dynasty, both reputed great sages.

<sup>3</sup> 1191-1155 B. C.

<sup>4</sup> *Yi* hung up a sack filled with blood and shooting at it, declared that he was shooting at Heaven.

<sup>5</sup> Two rivers in *Shensi*.

<sup>6</sup> The passage seems to be culled from the *Shi-chi* chap. 3, p. 10r. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 198](#)) where, however, the flogging of the Earth is not mentioned.

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*Chieh* and *Chou* ? *Tsou Po Ch'i* <sup>1</sup> discoursing on the depravity of *Chieh* and *Chou*, says that it fell short of doomed *Ch'in*, and doomed *Ch'in*'s fell short of *Wang Mang*'s. Nevertheless, the territories of *Chieh* and *Chou*, of *Ch'in* and *Wang Mang* were spared by thunder and lightning.

*Confucius* wrote the *Ch'un-ch'iu* in such a way, that he recommended the slightest good thing, and blamed the smallest evil, but in recommending goodness, he did not exaggerate its excellence, and in blaming evil, he did not magnify its wickedness. A man like him would never have made great reproaches for a small offence. In view of the slight doubts of King *Ch'êng*, Heaven caused a big tempest. If he had made up his mind to bury the duke like an official, why should the phenomenal change be so excessive ? According to the 'Examination of Doubts' in the 'Great Plan' <sup>2</sup> it is owing to the weakness of their intellect that people often do not understand the meaning of calamities, yet Heaven does not reprove them for their doubts. The doubts of King *Ch'êng* were not yet settled, when Heaven reprimanded him by the big tempest. This cannot have been the intention of august Heaven, I should say, and I am afraid that the writers on the *Shuking* have missed the truth.

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<sup>1</sup> An author of the *Han* time, cf. Vol. I, p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> A chapter of the *Shuking* Part V, Book IV, 20 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part II, p. 334](#)) [[Couvreur](#)] where different methods of solving doubts are given.

## CHAPTER IV

### Success and Luck

#### 1. I, I. *Fêng-yü*

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

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

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

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

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

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*Wu Yuan*<sup>1</sup> and *Po P'i*<sup>2</sup> both served *Fu Ch'ai*. *Po P'i* rose to the highest honours, and *Wu Yuan* was put to death. Their conduct p2.031 was different, but their master the same. Sometimes the conduct is the same, but the master different, that is also good and bad luck. Such was the case of *Yi Yin*<sup>3</sup> and *Chi Tse*<sup>4</sup>. Both of them possessed the same talents, but *Yi Yin* became prime minister and *Chi Tse*, a slave. The former met with *Ch'êng T'ang*, the latter with *Chou* of *Shang*.

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

Sometimes a wise and sage minister may come across a prince willing to practice his theories, but fails at the end. That was the same of *Confucius* and *Mencius*. *Confucius* was short of provisions in *Ch'ên* and *Ts'ai*,<sup>5</sup> and *Mencius* distressed in *Ch'i* and *Liang*<sup>6</sup>.

When there is not the proper time, a sovereign does not employ able men, and those whose talents are small and whose wisdom is shallow cannot make use of men of genius. To drive a Bayardo or a Green Ear<sup>7</sup> one must be a *Wang Liang*<sup>8</sup>, and to use a *Yü*, a *Chi*<sup>9</sup> and a *Kao Yao* as ministers a *Yao* or a *Shun* is required. If a man whose hands are able to manage a hundred Li horse endeavours to master a courser making a thousand Li<sup>10</sup>, he is sure to

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 140, Note 2.

<sup>2</sup> First minister of *Fu Ch'ai*, king of *Wu*, 495-473 B. C. See *Chavannes, Mém. Hist.* Vol. IV, p. 523 [css: [p. 21](#) ?].

<sup>3</sup> Minister of *Ch'êng T'ang*, the founder of the *Shang* dynasty.

<sup>4</sup> On Viscount *Chi* see Vol. I, p. 354. He was thrown into prison for having remonstrated against the excesses of his master *Chou Hsin*, the last emperor of the *Shang* dynasty.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 155, Note 2.

<sup>6</sup> The two States where the philosopher passed a great deal of his life.

<sup>7</sup> Two of the eight famous steeds of King *Mu*.

<sup>8</sup> A famous charioteer.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 130, Note 3.

<sup>10</sup> A horse running a thousand Li a day, an impossible task, the quickest couriers

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have a disaster, breaking the yoke and rending the halter, and should a prince be able to appreciate the talents of ordinary officials, use the wisdom of a great minister, his heart will prove obdurate and his mind impervious to reason. Thus excellent advice is repudiated, and worthies and sages are rejected, not because they are hated, or because their advice is disliked, but their ideals are too high, and their advice is hard to follow.

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

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

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

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

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making but 5-600 Li with many relays.

<sup>1</sup> A hermit, see Vol. I, p. 439, Note 1.

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

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 168, Note 2.

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

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*Yao* was filthy and *Shun* impure, *Wu Wang* bloodthirsty and *T'ai Kung* a cruel tyrant. They were all equally squalid and equally coarse, and their doings in harmony <sup>1</sup>. That was the cause of (*T'ai Kung's*) luck.

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>4</sup> Ou *Shang Yang* see Vol. I, p. 171, Note 2.

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The words of the groom <sup>1</sup> were platitudes, but the country-people liked them, and *Tse Kung's* address was full of meaning, but the peasants would not listen to them.

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

In this manner minor abilities may please the sovereign. Pleasing means good luck, not pleasing, bad luck. Some do not p2.034 possess such wanton talents, but ingratiate themselves by their astuteness and cunning, and thus become lucky, *e. g.* the official who stole the hair-pin, and the companion who caused the cocks to crow. The former became intimate with *Tse Fan* <sup>2</sup>, and the latter won the good graces of *Mêng Ch'ang* <sup>3</sup>. *Tse Fan* liked the thieving official, and *Mêng Ch'ang* the wily companion.

If anybody is useful to a prince who can rely upon him, he is sure to be successful. Sometimes a man may not be of direct use, but the ruler likes him, as was the case with *Chi Ju* and *Têng T'ung* <sup>4</sup>. *Chi Ju* was a favourite of the emperor *Hsiao Hui Ti*, and *Têng T'ung*, of *Hsiao Wên Ti*. They were not endowed with the smallest talents, or the slightest abilities, but they had a handsome body, graceful bones, a smooth skin, and a wonderful complexion. People are fond of beautiful looks, consequently their luck was ensured.

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<sup>1</sup> The groom of *Confucius* who spoke to the country people who had taken away his master's horse. Cf. Vol. I, p. 69 and *Huai Nan Tse* XVIII, 19r.

<sup>2</sup> A general of *Ch'u* who died in B.C. 575. The story here alluded is told in [Huai Nan Tse XII, 15r.](#)

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

<sup>3</sup> *T'ien Wên* of *Ch'i*, Prince of *Mêng Chang*. The story of the cock-crowing will be found on p. 132.

<sup>4</sup> On the final downfall of this minion see Vol. I, p. 309.

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

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

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

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

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<sup>1</sup> A wife of *Huang Ti*. Cf. Vol. I, p. 473, Note 3.

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



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prince is addicted to militarism, that same person would not suit him.

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

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

- We scholars have had no chance. We are so sad, because we are old and have lost the right time. Hence our tears.
- How is it possible, said their interlocutors, that you scholars never had any chance ?
- When we were young, replied the scholars, we studied literature, and after we had completed our studies, we wished to take office, but the sovereign liked to use old men. This prince died, and his successor only wanted warriors. Then we turned to military science, but, when we had mastered all its branches, the military prince likewise died, and the young prince ascended the throne. He wished to employ young men only. Meanwhile we had become old. Thus we never had the slightest chance <sup>1</sup>.

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

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

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

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

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<sup>1</sup> *Ch'in Hsi* recommended a friend to Duke *Mu* of *Ch'in* and committed suicide when his advice was not accepted. His death impressed the duke so much, that he took the protégé of *Ch'in Hsi* into his service. This story is told in Vol. I, p. 502. Of *Pao Shu* we know that he recommended his friend *Kuan Chung* to Duke *Huan* of *Ch'i*.

## CHAPTER V

### Annoyances and Vexations

#### 2. I, II. *Lei-ho*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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listen to their insinuations <sup>1</sup>.

The *second vexation* is this : Governors and clerks have different propensities, and their doings are pure or foul. The generous clerks are enthusiasts for all that is noble and beautiful, and never <sup>p2.039</sup> use other but pure words. The corrupt clerks resent this, and by degrees try to find fault with their rivals, slandering them for the smallest wrong, for which punishment is inflicted upon the latter <sup>2</sup>.

Or the governors are biased in favour of some of their subordinates and believe in what they say. These subordinates will, against all propriety, recommend their friends for extraordinary promotion. Those who oppose them, lose their sympathy and are slandered by them more than can be imagined. Honest officials daring to offer resistance and to propound different views, attract their hatred and are decried to the governors. That is the third vexation <sup>3</sup>.

Those who have not yet taken office have to suffer the three annoyances, and those who are in office, the three vexations. Even a *Confucius* and a *Mé Ti* could not avoid them, and men like *Yen Hui* and *Tsêng T'san* would not be free of them. How many hundred or thousand meritorious deeds soever they might accomplish, multitudes of envious persons would rise around them. Thorns and prickles would prick them and stick to their bodies and faces, and wasps and scorpions would sting the highly-principled <sup>4</sup>.

These six troubles are not the only ones, but the most conspicuous <sup>5</sup>, the world however does not perceive them. It does not see that owing to their doings the scholars have to suffer the three annoyances, and the officials, the three vexations. Those who remain uninjured they call undefiled, and those who have been calumniated, degraded. Those functionaries who advance in their career they regard as good, and those who are dismissed from office, as

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<sup>1</sup> Unfair competition among officials. There is no great difference with the second annoyance which, however, refers more to private life.

<sup>2</sup> Natural antipathy of the vicious against honest men.

<sup>3</sup> Favouritism.

<sup>4</sup> All metaphors denoting the insidious attacks of backbiters.

<sup>5</sup> Calumny must be a very frequent trait of the Chinese character, since in all the six cases those dissatisfied resort to it.

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bad.

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

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 147.

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How should the traces of pure and noble deeds not be covered with the dust of envious slander? The guitar players would fain have broken the fingers of *Po Ya*<sup>1</sup>, and the charioteers have crushed the hand of *Wang Liang*<sup>2</sup>. Why? Because they were all craving for the fame of exceptional skill, and hated those who surpassed them.

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

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

People do not assault the dead body of *Mêng Pên*, for its life is gone, nor

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

<sup>2</sup> See p. 31, Note 6.

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>8</sup> Cf. p. 31, Note 3.

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

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

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

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do they throw water on a hundred bushels of burnt out embers, for the fire is extinct. If some one outshines all others by his intelligence, and sheds his lustre over a whole age, or if he surpasses all by his energy, and stands towering over all the crowd, he is always slandered and envied by ordinary people. In case a man attempts to neutralise the common attacks with his honest heart, the profit which he seeks turns into loss. It was for this reason that *Confucius* felt sad, and *Mencius* was full of sorrow.

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

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

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

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

Those who are not yet in office have to suffer the three annoyances, and those who have already been employed, are visited with the three vexations. Even *Confucius* and *Mê Ti* could not escape them, and *Yen Hui* and *Tsêng*

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 7, Note 4.

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

<sup>3</sup> A place in *Hunan*. Cf. Vol. I, p. 179, Note 6.

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



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*T'san* could not remain unscathed. For all love those only who enjoy the general applause, but slight the truly wise.

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

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

## CHAPTER VI

### On the Cunning and Artful

33. XI, III. *Ta-ning*

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p2.043 The following question may be raised : The virtuous obtain honourable appointments and high wages, in case they behave properly, why then must people acquire wealth and honour by cunning ?

The reason is this. If the cunning, though well aware that proper conduct leads to wealth and honour, nevertheless seek a position and money by deceit, it is because they cannot withstand their inclinations. People know that vigorously tilling the ground, they can expect a harvest, and that a brisk trade will provide them with valuable goods. If they must steal them all the same, they are unable to overcome their natural propensities. Those who always do their duty, are held in esteem by every one, albeit yet the unrighteous are many, and the friends of justice in the minority ; the hearts of the former are concupiscent, and their will and intellect confused and weak. The cunning have the same qualities as the virtuous <sup>1</sup>, but succumb to their passions. The robbers are no less intelligent than farmers and merchants, but become guilty by their cupidity.

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*Question* : The cunning and the virtuous having the same qualities, qualities and conduct ought to agree. Why must the cunning alone succumb to their passions ?

*Reply* : Wealth and honour is what every one desires. Even he who by his conduct proves himself to be a perfect gentleman, in subject to the feelings of hunger and thirst. But a superior man combats his feelings by propriety, and dispels his desires by righteousness. Thus walking the right path, he eschews calamities. A vile man, on the other hand, yields to his greed and avarice,

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<sup>1</sup> Their original nature is essentially the same, but develops differently. Cf. Vol. I, p. 390.

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transgressing the rules of propriety and failing against the laws of righteousness. That leads to waywardness and cunning, by p2.044 which he becomes liable to punishment. The virtuous are superior men, the cunning are vile. In their doings and dealings the superior men and the vile widely differ, and their likes and dislikes are dissimilar.

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*Question* : Have the cunning and the slanderers the same principles, or is there any difference ?

*Reply* : The cunning and the slanderers are both vile, their principles are the same, but their qualities, different. Envy is the mainspring of their characters, which, however, manifest and reveal themselves in a different way. Slanderers hurt others by their tongues, whereas the cunning endanger them by their actions. The former take the direct road, the latter prefer the crooked one, and disguise their plans. The slanderers do not intrigue, the cunning have all kinds of devices. Therefore the sovereign can avoid the company of slanderers and seek that of the kind-hearted, but he is unable to distinguish the cunning from the virtuous.

*Exception* : Since a sovereign can always keep aloof from slanderers and consort with the kind-hearted, but is incapable of drawing a distinction between the virtuous and the cunning, is it impossible to know the mind of the latter ?

*Reply* : The cunning can be known, but a sovereign is not qualified to acquire this knowledge. An ordinary sovereign does not know the virtuous, and for that very reason cannot know the cunning either. Only wise and sage men examine their actions by the Nine Virtues and verify their words by the outcome of their deeds. If those actions do not harmonise with the Nine Virtues <sup>1</sup>, and if their words are not proved true by their doings, the persons

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<sup>1</sup> Properly speaking these Nine Virtues are eighteen. According to the *Shuking* Part II, Book III, 3 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 71](#)) [*Couvreur*] they are :

« Affability combined with dignity ; mildness combined with firmness ; bluntness combined with respectfulness ; aptness for government combined with reverence ; docility combined with boldness : straightforwardness combined with gentleness ; easiness combined with discrimination ; vigour combined with sincerity ; and valour combined with righteousness.

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in question are not virtuous, but cunning. By knowing the cunning one knows the virtuous, and by knowing the virtuous one knows the cunning. The knowledge of the cunning at the same time displays the nature of the virtuous and wise, and a conception of the virtuous is a key to understanding the character of the cunning and artful. The virtuous and the cunning proceed p2.045 in a different way, but the same investigation shows us what they are ; their aspirations are not the same, but one look reveals their real nature.

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*Question* : The system of the Nine Virtues has long been established, and there is no student but on seeing measures, knows their capacity, or on beholding scales, knows their weight. How is it that a ruler and lord of the land is ever surrounded by false and cunning ministers and always humbugged and hoodwinked ?

*(Reply)* : One must not complain that the measures are wrong, but that there is no grain to be measured, nor that there are no scales, but that there is nothing to be weighed. Those on the throne do not ignore that by means of the Nine Virtues they can investigate actions, and that from the results of his actions the sentiments of the agent may be inferred. If nevertheless they are blindfolded and see nothing, it is evident that they did not take the trouble to look. It is not always possible to act, but any action may be scrutinised, and men cannot always go into a question, but their sentiments may always be learned.

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*Question* : When the actions do not agree with the Nine Virtues, an investigation into the achievements does not disclose any deserts. Then such persons though promoted, do not turn out virtuous, and not being virtuous, they are cunning. Now, can men of trivial talents and superficial knowledge who cannot come up to the virtuous, since they have not their merits, nor act like them, be called cunning ?

*Reply* : The talents not being equally matched, there can be no rivalry of actions, nor a competition of merits. If people cannot cope together in knowledge, their talents may be in a proportion of ten to a hundred, but their

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likes and dislikes ought to be the same. However the virtuous and the cunning do not act in the same way. Both declare good to be good, and bad, bad, and both enjoy real fame, but in their works the former build up, the latter destroy. According to their distinction of right and wrong, their p2.046 doings must likewise be true or false. Now they agree in their words, but their proceedings are different, both have an excellent name, but the doings of the cunning are depraved.

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*Question* : — If those whose dealings are in accordance with the Nine Virtues are virtuous, then those whose actions are not, are cunning. Must then all the ordinary people be held to be cunning owing to their actions ?

*Reply* : All who are not right are wicked. Among the wicked those who kick against the pricks, are called unprincipled, and those who are artful, are considered cunning. In the penal laws of the holy emperors the cunning are ranked among the wicked, and in their rewards and exhortations the virtuous are among the good. The virtuous of perfect purity and the best among the good, are the sages among the virtuous. On the other hand, the great impostors among the wicked <sup>1</sup>, are the worst of the bad. Whence they say that one must look for the virtuous among the good, and search for the cunning among the wicked. When goodness and badness are well determined, the virtuous and the cunning become manifest.

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*Question* : The intelligent may be beclouded, and in arguing one may be mistaken. Now, if those who are right, are looked upon as virtuous, and those who are wrong, as cunning, this would be a misconception of the real nature of virtue, I should say.

*Reply* : That the intellect may be beclouded and arguments erroneous, is much to be regretted. Therefore we have the saying : [In punishing

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<sup>1</sup> All editions have [], which should be [], unless *Wang Ch'ung* wishes to designate those impostors who have sneaked among the virtuous, but that would be somewhat forced.

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premeditated crimes none must be considered too small <sup>1</sup>, and in condoning carelessness none should be deemed too great. <sup>2</sup>] A wise sovereign scrutinises the heart, and examines the mind, and then he punishes malice, and pardons mistakes. In case p2.047 of premeditated attacks the penalty is increased, for mistakes and errors it is diminished <sup>3</sup>. Every judge can make this distinction, and he will harbour no doubt, when he falls in with a virtuous man.

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*Question* : May those be called cunning whose words and deeds are not attended with any success ?

*(Reply)* : When *Su Ch'in* <sup>4</sup> brought about a confederation of Six States <sup>5</sup>, mighty *Ch'in* did not venture to review its troops outside the gates, and when *Chang Yi* <sup>6</sup> sowed distrust, the Six States did not risk a joint attack within the gates. The Six States being allied, *Ch'in* was afraid, and the Six States were powerful ; the Three *Ch'in* <sup>7</sup> having spread discord, *Ch'in* became powerful and the empire weak. The merits of these men were conspicuous, and their success was obvious. They have been recorded on bamboo and silks. Even worthies could not have outvied them. The Grand Annalist speaking of all the worthies, devotes special chapters to *Su Ch'in* <sup>8</sup> and *Chang Yi* <sup>9</sup>, nor is there any allusion to their having been envious or depraved. Their deserts were the same, and their fame not inferior to that of worthies. Merits which fall short of

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<sup>1</sup> Too small to be punished.

<sup>2</sup> Too great to be pardoned. The passage is quoted from the *Shuking* Part II, Book II, 12 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 59](#)) [*Couvreur*].

<sup>3</sup> A fundamental principle of all penal law, based on the difference of *dolus* and *culpa*.

<sup>4</sup> See Vol. I, p. 304, Note 8.

<sup>5</sup> *Yen, Chao, Han, Wei, Ch'i, and Ch'u*.

<sup>6</sup> See Vol. I, p. 115, Note 2.

<sup>7</sup> The three kingdoms into which the State of *Ch'in* was divided by *Hsiang Yü* in B. C. 206, viz. *Yung, Sai, and Ti*. Since *Wang Ch'ung* here speaks of the 4th cent. B. C., the time of *Su Ch'in* and *Chang Yi*, when the Three *Ch'in* did not yet exist, and since by their creation *Ch'in* did not become more powerful, but broke up, I suppose that [ ] here is a misprint for [ ] *San Chin*, the Three *Chin* States : *Han, Wei, and Chao*, into which the once powerful State of *Chin* split in B. C. 453, thus enabling *Ch'in* to come to the front.

<sup>8</sup> *Shi-chi* chap. 69.

<sup>9</sup> *Shi-chi* chap. 70.

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those of the worthies are like fame which is not real.

*Chang Yi* and *Su Ch'in* were men who could arrange difficulties. Living in a time of great disorder and confusion <sup>1</sup>, they formed far reaching plans. At that time *Chi* <sup>2</sup> and *Hsieh* <sup>3</sup> could not have vied with them in scheming, and *Yü* and *Kao Yao* would not have been p2.048 as successful. When the *Yin* and the *Yang* are in harmony, wind and rain set in at the proper time, the Five Grains grow in abundance, and robbers and thieves desist from their iniquitous doings; this is the merit of some persons exhibiting disinterestedness and self-denial, and of families displaying morality and virtue. Appointments, salary, honour, and glory are the results of plans and schemes <sup>4</sup>, and not the upshot of morality and virtue. The Grand Annalist recording merits, the *Kao-lai-sse-chi-lu* was written. Illustrious deeds have been carefully gone through, and all the most excellent, put on record. *Chang Yi* and *Su Ch'in's* exploits being so famous have also been included in this narrative. From this it follows that the cunning may also distinguish themselves by their gift of speech <sup>5</sup>, and that those who have no success cannot be cunning.

*Exception* : Those among the wicked who win merit are called cunning. In order to acquire merit they must be possessed of high talents and a keen intellect. Their thoughts must be far-reaching and pay regard to justice and benevolence, that they may be confounded with the great worthies. Whence it is said in the chapter on recognising the cunning <sup>6</sup> : — When the ruler of men has a taste for disputations, the words of the cunning are sharp, and when he delights in literature, their speech is refined. Sympathising with his

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<sup>1</sup> The time of the contending States beginning in B. C. 480.

<sup>2</sup> See Vol. I, p. 130, Note 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Vid.* Vol. I, p. 318.

<sup>4</sup> Elsewhere *Wang Ch'ung* says that all these things are the outcome of fate alone.

<sup>5</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* apparently sees in the two politicians *Chang Yi* and *Su Ch'in* cunning schemers, but not worthies or virtuous men. The Chinese still cling to the idea that moral laws hold good for politics also, and have not yet accepted the phantom of political morality, another name for the right of the strongest. They call a liar a liar, even though he has been a great statesman who did all his misdeeds for the welfare of his country. Thus most Europeans admire *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti*, but every Chinese detests him.

<sup>6</sup> [] probably the title of a lost chapter of the *Lun-hêng*.

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feelings and falling in with his views, they ingratiate themselves with the ruler, who does not perceive the falsity of their words. How could he learn their duplicity and detect their deceitfulness ?

*Reply* : This remark only refers to an ordinary sovereign, of poor gifts and a limited intelligence, who is easily overreached, and then does not see anything, and takes a knave for a virtuous man. When a prince is a good observer, discrimination is as easy for him as beholding dried meat on a dish, pointing out the lines on the palm, counting the figures on a chessboard, and unharnessing a horse in p2.049 the shafts. Fish and turtles abscond in the depths, but fishermen know their resorts ; birds and beasts hide in the mountains, but hunters perceive their tracks. The conduct of the cunning is different from that of most other people, and only ordinary sovereigns and men of mediocre abilities cannot see the difference.

*Exception* : The sovereign being fond of discussions, the cunning will use sharp words, and, when he is partial to literature, the style of the cunning is refined. Their words and deeds thus being modelled upon those of the prince, how can they be discovered ?

*Reply* : *Wên Wang* says of the method how officials are to be treated : A consideration of their former actions makes us understand their present words, and hearing their present words we may form a judgment of their former actions. Beholding the outward appearance we learn to know what is hidden, and from the inside we infer the outside. Thus the hypocrites posing as law-abiding people may be known, and heartless deceivers be distinguished. Conversely, sterling characters and truly good people are found out, and the faithful who observe the laws, appear. When, by nature, the cunning do not like discussions, but the sovereign has a fancy for them, they will imitate their lord with a view to agree with him, and when originally their mind has no literary turn, upon learning that their sovereign is addicted to literature, they will endeavour to equal him. His Majesty being extravagant, the cunning wear costly dresses, and in case His Majesty is thrifty, they avoid all pomp. Their present actions disagree with the former, and their behaviour at court is other than at home. Comparing their conduct in their native village with their manners in the palace, and contrasting the way in which they treat



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their own people with the style in which they serve their prince, we become aware that there is a discrepancy between the outside and the inside, and that the name and the thing do not tally. At certain moments this becomes visible, when their falsehood leaks out.

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*Question* : Human actions are not constant and unchangeable. Special circumstances often determine the issue. The faithful become traitors, and the straight turn crooked, changes brought about by special circumstances. The actions differ at different times, each event is attended with its special effect, sometimes people say one thing, sometimes another. The books of the Literati give many instances, and such changes under special circumstances are not p2.050 unusual. Now, must we not fall into error, if we take normal conditions as a basis ?

*Reply* : The virtuous may be favoured by circumstances, and so may the cunning. When the virtuous are thus favoured, they act accordingly, whereas, when the cunning are, they lose all restraint and do evil. The virtuous avail themselves of such an opportunity for a noble aim and for their country, while the cunning use it for their personal profit and that of their family. Such an opportunity helps us to discriminate between the virtuous and the cunning. Observing how they react on such an incentive, we learn whom we may call depraved and whom virtuous.

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*Question* : Does it happen that the cunning like to defame others ?

*Reply* : The cunning do not defame others, those who do, are slanderers. For the cunning have no occasion to slander, because they merely seek profit. If some one is useful to them, why should they slander him, and if he is not, slandering would be of no avail. By their scheming they seek advantage, and by their plots to make profit, and this profit they acquire in a convenient manner.

In case they grudge others a share of it, they intrigue against them. When they intrigue against somebody, they do not defame him, and injuring some one, they do not treat him badly. On the contrary, they praise a man, while

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laying their traps for him, so that he does not become aware of them, and cajole him whom they are going to strike, so that he has no suspicions. In this manner the cunning plot, without incurring any hatred, and they injure, nay ruin a man, without fearing his vengeance. Hiding their feelings and concealing their intentions, they even give themselves the air of exerting themselves for others. If they slandered others, these would again slander them. Nobody would have any sympathy for them, and the scholars would not consort with them. How could they fill their place in the world then, and win the good graces of their lord ?

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*Question* : If the cunning do not slander others in society, do they slander them to the governors ?

*Reply* : The cunning deceive the governors with men, but they do not slander others in their presence. p2.051

*Question* : Then, how do the cunning proceed ?

*Reply* : When the cunning calumniate others, they praise them, and, when they plot against them, they lull them into security. Wherein consists their slandering and plotting ?

E. g. let a man have great accomplishments and a wonderful knowledge, that his fame spreads far and wide. A governor afraid, lest the sovereign summon the man to hear his advice, and put more reliance in him than in himself, seeks a pretence to pass him over in silence. But those who constantly extol and belaud the man and introduce him to his notice, are many. The governor mentions that he desires to employ him and asks somebody's opinion about him. This one does not reply that X is a worthy and deserving to be called to office, for X would not like to be retained in a district, he formerly heard him say so. He declared that he hoped to go to a prefecture, and being in a circuit, he hoped to be transferred to a department. If his aims be lofty, he does not act like other people, and if his hopes be far-reaching, he does not care for what is near <sup>1</sup>. Being given a small office, his

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<sup>1</sup> So says the one who seeks to frustrate the promotion of X by raising all kinds of fictitious difficulties.

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ambition is not satisfied, or he lies down sick, and a poor appointment would injure his virtue or hurt his dignity. Therefore the sovereign will prefer to choose ordinary officials, that he may not lose his name or derogate to his reputation, for, provided that he can bear the thought of deferring to the worthy, he may use him, but if he considers to be unable to do so, it is not advisable to employ him. In case he makes use of him, and both sides are not equally benefitted, or that he dismisses him, and both do not suffer, he fears his resentment. Consequently he trusts in the suggestions of his cunning adviser and dispenses with the services of the worthy.

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*Question* : Can the cunning, in order to acquire great talents and extensive knowledge, study the ancients alone, or must they learn from a teacher ?

*Reply* : Every one possesses himself the knowledge to deceive others, but approaching a ruler he must have special qualities to impress him, just as a person in an exalted position overawes his subjects by his boldness. When it comes to fighting he must be conversant with the military art. Those special abilities are uniting and disuniting, and *Kuei Ku Tse* may be the teacher.

p2.052 There is a tradition that *Su Ch'in* and *Chang Yi* both studied uniting and disuniting <sup>1</sup>. The teacher *Kuei Ku Tse* <sup>2</sup> dug a cavern into the earth and said,

— He that shall speak down to me, so that I come out crying, will be able to divide the territories of rulers.

*Su Ch'in* spoke down to him, and *Kuei Ku Tse* was so moved, that his tears fell and moistened his coat. *Chang Yi* did not equal *Su Ch'in*, who was chief minister of *Chao* and of the Six States at the same time. *Chang Yi*, poor and wretched, fell back upon *Su Ch'in*, who made him sit down at the lower end of the hall, and gave him the food of the servants and handmaids. Several times calling out for him, he roused his anger with the object of inducing him to become a minister of *Ch'in*. In high dudgeon *Chang Yi* betook himself

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<sup>1</sup> [] political intriguing, forming and breaking alliances.

<sup>2</sup> An ascetic philosopher of the 4th cent. B. C.

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westward to *Ch'in*. *Su Ch'in* sent some of his men to escort him with rich presents. Subsequently it dawned upon *Chang Yi*, and he exclaimed,

— This was planned by him, but I did not understand it. In these things I cannot compete with him <sup>1</sup>.

Such schemes proceeded from *Su Ch'in's* profound knowledge. Watching his opportunity, he did his hit at the right moment, hence the high honour in which he was held and his great renown, for he was considered the first hero of his time. In deep laid plans and brilliant devices the profound and the superficial cannot be equally successful, and the clear-headed cannot possess the same knowledge as the blunt-witted.

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*Question* : Is it possible that the cunning care for their good names and accomplish great things ?

*Reply* : The cunning live on profit and exclusively set store on power. They do not care for their good names nor accomplish great things. By affecting power and sticking to what is vulgar they win a great notoriety of themselves. They are admired by the base, but not esteemed by superior men, for profit and justice are antagonistic, and straightforwardness and crookedness are opposites. It is justice that moves the superior man, and profit the base one. The cunning strive for great profits and notoriety. The superior man not staying in low spheres exposes himself to dangers <sup>2</sup>, and the cunning of the whole world meet with so many calamities, p2.053 that they cannot take care of their persons and still less of their good names.

Many records of former ages give examples of men who abandoned their families to take care of their own persons. Renouncing all gain, they only thought of their names. On bamboo and silks it has been written how *Po Ch'êng Tse Kao* <sup>3</sup> left his country and tilled the ground, and how *Wu Ling*

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<sup>1</sup> Abridged from *Shi-chi* chap. 70, p. 2r.

<sup>2</sup> Their exalted positions have many dangers, and they easily come to fall.

<sup>3</sup> A vassal of *Yao* who resigned his fief, when *Yü* became emperor, and took to agriculture. *Yü* is reported to have visited and questioned him on his fields. See *Chuang Tse* V, 4v. (*Giles, Chuang Tse* p. 142). Cf. p. 33, Note 2.

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*Tse*<sup>1</sup> gave up his position to water a garden. In recent times, *Wang Chung Tse*<sup>2</sup> of *Lan-ling*<sup>3</sup> and *Hsi-Lu Chün Yang*<sup>4</sup> in *Tung-tu*,<sup>5</sup> have resigned their dignities, and after a prolonged sickness did not respond to the call of their sovereign. They may be said to have been mindful of their repute.

Those who do not proceed on the path of righteousness, cannot advance on this road, and those who are never checked in their progress by the rules of justice, cannot win a reputation by their justice. The cunning, hankering after profit, make light of misfortunes, but think much of their own persons. They suddenly perish and are disgraced ; how should they care for their name. p2.054 Devoid of justice and destitute of virtue, subsequently, their proceedings must entail dishonour, and there can be no question of great accomplishments.

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*Question* : Is it easier to recognise great impostors or small impostors ?

*Reply* : It is easier to recognise great impostors, and more difficult to recognise the minor ones, for the great impostors have conspicuous abilities, and their whereabouts are easily traced. The small impostors are less shrewd, and their doings harder to detect, which will become clearer from the following consideration :

After a robbery it is difficult to detect small robbers, whereas the big ones

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<sup>1</sup> An appellative of *Ch'ên Chung Tse*, a scholar of *Ch'i*, mentioned by *Mencius*. Cf. Vol. I, p. 427. *Wu Ling Tse* is reputed the author of a short philosophical treatise in 12 paragraphs, contained in the *Tse-shu po-chia* Vol. 51. According to *Liu Hsiang* he wrote a work in 12 chapters (*Pei-wen-yün-fu* chap. 25). From the last paragraph of the work still extant we learn that he abandoned his post as minister of *Ch'u* to water other people's garden. At all events he was a rather extravagant recluse.

<sup>2</sup> *Wang Chung Tse* or *Wang Liang*, famous for his learning and excellent character, lived in the time of *Kuang Wu Ti*, 25-57 A. D. He declined the high offices conferred upon him owing to sickness.

<sup>3</sup> A place in *Yen-chou-fu*, *Shantung*.

<sup>4</sup> The *Li-tai ming-hsien lieh-nü shih-hsing p'u* calls the man : *So-Lu* and informs us that *Chün Yang* was his style, and that he was a native of *Tung-chün*, not of *Tung-tu*. The *Shang-yu-lu* again writes *So-Lo*. As his name both biographical dictionaries give *Fang*. *So-Lu Fang* was appointed governor of *Lo-yang* in A. D. 30. Twice he resigned owing to bad health. The second time in A. D. 55 he did not obey the summons of the emperor *Kuang Wu Ti*, who then sent a sedan-chair for him, and after the audience made him a grant of 2000 bushels of rice.

<sup>5</sup> A territory in *Honan*.

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are easily found. When they have attacked a city, besieged a town, robbed and pillaged, the thing transpires as soon as it has been done, and all the wayfarers know the robbers. But when they pierce a wall and, stealthily sneaking into a compound, steal, nobody knows them.

Question : Great impostors create disorder by their extreme wickedness. Now, if great robbers are easily known by people in general, wherefore does the ruler find it such an arduous task ?

*Reply* : The *Shuking* avers that it requires intelligence to know men, and that only for an emperor it is hard work <sup>1</sup>. *Shun* was a great sage, and *Huan Tou* <sup>2</sup> a great impostor. For the great sage it was difficult to know the great deceiver, for how could it be easy, since the great deceiver did not give the great sage any annoyance. Therefore a distinction is made between the knowledge of the people and of their lord. The sovereign finds it difficult to know great impostors, but easy to know small ones, whereas the people easily know great impostors, but have difficulties to find out small ones. Provided that the impostors be very clever and fine speakers, then they make such a use of their talents, that the prince with all his power cannot well call them to account for mere thoughts, and with all his intelligence he does not perceive anything. The talents of small impostors are of a lower order. When, amongst their countrymen, at times they are thrown off their guard, their real character leaks out. Then the sovereign is startled, when he gets wind of it. Thus great deceivers cause much more trouble than small ones.

p2.055 When the roof of a house leaks, those who perceive it, are below. In case it leaks much, those below notice it quite clearly ; if the leak is small, those below see it but indistinctly.

[Some one said,

— *Yung* is benevolent, but not cunning.

*Confucius* said,

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 147, Note 3.

<sup>2</sup> The minister of works under *Yao*, subsequently punished by *Shun* (*Shuking* Part II, Book I, 12, [Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 39](#)) [*Couvreur*].

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— Why should he use cunning. They who encounter men with smartness of speech for the most part procure themselves hatred. <sup>1</sup>]

By their ill-advised schemes they interfere with agriculture and commerce, they annoy the citizens to benefit the sovereign and irritate the people to please their lord. The advice of loyal officers is detrimental to the ruler, but advantageous to his subjects, the suggestions of the cunning are detrimental to the subjects and advantageous to the ruler <sup>2</sup>.

[The head of the *Chi* family was richer than the duke of *Chou*, and yet *Ch'iu* collected his imposts for him and increased his wealth. The disciples might have beaten the drum and assailed him.] <sup>3</sup> Collecting for *Chi*, he did not know how wicked it was, and that all the people condemned him <sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects V, 4 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> Only socialists would agree to this.

<sup>3</sup> [Analects XI, 16 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>4</sup> The disciple of *Confucius*, *Ch'iu* is pronounced to have been cunning owing to his having taken care of the interests of a nobleman instead of working for the people, a somewhat radical view, but collectors of taxes never have been popular. In the New Testament they are all decried as sinners.

## CHAPTER VII

### Weighing of Talents

34. XII, I. *Ch'êng-t'sai*

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p2.056 Among those who have discussed the question many are of opinion that scholars cannot be placed on a level with officials. Seeing that the officials are of practical use, and the scholars unemployed, they stigmatise the latter as shallow and incompetent, and praise the former as very ingenious and proficient. That shows that they are as ignorant of scholars as of officials, for both have their talents and abilities, and it is not true that the parts of officers are superior to the accomplishments of literary men. Officers do business, and students have no practice. We may well say that officers are business men, and that students have no practice, but the assumption that officials are ingenious and proficient, and scholars shallow and incompetent, exhibits a want of judgment.

The public usually looks down upon scholars, and these themselves have no very high opinion of their worth, for they would likewise be only too glad to serve their country and imitate the officials, whom they regard as their models. Whatever may be their shortcomings, the public will sneer at them, but the faults of officers they dare not criticise. They lay all the blame on the students, and give all the credit to the functionaries. <sup>1</sup>

The talents of the Literati do not fall short of those of the officials, but they lack *routine* and have not done official work. However, the public slights them, because they notice that the authorities do not like to employ them, a dislike caused by the mass of affairs which they cannot all settle alone, and are obliged to leave to the care of officers. Respecting their qualities and talents they hope that their many abilities may be of use to them. The

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<sup>1</sup> The masses not only in China, but in other countries as well view everything from the practical side. What is a man worth *i. e.*, how much does he earn, is the usual question of an American. They admire and affect wealth and power, and think very little of learning.



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bureaucrats relieve them of their troubles, working hard in their offices. By their decisions they distinguish themselves, and their chiefs highly appreciate their skill.

p2.057 The scholars are timid and unqualified to overcome difficulties. When the governors are troubled with doubts, they cannot help them, and are unable to exert themselves. Their services being of no benefit under existing conditions, no post is conferred upon them. The governors judge talents by official efficiency and expect them to become manifest in the discharge of official duties. It is for this reason that the public is wont to esteem the officials and despise the scholars. This contempt of the latter, and admiration of the former, is based on the inability of the students to meet the *bureaucratic* requirements, for public opinion merely inquires into their usefulness.

At present, those in authority are very able and extremely learned men who thoroughly know the people. They take things up in the proper way and ever bring them to a good end. When they appoint officials, they take a sufficient number to assist them in carrying out their designs. Should these designs aim at the cultivation of virtue or at the introduction of reforms, then officers are only like tiles and stones, but scholars like pearls and jewels. Officers are merely able to break resistance and smooth over difficulties, but they know nothing about preserving their own selves pure and undefiled, and therefore cannot be of any great help to their governor <sup>1</sup>. Scholars have no experience of business, but excel in guiding and possibly rescuing their superiors. When governors and ministers are going wrong, they are not afraid to remonstrate with them, and warn them.

They who on earth were able to establish stringent rules, who up to three times offered their remonstrances, and enjoined upon the governors to examine and purify themselves, despising all crookedness, have for the most part been scholars. They who assent to everything and try to remain in favour at all cost, and, when their governor indulges his desires, merely bow their

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<sup>1</sup> If these indictments of *Wang Ch'ung* are just and not dictated by his offended *amour-propre* owing to his inability to advance in the official career, officialdom in the *Han* time must have been different from what it is now, for at present the majority are scholars well versed in literature, but not in business.

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heads and remain silent, are mostly officials. They are strong in business, but weak in lealty, whereas scholars are excellent on principles, but bad business men. Both have their special merits and demerits, between which those in power may choose. Those who prefer students, are such as uphold virtue and carry out reforms, p2.058 those who rather take officials, attach the greatest importance to business and the suppression of disorder.

If a person's gifts are insufficient, he wants help, and wanting help, he expects strength. An officer takes an assistant, because his own force is inadequate, and a functionary engages an able man, because his own talents do not come up to the mark. When the sun illuminates the dark, there is no need for lamps and candles, and when *Mêng Pên* and *Hsia Yü* oppose the enemy, no further helpmates are requisite. Provided that the knowledge and the power of governors and ministers be like the sun shining upon darkness or the irresistible *Mêng Pên* and *Hsia Yü*, then the talents of officials are of no use.

In case of sickness we call in a physician, and when misfortune happens, we employ a sorcerer <sup>1</sup>. If we could ourselves make out the prescriptions and mix the medicines, or enter into the house and expel the evil influences, we should not have to pay for the doctor, nor to invite the sorcerer.

Bridges are built, because the feet cannot cross ditches, and carts and horses used, because one cannot walk long distances. If the feet were able to jump over ditches, or if one could walk a long way, there would be no bridges built, and no carts and horses used.

People estimate those things of the world most, to which they must look to supply their deficiencies, owing to their weakness and limited knowledge. The high authorities of our age do not accuse their own inability, but disdain the students for their want of practice, nor do they study the qualities of the officials, but finding them useful, think very much of their talents, and declare them to be excellent functionaries. Without officials they cannot get rid of their troubles, and in default of these there is nobody to save them from their vexations. Wherefore they fill all posts with ordinary men. Since their

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<sup>1</sup> A remark very characteristic of *Wang Ch'ung's* time.

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appointment is never attended with any inconvenience, whereas the scholars have nothing to distinguish themselves, and with their abilities are incapable of filling difficult posts, they are left out, when new appointments are made, nor are their services desired at court.

Those among them who have a quick intellect, at once change and set about studying official work, following in the wane of the officials. The others who have not yet made themselves conspicuous by their admirable qualities, cling to antiquity and pursue their ideas, observing the rules of propriety and cultivating virtue, <sup>p2.059</sup> but governors and ministers do not entrust them with any duty, and the bureaucrats mock them. Not being called to office, they give up further efforts and resolve to resign. The scorn fills them with disgust. Since in the discharge of their duties they do not meet with encouragement, their treatment of affairs lacks thoroughness. Then they are supposed to be inefficient and pushed aside.

Men possessed of common gifts and not burdened with lofty ideals, commence to learn official work, and are soon merged in officialdom. Taking the knowledge of the high authorities as their load-star, and conforming to the exigencies of the times, they completely change their former ideas and their occupation. Studying day and night, they are not ashamed of anything, provided that they make their mark and master the official correspondence <sup>1</sup>.

Conversely, enthusiasts and remarkable characters disdain to sacrifice their convictions, or to demolish the objects of their veneration for the purpose of pushing on by sycophancy. They strongly disapprove of talented students entering into the ranks of office-holders. Strongly maintaining their high aims, they decline to take up those poor studies <sup>2</sup>.

Sometimes it may also happen that scholars do not quite understand their business. Their thoughts being wandering and not concentrated enough, they are not fit for the office of which they may be in charge. When asked, they give wrong answers, they do not know the art of genuflexion, and in coming forward and retiring, disregard the fixed rules. In their reports on various

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<sup>1</sup> These are the opportunists among the scholars.

<sup>2</sup> These uncompromising characters stick to their principles, but do not get on in life.

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matters, young students will disclose faults, adducing the opinions of the ancients. They denounce the selfish desires of their superiors with a terrible outspokenness, saying awkward things which they had better leave unsaid. Obstinate, and bound by their prejudices, they follow their own rules in all their writings, and do not manage things in the proper way. Their style is unusual ; being somewhat excentric, they depart from the ordinary standard, and do not do things as they should be done. Therefore people make light of them, the official class despises them, and the high dignitaries hold them in disrespect <sup>1</sup>.

p2.060 It is for this reason that common students dislike to go through the Classics, or make a thorough study in order to become well acquainted with ancient and modern times. Eager to collect one master's dicta and to get a smattering of theory, they all rush to study historical works and read law <sup>2</sup>. Reciting ordinances and institutions, they write reports on various subjects. They learn how to fawn upon their superiors, and how to kneel down and kotow, all with a view to laying the foundation of their house, and establishing their family. Once called to office, they are well off, hence their bias in favour of the present, and their disregard of the past. In the keen competition with their rivals, they give up their former ideas, and struggling to get to the front, pay no heed to propriety. The Classics are neglected, and study is an exploded idea. Ancient literature is no more cultivated, and what they have learned formerly, soon forgotten.

Literati lead a poor life in their lonely houses, while the officials are bustling about in the halls of the palace. Clever and able officials rise, later on, and come to the front, whereas persons fulfilling all moral obligations, are beset with so many difficulties, that they hide and steal away. The success is owing to cunning and the failure to awkwardness <sup>3</sup>. The talents of scholars

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<sup>1</sup> This sort of young firebrands and utopists would reform everything, but they do it with inadequate means, and soon are crushed under the inert masses they are attempting to stop.

<sup>2</sup> According to our modern view, this is just what a future official should do. Literature alone, which up to very recent times was the only study of all the candidates, does not suffice. A literary education can be nothing more than a basis for future special studies.

<sup>3</sup> This is not true. With virtue and literature alone a country cannot be governed. This requires practical knowledge and experience, of which the typical literati are destitute,

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are not inferior, nor is their knowledge insufficient, but they lack experience and practice.

When the foot has never walked a road, even *Yao* and *Yü* must inquire at its turns, and when the eye has not yet spied an object, even *Confucius* and *Mê Ti* would ask about its shape. In the region of *Ch'i* <sup>1</sup>, the inhabitants make embroidery from generation to generation, and even common women possess this skill. In the city of *Hsiang* <sup>2</sup>, the people weave brocades, and even stupid girls know the art. That which we daily see and daily do, our hands become accustomed to. If talented scholars have not yet seen a thing, or if clever women have not yet done something, the work seems strange to them, and the handicraft extraordinary. p2.061 When they are suddenly called upon to perform it, and for the first time behold it, even something apparently very easy gives them the greatest trouble.

Respecting scholars, at present their critics do not speak of a want of practice, but doubt their intellectual faculties ; they do not say that they have not yet done anything, but that their knowledge does not reach so far, which is a misrepresentation. The mental power of the literati is not too weak, and there is no profession which they might not comprehend, though they have not taken an active part in it <sup>3</sup>. Now the public noticing that they have no experience, regard them as incapable, and seeing them inactive, ascribe this to their dullness.

Ranked according to their usefulness and classed according to their efficiency, the officials are in front, and the students in the rear. That is the point of view of the government. But in a classification on scientific principles, the scholars are above, and the officials below. From an agricultural point of view, agriculturists come first, and from a commercial standpoint, merchants are the first class. As regards government, officers are its men. In their youth already they learn official work, and government in their field of action,

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and which they disdain to acquire.

<sup>1</sup> In *Shantung*.

<sup>2</sup> An ancient name of *Kuei-tê-fu* in *Honan*.

<sup>3</sup> As a rule perhaps, but there are many students so unpractical and only at home in the high spheres of pure thought, that just their great learning and idealism makes them absolutely unfit for business.

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knives <sup>1</sup> and pencils being their ploughs, and despatches, their labour. They resemble the sons of a house who, having grown up in it, know all its nooks and corners much better than any foreigner does. When a guest arrives only for a short while, he may be a second *Confucius* or *Mê Ti*, yet he will not be able to distinguish things as well as they do. Scholars are like these guests, and officials represent the sons. As sons the officials know much more than the scholars, for the latter are much less *au courant* than the former. The governors and ministers of our time know how sons are, yet believe officials to be exceptionally clever, unaware that the officials have acquired their efficiency by practice. They likewise know guests, and yet see in helplessness after a short stay a sign of foolishness, quite forgetting that the incompetence of the scholars is owing to their want of exercise. The vision of these dignitaries is blurred, and they are unable to reason by analogies.

A man fit to be assistant in a district, might also fill the post of a secretary in a prefecture, and he who could reform an entire <sup>p2.062</sup> prefecture, would be qualified for service in a province. However the prefecture does not summon the assistant, and the province will not have the reformer. It would be no harm, if they used their talents to acquire the necessary practice, their little knowledge of official correspondence would be compensated by their great virtue.

The Five Secretaries <sup>2</sup> of course have their rules and regulations, and for books and registers there exist certain precedents. How can a man who diligently studies and easily learns all these things, so that he becomes a clever official, for that reason be thought more of than others? Wise governors select officials according to their talents, regardless of their being experienced in discussing official matters. They set the highest store on character, and do not look to book-keeping.

Good officials are called loyal. Loyalty is not exhibited in books and registers. Business may be learned by study, and with the rules of etiquette one becomes familiar by practice; loyalty and justice however are not to be acquired in this manner. Officials and scholars have both their special aims.

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<sup>1</sup> Erasing knives, see p. 73. Note 2.

<sup>2</sup> See Vol. I, p. 65, Note 1.

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Loyalty and faith is the goal of the scholars, whereas the officials are chiefly interested in the management of affairs. As long as loyalty and honesty is maintained, a little bungling in business is not injurious to a man's reputation. Albeit yet owing to their inexperience in office work students are placed in the second rank by most critics.

Judges give their verdicts according to edicts and laws. In their administration the officials are obliged to consult jurists, and nothing is of greater importance in a district magistrate's office than edicts. If his competence be taken as a criterion of the worthiness of an official, then the jurisconsults <sup>1</sup> ought to take the first place. Perhaps people will admit this, saying that edicts are the Canons of the *Han* dynasty, on which the officials base the decisions which <sub>p2.063</sub> they propose, and that a case having been settled by law, everything is clear indeed.

I should say that the Five Canons are also standard works her the *Han* dynasty, and that the literati conversant with the theory of government, have all derived their wisdom therefrom. *Tung Chung Shu* explained the meaning of the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, and in comparing it with the laws did not find any divergence. Therefore the *Ch'un-ch'iu* is a Canon of the *Han*, composed by *Confucius*, it is true, but handed down to the *Han*. Those critics who merely appreciate jurisprudence and slight the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, are narrow-minded. The purport of this work and the other four Canons is intertwined, and unless the *Ch'un-ch'iu* were a great production, the Five Canons would not be universally read.

The Five Canons deal with principles, and business counts less than principles. There being principles, business is regulated, and in default of principles nothing can be done. Now that which scholars study, are principles, and that which officers learn, is business. In case they are of equal talents,

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<sup>1</sup> The writers on law form one of the Nine Schools into which *Liu Hsin* B. C. 7 divided the then existing philosophical literature. These writers are not jurists in the modern acceptation of the word, but rather authors philosophising on the nature of law, rewards and punishments, government, and political economy. The Catalogue in the *Han-shu* mentions only ten works of this class. The *Tse-shu po-chia* gives six works. The most celebrated so-called jurists are *Kuan Chung*, *Yen Tse*, *Shang Yang*, and *Han Fei Tse*, all well known to, and several times mentioned by, *Wang Ch'ung*, who has a special dislike for the criminalists *Shang Yang* and *Han Fei Tse*. Cf. Vol. I, chap. XXXV *Strictures on Han Fei Tse*.

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they should study principles if they wish to rank with officials <sup>1</sup>.

For washing dirty things one uses water, and for roasting raw and tainted meat, fire. Water and fire are the principles, and their use is business. Business is posterior to principles. If we compare students with officials, the former adjust what is antecedent, the latter care for what is subsequent. From the contrast between principles, which are first, and business, which is last, we may determine the superiority and greater dignity of either.

*Yao* by his brilliant virtue succeeded in conciliating the black-haired people. *Confucius* said that filial piety and brotherly love in the highest degree could even touch spirits. *Chang Shih Chih* <sup>2</sup> remarked that the *Ch'in* dynasty relied on petty officers with pencils and knives, and that, the dissolution having gone on up to *Erh Shih Huang Ti*, the empire broke down. *Chang T'ang* and *Chao Yü* were both honest officials of the *Han* period, and yet the Grand Annalist places them among the oppressors <sup>3</sup>. How can those p2.064 responsible for the breakdown of the empire, be compared with them whose piety affects the spirits ? This should fill people's minds.

The high dignitaries are cognisant of the great principles of the classical studies, but do not honour the students, because it strikes them that those students of classical literature are in the administration less efficient than functionaries.

With a butcher's knife one may carve a fowl, but it is difficult to slaughter an ox with a poultry knife. A master in embroidery can sew a curtain or a garment, but a workman twisting thread would be unqualified to weave brocade. Thus the scholars can do the business of the officials, but officials do not find their way through the science of scholars. The knowledge of officials is really bad and not up to the mark, the scholars however, in spite of their

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<sup>1</sup> The last clause from 'if they wish...' seems to be a gloss which ought to be expunged, since it spoils the meaning : officials being of equal talents with scholars, instead of devoting themselves to business, ought to study general principles.

<sup>2</sup> A high officer of strong character at the court of the *Han* emperor *Wên Ti*, B. C. 179-157.

<sup>3</sup> *Shi-chi* chap. 122. Both officers together enacted several laws, hence *Sse-Ma Ch'ien's* aversion, who like our philosopher had a strong inclination towards Taoism and in his introduction to the above chapter approvingly quotes chap. 57 of the *Tao-tê-king* 'The more laws and edicts, the more robbers and thieves'.



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want of practice, possess excellent qualities, only they have no experience.

*Yü* regulating streams and rivers did not handle the hoe or the spade, and the Duke of *Chou* in building *Lo yi*<sup>1</sup> did not hold battering-rams or poles in his hands. Pencils and ink, registers and books are like hoes and spades, rams and poles. To expect a man of vast ideas and high principles to carry them out personally, would be like bidding a general fight himself, or an engineer cut wood. In case a scholar able to interpret one Canon is called upon to do the work of one office, he can master it in ten months. For an office-holder, on the other side, to study the contents of one Canon a whole year would not suffice. Why ? Because official work is easy to learn, whereas classical studies offer great difficulties.

Students thumb the Classics to fathom the meaning of the Sages, and officials move their pencils to take note of public affairs. What is more difficult, to comprehend the thoughts of the great Sages, or to understand the affairs of the small people ? These men who by their genius overcome all difficulties, cherish more than a hundred thousand sentences and paragraphs in their minds, and never flag in what they take in hand. Their profound studies embrace antiquity as well as the present time, and from the rich p2.065 spring in their bosom pour out ingenious thoughts by thousands<sup>2</sup>. The wisdom of the bureaucrats consists merely in their books and registers, of which they understand all the intricacies.

What means the possession of ten or a hundred coins compared with the wealth of a thousand pieces of gold, and how could the granaries of the capital towering like mountains be placed on a level with heaps of grain not higher than mounds of earth ? A man famous for his talents is like a famous vessel. The bigger the vessel, the greater its capacity. The treasures hidden in the bosoms of the scholars can be pronounced greater than those of the officials.

Creepers growing among hemp, become straight without support, and white silk gauze placed amidst coloured one, takes a dark colour without

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<sup>1</sup> The new capital of the *Chou* dynasty in *Honan*.

<sup>2</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* is bragging somewhat here. Even in the best Chinese authors, let alone ordinary scholars, we do not discover ingenious thoughts by thousands.

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having been dyed. This means that the good and the evil we practice transforms our character. The nature of scholars cannot always be good, but revering the holy doctrines, they chant and hum them over day and night <sup>1</sup>, and thus take the habits of the Sages.

In their childhood already do the future officers become familiar with pencil and ink, which they learn to use by constant practice. They never read a page of a book, or ever hear the words benevolence and justice <sup>2</sup>. When they have grown up and are called to office, they abuse their power of writing and their experience in business. All their proceedings are dictated by selfish motives, and influence and profit are their only aims. When they have to make an investigation, they allow themselves to be bribed, and fleece all the people with whom they are brought in contact <sup>3</sup>. Having an honourable position, they crave for power, and, should they find favour with the sovereign, they contrive the disgrace of the governors. Once in power, they will wear elegant hats and sharp swords <sup>4</sup>, and after one year's service their estate and their mansion are well provided. They have not all a wicked character, but their p2.066 practices are in opposition to the holy doctrines. Those who follow the method of the literati, reform and learn to love justice, so that their ideas as well as their dealings change and improve.

An enlightened governor who clearly saw this, and therefore employed scholars, was the minister of *Tung-hai* <sup>5</sup>, *Tsung Shu Hsi* <sup>6</sup>. He used to invite obscure scholars on a large scale. In spring and autumn he would assemble them to a feast and divide them into three classes. In a regular order he nominated them to vacant posts. Among the officials of a prefecture nine out of ten were scholars. The prefect of *Ch'ên-Liu* <sup>7</sup>, *Ch'ên Tse Yü* likewise opened the ways to the literati. They were given all the posts of secretaries and clerks, and the bureaucrats were only employed in the ratio of one or two

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<sup>1</sup> The recital of the Chinese Classics is more a chanting than a reading.

<sup>2</sup> This is greatly exaggerated.

<sup>3</sup> Bribery and corruption seem to have been the canker of Chinese officials at all time.

<sup>4</sup> The military spirit of the Chinese in the *Han* time was greater than it is now, for they were then just emerging from feudalism.

<sup>5</sup> A place in *Kiangsu*.

<sup>6</sup> The *Shih-hsing p'u* calls him *Tsung Chün* (T. *Shu Hsiang*). He died in A. D. 76.

<sup>7</sup> A place in *Honan*.

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among ten.

These two governors knew the respective value of principles and business, and could judge of the capacities of the candidates. Therefore the age has praised their names, and many of their doings have been recorded in books and memoirs.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### The Valuation of Knowledge

35. XII, II. *Liang-chih*

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p2.067 In our essay on the weighing of talents <sup>1</sup> we have spoken on talents and conduct, but the great superiority of learning has not yet been set forth. Scholars surpass the officials by their learning, on which they spend a long time, purifying their characters and refining their talents. The learned thus suppress their evil desires and rectify their natures, until their talents are fully developed, and their virtue is complete. At that juncture a comparison shows that the capacities of those thus refined are much greater than those of the officials.

When poor and rich men both send a present of a hundred cash for funeral expenses <sup>2</sup>, the mourners, provided they are intelligent, know that the poor have no means and that, if they likewise have contributed a hundred, the rich, who have plenty, possess much more. The unintelligent infer that, since in both cases the sum is a hundred, the fortunes of the rich and the poor are the same. Scholars and officers are in a similar position. Both being employed as clerks or acting as secretaries, the wise among their chiefs are aware that officials and scholars are alike, as far as their writing is concerned, but that the students have many hidden treasures in their bosoms besides. The simple-minded, however, consider that they are both functionaries, and that, as to the thoroughness and extent of their knowledge, their acquirements are the same, a great mistake.

It is the nature of the earth to produce plants, and the nature of mountains to grow trees. If mallows and leeks be sown in the earth, and

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<sup>1</sup> Chap. VII.

<sup>2</sup> The custom of sending presents to the relations of the deceased as a contribution to the funeral expenses, is very old and already mentioned in the *Liki* (Cf. [Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVIII, p. 140 seq.](#)) [[Couvreur](#), § 8]. In ancient times these presents usually were *in natura*, at present they are mostly in money. I did not find any allusion to this custom in *De Groot* great work, [The Religious System of China](#).

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jujubes and chestnuts planted upon the mountains, we speak of a garden and a park, which can no more be placed on p2.068 a par with common land or ordinary mountains. The case of officials and students is analogous. Both have their faculties, and both use pencil and ink, but, in addition to this, the students are the guardians of the doctrine of former emperors, which doctrine means more than mallows and leeks, jujubes and chestnuts.

An ordinary woman spins and weaves with her hands. Should she be endowed with extraordinary skill, she will weave brocade and make embroidery, and be accounted exceptional so as not to come in the same class with the common run. Now, when the faculties of the scholars are contrasted with those of the officials, the former have still a surplus in their knowledge of classical and other writings, as the spinning girls still possess the special gift of weaving brocade and embroidering.

Poor fellows are prone to excesses, while rich people observe the rules, because the poor are hard up, whereas the rich live in opulence. Thus scholars do not do evil, but officials indulge in malpractices, for they are devoid of morality and virtue, and scholars have abundance of benevolence and righteousness <sup>1</sup>.

When poor and rich men together are guests, and receive a present from the host, the rich are not abashed, but the poor always feel ashamed : the former are in a position to make acknowledgments, the latter have nothing to give in return. Students and officials both look upon the high officers as their hosts. The students receiving their salary from them, repay them with virtue and wisdom ; the hearts of the officials are empty, they have not acquired humanity and equity, and merely live on their income, incapable of showing their gratitude, they are, as it were, dining gratis like the personators of the dead <sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* shares the mistake of most Chinese philosophers and of many westerners too, believing that virtue is a necessary correlate of learning. Virtue may be acquired without study, and many scholars are without it.

<sup>2</sup> Phrase quoted from the *Han-shu* (*Pei-wên-yün-fu*). These personators of the dead were relatives of the deceased who had to represent the departed soul when sacrifice was offered to it. They were treated with great respect, and refreshments were presented to them. This custom, several times mentioned in the *Shiking* and the *Liki*, was abolished after the *Chou* dynasty.

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Gratis means for nothing : without virtue they live on a salary paid by others for nothing, whence the expression : dining gratis. They do not know any method or art, nor can they regulate the administration. They are sitting silent in the court, unable to discourse on any subject, exactly like corpses. Therefore they are called personators of the dead, and it is thus that the p2.069 officials are, so to speak, dining gratis like the personators of the dead.

Occupying places of honour and living in luxury, how would they venture to take notice of any wicked inclinations of their superiors or administer admonitions ? In the first place, they themselves cannot distinguish between right and wrong, and then they are apprehensive of punishment and dare not speak their minds.

The *Liki* says,

« Human nature is fond of beauty.

Those who can speak with vigour are not appreciated owing to their bad style. They have backbone, it is true, but no flesh, and are not portly enough <sup>1</sup>. They who oppose the views of governors and ministers, are sure to incur their displeasure, and even if they should fight for their country, would not earn any fame. Therefore he who covets rank and emoluments must not remonstrate with his superiors.

The officials struggle for rank and money. Once instated, they desire substantial profit, which they can expend at discretion. To extort money they would even risk their lives, and could not explain the right principles to their covetous superiors. They might see wrongs as high as the *T'ai-shan*, how would they dare to utter the slightest reproof ? Under these circumstances they cannot clear themselves from the charge of dining gratis like the personators of corpses.

The scholars study the great principles, and serve their chiefs with virtue. When it is useless, they desist. Their aims being those of great ministers, they do their best to establish a just and proper course according to the canon. They do dare to speak. But by their rank they are far below the high

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in the *Pei-wên-yün-fu* chap. 7a. The meaning is that such passionate speakers are imbued with the right feelings, but want elegance, and therefore are not held in esteem.

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authorities, and when such inferior officers approach them to make remonstrances, the *Liki* calls it flattery <sup>1</sup>. Therefore the residences of prefects and district magistrates are always empty and short of men <sup>2</sup>.

Somebody may suggest that officials have the faculty of drawing up documents, of keeping books and registers, and of investigating and settling all kinds of affairs. Though ignorant of moral science, they yet exert their strength and their skill, and exhaust it in the <sup>p2.070</sup> service of the State, which must also be deemed a manifestation of their indebtedness to those above them <sup>3</sup>.

I reply that, in this respect, they again resemble poor men who have been burdened with a heavy official duty. Owing to their poverty, they have no other means of compensation than personally discharging their official duty, more they cannot do. This discharge of their duty is like house or wall building. For houses they use hatchets and axes, and for walls, beetles and spades. What difference is there between carrying hatchets and axes, and grasping beetles and spades, and the holding of knives, or the taking of styles? If the composition of official papers is held to be a manifestation of the indebtedness to one's superiors, the masons building houses or walls are likewise showing their gratefulness to those above them, and all are performing official duties, knives, styles, hatchets, axes, beetles, and spades all being the same <sup>4</sup>.

One takes cloth to barter silk ; exchanging that which it possesses against that which it has not, each party obtains what they desire. Students take their science to barter wages, the officials however possess nothing to trade with <sup>5</sup>. Peasants and merchants have different professions, and their products cannot be the same. He who, in regard to quality and quantity, produces in abundance, is called a rich man. To become rich is the desire of every

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<sup>1</sup> I did not succeed in tracing this passage in the *Liki*, and fail to see how a remonstrance can be construed as a flattery.

<sup>2</sup> Of men who might offer their advice, which they dare not for fear that they might be suspected of flattery.

<sup>3</sup> They are indebted to the high officers for the emoluments they receive from them.

<sup>4</sup> Ordinary officials without classical learning do not rank higher than menials and artisans.

<sup>5</sup> An unjust reproach, for experience in business is not to be disdained.

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villager. Now the doctrine of the ancient kings is not merely like the produce of peasants and merchants. Those who become high officers, gain honour and bring about great reforms, have more glory than rich people in their luxury. Moreover the work of the scholars is more than abundant produce. They perfect themselves, their intellect shines brightly and, what is still more remarkable, they correctly distinguish right and wrong.

The similarity of twigs of hemp with the trunks of the trees on the mountains is that they serve as torches <sup>1</sup>. First they give much smoke, but, after the fire has come through, their radiance is most lustrous, and lighted in a hall, they shed their splendour p2.071 round about to a great distance, and have much more brilliancy than the fire on the hearth <sup>2</sup>.

Before a piece of silk is embroidered, or brocade woven, they do not distinguish themselves from common silk or ordinary fabrics. By the skilful use of variegated silk, the needle distributing the thread in an artistic way, a brilliant composition is created, in black and white, or black and blue : pheasants, mountains and dragons, the sun and the moon <sup>3</sup>. The *savants* have likewise compositions, which they study, resembling the multicoloured *chefs-d'oeuvres* of silk embroidery. By their original endowments they do not exceed others, but, when they have amassed learning, they leave them far behind.

Nuts which have no kernels, are called specious, and if they cannot be opened with knives or axes, they are termed solid. Officials who have not acquired the learning of the age have no kernel. How could the faculties of the specious and the solid be compared together ?

Bone is carved, ivory is sculptured, jade polished, and jewels are ground.

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<sup>1</sup> Still now-a-days torches are often made of hemp-hard.

<sup>2</sup> The fire on the hearth produced by ordinary fire-wood. It goes without saying that scholars are likened to the twigs of hemp, shedding a brilliant light by their intelligence, whereas officials are no more than trunks of trees.

<sup>3</sup> All these are emblematic figures mentioned in the *Shuking* Part II, Book IV, 4 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 80](#)) [[Couvreur](#)]. In ancient times they were partly depicted and partly embroidered on official robes, so that painted silk and silk embroideries must already have been known before the *Chou* dynasty, perhaps 2000 years B. C.



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By carving, sculpturing, polishing, and grinding <sup>1</sup> precious objects are produced. As regards human learning, knowledge and skill are developed in the same manner as bone, ivory, jade, and jewels are cut, carved, polished, or ground. Even in case such a polished scholar should prefer not to be employed, a wise ruler would not give him up.

*Sun Wu* <sup>2</sup> and *Ho Lü* <sup>3</sup> were the best experts of their age in enlisting soldiers. He who knows, or has learned the rules of war, must needs win a battle. But should he ignore the art of marshalling his troops by tens and by hundreds, or not understand fencing and swordsmanship, his army led on by force would be routed, and the leader defeated for not knowing the art of war <sup>4</sup>.

p2.072 When rice is ripe, they call it paddy. Pounded in a mortar and separated from chaff by sifting, steamed in a pot, and cooked with fire, it becomes well done food. Then it is sweet and eatable, which means that it has got the proper taste of food, and the necessary softness. Before paddy has been transformed into hulled rice <sup>5</sup>, and hulled rice into food, its raw flavour has not yet been removed, and its consumption would be injurious. Now, a man without learning is like rice not yet turned into paddy, or hulled rice not yet cooked. His mind is as unprepared as raw rice, whose consumption is prejudicial to our health. A student is improved by his studies and educated by his teacher, and the result is as remarkable as the transformation of rice into food, and the food becoming soft.

Before copper and tin are found, they are among other minerals. Picked or dug out by miners, melted in a furnace, heated with bellows, and polished, they are wrought into tools. Previous to the smelting process they are called

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<sup>1</sup> These different manufactures, which still to-day are so very characteristic for China, viz. the working of bone and ivory, of jade and jewels, are worthy of note. The four words are from the *Shiking* (*Legge, Classics* Vol. IV, Part I, p. 91).

<sup>2</sup> Commonly called *Sun-tse*, a celebrated general in the service of *Ho Lü*, to whom a [well-known work on the art of war](#) is ascribed.

<sup>3</sup> A king of *Wu* of the 6th cent. B. C., on whom cf. Vol. I, p. 380, Note 1.

<sup>4</sup> Officials are compared with such ignorant leaders.

<sup>5</sup> The variety of names for rice in its different stages — there are still others referring to its quality — show the great importance it has for China.

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ore <sup>1</sup>. Ore is the same as tiles found by the roadside, or small stones on mountains. Thus rice unhusked and not steamed is termed paddy, copper not yet molten and unpolished, ore, and men without instruction, blockheads resembling bamboo and wood.

While bamboo is growing on mountains and wood in forests, their future use is still uncertain. Bamboo is broken into tubes, which are split into tablets. The traces made on these with styles <sup>2</sup> and ink form characters. Big tablets become Classics, the smaller ones, records. Wood is cut into blocks, which are split <sup>p2.073</sup> into boards, which by dint of carving and planing become writing tablets for official memorials <sup>3</sup>. Bamboo and wood are coarse things, but by cutting and polishing, carving and paring are wrought into useful objects. What about man, the noblest creature of all, whose nature encompasses heaven and earth? Unless he goes to school to study the Classics and other works, and unless his honest, but uncultured mind is imbued with propriety and righteousness, he stands in the imperial court stiff like a lath or a tablet, and is of no use.

When the grass in the wilds of the mountains is luxuriant, they cut it down with sickles to make a road. Before scholars have taken the road to knowledge, their vicious inclinations have not yet been eradicated like the weeds, and the wood of the mountain wilds, before they have been mowed down to make a road. Dyed cloth and silk are called coloured stuffs. They are appreciated as dresses of lucky augury. Previous to the dying, one speaks of coarse silk, which is unpropitious, for mourners dress in it <sup>4</sup>. When illiterate people are in the government service, they cannot bring about any happy

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<sup>1</sup> Mining and metallurgy were practised long before the *Han* dynasty. The *Shuking* (*Yü-kung*) speaks of gold, silver, and copper [[Legge](#)] [[Couvreur](#)], the last being the metal *par excellence*. The *Chou-li* informs us that tin was mined [[Biot](#)]. From the 7th cent. B. C. a tax was levied on salt and iron, and we have a treatise on these two metals [] of the 1st cent. B. C.

<sup>2</sup> The same character later on served to designate a pencil or a brush made of hair and invented in the 3d cent. B. C. The style originally was a bamboo pencil dipped into lacquer to write on the wooden or bamboo tablets then in use.

<sup>3</sup> On ancient Chinese books before the invention of paper, the erasing knife, and the style or pencil see the remarkable paper of [Ed. Chavannes, les Livres chinois avant l'invention du papier](#) (*Journal Asiatique*, Janvier-Février 1905).

<sup>4</sup> The colour of mourning is a greyish white, the colour of undyed stuffs; whereas red is the colour of joy and good augury.

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results just as mourners dressed in coarse cloth do not attract happiness.

Those knowing how to hew and shape beams and pillars, go by the name of carpenters, those who dig holes and ditches, are called diggers, and those who understand how to carve and polish official documents <sup>1</sup>, are called scribes. Now the science of the officials consists in preparing official papers <sup>2</sup>; they must be ranked with carpenters and diggers, how then could they be placed on a level with scholars ?

Censors drawing up their documents give the exact weight of money, not losing an atom <sup>3</sup>, and those charged with placing the baskets and vessels at sacrifices, do not make any mistake in arranging them in the proper rows. All this practice they have acquired by previous learning, but people think nothing of it, for p2.074 it is trivial skill and not any valuable knowledge. Without a 'classical erudition' as the basis, they are familiar with style and ink. In great principles insufficient, they possess too many small abilities, and, although they may speak of their great learning, it is but the knowledge of secretaries, and the wisdom of stewards.

Eating millet, one becomes satiated, and dining on bran, one appeases one's hunger. Though in both cases we speak of eating, yet the taste is not the same. Scholars as well as officials are said to have learning, but their usefulness in the State is not equal.

*Tse Pi* <sup>4</sup> of *Chêng* wished to employ *Yin Ho* in the administration. *Tse Ch'an* <sup>5</sup> compared him with a man who had not yet held a knife in his hand and was called upon to cut <sup>6</sup>. *Tse Lu* got *Tse Kao* appointed governor of *Pi*. *Confucius* said,

— You are injuring a man's son <sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Documents written on wooden tablets which are carved and polished.

<sup>2</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* confounds scribes and officials.

<sup>3</sup> In auditing accounts.

<sup>4</sup> Chief minister of *Chêng*.

<sup>5</sup> Celebrated statesman. Cf. Vol. I, p. 209, Note 1.

<sup>6</sup> Allusion to the *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Hsiang* 31st year, where *Tse Ch'an* dissuades *Tse Pi* from making *Yin Ho* commandant of a city owing to his being too young and unexperienced (*Legge, Classics* Vol. V, Part II, p. 562) [*Couvreur*, p. 579 seq.].

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 407.

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Both had not yet studied and were ignorant of the great principles.

Should a physician who has no method, say that he could cure diseases, he would be asked, how he performed his cures. If he then replied that he followed his own judgment, sick persons would distrust him. Now officials without a classical training pretend to be able to govern the people. Asked by what they were going to govern, they would reply, by their talents. That would be like the physician curing sickness without any method, according to his own fancy. How could the people put faith in such a man, or how should the ruler of men appoint and use him ?

Let somebody without money in his hands offer to purchase something, and the seller ask him, where his money was, then he would have to own that he had no money, and the proprietor would doubtlessly not give him the ware. An empty head is like empty hands. How could such a person expect the sovereign to employ, and the people to have confidence in him ?

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## CHAPTER IX

### Admitting Shortcomings

36. XII, III. *Hsieh-tuan*

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p2.075 In the chapters on the Weighing of Talents <sup>1</sup> and the Valuation of Knowledge <sup>2</sup>, we have pointed out that concerning their talents, scholars and officials have no reason to impeach one another, the former cultivating the great principles, and the latter studying their books and registers. Theory ranks higher than practice, whence it must be admitted that the literati outshine the functionaries by far. But this is an estimate and a valuation of their professions viewed externally, internally, they both have their shortcomings, which have not yet been openly avowed.

Scholars able to explain one Canon <sup>3</sup>, presume to understand the great doctrine <sup>4</sup>, and therefore look down upon the officials, and these well acquainted with their books and registers, think their learning above all criticism, and themselves entitled to laugh at the scholars. They all rely on their wealth and keep it for themselves ; satisfied with themselves, they find fault with their adversaries, ignoring their own shortcomings and unaware of their proper deficiencies. The *Lun-hêng* informs them with a view to making them open their eyes and see, where they are going.

The faults of the students are not limited to their inexperience in keeping registers, nor does the weakness of the officials merely consist in their ignorance of the great doctrine. They are, moreover, narrow-minded, and do not care for ancient and modern times : they do not understand their own business, and are not up to the mark. Either class has its defects, but is not conscious of them. How is it that even the writers of our time are unable to

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<sup>1</sup> Chap. VII.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. VIII.

<sup>3</sup> It is a curious fact that in the *Han* time already there were specialists studying only one book or one author just as we have our *Goethe*, *Shakespeare* and *Dante* critics.

<sup>4</sup> The doctrine of *Confucius* of course.

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instruct them ?

p2.076 The scholar's sphere of activity is found in the Five Classics, which as professors in their schoolrooms they explain and teach day and night. They are familiar with every sentence, and they understand the meaning perfectly. In the Five Classics they are all right, it is true, but they fail in regard to all events which took place after the time of the Classics, under the *Ch'in* and *Han* dynasties, a knowledge of which is indispensable. Those who know antiquity, but ignore the present are called dryasdusts. It is the scholars that well deserve this designation.

Anterior to the Five Classics, up to the time, when heaven and earth were settled, emperors and rulers have come to the throne, but which were the names of these sovereigns, the scholars do not know either. Those who are conversant with the present time, but do not know antiquity, are called benighted. Compared with remote antiquity the Five Canons are quite modern. Since they only can explain the Classics, but are in the dark as to remote antiquity, the scholars are to be called benighted.

The students might object that primitive times are so remote, and their events so obliterated, that the Canons do not mention, and teachers not consider them. Even though the history of the Three Rulers<sup>1</sup>, who are comparatively modern, were omitted in the Classics, unity would require it, the Classics ought to know them, and the scholars be able thoroughly to discourse upon them.

The *Hsia* begin their reign with *Yü*. Having established their years, called *tsai*, they lasted down to the *Yin*<sup>2</sup> dynasty. The *Yin* commence with *T'ang*. Their years = *sse* go on to the *Chou* dynasty, which begins with *Wên Wang*. Their years = *nien*<sup>3</sup> reach down as far as the *Ch'in* dynasty. *Chieh* ruined the *Hsia*, and *Chou* destroyed the *Yin*, but who was it that caused the *Chou* dynasty to fall<sup>4</sup> ?

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<sup>1</sup> The emperors *Yü*, *T'ang*, and *Wên Wang*, founders of the *Hsia*, *Shang*, and *Chou* dynasties, often mentioned in the Classics.

<sup>2</sup> *Yin* or *Shang* dynasty.

<sup>3</sup> [] the expression for a year now in use.

<sup>4</sup> The downfall of the *Hsia* and *Shang* dynasties is said to have been brought about by

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p2.077 The *Chou* may be of too distant a period, but the *Ch'in* were defeated by the *Han*. The first ruler of the *Hsia* was *Yü*, and the first sovereign of the *Yin* was *T'ang*. The ancestor of the *Chou* was *Hou Chi*, but who was the progenitor of the house of *Ch'in* <sup>1</sup> ?

That *Ch'in* burned the Five Canons and threw the scholars into pits is well known to devotees of the Five Classics, but for what reason did *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* consign the Classics to the flames, and which feeling prompted him to kill the scholars <sup>2</sup> ?

The *Ch'in* are the former dynasty, the *Han* are the dynasty of the literati themselves. How many generations are there from *Kao Tsu* to the present day, and how many years have elapsed till now <sup>3</sup> ? How were the *Han* first invested by Heaven, which were the omens they found <sup>4</sup>, and did they win the imperial sway easily or with difficulties <sup>5</sup> ? How is their position compared to the *Yin* and the *Chou* dynasties in this respect ?

Let us suppose that the sons of a house have pursued their studies up to a certain age, and then are asked by somebody, how many years they have been living in their house, and who were their ancestors. If they do not know it, they are silly youngsters. Now the scholars who are ignorant of the affairs of the *Han* time, are the silly people of their age.

Those well versed in antique lore, and familiar with our time, are fit to be teachers, but why call a teacher a man who knows neither ancient nor modern times ? Should anybody inquire about the books of two feet four inches *viz.* the utterances of the sages <sup>6</sup>, they study these day and night, and

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the wickedness of the last emperors *Chieh* and *Chou*. The last rulers of the *Chou* dynasty were not depraved, but weak, and so their house fell an easy prey to the attacks of powerful *Ch'in*.

<sup>1</sup> This is doubtful. *Sse-Ma Chien* makes the emperor *Chuan Hsü* their ancestor, *Sse-Ma Chêng*, the emperor *Shao Hao*. *Vid. Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 1, Note 3.*

<sup>2</sup> These questions are answered in Vol. I, pp. 449 and 490 seq.

<sup>3</sup> Chronology is not the strong point of Chinese scholars. *Han Kao Tsu* reigned from 206-195 B. C. The *Lun-hêng* was written about 80 A. D.

<sup>4</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* speaks of these omens in chap. XVIII-XXI.

<sup>5</sup> *Kao Tsu* had to fight many battles against rival generals, his most powerful rival being *Hsiang Yü*, who nearly defeated him. It was only by chance that he and not the latter ascended the throne of the *Ch'in*.

<sup>6</sup> The collections of bamboo and wooden tablets forming books measured two feet four

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take an interest in everything included in their sphere of thought. The things of the *Han* time however are not mentioned in the Classics, therefore p2.078 all works in which they are treated, are, in their eyes, small works, and trivial books, which they compare with minor arts. A knowledge of these works is not appreciated by the literati, and the ignorance of these matters not deemed a deficiency.

I should like again singly, and severally to question the literati, each on his own favourite Classic, which he interprets day and night. First I would ask the expositors of the *Yiking*, how it originated, and who was its author. They will most likely reply that *Fu Hsi* composed the Eight Diagrams, which *Wên Wang* developed into sixty-four, and that *Confucius* wrote the definitions, illustrations, and annexes. By the joint efforts of these three Sages the *Yiking* was completed.

I would ask again : There are three editions of the *Yiking*, the first is called *Lien-shan*, the second, *Kuei-tsang* and the third, the *Chou Yiking*. Was that *Yiking* composed by *Fu Hsi*, and written by *Wên Wang* the *Lien-shan*, or the *Kuei-tsang*, or the *Chou Yiking* <sup>1</sup> ? When the *Ch'in* burned the Five Canons, how did the *Yiking* escape <sup>2</sup> ? Some years after the accession of the *Han* it was restored. In the time of *Hsüan Ti* a woman in *Ho-nei* demolishing an old house, discovered one chapter of the *Yiking*. What name did it receive ? Was the *Yiking* complete at that time or not ?

To the students of the *Shuking* I beg to address the following questions : The *Shuking* which they are now explaining day and night, embraces 29 chapters. But in addition to this, there is an edition of 102 chapters, and one of 100 chapters. From which of the two did the 29 chapters proceed ? Who is the author of the 102 chapters ? Where were all the chapters of the *Shuking*, when *Ch'in* burned all the books ? Which emperor, after the rise of the *Han*

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inches or three feet of the *Chou* measure in case of the Classics. Other works of less importance were much smaller, only about one foot long. But even the *Analects* originally did not exceed one foot. Cf. Vol I, p. 456.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 454, Note 4.

<sup>2</sup> As a book on divination the *Yiking* was preserved from destruction. See *Legge, Sacred Books* Vol. XVI, Introduction p. 2.



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dynasty, had the *Shuking* first transcribed <sup>1</sup>, and who was the man that was first initiated into it <sup>2</sup> ?

The following question is intended for the students of the *Liki* : Already before the time of *Confucius* the *Chou* had established their Rites, and there were those of the *Yin* and the *Hsia*. The Three Emperors would increase or decrease the Rites according p2.079 to circumstances, the chapters were added to or diminished, and the text amplified or curtailed. Now I do not know, whether the present *Liki* is that of the *Chou*, or of the *Yin*, or the *Hsia* <sup>3</sup>. Because the *Han* succeeded the *Chou*, they will no doubt urge that it is the *Liki* of the *Chou* <sup>4</sup>. But in their Rites there were the 'Six Institutions' <sup>5</sup>, and six multiplied, six times six, gave the numbers thirty-six and three hundred and sixty, whence the three hundred and sixty officers of the *Chou*. In our *Liki* the Six Institutions are left out, there are no three hundred and sixty officers, and no mention is made of the son of Heaven. When were the rites of the son of Heaven abolished, perhaps at the downfall of the *Ch'in* dynasty ?

Under the reign of *Hsüan Ti*, a woman in *Ho-nei* demolishing an old house, found one chapter of the lost *Liki*. Which chapter was it among the sixty ?

*Kao Tsu* charged *Shu Sun T'ung* <sup>6</sup> with the edition of the different parts of the *Yi Li*. Where were the sixteen chapters previous to their new edition <sup>7</sup> ? The *Yi Li* appears in sixteen chapters, which escaped the fire of *Ch'in*. How many chapters were there after the *Ch'in* period <sup>8</sup> ?

Let me ask the students of the *Shiking* under which ruler it was composed. They are sure to reply that the *Shiking* was composed at the decline of the *Chou* dynasty, to wit in the time of King *K'ang* <sup>9</sup>. The virtue of

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<sup>1</sup> The answers to all these questions are to be found in Vol. I, p. 447 seq.

<sup>2</sup> *Ch'ao T'so*, cf. Vol. I, p. 450.

<sup>3</sup> The double question is indicated by the two finals .... [] .... [], a mode of expression not seldom used in the *Lun-hêng*.

<sup>4</sup> This problem is ventilated in Vol. I, p. 455.

<sup>5</sup> *Loc. cit.* Note 4.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 380, Note 5.

<sup>7</sup> According to *Wylie, Notes* p. 5 they were concealed in the house of *Confucius*.

<sup>8</sup> The Catalogue in the *Han-shu* mentions seventeen chapters. Cf. *Legge, Classics* Vol. XXVII, Introduction p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> 1078-1053 B. C.

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the king being wanting in the houses of his subjects, and the great officers being remiss in their remonstrances, the *Shiking* was produced. But the grandeur of *Wên Wang* and *Wu Wang* was still venerated under *Ch'êng*<sup>1</sup> and *K'ang*, and the latter's age was not yet degenerate<sup>2</sup>; why did the *Shiking* appear then<sup>3</sup>?

p2.080 The *Chou* dynasty had more than one king, how do we know that it must just have been *K'ang Wang*? The two dynasties have both degenerated towards their close, why then was not the *Shiking* composed, when the ruin of the *Hsia* and *Yin* dynasties was drawing near?

The *Shuking* says, [The *Shiking* is the expression of earnest thoughts, and songs are the chanting of these expressions]<sup>4</sup>, consequently at that time there must already have been a *Shiking*. They maintain, however, that it came down from the *Chou*, and that its origin goes back to that time<sup>5</sup>.

Of old they collected the Odes, which were committed to writing. To-day we have no book of Odes, but how do we know whether at the burning of the Five Canons by *Ch'in* no special regard was shown for the *Shiking* alone<sup>6</sup>?

There is a question for the students of the *Ch'un-ch'iu*: In the time of which king of the *Chou* dynasty did *Confucius* write the 'Spring and Autumn'? After his return from *Wei* to *Lu*, he edited the music and wrote the *Ch'un-ch'iu*. His return from *Wei* to *Lu* falls in the reign of Duke *Ai*<sup>7</sup>. But, when he

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<sup>1</sup> *Ch'êng Wang*, 1115-1079 B. C., succeeded *Wu Wang*, 1122-1116.

<sup>2</sup> Both were wise and virtuous rulers.

<sup>3</sup> *Legge* holds that the *Shiking* is a fragment of various collections of odes made during the early reigns of the kings of *Chou*. The oldest pieces were composed during the *Shang* dynasty, the youngest go down to the 6th cent. B. C. (*Legge, Classics Vol. IV Part I, Prolegomena pp. 27 and 82 seq.*)

<sup>4</sup> *Shuking* Part II, Book I, 24 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 48](#)) [[Couvreur](#)]. *Legge* takes [] to mean 'poetry' and accordingly translates, 'Poetry is the expression of earnest thought; singing is the prolonged utterance of that expression'.

<sup>5</sup> *Wang Ch'ung's* rendering [] by *Shiking* is very doubtful, and his surmise that the *Shiking* existed already at *Shun's* time very precarious.

<sup>6</sup> Something seems to be wrong in the text here, perhaps we should read 'we have a book of Odes', for in *Wang Ch'ung's* time there were several editions. The Odes were nearly all recovered in the *Han* time, having been preserved in the memory of the scholars more than the other Classics.

<sup>7</sup> 493-466 B. C. *Confucius* returned to *Lu* in 484 after having passed five to six years in *Wei* without taking office. What he did during this time, and how he was treated by the reigning duke we do not know. There is a blank in his history just at this time. Cf.

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left *Wei*, who was its ruler <sup>1</sup> and in what manner did he treat *Confucius*, that he returned to *Lu* and composed the *Ch'un-ch'iu* ?

*Confucius* copied the chronicle <sup>2</sup> and made of it the *Ch'un-ch'iu*. Was *Ch'un-ch'iu* the original name of the chronicle <sup>3</sup>, or did it <sup>p2.081</sup> become a Classic by the revision, and then form part of the *Ch'un-ch'iu* ?

The jurists <sup>4</sup> might likewise ask the literati, who made the *Nine Statutes* <sup>5</sup>. They having heard of the legislation of *Kao Yao*, will certainly reply *Kao Yao*, but the others will object that *Kao Yao* lived under *Yü*, and that *Yü's* punishments were five <sup>6</sup>, which, however, are not contained in our law. They might perhaps say *Hsiao Ho*, only to be met with the rejoinder that *Hsiao Ho* was a contemporary of *Kao Tsu* <sup>7</sup>. Under the régime of *Hsiao Wên Ti* <sup>8</sup> a superintendent of the public granary in *Ch'i*, *Shun Yü Tê* had committed a fault and was summoned to appear in *Ch'ang-an*. His daughter, *T'i Jung* <sup>9</sup>, sent a petition to the emperor in behalf of her father, pointing out that, after suffering corporal punishment <sup>10</sup> there was no redress. *Wên Ti* was touched by her words and abolished corporal punishments <sup>11</sup>.

Now in our *Nine Statutes* we have symbolical <sup>1</sup>, but not corporal punishments. *Wên Ti* lived later than *Hsiao Ho*, and we know that then corporal punishments were still in vogue. *Hsiao Ho* in his legislation restored corporal punishments ; are we entitled then to assume that the *Nine Statutes*

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*Legge, Classics* Vol. I, Prolegomena p. 83.

<sup>1</sup> Duke *Ch'u*, 492-481 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> The chronicle of *Lu*.

<sup>3</sup> It was the name of the chronicle of *Lu* before *Confucius* edited it. See Vol. I, p. 457 and *Legge, Classics* Vol. V, Part I, Prolegomena p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 62, Note 3.

<sup>5</sup> The 'Nine Statutes' forming the Penal Code of the *Han* dynasty.

<sup>6</sup> Branding, cutting off the nose, cutting off the feet, castration, and execution.

<sup>7</sup> *Hsiao Ho* assisted *Liu Pang*, the later *Han Kao Tsu*, in his struggle for the throne. He also drew up a Penal Code for the *Ch'ien Han* dynasty. Died B. C. 193. Cf. *Giles, Bibl. Dict.* No. 702.

<sup>8</sup> B. C. 179-157.

<sup>9</sup> *Shun Yü Tê* had no sons, but five daughters.

<sup>10</sup> *Viz.* branding, cutting off the nose, and cutting off the feet.

<sup>11</sup> This episode is told with all the details in the *Shi-chi* chap. 10, p. 12v ([Chavannes, \*Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 474\*](#)), and in the *Han-shu* chap. 23, p. 12v., where the officer is called *Shun Yü Yi*.

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are the work of *Hsiao Ho* <sup>2</sup> ?

Of old [there were three hundred rules of ceremony, and three thousand rules of demeanour] <sup>3</sup>. Of penalties there were likewise p2.082 three hundred, and three thousand minor paragraphs. Such rules as were separated from the ceremonies were added to the penalties, and what was excluded from the former was incorporated into the latter. Therefore both were of equal number. Our Ritual has sixteen sections, and the laws of *Hsiao Ho* have nine sections ; how does this discrepancy come in ?

All the chapters of the Five Canons have headings referring to the subjects treated for the sake of distinction. Only the Ritual and the Penal Code are without such headings. A Ritual with headings is considered disfigured, and a Code spurious. What is the reason of this ?

In short, if we inquire of the scholars the meaning of old and modern institutions, they are at pains how to distinguish between the names, and if we question them on things concerning their Classics, they are no less ignorant. How can their indolence be held to be the proper method of teaching ? Their horizon is rather limited ; this we must reproach them with.

The officials pretend that they know official business and understand their books and registers. An inquirer would ask whether, in order to understand all these matters, it was not requisite thoroughly to grasp their principles and completely comprehend their meaning. In this respect the officials would prove quite incompetent.

Let me ask : In olden days the feudal barons were entrusted with the administration of special territories, now prefects and magistrates are

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Chavannes loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> We read in the *Han-shu loc. cit.* p. 11r. that under the *Chou* dynasty there were nine kinds of punishments, the five of *Yü* and in addition : banishment, fining, whipping, and flogging, and that the *Ch'in* dynasty was conspicuous by its cruelty. *Han Kao Tsu* first hoped to get on with three statutes providing capital punishment for murder, and talion for bodily injury and theft. These punishments proving insufficient, *Hsiao Ho* on the basis of the Penal Code of the *Ch'in* dynasty drew up the Nine Statutes in question.

<sup>3</sup> [Chung Yung chap. XXVII, 3.](#)

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appointed. What does that mean <sup>1</sup> ?

In ancient times there was the joined field system, people having to cultivate one field for the community. Now land taxes are levied in grain and grass. What does that signify <sup>2</sup> ?

People are expected continually to exercise the same profession. On what is based the monthly turn <sup>3</sup> ?

p2.083 With the twenty-third year *corvées* <sup>4</sup> begin, from the fifteenth year the land tax is to be paid, and from the seventh the poll-tax. Why was the twenty-third year chosen ?

Under which ruler was introduced the sacrifice before the winter solstice ? Wherefore have been established the offerings to the Gate, the Door, the Well, and the Hearth ? And wherefore are the Spirits of the Land and Grain <sup>5</sup>, *Shên Nung*, and the *Ling* Star sacrificed to <sup>6</sup> ?

Why is sickness expelled at the close of the year <sup>7</sup> ? What does it mean that they set up a human figure of peach wood at the door, and for what purpose do they suspend cords of reeds over the entrance, and paint tigers on the door-screens <sup>8</sup> ? What is the idea of those who on the walls of the porches paint a hero, who is to quell fire ?

To what do the six feet of a pace, and the six inches of a bonnet correspond ?

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<sup>1</sup> Feudality was abolished by the *Ch'in* dynasty, and the feudal lords replaced by functionaries.

<sup>2</sup> The joined field system fell into desuetude in the *Chou* time already, when land taxes were introduced.

<sup>3</sup> This refers to the obligatory military service during the *Chou* epoch, which lasted one month every year. After one month of service it was other people's turn to serve.

<sup>4</sup> I suppose that [] should be written, for *ju* gives no sense. The *corvées*, especially military service, lasted from the 23rd to the 56th year under the *Han* dynasty. Cf. my paper '*Das chinesische Finanz- und Steuerwesen*' in the *Mitt. d. Sem. f. Orient. Sprachen* Vol. III, 1900, p. 187.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 510.

<sup>6</sup> See Vol. I, p. 520.

<sup>7</sup> See Vol. I, p. 534.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 243. The custom of painting tigers on the door-screens to frighten away demons is practised to the present day. *Vid. De Groot, Fêtes annuelles d'Émoui* Vol. II, p. 608.

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If there is a commanding officer, and a chancellor, but no assisting under-secretary of State <sup>1</sup>, which rule then obtains ?

Two prefects corresponding together use the phrase : Your servant ventures to state ; two district magistrates do not say so. How is this to be explained ? When a prefect has to address the two *fu* <sup>2</sup>, he says that he ventures to say, whereas corresponding with the minister of works he uses the expression 'to report'. What style is that ?

In what manner are the eight degrees of nobility <sup>3</sup> conferred upon the people ? What is the meaning of the titles : *tsan-niao* and *shang-tsao* <sup>4</sup> ?

p2.084 Extraordinary merits of officials are termed *fa-yüeh*. What does the expression : *chi-mo* mean ?

At the age of seventy, old people are presented with a jade staff <sup>5</sup>. How did this custom arise ? What sort of sticks are those with a pigeon, but not with another bird, at one end ? If the pigeon is considered auspicious, why do they not give a pigeon, but a pigeon-staff, and not a staff with another bird <sup>6</sup> ?

When the water in the clepsydra has sunk so far, the drum is sounded up

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<sup>1</sup> The meaning of very concise sentence is very doubtful.

<sup>2</sup> A designation for the minister of revenue and the minister of works together.

<sup>3</sup> They seem to have been granted for military achievements during the *Han* time (*P'ien-tse-lei-pien*).

<sup>4</sup> [], [] are two of the twenty ranks of officials in vogue during the *Ch'in* and *Han* dynasties. *Tsan-niao* literally means a horse adorned with a silken harness. The officers of this rank were entitled to ride such horses. The original meaning of *shang-tsao* is not clear (Cf. [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. II, pp. 528, 529](#)).

<sup>5</sup> The staves which in the *Chou* dynasty were presented to old men by order of the emperor, were called 'imperial staves' ([Le Tscheou-li par Ed. Biot Vol. II, p. 394](#)).

<sup>6</sup> According to the *Hou Han-shu* in mid-autumn all the old men of seventy years received a 'jade staff', one foot long, adorned with a pigeon at one end, implying the wish that they might eat their food with the same ease as pigeons do. The *Fêng-su-t'ung* assigns another reason for this old custom : *Han Kao Tsu*, pursued by his adversary *Hsiang Yü*, concealed himself in the rushes. Pigeons cooing above him, his pursuers did not think that a man was hidden there, and he escaped. After his accession, he had pigeon staves made in remembrance of this adventure to support the old. (*Pei-wên-yün-fu* chap. 52). A picture of the handle of such a 'pigeon-staff', taken from the *Hsi ch'ing ku chien*, will be found in *B. Laufer's* paper, *The Bird Chariot in China and Europe*, reprinted from the Boas Anniversary Volume, 1906, p. 419. The entry in *Giles Dict.* No. 2267 to the effect that the figure of a pigeon was engraved on the staff, should be rectified.

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to five times. For what reason <sup>1</sup> ?

The day is divided into sixty parts.

Officers dress in black, but within the palace gates they wear red single garments. Wherefore this nice distinction ?

Dresses are tightened round the waist. On the right side one carries the sword of honour in the girdle, and on the left, the blade for fighting. Who established this custom ?

p2.085 Shoes are curved like a hook, and what are the bonnets on the head like ? <sup>2</sup>

Officials live in the suburbs, and going out, ride in a carriage. Which emperor, who was in the habit of drawing up documents, first built suburbs ? And which artisan invented carriages ? Which was the place for breeding horses ? Which ruler invented the art of writing ?

It is difficult to know, who first erected suburbs, and where horses were bred, for it is too far away. The inventors of carriages and writing are easy to be known and, to be sure, people will reply to our question by saying that *T'sang Hsieh* invented writing, and that *Hsi Chung* constructed the first carriage. But if we go on to inquire what prompted *T'sang Hsieh* to make his invention, and whence *Hsi Chung* got the impulse to build a cart, they again do not know it <sup>3</sup>.

The officials ignore what they ought to know, and are to be blamed for not extending their learning. The scholars do not study ancient and modern

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<sup>1</sup> The drum is beaten to mark the five night-watches every two hours from 7 p.m. to 5 a.m., and from ancient times the hours are determined by the water-clock. It was in use in the *Chou* epoch, and a special officer had charge of the clepsydra ([Le Tscheou-li Vol. II, p. 201](#)). For day and night a stalk was marked with a hundred divisions, of which about 58 would have to be allotted to day-time and 42 to night. *Wang Ch'ung* says that day has 60 divisions. In the *Han* time 48 different stalks, corresponding to the varying lengths of day and night, were used. In 5 B. C. one hundred and twenty divisions were introduced for day and night, of which 60 would be allotted to each at the equinoxes.

<sup>2</sup> The *Hou Han-shu* says that in primitive times men lived in caverns and wild places, dressing in furs and covering their heads with skins. In later ages the Sages noticed that birds and beasts had horns, crests, and beards, in imitation whereof they invented bonnets and caps with ribbons. (*Kanghi's Dict.*).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 27.

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times ; how can they understand what is distant in time ? Trusting in the text of the Classics, they peruse the same paragraphs over and over again, explaining complicated expressions and elucidating crucial points. The officials again are not at home in their own sphere. They merely go by decisions, investigate matters, write letters, and take notes. In the presence of a minister they give their opinion with great volubility, but know nothing well. All their devices are superficial and inadequate. They are one-sided, unsteady, and lack thoroughness. All have their short-comings, and no reason whatever to cavil at one another.

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## CHAPTER X

### The Display of Energy

37. XIII, I. *Hsiao-li*

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p2.086 In the chapters on the Weighing of Talents <sup>1</sup> and the Valuation of Knowledge <sup>2</sup> the discussion has been limited to knowledge and learning, and we have not yet spoken of the energy of talent. All the learned possess this energy. Officials display it in the administration, and students in their studies.

Some one inquired of *Yang Tse Yün* <sup>3</sup>, whether among the wise and virtuous there were also men strong enough to carry a huge tripod, or hold a decorative flag. 'A hundred', was the reply. A hundred among the wise and virtuous were held to be fit to match those carrying a big tripod or lifting a decorative flag, for athletes of great strength are capable of carrying a tripod or holding a flag, just as scholars of great energy possess an extensive knowledge and a penetrating intellect. Enlarged views and penetration are the force of students, whereas in raising heavy loads and tearing off hard objects lies the force of strong men.

We read in the chapter *Tse-t'sai* <sup>4</sup> :

« Powerful is the king who opens the path to wisdom. He leads and reforms the people.

That means that the wise are likewise powerful in propriety and righteousness, and therefore can open the path to wisdom, guiding and reforming the people. Reforming requires propriety and rectitude, and propriety and rectitude necessitate literary abilities. Having still energy left after all exertions, one may use it for study, and this ability to study proves

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<sup>1</sup> Chap. VII.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. VIII.

<sup>3</sup> The well known philosopher. Cf. Vol. I, p. 124, Note 1.

<sup>4</sup> 'The Timber of the Tse Tree' a chapter of the *Shuking* [[Legge](#)] [[Couvreur](#)]. In our text this quotation is not to be found.

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that one possesses energy.

Somebody might ask, whether a scholar who can explain one Classic may be regarded as a man full of energy. I would reply that he may not <sup>1</sup>.

p2.087 *P'ang Shao Tu* of *Ch'ên-liu* <sup>2</sup>, whenever he recommended some scholar for an office, was in the habit of saying that the talents of Mr. So-and-So equalled those of a hundred men. The prefect being diffident of these abilities and not replying, *P'ang Shao Tu* would add that perhaps he had not said enough, and that Mr. So-and-So could vie with a million men in talent.

— You speak nonsense, my dear friend, returned the prefect angrily,

but *P'ang Shao Tu* rejoined,

— Officials do not understand a single word of a single Canon and cannot repeat one sentence spoken by a teacher. Students, however, are able to enounce a million paragraphs and phrases, is their knowledge, therefore, not equal to that of a million people ?

The prefect could give no answer.

The remark of *P'ang Shao Tu* is true, still it is not quite to the point, for the scholars may be able to repeat a million sentences, yet they pay no heed to ancient and modern history. They have a blind faith in the methods of their teachers and, though their topics be manifold, after all they do not deserve the name of profound scholars. Many events which happened before the *Yin* and *Chou* epochs have been recorded in the Six Canons, but of these the literati know nothing. Of the affairs of the *Ch'in* and *Han* time they take no notice and thereby evince a lack of zeal and energy <sup>3</sup>.

The *Chou* looked up to the Two Dynasties <sup>4</sup>, and the *Han*, to the *Chou* and *Ch'in* times. What happened after the *Chou* and *Ch'in* does not exist for the literati. The *Han* wished to learn, the scholars have not this ambition. In case

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<sup>1</sup> One Classic does not suffice.

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

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 76.

<sup>4</sup> The *Hsia* and *Shang* dynasties.

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scholars are inclined to enlarge their views, they may be called learned scholars. They have more energy than common ones and, as *P'ang Shao Tu* puts it, the talents of learned scholars are equal to those of ten million people <sup>1</sup>.

[*Tsêng Tse* said,

— The learned man may not be without breadth of mind and vigorous endurance. His burden is heavy and his course is long. Perfect virtue is the burden which he considers it is his to sustain ; is it not heavy ? Only with death does his course stop ; is it not long ?] <sup>2</sup>

p2.088 We learn from this that the scholar has to carry the burden of his conviction alone, and alone to walk the long way leading to the goal for which he is striving. His body carries a heavy burden up to his last moments, never tired and never broken, such is his single energy. The burden of *Tsêng Tse* consists in virtue, that of the scholar in learning ; the loads are dissimilar, but the weight is the same <sup>3</sup>.

A hundred-weight may be lifted by one man, but two men are incapable of moving more than 10 cwt. In the world, there are many apt to lift a hundred-weight, but very few have the force to raise 10 cwt. What the scholars carry is above 10 cwt.

When the productive power of the soil is great, plants and trees pullulate, and the crop of one acre is as much as the produce of five acres of average quality. Farmers know that the exuberant growth of grain is owing to the natural fertility of the soil, but people ignore that abundant literary productions are the upshot of extraordinary talents, and thus do not understand the real state of affairs. Now, the energy of learned scholars surpasses that of common students, and in a still higher degree that of functionaries.

Those who promote the wise and recommend the learned, are usually

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<sup>1</sup> The typical conceit of a Chinese scholar.

<sup>2</sup> Quotation from *Analects VIII, 7* [*Couvreur*].

<sup>3</sup> I do not see why a distinction is made between *Tsêng Tse* and other scholars. Was *Tsêng Tse* not learned, and are the scholars not virtuous ?

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accounted very energetic. In order to raise the wise and recommend the learned, they draw up their daily reports to the throne. Those able to write them are learned scholars, who must not necessarily be professionals. It suffices that they have a keen intellect as well as a ready pen. The memorials of *Ku Tse Yün* and *T'ang Tse Kao*<sup>1</sup> number more than a hundred, all written in a most vigorous style. They speak out what they think, conceal nothing, and are never at a loss how to express their ideas. Only men of genius can do that.

*Confucius* was the strongest man in the *Chou* epoch. He wrote the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, revised the Five Classics, and fixed the doubtful text of many an abstruse book<sup>2</sup>. The higher the mountains, the more clouds gather around them. Before the morning is over, Mt. *T'ai* has produced so much rain, that it pours down on the whole empire<sup>3</sup>. The knowledge of the wise is like those clouds and rain. p2.089 Consequently they put forth more than thousands of tablets full of letters, and must be admired for their great energy.

In praising force, people use to extol *Wu Huo*<sup>4</sup>. *Tung Chung Shu*<sup>5</sup> and *Yang Tse Yün* are the *Wu Huos* of letters. King *Wu* of *Ch'in* attempted with *Mêng Yüeh* to lift a tripod, but he could not carry it, broke a blood-vessel, and died<sup>6</sup>. When inferior scholars lay open their innermost thoughts to men like *Tung Chung Shu*, they are unable to carry the burden which they have taken, and break down, having sprung an artery.

When, in *Wang Mang's* time, the clauses of all the chapters of the Five Canons were gone through, they amounted to two hundred thousand. A gentlemen of vast learning, *Kuo Lu*, fixed the old text, during the night, and expired under his candle. His mind could not bear the strain, his arteries were broken, and his life extinguished.

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<sup>1</sup> The same as *Ku Yung* and *T'ang Lin* Vol. I, p. 469.

<sup>2</sup> This must refer to the Classics, for it is not known that *Confucius* revised other books besides.

<sup>3</sup> See Vol. I, p. 277.

<sup>4</sup> A 'Samson' of the feudal age. *Giles, Dict* No. 2334.

<sup>5</sup> A great writer. Cf. Vol. I, p. 357, Note 1.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Shi-chi* chap. 5, p. 26v. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 76](#)). The death of King *Wu* took place in B. C. 307. He was very strong himself and fond of strong men like *Mêng Yüeh*. After the king's death, the latter and all his relations were executed.

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The son of *Yen* <sup>1</sup> had already all but outrun *Confucius* in his course, when he flagged, completely shattered and exhausted. His hair turned white, and his teeth fell out. Even a person with almost perfect endowments may still break down. The strength of *Confucius* was wonderful, *Yen Yuan* could not bear the strain.

Unless talents and energy are equally balanced, knowledge does not come up to the mark. Those who perforce will rise from the rank and file up to the highest grades, come to spitting blood, swooning, and losing their consciousness, until at last their life ends.

To fill boards with five rows of characters or to write memorials of ten tablets, is a hard task for people of small talents and bad writers. How could they combine sentences to paragraphs, and write hundreds of chapters ? That requires special energy.

If the waters of streams and rivers come rushing, taking their course through the country, always flowing on and never drying up or stopping, they must have copious sources. People are aware that the long courses of rivers and streams require springs p2.090 abounding in water in the earth, but they overlook that men who write thousands of tablets have in their bosom an ever-flowing spring of ideas, and thus they are far from the truth. Looked at, the hoof of a racer does not distinguish itself from the hoof of a common horse, but no sooner does it gallop through the plain, than it becomes visible that it can run a thousand Li. The hoof of a horse and a human hand are the same after all. If those who make much of the hoof of a steed, do not call attention to the hand of a man of letters, they do not understand analogies.

A good judge of the strength of muscles, who has an eye for analogous facts, will place a man of great scientific energy in the service of the State, for a man strong in letters, assisted by a strong governor, is sure of great success through his strength, whereas, when a strong man is not assisted by another strong one, it ends in disaster. This will become evident from the following consideration :

A strong man may lift a big and ponderous thing, and a strong ox may

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<sup>1</sup> *Yen Yuan* = *Yen Hui*, the disciple of *Confucius*.

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draw a heavy cart. Such a cart ascending a hill, a strong ox must draw in front, and a strong man push behind, then it is possible to pull the vehicle over the height. If, however, the ox be feeble, and the man worn out, the heavy cart rolls back, tumbles into a ditch, upsets, and is smashed.

Learned scholars, cherishing the principles of the former kings in their hearts and harbouring the dicta of the diverse schools of thought, are hard to be pushed or pulled, even more so than a heavy cart. Should those who recommend and push them be weak and without energy, then they retire and hide in rock caverns <sup>1</sup>.

The *Yellow River* rises in the *K'un-lun*, and the *Yangtse* comes from the *Min-shan* <sup>2</sup>. The force of their currents is very great. After a heavy rainfall still greater masses of water flow down, and unless their banks were so wide, and the land so low, they would never reach the eastern sea in their course. If the banks were narrow, and the land high, a breach in a canal would cause the entire hill land to be flooded.

The knowledge of an able student bears some resemblance to this. When his learning pours out, and he does not fall in with a strong governor to introduce and recommend him, he is lost in <sup>p2.091</sup> his poor cottage, for how could he rise to the palace of the holy ruler and impart to him his views on government ?

The flame of a fire does not shine, unless it be raised. Now, here is a man whose knowledge rises as high as a peak, and whose virtue is like a mountain. In spite of his immense force, he cannot boast of it himself, and stands in need of somebody to introduce him. Should he not find such an assistant, he takes his wonderful energy and absconds in some small alley of a village for want of an opportunity to rise.

*Ao* <sup>3</sup> and *Hsia Yü* <sup>4</sup> were two men of great strength in ancient times. They

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<sup>1</sup> Scholars not finding the necessary support retire from public life to become recluses and hermits.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 23, Note 2.

<sup>3</sup> A strong man in the *Shang* dynasty.

<sup>4</sup> See Vol. I, p. 484, Note 6.

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could carry a thousand *chün* <sup>1</sup> on their bodies and with their hands tear off a horn or twist a hook, but called upon to lift themselves from the ground, they would have been unable to detach themselves from it.

Men whose bosoms are filled with wisdom and genius, deserve to be in the king's palace. They require no more than a tongue of three inches and a pencil of one foot to assert themselves. But they cannot push themselves to the front, and, if they could, not stay there. They want others to push them, and expect others to prepare a position for them. However it is rather difficult to find a suitable post for men imbued with great principles and extensive learning.

A small stone being attached to a mountain, the force of the mountain can hold it in its gravel and mounds of earth. Besides, the small stone is so light and subtle, that it can itself keep its position. As regards a big stone, however, it is not embedded in sand or earth, and the mountain cannot hold it. Placed on a precipitous cliff, it is sure to tumble down into the deep valley.

Provided that a scholar, heavy with knowledge, comes across a superior of modest endowments, there is no sand nor earth right and left to support him, and even if he is given an exalted position, his chief cannot keep him there. He shares the fate of the big stone tumbling down <sup>2</sup>.

Somebody cuts firewood on a mountain. The light brushwood can easily be tied together, but the big trees of ten spans and more <sup>p2.092</sup> neither admit of being moved by pulling nor of being pushed behind. Therefore the fuel-gatherer leaves them in the forest and returns home, collecting the small wood, which he binds together. Carrying on this argument, we must own that men of great abilities resemble trees of over ten spans in circumference. Human force cannot raise nor recommend them <sup>3</sup>, as the fuel-gatherer is incapable of pushing or dragging a huge tree.

*Confucius* was wandering about, and nowhere did he find a resting-place,

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<sup>1</sup> A *chün* in the *Han* time was equal to 30 pounds or catties.

<sup>2</sup> The chief is compared with a mountain unable to hold a big stone, the scholar : Only great men are qualified to appreciate great men and keep them in their service.

<sup>3</sup> Others may recommend them, but then their promotion is not of long duration. Ere long, they will get into conflict with their employers and abandon their posts.

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not because his sagehood was not enlightened enough, but his grand principles were too difficult to be put into practice, and nobody could make use of him. Consequently *Confucius* stood there like an enormous tree on a mountain.

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That Duke *Huan* succeeded in bringing about a confederation of the princes and re-adjusting the empire, was due to *Kuan Chung's* energy. *Kuan Chung* had this energy, and since Duke *Huan* could raise him, he may well be called a mighty monarch. *Wu* could not avail itself of *Wu Tse Hsü* <sup>1</sup>, and *Ch'u* had no employment for *Ch'u Yuan* <sup>2</sup>. The energies of these two persons were very great, but their sovereigns were unable to raise them.

After some unsuccessful efforts to raise a thing, people eventually leave it on the spot and depart, but it also happens that, out of anger, they cut it down with an axe and destroy it. This hardship was suffered by *Wu Tse Hsü* and *Ch'ü Yuan* <sup>3</sup>.

Fish in a pond mutually devour each other. Those which passing their mouths find room in them, are swallowed, but those which their mouths cannot hold, are not gulped down. Similarly *Shang Yang* thrice addressed Duke *Hsiao*, but solely his last proposal was accepted. The two former proved impracticable, and the last only was fit to be carried out. We notice that the enlightened laws of *Kuan Chung*, and the agricultural and military system of *Shang Yang* <sup>4</sup> were measures not to be taken by weak rulers.

p2.093 In the era of the Six States very clever officers went to *Ch'u*, and the *Ch'u* State became powerful <sup>5</sup>; they abandoned *Ch'i*, and its power declined. They succoured *Chao*, and *Chao* was well provided <sup>6</sup>, they turned

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

<sup>2</sup> See p. 1, Note 2.

<sup>3</sup> See Vol. I, p. 140, Note 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Vid.* Vol. I, p. 463. Notes 5 and 6.

<sup>5</sup> Such an officer was *Wu Ch'i* of *Wei*, who as chancellor organised the administration of *Ch'u*, and vanquished all her rivals.

<sup>6</sup> The *Chao* State flourished under *Fei Yi* as minister, who was put to death in B. C. 295.



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their back upon *Wei*, and *Wei* had to suffer <sup>1</sup>.

The *Han* State employed *Shên Pu Hai* <sup>2</sup> carrying out his three devices <sup>3</sup>, and for fifteen years no foe dared infest its territory. Then it dispensed with his services and did not read his books. The weapons were destroyed, the armour gone to pieces, and the State was annexed by *Ch'in*.

In the *Yin* and *Chou* epochs there was an uninterrupted series of revolutions, and one disaster followed the other. Their intention was not to do without government, but their power was too weak, and their knowledge too limited, so that the best advice was lost upon them. Thus a heavy mound of earth cannot be trampled down by one man's footsteps, nor a huge pile of stones be subverted by one man's hand. Wise officers excel by their strong sinews, and narrow-minded rulers are no match for them. If they seek each other, they pass one another like fish and quadrupeds <sup>4</sup>.

Unless a *Kan-chiang* blade <sup>5</sup> be thrust by a man, water-plants and gourds receive no injury, and unless fine bamboo arrows be shot from a cross-bow, *Lu* tissues <sup>6</sup> cannot be pierced. Not that the blade and the fine bamboo are worthless, but without a person dealing a blow or shooting, the gourd and the silk are not cut <sub>p2.094</sub> or pierced <sup>7</sup>. How could the feat of cutting a flag or piercing an armour be achieved ?

With strength sufficient to draw a bow one may not pull a powerful ballista. Provided that the force of the ballista is of five stones <sup>8</sup>, but is pulled with three, then the sinews are rent, and the bones broken without any

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<sup>1</sup> It was for this reason that King *Hui* of *Wei* in B. C. 336 summoned *Mencius* and other sages to his court.

<sup>2</sup> *Shên Pu Hai*, a native of *Loyang*, became minister under Prince *Chao* of *Han* and died in B. C. 337. He is known as *Shên Tse* and a Taoist author. The *Shi-chi* devotes some lines to him in chap. 63, which treats of *Lao Tse*, *Chuang Tse*, and *Han Fei Tse*.

<sup>3</sup> It is not clear which these three devices were ; the *P'ien-tse lei pien* quotes this passage, the *Pei-wên-yün-fu* refers to *Huai Nan Tse*. *Shên Pu Hai* reorganised the administration, sought the friendship of other States, strengthened the military power of *Han*, and reformed the criminal law.

<sup>4</sup> Living in different elements, they cannot unite or have any intercourse.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Vol. I. p. 504, Note 1.

<sup>6</sup> Very soft things. The tissues of *Lu* in *Shantung* must have been exceptionally fine.

<sup>7</sup> There must be some force, in default of which the best weapons are useless.

<sup>8</sup> See Vol. I, p. 498, Note 1.

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result. The strength not sufficing for bending a strong bow, a catastrophe ensues such as breaking the spine. Those who are not intelligent enough to employ wise men, themselves injure their virtue and lose their good name. Yet most critics do not admit that talents may be too great and principles too high for a sovereign to use them, and hold that the unworthy only do not come to the front. He that knows how to push his way, does not make opposition, when his connection with the sovereign ceases, and he that recommends himself, does not resent the low price offered him.

All things used by man require somebody to use them, when their inherent value comes to light. That which drives a chisel into the wood are the blows of the hammer, and a spade can dig up the earth, if pressed down by the plant of the foot. All sharp-edged tools can cut and carve, provided there is a hand to grasp, and a force to push and pull them.

When *Han Hsin* <sup>1</sup> left *Ch'u* and went to *Han*, the peace of *Hsiang Yü* <sup>2</sup> was gone. *Kao Tsu* knew how to keep him and profit by his excellence, putting him in the right place. He could appreciate his energy and discern his merits.

*Fan Li* <sup>3</sup> earned fame by his assaults on cities and open battles, but when *Kao Tsu* made appointments, he gave the first to *Hsiao Ho* <sup>4</sup>. He likened *Hsiao Ho* unto a hunter, and *Fan Li* unto a greyhound, for *Hsiao Ho* was quietly seated, while *Fan Li* was running to and fro. The first appointment was not bestowed on that bustling person, but on him that was quietly sitting down. *Hsiao Ho's* forte was his acuteness, whereas *Fan Li* won his laurels by his energy. Therefore *Hsiao Ho* could send him on a mission to *Ch'in* to collect official documents. All the other high p2.095 officers were amassing gold, and *Hsiao Ho* alone collected books. Sitting in his chair, he learned to know the conditions of *Ch'in*, and thus was enabled to lay his plans for its ruin. All the other dignitaries were hurrying about, and *Hsiao Ho* urged them on.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 148, Note 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Hsiang Yü*, the rival of *Han Kao Tsu*, was omnipotent in the *Ch'u* State.

<sup>3</sup> Better known under the name of *Fan K'uai*, originally a dog-butcher, who was raised to high honours by *Han Kao Tsu*.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 81, Note 10.

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In this way *Shu Sun T'ung*<sup>1</sup> fixed the ceremonies, and *Kao Tsu* was honoured thereby. *Hsiao Ho* drafted the penal code, and the house of *Han* became pacified<sup>2</sup>. By rites and laws greater fame is to be won than on the battle-field, and cutting the heads of the enemies off, is not as meritorious as honouring the sovereign.

In ploughing the weeds, and sowing grain lies the force of peasants, in bold attacks and battles, that of soldiers, in scaffolding and hewing, that of artisans, in making books and stitching registers, that of official clerks, in propounding the doctrine and discoursing on government, that of learned scholars. Every living person possesses some faculty, but some of these abilities are highly estimable, some mean. *Confucius* could lift the bar of the north-gate, but did not boast of this strength<sup>3</sup>, being well aware that the force of muscles and bones in general esteem falls short of that of benevolence and rectitude.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 380, Note 5.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 81, Note 10.

<sup>3</sup> Both *Lieh Tse* VIII, 6r. [[Wieger](#), p. 189] and [Huai Nan Tse XII, 4r.](#) relate this same fact in almost identical words, but they speak of the gate of the capital. The *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* also has a reference to it.

## CHAPTER XI

### On Intelligence 38. XIII, II. *Pieh-t'ung*

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p2.096 In the houses of the wealthy, a space of ten feet serves as the inner apartment, and in this room are boxes and trunks all filled with lustres and other silk fabrics <sup>1</sup>. The poor likewise use a space of ten feet as inner apartment, but it is completely empty, merely consisting of four bare walls, whence they are called poor. The intelligent are like the wealthy, the unintelligent like the poor. Both are provided with a body seven feet high, but whereas the intelligent harbour the words of all the philosophers in their bosoms, the hearts of the unintelligent are empty, for they have never read a single tablet, like the interior of poor people, four bare walls.

In the general appreciation, the poor and the rich are not equal, and thus the sharp and the blunt-witted cannot be placed on a level. However the world holds the rich in affectionate esteem, and does not honour the clear-headed, it feels ashamed of the poor, and does not despise the unwise ; a treatment not warranted by the principles of analogy. As for the deference shown to rich people, they live in luxury because of their wealth, and therefore are held in respect. But rich men are not like scholars, and scholars fall short of strong-minded individuals.

The latter have more than ten chests crammed full of letters : the words of the sages, the utterances of worthies, as far back as *Huang Ti*, and down to the *Ch'in* and *Han*, methods of government, and for increasing the national wealth, criticisms on the age, and strictures on low class people, all is there. A man with a bright intellect, and large views has a better claim on our consideration, I should say, than lustres and silk stuffs.

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<sup>1</sup> Even to-day the Chinese do not use their silks and curios for decorating their poorly furnished rooms, but keep their treasures in trunks and boxes, whence they are seldom removed, to be shown to some good friend.

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*Hsiao Ho*<sup>1</sup> went to *Ch'in* to collect official papers, and it was by the force of these documents that the *Han* could sway the p2.097 Nine Provinces<sup>2</sup>. With documents they extended their rule over the entire empire, and how much greater is the wealth of empires than that of private persons ?

A man whose eyes cannot see green and yellow, is called blind. If his ears cannot hear the first and second notes, he is deaf, and if his nose has no perception of perfumes and stench, he is without the sense of smell<sup>3</sup>. Any one without the sense of smell deaf, or blind is not a perfect man. Now a person without a vast knowledge, ignorant of past and present, not conversant with categories, insensible of right and wrong, is like a blind or deaf man, or one without the olfactory senses. Even scholars who do not study must be considered beclouded, and fancy common people never reading a book and not knowing truth and untruth. Theirs is the height of narrow-mindedness. They are like dummies made of clay or wood, which have ears and eyes quite complete, and yet are insensible.

Wading through shallow water, people find crabs, in greater depth they discover fish and turtles, and in the deepest recesses they fall in with water snakes and dragons. As the steps taken are different, so the animals met with vary. The same rule applies to those who make more or less progress in science. Those remaining on the surface read stories and pleasant books, those entering deeper come to the school of the Sage, where they learn to know works of profound wisdom. The farther they penetrate into the doctrine, the more insight they acquire.

On a journey, people always want to visit the capital, because it has so many sights worth seeing, and in the capital they desire to see the market, where so many rare things are exposed for sale. The dicta of all the thinkers of the divers schools and the history of ancient and modern times are likewise very wonderful, even more so than the capital with its big market place. By a visit to the capital, the traveller's intention is accomplished, and the sight of

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> The *Han* took over the bulk of the administration of the *Ch'in* dynasty, for which purpose *Hsiao Ho* collected their official papers.

<sup>3</sup> [ ] *yung*. *Kanghi* quotes this passage and suggests that this character may be a variant of [ ] 'carbuncles' or extuberances *viz.* in the nose.

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the big market satisfies his desires. How much more must this be true of a journey into the realms of thought and science ?

Big rivers do not dry up in times of drought owing to their many tributaries. Pools, on the other hand, show the mud already, p2.098 when it has not rained for several days, because they have no affluents. The big rivers are connected, and the small ones linked together, so they flow eastward into the ocean <sup>1</sup>. Hence the greatness of the ocean. Unless the ocean were in connexion with all the rivers, it could not be termed immense. A man harbouring the sayings of all the philosophers is like the ocean receiving the water of all the rivers. If he is not deemed great, then the ocean must be declared to be smaller than the rivers likewise. That the ocean exceeds all the rivers in size is generally known by men, but they cannot comprehend that the intelligent are brighter than the unintelligent.

Moisture trickling down becomes salt, a taste produced by water. The water of the eastern ocean is briny and extends to a great distance. In *Hsi-chou* <sup>2</sup> there are salt-wells, which are very deep. Can a person have the benefit of a salt-well that either wishes to consume salt without possessing a well, or bores a well, but does not find a spring ? He who has no commerce with sages and wise men can hardly expect to win a name above all others.

The jurists are in the habit of neglecting practical life, and, when called upon, are unable to give judgment in a case. The students of clauses and paragraphs do not study old and modern literature, and are unfit thoroughly to argue a point.

Some people contend that to comment upon one Classic is the right thing <sup>3</sup>, for what is the use of extensive knowledge ? The school of *Confucius* takes up all the Five Canons, and no one but has mastered them all is accounted almost perfect. *Yen Yuan* said that the master extensively filled his

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<sup>1</sup> In China of course.

<sup>2</sup> According to the *T'ai-p'ing yü-lan* chap. 165 *Hsi-chou* would be identical with *Kao-ch'ang* or *Karakhodjo* in Turkestan. Rock-salt is mentioned as a produce of this country, brought as tribute to China under the *Liang* dynasty (*T'ai-p'ing yü-lan* chap. 865, p. 6r.). But perhaps *Wang Ch'ung* refers to a *Hsi-chou* in *Szechuan* (*Playfair* No. 2619, 4°), which province was famous for its salt-wells already in the *Han* time. See *T'ai-p'ing yü-lan* chap. 189, p. 1v., where a passage from the *Han-shu* is quoted.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 75, Note 3.

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mind with learning <sup>1</sup>. Only men of exceptional knowledge are worthy the name of well-read scholars, for could the term 'extensively' used by *Yen Yuan* refer to one single Classic only ?

p2.099 I cannot embrace all the Five Canons in my studies, nor can I trouble myself with all sorts of things. Reposing confidence in one doctrine, I do not like to enlarge my views. I am not clever enough to be well acquainted with antique lore or familiar with modern times, but am so stupid, that I cherish my stupidity and do not wish to learn. Thus any one who is satisfied with one Classic only should speak.

We open the door to let the sunlight in, and since this does not suffice to illuminate all the dark places, we pierce the walls to make windows and sky-holes, and thus add to the light penetrating through the door. The explanation of one Classic is like the light of the sun, the records used to assist it, are the windows and sky-holes. The words of the philosophers enlighten us even in a higher degree than windows and sky-holes afford a passage to the sunshine. As sunshine lights the interior of a room, so scientific researches enlighten the heart.

To open the door and let the light in, and to sit in a raised hall, or even to ascend a balcony to have a look at the surrounding buildings, is what people like to do. To shut the door and sit in obscurity, turned towards a pitch dark room, or to dig a mine and, lying on the back, work in the vicinity of the yellow springs <sup>2</sup>, is distasteful to everybody. They who shut their hearts and close their minds, never viewing things from a higher standpoint, are like dead men.

In the time of the emperor *Hsiao Wu Ti* <sup>3</sup>, the king of *Yen, Tan*, staying in the *Ming-kuang* palace wished to go to his sleeping apartments, but all the three hundred doors were tightly closed. He ordered twenty of his attendants to open them, but they did not succeed. Subsequently *Tan* became involved in an insurrection and committed suicide. The closing of the doors was a presage of the death of King *Tan* of *Yen*. Dying is a calamitous event, hence

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects IX, 10](#) [Couvreur].

<sup>2</sup> The Styx of the Chinese.

<sup>3</sup> B. C.140-87.

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the closing was referred to it.

*Ch'ing Fêng* of *Ch'i* was a dullard. When the high officers of six States at a meeting recited the Odes, he did not understand them <sup>1</sup>. Later on a catastrophe was brought about by *Ling* of *Ch'u* <sup>2</sup>. p2.100 He who does not let in the light of science is a corpse still walking about.

When a State has ceased to exist, its altar of the land is roofed above and fenced in below, to indicate that its connexion with Heaven and Earth has been interrupted <sup>3</sup>. The *Chou* took care lest in spring and autumn such altars should be treated with disrespect. People should read classical and profane books in the same manner as the altars of the land must be in communication with the fluids of Heaven and Earth. Those who do not study are like persons disregarding the altars of the land. The communication with the air being checked, even the strongest man dies, and luxuriant plants wither.

Eatable things in the eastern sea are manifold on account of its vastness. The procreative power of the water being exuberant, a great variety of very strange things is produced. Thus a great man has many treasures, enshrined in his bosom : great talents and great knowledge, and there are no principles or methods but he embraces them. Students with similar views and men of great learning all come to him, because he understands the profound meaning of the Classics and knows so many words of teachers. Things of the past and the present time and utterances of various philosophers he remembers a great many, and is not merely a man of learning of a certain school. No one can know the taste of sweet wine, if he has not purchased it, and merely used sugar <sup>4</sup>.

Peasants producing excellent grain in abundance are looked upon as

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<sup>1</sup> This fact is mentioned in the *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Hsiang* 27th and 28th year (*Legge, Classics Vol. V, Part II, pp. 532 and 542*) [[Couvreur](#), § 1 ; [Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> King *Ling* of *Ch'u* executed *Ch'ing Fêng*, who had fled to *Wu* in B. C. 537. See *Ch'un-ch'iu*, Duke *Chao*, 4th year [[Couvreur](#), § 5]. According to the *Tso-chuan* King *Ling* reproached *Ch'ing Fêng* with having murdered his ruler. So his ignorance was not the direct cause of his death.

<sup>3</sup> This rule is set forth in the *Liki*, *Chiao-t'ê-shêng* (*Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 425*) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>4</sup> The meaning is somewhat obscure. I take it to be that it is not sufficient to sugar common wine to have the taste of sweet wine, which is a special quality. Sugar symbolises the learning of one school, sweet wine, that of all combined.



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superior husbandmen, and those whose crops are small, as inferior. The talents of men of letters correspond to the faculties of husbandmen. Those able to produce plenty of grain are called superior husbandmen, and the others apt to collect a vast amount of knowledge, are superior scholars. To praise the ox for carrying a heavy burden, and not to belaud the swiftness of the horse, to extol the hand, and revile the foot, who would think that reasonable ?

p2.101 Unless a district road communicates with the country, or a country road leads to town, a traveller on horseback or in a boat would not take it. Unless veins and arteries are in connexion, a man contracts a dangerous disease, for the cessation of this connexion is a very bad thing, a misfortune with the worst consequences. As robbers have their haunts in rank grass, wicked thoughts grow in unprincipled hearts <sup>1</sup>. Unprincipled means devoid of maxims and principles <sup>2</sup>.

A physician qualified to cure one disease is considered clever, and, if he can treat a hundred maladies, he is called excellent. Such an excellent physician gives prescriptions for a hundred diseases, and heals the ailments of a hundred patients. A genius imbued with the teachings of the divers schools of thought can settle the quarrels of a hundred clans. How could the numerous prescriptions of a *Pien Ch'io* be put on a par with the single ability of a clever physician ?

*Tse Kung* said,

[— If one do not find the door and enter by it, he cannot see the ancestral temple with its beauties, nor all the officers in their rich array.] <sup>3</sup>

The ancestral temple and all the officers here serve to illustrate the teachings of *Confucius*. They are so excellent, that they may be compared with the

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<sup>1</sup> Literally 'no road'.

<sup>2</sup> It is impossible to bring out the full meaning of this paragraph in English. In Chinese the principal words pointed out in Notes 1-3 have all a double meaning : to *communicate*, to *connect*, a *road* on one side and on the other : *intelligent*, *clever*, *principle*. The general purport is that intelligence, and good principles cannot be dispensed with just as good roads and communications are necessary.

<sup>3</sup> [Analects XIX, 23 \[Couvreur\]](#) (*Legge, Classics* Vol. I, p. 347).

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ancestral temple, and so numerous, that they bear resemblance to the hosts of all the officers. Therefore a man of comprehensive information and deep erudition is a follower of *Confucius*.

The land of the *Yin* and *Chou* dynasties extended as far as 5 000 Li, and even the wild and fortified dependencies were governed with the utmost care. Over 10 000 Li fell under the dominion of the vast territory of the house of *Han*, and in the fortified and wild tracts, people were wearing wide state-robles and broad girdles <sup>1</sup>. Without exceptional virtue nobody can be affectionately solicitous for distant countries, and in default of great talents one cannot <sub>p2.102</sub> enlarge one's views. Therefore men of great experience and deep erudition are not taxed with obtuseness, and those well versed in all the sciences are not charged with narrowness of mind.

People like to see paintings. The subjects reproduced in these pictures are usually men of ancient times. But would it not be better to be informed of the doings and sayings of these men than to contemplate their faces? Painted upon the bare wall <sup>2</sup>, their shapes and figures are there, the reason why they do not act as incentives, is that people do not perceive their words or deeds. The sentiments left by the old sages shine forth from the bamboos and silks, where they are written, which means more than mere paintings on walls.

If an empty vessel in the kitchen be gilt or silvered and, having nothing in it, be placed before a hungry person, he would not even cast a look at it. But suppose that dainty food and savory viands be served in an earthen pot, people would forthwith turn to it. The delicious and sweet words of old sages are more than food in vessels. The benefit derived from study is not merely that of eating. Thus the hungry do not care for empty vessels without contents, and the government does not employ men with empty heads without thoughts.

When swordsmen fight together, he who possesses the knowledge of the girl of *Yüeh* <sup>3</sup> in *Ch'ü-ch'êng* <sup>1</sup> gains the victory. Two adversaries meeting,

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<sup>1</sup> Even the natives of the colonies had assumed Chinese dress and Chinese civilisation.

<sup>2</sup> These must have been paintings in fresco, perhaps of a similar kind as those recently unearthed in *Turkestan*.

<sup>3</sup> A virgin living in the 'southern forest', skilled in swordplay and recommended to the

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one is cleverer than the other, and the one possessing greater ability becomes victor. The systems of *Confucius* and *Mê Ti*, and the books of worthies and sages are of greater value than the accomplishments of the girl of *Yüeh* in *Ch'ü-ch'êng*, and to improve human transactions and increase human knowledge, is more than a mere device to win in a contest. By the art of swordplay one acquires the repute of being ever victorious, and by virtue of the books of worthies and sages, one becomes exalted.

When the officers of the district cities are summoned before their superiors to be questioned on administrative reforms, the intelligent and well informed will communicate their experiences, and provided that the high officers are impressed thereby, the <sub>p2.103</sub> administration can be reformed and learning, cultivated. When the doings and sayings of worthies and sages, handed down on bamboo and silk, transform the heart and enlighten the mind, the result is more momentous than the replies of the district officers on the questions addressed to them.

*Yü* and *Yi* together regulated the Great Flood ; *Yü* took care of the water, whereas *Yi* recorded all strange things. The border mountains beyond the seas were not held to be too far to go there, and from what they had heard and seen they composed the 'Mountain and Sea Classic' <sup>2</sup>. If *Yü* and *Yi* had not travelled so far, the *Shan-hai-king* would not have been written. Its production testifies to the great multitude of things seen by them. *Tung Chung Shu* beheld the *Chung-ch'ang* bird, and *Liu Tse Chêng* knew the body of *Erh Fu*. Both had read the *Shan-hai-king*, and therefore could utter themselves on these two things. Had *Yü* and *Yi* not reached those distant lands, they could not have edited the *Shan-hai-king*, and without reading this book *Tung Chung Shu* and *Liu Tse Chêng* would not have been in a condition to verify the two doubtful questions.

A fruit fell down and sank into the steps leading up to a terrace (?). *Tse*

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king of *Yüeh* by *Fan Li* (5th cent. B. C.). She became the instructor of the king's best soldiers. I cannot explain why a place in *Shantung* is coupled with her name here. Was she invited there too ?

<sup>1</sup> A place in Shantung.

<sup>2</sup> This book has most likely not the age ascribed to it by Chinese critics and is not older than the 4th cent. B. C.

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*Ch'an*, with his great knowledge of things, could discourse on it. When a dragon made its appearance in the suburbs of *Chiang* <sup>1</sup>, *T'sai Mê* <sup>2</sup> knew how to account for it, so that the necessary precautions could be taken.

When a father or an elder brother on the point of death, more than a thousand Li distant from home, leave a testament with admonitions, dutiful sons and brothers are eager to read it, and never will dismiss it from their affectionate thoughts. Such is their solicitude in honouring a parent, and paying respect to an elder. Undutiful sons slight and disregard a testament, and do not care to examine its contents. The scripts of old sages and former worthies, left to posterity, are of much greater importance still than documents left by a father or a brother. Some read these writings and make abstracts of them, others throw them away and do not copy them. Even a man from the street could tell us, which of the two courses p2.104 is preferable, and those whose business it is to distinguish between right and wrong, should not be fit to draw the line ?

When *Confucius* was taken ill, *Shang Ch'ü* <sup>3</sup> divined that at noon his time would come. *Confucius* said,

— Bring me a book, for what will be the matter, when it is noon ?

So fervent was the Sage's love of study, that it did not even cease at the point of death. His thoughts were in the Classics, and he did not renounce his principles, because he was near his end. Therefore it is not without reason that he is regarded as the Sage for a hundred generations, who himself took pattern by the institutions of the ancients.

From *Confucius* down to the *Han* there have been many persons famous for their talents and not solely such as 'stuff themselves with food the whole day, without applying their minds to anything good' <sup>4</sup>. Either did they explain the Five Canons, or read the Classics and other works, which are very voluminous, so that it is difficult to matter them all.

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<sup>1</sup> Capital of the *Chin* State. Cf. Vol. I, p. 308, Note 7.

<sup>2</sup> Historian of the *Chin* State, 6th cent. B. C.

<sup>3</sup> Styled *Tse Mu*, a disciple of *Confucius*.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted from [Analects XVII, 22](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

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Divination by diagrams, and fortune-telling are arts of the time of *Wên* and *Wu Wang*. Of yore, there was *Shang Ch'ü* who could interpret the diagrams, and more recently *Tung Fang So* <sup>1</sup> and *Yi Shao Chün* <sup>2</sup>, who were able to guess hidden objects. Though of no great importance, these arts are also derived from the sages, which has often been overlooked <sup>3</sup>.

Human nature is endowed with the Five Virtues, open to reason and prone to learning, which distinguishes it from that of all other creatures. But now it is different. People stuff themselves with food, and are given to drink, and to escape their remorse they wish to sleep. Their bellies are larders, and their bowels, wine-skins, and they are nothing better than inanimate things.

p2.105 Among the three hundred naked creatures <sup>4</sup>, man takes the first place, for of all the productions issued from the nature of Heaven and Earth he is the noblest, a superiority which he owes to his knowledge. Now those addle-headed, obese fellows do not care for knowledge. How do their desires differ from those of the other two-hundred and ninety-nine naked creatures, that they should lay claim to superiority and precedence ?

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The people of China are superior to the savages, for understanding the words benevolence and righteousness, and acquiring the sciences of ancient and modern times. If they merely use their brains for procuring themselves food and raiment, living on months and years, until they are white-headed and toothless, without ever cultivating their minds, they rank lower than savages. Look at the spiders, how they knit their webs with a view to entrapping flying insects. How are the transactions of those men superior to theirs ? Using their brains, they work out their selfish and deceitful schemes with the object of acquiring the amenities of wealth and long life, paying no heed to the study of the past or the present. They behave just like spiders.

Creatures with blood in their veins are not liable to die of starvation, for

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<sup>1</sup> A magician on whom see Vol. I, p. 346.

<sup>2</sup> Generally known as *Li Shao Chün*, his style being *Yün Yi*. Cf. Vol. I, p. 343 seq.

<sup>3</sup> The Chinese regard divination as a science for which the *Yiking* is the standard work.

<sup>4</sup> In Vol. I, p. 528 *Wang Ch'ung* speaks of three hundred and sixty naked creatures.

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they all are possessed of the necessary astuteness to find food and drink. Even the unintelligent are able to support themselves. They make their living as officials, and even become high dignitaries. Governors, ministers, and those in authority are like our high officer *Kao Tse*<sup>1</sup>; how can they discern them? In the course of time they distinguish themselves, for it is their fate to be called to office. Knowing neither the past nor the present time, they are still looked upon as very clever owing to their position. How should the superior officers, by their unscientific methods, be able to find out men of intellect and treat them with due consideration, irrespective of rank and precedence? Ministers and high dignitaries are unqualified for this.

p2.106 If there be men like *Ts'ai Po Ch'ieh*, governor of *Yu Fu-fêng*<sup>2</sup>, the prefect of *Yü-lin*<sup>3</sup>, *Chang Mêng Ch'ang*, or the prefect of *Tung-lai*<sup>4</sup>, *Li Chi Kung*, they are all endowed with an enlightened mind and conversant with the past as well as the present<sup>5</sup>. Consequently they hold intelligent persons in the same respect as distinguished guests. What sort of a character must have been *Chao* of *Yen*<sup>6</sup>, who plied the broom for *Tsou Yen's* sake! *Tung Chung Shou*, magistrate of *Tung-ch'êng*<sup>7</sup> was held to be the chief of the scholars in knowledge, and everywhere reputed for his intelligence. Receiving somebody, he could discover his exceptional rank<sup>8</sup>. Thus he knew quite well that Mr. *Ch'an* of *Chung-li*<sup>9</sup>, a simple, registered citizen was to be solemnly invested with the jade *bâton* and the jade disk. For the knowing, every stone has its splendour, whereas the unknowing do not even remark the brilliancy of gold and gems.

From *Wu Ti* down to our dynasty, at various times very clever men have

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<sup>1</sup> This might be an allusion to [Analects V, 18](#) [Couvreur]: 'They are like our high officer *Ch'u'* i. e., as bad.

<sup>2</sup> The modern *Fêng-hsiang-fu* in *Shênsi*.

<sup>3</sup> In the province of *Kuangsi*.

<sup>4</sup> In *Lai-chou-fu*, *Shantung*.

<sup>5</sup> The three persons named seem to be contemporaries of *Wang Ch'ung*.

<sup>6</sup> Prince *Chao* of *Yen*, who employed *Tsou Yen* and treated him with great consideration.

<sup>7</sup> I suppose that [] should be written, a district in *Fêng-yang-fu*, *Anhui*, during the *Han* time.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Couvreur's* Dict.

<sup>9</sup> A district likewise in *Fêng-yang-fu*, *Anhui*.

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been promoted. If they were to be questioned at some examination, the replies of men like *Tung Chung Shu*, *T'ang Tse Kao*, *Ku Tse Yün*<sup>1</sup>, and *Ting Po Yü* would not only be perfectly correct, but their compositions would also be most brilliant, as the result of their extensive reading and diligent study. In case these four could only use their pen, commenting on the Classics, and that they had not perused old as well as modern books, they would not be able to establish their fame in the palace of the holy emperor.

When *Hsiao Ming Ti*<sup>2</sup> was reading the biography of *Su Wu*, he hit upon the name of a military officer called : *yi chung chien* (master of the horse<sup>3</sup>). He asked all his officers about the meaning, but none of them knew it. The words in the institutions of *T'sang Hsieh* and in the books of elementary learning are universally known, but when nobody is able to reply to the questions of His Imperial Holiness, it becomes evident that the majority of the officials were nothing but bureaucrats owing their position to good luck only. What was signified by the character *to* combined with *mu*, they could not tell. It would have been rather hard for them to explain the word '*chung-ch'ang*', as *Tung Chung Shu* did, or to know the word '*erh-fu*' like *Liu Tse Chêng*<sup>4</sup>.

It might be urged that intelligent men are appointed chancellors of the imperial library, whose business it is to revise books, and fix the texts like the grand historiographer or the grand supplicant, whose office is likewise purely literary. They are not employed to govern the people, or on other business. Therefore such officers of the library, men like *Pan Ku*, *Chia K'uei*<sup>5</sup>, *Yang Chung*<sup>6</sup>, and *Fu Yi*<sup>7</sup>, enjoy a great popularity, and their writings are much admired. Though they remain at their posts, and are not entrusted with other offices, they still render great services to the world.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 86, Note 2.

<sup>2</sup> The *Han* emperor, 58-76 A. D.

<sup>3</sup> The expression occurs in the biography of *Su Wu* in the *Ch'ien Han-shu* (*Couvreur*).

<sup>4</sup> See above p. 103.

<sup>5</sup> *Chia K'uei*, eminent scholar, A. D. 30-101, who together with the historian *Pan Ku* was appointed historiographer.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 469.

<sup>7</sup> A scholar who left a collection of poetry in 28 chapters. With *Pan Ku* and *Chia K'uei* he was attached to the Imperial Library and entrusted with editorial work.

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I beg to reply that this is not proceeding on the lines of the *Chou* period, when sharp-witted men like *Tsou Yen* and *Sun Ch'ing*<sup>1</sup> stood in high favour with their sovereigns, and all the honours and distinctions of the age were bestowed upon them. Although *Tung Chung Shu* did not hold a premier's post, he was well known to rank higher than all the ministers. The *Chou* looked up to the two preceding dynasties, and the *Han* followed in the wake of the *Chou* and *Ch'in*. From the officers of the library the government sees whether it prospers or not. The heart is like a ball or an egg, but it constitutes the most precious part in the body ; the pupil of the eye resembles a pea, but it illumines the whole body. Thus the chancellors may be petty officials, yet they secretly direct the principles governing the whole State. Learned men make this career, as the academicians are recruited from the scholars.

'They remain at their posts, and are not entrusted with other offices', does that mean that His Imperial Holiness has no confidence in them ? Perhaps they had not yet completed their works or discharged their duties.

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<sup>1</sup> The philosopher, cf. Vol. I, p. 387, Note 4.



## CHAPTER XII

### Apparent Backwardness

40. XIV, I. *Chuang-liu*

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p2.108 Since able scholars, as we have asserted, rank above all others, people are amazed that as officials they do not advance, and that the posts and functions they have to fill are so inferior. As a matter of fact, we need not be surprised that talented men should be outpaced by ordinary functionaries, for just this circumstance will show us the difference between clever persons and unworthy ones, and display what more or less dignity really means.

When a tortoise is three hundred years old, it is as big as a cash and walks on lotus leaves. At the age of three thousand, it has a green edge and it measures one foot and two inches. When milfoil is seventy years old, it grows one stalk, and at the age of seven hundred it has ten stalks. Both are supernatural things <sup>1</sup>, which accounts for the slowness of their growth. These many years give them their wisdom and their knowledge of the truth.

Able scholars on earth are like the spiritual milfoil and the divine tortoise. They spend at least half the days of the year on their studies. Intensely bent upon their researches, they do not covet official honours, and, if called to office, their conduct is irreproachable, square and upright, and not like that of ambitious officials. Hence their advance in life is delayed, and their promotion fraught with difficulties.

If a needle or an awl pierce something, they go through, but in case the points of these implements were square, they would not even penetrate one tenth of an inch deep. Able scholars like square dealings, they do not possess the sharpness of a needle or an awl, and therefore have not the means of making their way and push themselves to the front.

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<sup>1</sup> Owing to this supposed supernatural nature they are used for divining purposes.

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A courser runs a thousand Li a day, but it must be unhampered. Should it have to drag a cart, any hackney might compete with it. Used to pull a salt-wagon, it would drop its head, the perspiration would trickle down, and it would be unable <sup>p2.109</sup> to advance. However, if *Po Lo* <sup>1</sup> started it, or *Wang Liang* <sup>2</sup> took the reins and allowed it to chase along, free of any burden, it would keep up its reputation of a thousand Li runner.

Our students encompass the wisdom of the past and the present in their bosoms, and carry the burden of propriety and righteousness on their shoulders. Within they are troubled with all their learning, and without harassed with their care for a decent and honest behaviour. They dare not recklessly advance or seek promotion at all cost. Consequently they are left behind. How could they start on a bright morning and win the prize of a thousand Li race, unless they find a friendly *Po Lo* or a protector like *Wang Liang* ?

Furthermore, it is a fact that all living creatures, filled with the vital fluid, have their backs turned upwards and their bellies downwards, as long as they move about. When they fall sick or die, the back is turned downwards and the belly uppermost <sup>3</sup>. The reason is that on the back the flesh is thick and heavy, whereas on the belly it is thin and light <sup>4</sup>. When able scholars and ordinary officials meet in life, their relation is similar : Under enlightened governors, and when sciences flourish, ordinary officials have to carry the scholars, who rise upon their shoulders, but, when the highest authorities are short-sighted, and sciences neglected, then the officials rise above the scholars, who are kept in subordinate positions, as with animals struck by a fatal blow the belly is uppermost and the back turned downwards.

Moreover, the back has a certain tendency towards heaven, and the belly, towards earth. As long as a creature is alive and moving, the proper order is observed, the belly and the back being in their respective places. By sickness or death this order is reversed, for then the belly usurps the place of the back

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<sup>1</sup> A famous horse trainer, see Vol. I, p. 239, Note 1.

<sup>2</sup> The well known charioteer.

<sup>3</sup> That depends on circumstances.

<sup>4</sup> This is no reason.

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above.

This is not only true in regard to the belly, for when creatures happen to fall, the feet of others are above them also, and when scholars in life meet with misfortune and come to fall, officers who do not rank higher than their feet or ankles, walk over them.

*T'ang Fang So* <sup>1</sup> made the remark that, if the eyes were not in the face, but in the feet, they would not be fit to dispel p<sub>2.110</sub> darkness, for how could they see then? *Chi Yen* <sup>2</sup> said to the emperor *Wu Ti*,

— Your Majesty employs officers as one heaps up fuel. That which comes last is placed on the top.

The dictum of *Tung Fang So* and the remark of *Chi Yen* did not merely disapprove of ordinary officers obtaining positions and able scholars being dismissed. For, when an officer has lost his post, it is difficult to discover his virtue, whereas, while he keeps it, it is hard to perceive his unworthiness. Fame always attends high offices, and aspersions are cast on low positions in which able scholars usually find themselves.

Observing the rules of propriety and walking the right path, purifying themselves and keeping the moral laws, they do not take heed of what is mean and below them. Thus they happen to stick fast, and their progress is checked. They have enough to do to get clear and save themselves, but this impediment prevents them from pushing themselves to the front. For the purpose of acquiring and storing up as much knowledge as possible they do all that is in their power.

Common officers do not think of self-education. When they have advanced, their covetousness is aroused, and they do mean things, making unlawful gain by oppression and extortion <sup>3</sup>.

The maple and the varnish trees grow very rapidly, therefore their bark and their wood cannot be very solid. The hard-wood tree gets its leaves but in the fifth month, much later than those trees blooming in spring, but its timber

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 104, Note 5.

<sup>2</sup> See Vol. I, p. 94, Note 3.

<sup>3</sup> This seems to have been the vice of Chinese officials from time immemorial.

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is very hard, so that it can be used for axle-trees. The paper-mulberry of the *Yin* dynasty <sup>1</sup> measured a span after seven days, but after its sudden growth it completely dried up, and therefore was regarded as a miracle. Big vessels require a considerable time for their completion, and precious merchandise is difficult to be sold. That which does not need a whole day and forthwith fetches a price, are things like fruit and vegetables <sup>2</sup>.

In the current of rapids, gravel turns round, while big stones remain unmoved. Why ? Because big stones are heavy, and gravel is light. The gravel whirling round is deposited on the big stones, p2.111 which are completely hidden and become invisible. Able scholars meeting with ordinary officials in life, are in a similar condition. Blunt-witted superiors push the ordinary officials and make them jump over the heads of the scholars, who must lie low and suffer their rivals to pass over them. So it may happen that they retire altogether, to lead a hermit life in a grotto or a cavern. Those in authority are responsible for it, for they are unfit to discern real merit. These able men are proficient students, but without influence, and they cannot well commend themselves.

Things that can be taken in hand are utensils. He that finds his strength inadequate to lift them, does not dare to move them. The principles of able scholars are not merely as heavy as vessels <sup>3</sup>.

Gold and iron placed on the ground are not moved by a north-easter, whereas a hair or straw amongst them are carried away a thousand Li. The principles cherished by the scholars are like the heavy stones in the water, or gold and iron on the ground. Their advance is not as swift as that of ordinary functionaries, and the high officers are too weak to use them. One breath suffices to blow away a hair or a straw from among gold and iron, and no north-easter is required. Ordinary officials are as easily shifted as a hair or

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 161.

<sup>2</sup> All good things require time, therefore the progress of able scholars is slower than that of common officials. The former are like the hard-wood trees, big vessels, or precious merchandise, the latter correspond to the maple and varnish trees, the paper-mulberry, fruit and vegetables. They advance very quickly, but the stuff they are made of is not very valuable.

<sup>3</sup> They are heavier and of greater moment.

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chaff are blown away.

When gravel is rolled about by a current, and a mote carried away by a north-easter, it is not a mere swelling, or a soft sea breeze that moves it <sup>1</sup>. An unprincipled governor who, acting upon uncontrollable impulses, promotes whomever he just chances to like, without any careful inquiry, (and thus recklessly confers posts and honours), is like a wild current turning gravel about, or a northeaster wafting aloft a hair or a straw. They fly about in a strong gale, gravel rolls to and fro in a wild current, and common officials advance, when falling in with a wayward governor.

When we throw a round thing on the ground, it may roll in one of the four directions, north, south, east, or west. Knocked with a stick, it comes to rest after a short while. Square things thrown on the ground remain motionless immediately after their fall. In order to shift them, men must push or lift them. Able scholars are always square <sup>2</sup>, therefore hard to be moved, and to advance them men <sup>3</sup> are required.

p2.112 Birds have more agility than man, who, in hurrying to a distant place, cannot cope with them. In spite of that, amongst the creatures of Heaven and Earth man is the noblest <sup>4</sup>. Locusts can fly ten thousand Li, and the unicorn must be sent as a tribute, to reach the court of the emperor. Yet locusts are a plague, and the unicorn, a felicitous presage <sup>5</sup>. It has four legs, still it cannot arrive of itself <sup>6</sup>, how then should man make his way with his two legs? Thus swallows are more light-winged than phœnixes, and hares more nimble-footed than unicorns. A frog jumps better than a spiritual tortoise, and a snake leaps with greater agility than a divine dragon <sup>7</sup>.

Men like *Lü Shang* <sup>8</sup> are conspicuous among grey-heads, and the wisdom

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<sup>1</sup> The text is not very clear. The simile is illustrated by the next clause, where unprincipled governors are likened to a wild current and a strong gale.

<sup>2</sup> *I. e.*, fair and honest.

<sup>3</sup> Strong men.

<sup>4</sup> Swiftmess alone, in our case a quick promotion, is not a sign of superiority.

<sup>5</sup> The sacred unicorn is not as quick as the worthless locusts.

<sup>6</sup> It is sent as a tribute, and does not arrive of its own accord.

<sup>7</sup> The four sacred animals are outrun by many ordinary ones.

<sup>8</sup> The surname of *T'ai Kung*. Vol. I, p. 238, Note 1.

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of *Po Li Hsi* <sup>1</sup> shines even among persons with yellow hair <sup>2</sup>. By their excellent political advice they became the helpmates of their princes. They were weighty personages and not easy to be promoted. Futile and frivolous things are quickly done, calamities and disasters happen quite suddenly. Therefore they say that he who advances with impetuosity is prompt to retire.

The warmth of the *Yang*, and the cold of the *Yin* take months till they arrive. A calamitous change is a disaster completed in one day. For the ice of a river to close, one day's frost is not sufficient, and forming a mountain by heaping up earth is a work not to be completed in a short time.

A *Kan-chiang* <sup>3</sup> sword must be long on the coal in the furnace. To sharpen the blade and make it pointed, it must be smelted and hammered under intense heat, and it is only taken out of the fire after a long heating. The working is a very slow process, but it thus acquires its sharpness.

Flesh suddenly grown, is called a tumor, and a spring violently rushing forth, a fountain. Wine suddenly heated, easily becomes sour, and minced meat, suddenly made sour, is easily spoiled <sup>4</sup>. From these considerations we may infer that the slow advance of able scholars has its analogies and its causes. Which are they? Great learning and momentous thoughts weigh heavily upon the whole being.

p2.113 Plants and trees, while alive, are full of sap ; and being sappy, they are heavy. Dead, they are dry : While dry, they are light and easy to lift ; being sappy, they are heavy and difficult to move. Now the original fluid resides in living organisms, not in those withered <sup>5</sup>.

When carts drive on land, and ships sail through a canal, those heavy and full of cargo proceed slowly, whereas the empty and light ones move swiftly. The weight of the doctrines of former emperors, carried in the bosom, is heavier than the burden of ships or the loading of carts, and for those

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<sup>1</sup> Famous character of the 7th cent. B. C. Vol. I, p. 502.

<sup>2</sup> Very old people whose white hair has already become yellowish.

<sup>3</sup> See Vol. I, p. 504, Note 1.

<sup>4</sup> Great haste is not always an advantage, for it may spoil everything.

<sup>5</sup> Ordinary functionaries, of course, are compared to withered organisms. Being much lighter than those full of sap *viz.* men of learning, they are much more easily moved about.

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carrying so heavy a burden, a quick promotion becomes difficult.

Thieves stealing other people's property obtain it soon enough, but the things, thus obtained, are not their own, nor acquired by their own industry. A man of the world may very soon obtain a high post which spreads a lustre about him, but, at the same time, evil reports will be set on foot to the effect that he is nothing but a dummy, living on his salary and doing nothing. That able scholars do not get on in their career is owing to the lack of insight on the part of the higher authorities and superior officers.

Peasants bring their grain to the capital, and merchants convey their goods to distant places, both expecting to see their hopes realised. But should the gates and the suburbs be closed to traffic, or fords and bridges have been made impracticable, they would, in spite of all their efforts, and all their speed, not be able to arrive in time and make the gains they expected <sup>1</sup>.

The higher officers are envious of able men, and will have nothing to do with them. If the latter are not put in irons and treated as mean criminals, they may congratulate themselves. How can they hope to rise in the service, or expect that their doctrines will soon be realised ?

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<sup>1</sup> Like peasants with their bags of grain, students with their learning betake themselves to town, but the high officers do not care to admit them, so that their learning is of no practical use to them.

## CHAPTER XIII

### The Real Nature of Knowledge

78. XXVI, I. *Shih-chih*

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p2.114 The Literati, discoursing on Sages, are of opinion that they know thousands of years of the past, and ten thousand future generations. Merely by the keenness of their sight, and the subtlety of their hearing, they are able to give the proper names to new things. They know spontaneously, without learning, and understand of themselves, without inquiring, wherefore the term Sage is equivalent with supernatural. They are like milfoil and the tortoise, which know lucky and unlucky auguries, whence the milfoil plant is regarded as supernatural, and the tortoise as a divine creature.

The talents of Worthies do not reach this standard ; their intelligence is weaker and not so comprehensive, whence they are called Worthies. This difference of name implies a difference of nature, for the substance being the same, the name uses to be equal. As for the name Sage, it is known that Sages are something extraordinary and different from Worthies.

When *Confucius* was about to die, he left behind a book of prophecies <sup>1</sup> wherein he says,

— I know not what sort of fellow, styling himself the First Emperor of *Ch'in*, comes to my hall, squats on my bed, and turns my clothes topsy-turvy. After arriving at *Sha-ch'iu* he will die.

In course of time the king of *Ch'in*, having swallowed the empire, assumed the title of First Emperor. On a tour of inspection, he came to *Lu* and visited the home of *Confucius*. Then he proceeded to *Sha-ch'iu*, but on the road he was taken ill and expired.

Another entry is this,

« *Tung Chung Shu* carries confusion into my book.

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<sup>1</sup> See Vol. I, p. 319, Note 1.



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Subsequently, the minister of *Chiang-tu*<sup>1</sup>, *Tung Chung Shu* made special researches into the *Ch'un-ch'iu* and wrote comments and notes on it<sup>2</sup>. The book of prophecies further says,

« *Ch'in* will be p<sub>2.115</sub> ruined by *Hu*.

Later on, the Second Emperor *Hu Hai* in fact lost the empire.

These three instances are used to bear out the statement that Sages foreknow ten thousand future generations.

*Confucius* ignored his descent, his father and mother having concealed it from him. He blew the flute and then of himself knew that he was a scion of *Tse*, a great officer of *Sung* of *Yin*<sup>3</sup>. He did not consult books or ask anybody, his playing the flute and his genius alone revealed to him his generation<sup>4</sup>. This would appear to be a proof of the faculty of Sages to know thousands of years of the past.

I say that all this is fallacy. Such miraculous stories are recorded in prophecy books and all in the style of *Hu* destroying the *Ch'in*, told in many books, or of the text of the Plan of the River<sup>5</sup>. The plain illustrations of *Confucius* have been magnified with a view to prove wonders and miracles, or the stories were fabricated in later times to furnish evidence.

*Kao Tsu* having enfeoffed the king of *Wu*, and seeing him off, patted him on his shoulder saying,

— Within fifty years hereafter, some one will revolt from the *Han* in the south-east. Will that not be you ?

In the time of *Ching Ti*, *Pi*<sup>6</sup> along with seven other States plotted a rebellion

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<sup>1</sup> In the *Yang-chou* prefecture, *Kiangsu*.

<sup>2</sup> See Vol. I, p. 466.

<sup>3</sup> *Tse* was the family name of the *Yin* dynasty. *Wei Tse*, the viscount of *Wei*, a clansman of the last emperor of the *Yin* dynasty, was made prince of *Sung*. He is believed to have been the ancestor of *Confucius*. Cf. [Chavannes, \*Mém. Hist. Vol. V, p. 284 seq.\*](#) In the *Liki* ([Legge, \*Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 139\*](#)) [[Couvreur](#)] *Confucius* says himself, 'I am a man of *Yin*'.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 324, Note 4.

<sup>5</sup> The Plan of the Yellow River containing the eight diagrams revealed to *Huang Ti*, see Vol. I, p. 294, Note 1.

<sup>6</sup> King of *Wu*, a nephew of *Han Kao Tsu*.

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against the *Han* <sup>1</sup>. Those who first made this statement had perhaps noticed the dispositions and the signs of the time, whence they surmised that a rebellion would come, but they ignored the name of the leader. *Kao Tsu* having observed the valour of *Pi*, then correctly hinted at him.

If from this point of view we consider *Confucius'* cognisance of *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* and of *Tung Chung Shu*, it may be that at the time he merely spoke of somebody visiting his home and deranging his book, and, later on, people, remarking that *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* entered his house, and that *Tung Chung Shu* studied his p2.116 work, exaggerated the dicta of *Confucius* and wrote down the names of the principal persons.

If *Confucius* was endowed with supernatural powers, so that he could see the First Emperor and *Tung Chung Shu* ere they existed, then he ought to have at once been aware of his being a descendant of the *Yin* and a scion of *Tse* likewise, and have no need of blowing the flute to determine it. *Confucius* was unable to ascertain his family name without playing the flute, but his seeing the First Emperor and beholding *Tung Chung Shu* is like blowing the flute.

According to the narrative of *Shih Huang Ti* <sup>2</sup>, he did not go to *Lu* ; how then should he have entered the hall of *Confucius*, squatted down on his bed, and turned his clothes topsy-turvy ? In the thirty-seventh year of his reign, on the *kuei-ch'ou* day of the tenth month <sup>3</sup>, *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* started on a journey to *Yün-mêng*. From afar he sacrificed to *Shun* in *Chiu-yi*. Floating down the *Yangtse*, he visited *Chieh-ko*, crossed the stream at *Mei-chu* <sup>4</sup>, went over to *Tan-yang*, arrived at *Ch'ien-t'ang*, and approached the *Chê* river. The waves being very boisterous, he went 120 Li westward, crossed the stream at a narrow passage, and went up to *Kuei-chi*, where he made an oblation to Great *Yü*, and erected a stone with an encomiastic inscription. Then turning to

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<sup>1</sup> This great rebellion broke out in B. C. 154. See *Shi-chi* chap. 11, p. 2r. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 498](#)).

<sup>2</sup> As given in the *Shi-chi* chap. 6, p. 26v. from which the following narrative is abridged.

<sup>3</sup> The 1st of November 211 B. C. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 184](#)).

<sup>4</sup> *Mei-chu* lies in the *Chien-p'ing* district of *Anhui*, which is conterminous with *Tan-yang-hsien* in *Kiangsu*.

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the southern Sea, he went back. Passing *Chiang-ch'êng*, he sailed along the seashore northward as far as *Lang-yeh*, whence still further north he arrived at the *Lao* and *Ch'êng*<sup>1</sup> Mountains. Then he proceeded to *Chefoo*, and always keeping near the sea-shore, reached the *P'ing-yuan* Ford, where he fell sick. He passed away on the *P'ing* Terrace in *Sha-ch'iu*<sup>2</sup>.

Since he did not go to *Lu*, wherefrom does the Book of Prophecies derive its knowledge that *Shih Huang Ti* came to *Lu* as p2.117 it says ? This journey to *Lu* not being a fact that might be known, the words ascribed to *Confucius* 'I know not what sort of a fellow', &c. are not trustworthy either, and this utterance being unreliable, the remark about *Tung Chung Shu* deranging his book becomes doubtful also.

In case records of famous deeds seem rather queer, they are the work of common people. All books, unless they be directly written by Heaven and Earth, go back on former events, there being reliable evidence. Those without experience, of course, cannot utilise these sources. All Sages foreseeing happiness and misfortune, meditate and reason by analogies. Reverting to the beginning, they know the end ; from their villages they argue on the palace, and shed their light into the darkest corners. Prophecy books and other mystic writings see from afar what has not yet come to pass ; they are aware of what is going to happen in future, which, for the time being, is still a void and wrapt in darkness. Their knowledge is instantaneous, supernatural, and passing all understanding.

Although ineloquent persons may not be qualified for it, still it is possible to predict calamities by observing analogies, or to predetermine future events by going back to their sources and examining the past. Worthies have this faculty as well, and Sages are not alone fit to do it.

When *Chou Kung* was governing *Lu*, *T'ai Kung* knew that his descendants would be reduced to impotence, and when *T'ai Kung* was ruling in *Ch'i*, *Chou Kung* saw that his scions would fall victims to robbery and murder. By their methods they foreknew the ultimate end, and perceived the signs of adversity

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 231, Note 7.

<sup>2</sup> See Vol. I, p. 232, Note 3.

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and rebellion.

*Chou* having ivory chop-sticks made, *Chi Tse* administered reproof <sup>1</sup>, and *Confucius* sighed because dummies were buried in *Lu*. From the ivory chop-sticks the one inferred the misery attending the search for dragon-liver, whereas the other saw in the dummies the danger that living persons might be interred along with the dead <sup>2</sup>.

*T'ai Kung* and *Chou Kung* were both cognisant of what had not yet come to pass, as *Chi Tse* and *Confucius* were aware of what <sup>p2.118</sup> had not yet taken place. As regards the source from which they drew the knowledge of the future, there is no diversity between *Sages* and *Worthies*.

The marquis of *Lu* being old, and the crown-prince weak, his daughter by a second wife leaned against a pillar, heaving a sigh. Old age and weakness were to her presages of future disorders and revolutions. Even a woman was clever enough to reason by analogies and thus discover the future. How much more should this be the case with *Sages* and superior men of exceptional parts and great intelligence ?

In the 10th year of *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* <sup>3</sup> the mother of King *Yen Hsiang* <sup>4</sup>, the queen-dowager *Hsia*, saw in a dream the consort of King *Hsiao Wên* <sup>5</sup> who said,

— The queen *Hua Yang* together with her husband *Wên Wang* <sup>6</sup> is buried in *Shou-ling*, and the queen-dowager *Hsia* and King *Yen Hsiang* are buried in *Fan-ling*. For this reason the tomb of the queen-dowager *Hsia* is transferred to *Tu-ling* <sup>7</sup>, so that I can say, 'I

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 354.

<sup>2</sup> The dummies had taken the place of living persons who were thus buried symbolically. Burying them alive would have been a relapse into the primitive custom. Cf. chap. XXXV.

<sup>3</sup> In B. C. 237.

<sup>4</sup> A misprint for *Chuang Hsiang*, king of *Ch'in*, 249-246 B. C.

<sup>5</sup> This king of *Ch'in* reigned only three days in B. C. 250.

<sup>6</sup> *I. e.*, *Hsiao Wên Wang*.

<sup>7</sup> East of *Hsi-an-fu*, *Shensi*.

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see my son <sup>1</sup> in the east and my husband in the west. After a hundred years a city of ten thousand families will rise by my tomb.

In course of time everything turned out as predicted. If those foreknowing the future from analogies be regarded as Sages, then the daughter of the second wife and the queen-dowager *Hsia* were Sages.

In the 10th year of King *Chao* of *Ch'in* <sup>2</sup>, *Ch'u Li Tse* <sup>3</sup> died and was interred in *Wei-nan* <sup>4</sup>, east of the *Chang* terrace. He said,

— A hundred years hence, an emperor's palaces will hem in my tomb.

After the rise of the *Han* dynasty, the *Ch'ang-lo* palace was built at his east and the *Wei-yang* palace at his west side. The arsenal was just on his tomb, exactly as he had said. This is a proof of his prescience and of his foreseeing future events. If such an evidence constitutes a claim to sagehood, then *Ch'u Li Tse* was a Sage. If he was not a Sage, then the knowledge of the future does not suffice to make a man a Sage.

p2.119 *Ch'u Li Tse* seeing the emperor's palaces close by his grave, was like *Hsin Yu*, who knew that *Yi-ch'uan* <sup>5</sup> would become the territory of the *Jung* <sup>6</sup>. In ancient days *Hsin Yu* passing through *Yi-ch'uan* and noticing the inhabitants, wearing their hair long down on their back, performing sacrifices, said,

— Within a hundred years this land will most likely belong to the *Jung*.

A hundred years hence *Chin* <sup>7</sup> transferred the *Jung* of *Lu-hun* <sup>8</sup> to *Yi-ch'uan*,

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<sup>1</sup> King *Yen Hsiang*, who had been adopted by Queen *Hua Yang*. His real mother, the queen-dowager *Hsia*, was originally a concubine.

<sup>2</sup> B. C. 297, the *Shi-chi* chap. 5 adduces the 7th year = B. C. 300.

<sup>3</sup> A member of the royal house.

<sup>4</sup> Near *Hsi-an-fu*.

<sup>5</sup> In the *Sung* district of *Honan* province.

<sup>6</sup> Non-Chinese tribes in the west.

<sup>7</sup> *Chin* and *Ch'in* combined invited the *Jung* to change their residence.

<sup>8</sup> In *Kua-chou*, *Kansu*.

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and what *Hsiu Yu* knew before became a reality <sup>1</sup>. From the omen of the long hair he inferred the expansion of the *Jung*, just as *Ch'u Li Tse*, on beholding the vast plain near his tomb, foresaw that the Son of Heaven would move quite close to his tomb.

*Han Hsin* <sup>2</sup>, burying his mother, likewise had a vast and elevated place built, that by its side there might be room for ten thousand families. Subsequently, in fact ten thousand families settled near his tomb. *Ch'u Li Tse's* comprehending the presages indicative of the imperial buildings in the vast plain was like *Han Hsin's* perceiving the edifices of ten thousand families on the plateau. The foreknowing of things to come is not a knowledge requiring the faculty to look through obstacles or an exceptionally fine hearing ; in all these cases omens are taken into account, traces followed up, and inferences drawn from analogous circumstances.

When in the *Ch'un-ch'iu* epoch ministers and high officers held a meeting, they had an eye for all abnormal proceedings and an ear for strange utterances <sup>3</sup>. If these were good they took them for indications of felicitous events, if they were bad they saw in them unlucky auguries. Thus they knew how to ascertain happiness and misfortune, and, long before, were aware of what had not yet come to pass. It was no divine or supernatural knowledge, but all derived from signs and analogies.

p.2120 At present all things knowable may be grasped by reflection, but all things unknowable <sup>4</sup> remain incomprehensible without research or inquiry. Neither ancient nor modern history affords any instances of men knowing spontaneously without study or being enlightened without inquiry. For things knowable merely require earnest thought, then even big subjects are not

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<sup>1</sup> Abridged from the *Tso-chuan*, Duke Hsi 22nd year [[Couvreur](#)], whence we learn that the *Jung* emigrated to *Yi-chuan* in 638 B. C. *Hsin Yu* predicted it, when King *P'ing* of *Chou*, to avoid the incursions of the *Jung*, transferred his capital from *Chang-an* to *Lo-yi* in 770 B. C. Consequently the hundred years of *Hin Yu* are only a round number. The *Tso-chuan* adds that *Hsin Yu* foresaw the event from the fact that in *Yi-ch'uan* the rules of ceremony were already lost. Wearing long or dishevelled hair is a sign of barbarity, therefore barbarians might well occupy the land.

<sup>2</sup> The friend of *Han Kao Tsu*. Cf. Vol. I, p. 148, Note 5.

<sup>3</sup> They were as superstitious as the old Romans.

<sup>4</sup> Unknowable at first sight, not altogether.

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difficult of apprehension, whereas things unknowable, how small soever, do not become easy through mental efforts or research. Consequently great *savants* are not apt to bring about anything without study or to know anything in default of inquiry.

An objection may be urged on the score that *Hsiang T'o*<sup>1</sup>, at seven years of age, taught *Confucius*. At the age of seven, he could not yet have entered an elementary school, and yet he acted as teacher to *Confucius*. Therefore he must have been self-knowing by nature.

*Confucius* says that [those who are born with the possession of knowledge are the highest class of men. Those who learn, and so get possession of knowledge, are the next.]<sup>2</sup> Speaking of those born with knowledge, without referring to their studies, *Confucius* has in view men like *Hsiang T'o*.

In the time of *Wang Mang*<sup>3</sup>, *Yin Fang* of *Po-hai*<sup>4</sup> was twenty-one years old. He had neither had a teacher nor a friend, but his inner light was fully developed, so that he was well versed in the Six Arts<sup>5</sup>. When the governor of *Wei-tu*<sup>6</sup>, *Shun Yü Tsang*, had written a memorial, *Yin Fang*, who had not studied, on seeing the document, could read it and argue on its purport. The quotations from the Five Classics he could elucidate and discourse on the subject to the gratification of all persons present. The emperor summoned him and gave him a theme 'The flying insects', on which he wrote an excellent essay. Verily, he was endowed with great erudition, and all under Heaven called him a Sage. A man p2.121 conversant with the Six Arts, without having had a teacher or a friend, and able to read a document placed before him, although he has not studied books formerly, is a Sage. Without study he possesses knowledge spontaneously, and without instruction he is enlightened of himself. If this is not divine, what is it ?

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. [Huai Nan Tse XIX, 13v](#). See also *Giles, Biogr. Dict.* No. 696, where we read that *HsiangT'o* was merely qualified to be the teacher of the Sage.

<sup>2</sup> [Analects XVI, 9](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>3</sup> 9-22 A. D.

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

<sup>5</sup> Ceremonial, music, archery, charioteering, writing, mathematics.

<sup>6</sup> I suppose that the capital of *Wei* = *Ta-liang*, the modern *K'ai-fêng-fu*, is thus designated.

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My answer to this objection is this : Although *Yin Fang* had no teacher or friend, yet he must himself have learned many things, and though he did not study books, he must himself have plied pen and ink. When an infant is born, and its eyes first open, it has no knowledge, even though it possess the nature of a Sage. *Hsiang T'o* was seven years old. At the age of three and four already he must have listened to other men's speeches. *Yin Fang* counted twenty-one years. At fourteen and fifteen years of age he has probably learnt a great deal.

When a man of great natural intelligence and remarkable parts is confined to his own thoughts and has no experience, neither beholding signs and omens nor observing the working of various sorts of beings, he may imagine that after many generations a horse will give birth to an ox, and an ox to a donkey, or that from a peach-tree plums may grow, or cherries from a plum-tree. Could a Sage know this ? <sup>1</sup>

If a subject assassinated his sovereign, or a son killed his father and if, on the other side, somebody were as kind-hearted as *Yen Yuan*, as dutiful a son as *Tsêng Tse*, as brave as *Mêng Pên* and *Hsia Yü* and as critical as *Tse Kung* and *Tse Wo* <sup>2</sup>, would a Sage be apt to find this out ?

*Confucius* says that [some other dynasty may follow the *Chou*, but though it should be at the distance of a hundred ages, its affairs may be known] <sup>3</sup>, and elsewhere he remarks,

[— A youth is to be regarded with respect. How do we know that his future will not be equal to our present ?] <sup>4</sup>

In regard of abrogations and innovations he believes that they may be known, but he asks how the future of a youth could be known. The future of a youth is hard to be pre-ordained, whereas abrogations and innovations are easy to detect.

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<sup>1</sup> Even a Sage could not know the erroneousness of such suppositions. Pure thought alone does not provide true knowledge, there must be experience besides and reasoning by analogy.

<sup>2</sup> The two former and the two latter were disciples of *Confucius*.

<sup>3</sup> [Analects II, 23](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>4</sup> [Analects IX, 22](#) [[Couvreur](#)].



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p2.122 However, all this is very far away, and nothing that may be heard or investigated.

Let us suppose that somebody standing at the east side of a wall raises his voice, and that a Sage hears him from the west side, would he know whether he was of a dark or a pale complexion, whether he was tall or short, and which was his native place, his surname, his designation, and his origin ? When a ditch is dug out and filled with water, affectionate care is bestowed on human skeletons excavated. Provided that the face and the hair of such a skeleton be deformed and partially destroyed, and the flesh decomposed and gone, would a Sage, upon inquiry, be apt to tell whether the deceased was a peasant or a merchant, young or old, or eventually the crime he had committed and for which he had to suffer death ? Not that a Sage is devoid of knowledge, but this cannot be known through his knowledge. Something unknowable by knowledge may only be learned by inquiry. Being thus unable to know, Sages and Worthies equally fail.

An opponent might retort with the following story : When *Chan Ho*<sup>1</sup> was sitting in his room with a pupil in attendance upon him, a cow was heard lowing outside the gate. The pupil said,

— This is a black cow, but it has white hoofs.

*Chan Ho* concurred saying,

— Yes, it is a black cow, but with white hoofs,

and he sent somebody to look at it. In fact, it was a black cow with its hoofs wrapped in some stuff. *Chan Ho* being merely a Worthy, was still in a position to distinguish the sound of the cow and to know its colour ; should a Sage with his superior insight not be qualified to know this ?

I beg leave to put a counter-question : If *Chan Ho* knew the cow to be black and to have white hoofs, did he also know to whom it belonged, and for what purpose its hoofs had been made white ? With this manner of devices one barely finds out one point, but cannot exhaust the whole truth. People thus may learn one thing, but being questioned and cross-examined, they

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<sup>1</sup> A native of the *Ch'u* State in the *Chou* epoch.

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show that they do not possess the entire knowledge, for only what has been seen with the eyes and asked with the mouth, may be perfectly known.

In the 29th year of Duke *Hsi* of *Lu*, *Ko Lu* of *Chieh*<sup>1</sup> came to court and stopped above *Chang-yen*. Hearing a cow lowing, he p2.123 said,

— This cow has already had three calves, but they have all been taken away from her.

Somebody asking how he knew this, he replied that her voice disclosed it. The man applied to the owner of the cow, and it was really as *Ko Lu* had said<sup>2</sup>. This again is an instance of the use of some scheme and not knowable by knowledge alone.

*Yang Wêng Chung* of *Kuang-han*<sup>3</sup> understood the voices of birds and brutes. Once, when he was driving a lame horse in the open country, another blind horse was grazing at some distance. Both horses took notice of each other by neighing. *Yang Wêng Chung* said to his charioteer,

— That loose horse knows this one, although it be blind.

The charioteer inquiring how it could know that, *Yang Wêng Chung* replied,

— It abuses this horse in the shafts for being lame, and our horse, in turn, reviles the other because it is blind.

The charioteer did not believe it ; he went to look at it, and the eyes of the other horse were really blind<sup>4</sup>. *Yang Wêng Chung* understood the voices of horses as *Chan Ho* and *Ko Lu* of *Chieh* could distinguish the lowing of cows.

They used a method and relied on a certain device. If both are combined it is not necessary to look or hear through, or to see at a distance and make distinctions, the eyes wandering about. For hearing sounds there is a method, and for discerning colours there is a device. Using these methods is like foreseeing. The public does not understand this, and under these circumstances speaks of a Sage with supernatural gifts.

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<sup>1</sup> A small State held by wild tribes, south of *Kiao-chou*, of which *Ko Lu* was the chief.

<sup>2</sup> This story is told in the *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Hsi* 29th year [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>3</sup> Region in the province of *Ssechuan*.

<sup>4</sup> The *Pei-wên-yün-fu* cites this passage, but calls the person *Han-yang Wêng-chung* i. e., *Wêng-chung* of *Han-yang*. I could not find any farther information on the man.

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*Confucius* seeing an animal named it *rhinopithecus*, and the Grand Annalist had the idea that *Chang Liang* looked like a woman. *Confucius* had never before seen a rhinopithecus, but when it arrived he could give it its name. The Grand Annalist belonged to another age than *Chang Liang*, but his eyes beheld his shape. If the people at large had heard of this, they would have looked upon both as divine beings who were prescient. However *Confucius* could name the *rhinopithecus*, because he had heard the songs of the people of *Chao*, and the Grand Annalist knew *Chang Liang* from a picture p2.124 which he had seen in the emperor's memorial hall <sup>1</sup>. They kept secret what they had seen, concealed their knowledge, and did not disclose their hidden thoughts. The great majority of people are thoughtless and know little. Noticing Worthies or Sages giving some creatures their proper names, they take them for supernatural beings.

From this point of view *Chan Ho* as well, who knew a cow to be black with white hoofs, comes under this category. Unless he was in possession of a peculiar method or device of his own, he must have got his information about the animal from without beforehand.

The present diviners look to their methods and calculations and, those being of no avail, contemplate the circumstances of the case. By combining these circumstances with their theory, they appear to be in possession of supernatural powers. *Chan Ho* and the like are the diviners of the present day. If *Chan Ho* and others had an intuitive knowledge and needed no theory, then they were like those animals living in nests which foresee a storm, or those cave-dwellers which foresee rain <sup>2</sup>. Their intellect was prematurely developed as was the case of *Hsiang T'o* and *Yin Fang*.

Against this it may be urged that *Huang Ti*, at his birth, was endowed with supernatural faculties, and that he could already speak as a babe. The

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<sup>1</sup> [a]. *Williams* and *Giles* translate this word by 'imperial palace', which is much too vague, *Couvreur* by 'chancery', quoting two passages referring to the *T'ang* time. Originally it must have been a hall where the emperor used to sacrifice and pray to his ancestors for happiness. But other business was transacted there also. We read in the biography of *Chia Yi*, *Shi-chi* chap. 84, p. 14r. that *Chia Yi* was received there by the emperor *Hsiao Wên Ti* : [...]. The commentator remarks that the [a] was the principal room in front of the *Wei-yang* palace.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 109.

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emperor *K'u* could tell his name after he was born. They had not yet gained any experience from without and immediately after their births were able to talk and tell their names. Was not this a proof of their superhuman faculties and an instance of their innate knowledge ?

I answer that, if *Huang Ti* could talk after his birth, his mother had carried him twenty months before she gave birth to <sup>p2.125</sup> him, and that, according to this computation of the months, he must have been about two years in his mother's womb <sup>1</sup>.

The Emperor *K'u* could speak his own name, but he could not tell those of other people. Although he possessed this one gift it did not reach very far. Did his so-called divine and innate knowledge merely amount to his faculty to utter his name when he was born ? The allegation that he knew it and did not learn it from any one, cannot be verified. Even if *Huang Ti* and *Ti K'u* should really have been in possession of supernatural powers, these would only have been some prematurely developed talents.

A man's talents may be precocious, or they may be completed rather late. Even in case he has been without a teacher, he has at home acquired the learning of his family. People upon remarking his precociousness and premature erudition, in their admiration exceed all bounds. If they say that *Hsiang T'o* was seven years of age, he must have been ten, and their assertion that he instructed *Confucius* shows only that *Confucius* put a question to him. If they say of *Huang Ti* and *Ti K'u* that, after their birth, they were able to talk, the time has, no doubt, been several months, and the twenty-one years which they ascribe to *Yin Fang* must have been about thirty. If they contend that he had no teacher nor a friend, and that he did not study, as a matter of fact, he travelled about to gather information and worked at home. But the masses are extravagant in their commendations, and in condemning they magnify the faults.

There is a popular tradition about *Yen Yuan* to the effect that, at the age of eighteen, he ascended Mount *T'ai*, whence, in the far distance, he viewed a

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<sup>1</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* means to say that *Huang Ti* at his birth was as developed as a child of two years, so that his ability to talk would not be so marvellous. He only forgets to tell us how *Huang Ti* could learn speaking, while in his mother's womb.

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white horse fastened outside the *Chang* gate in *Wu* <sup>1</sup>. An investigation reveals the fact that *Yen Yuan*, at that time, was thirty years old, and did not ascend Mount *T'ai*, nor descry the *Chang* gate in *Wu*. The credit given to *Hsiang T'o* and the praise bestowed on *Yin Fang* are like the admiration of which *Yen Yuan* was the object.

*Tse Kung* asked,

[— Why should the Master not study ? But, on the other side, how could he always find a teacher ?] <sup>2</sup>

And *Confucius* remarks that at the age of fifteen he had his mind bent p2.126 on learning <sup>3</sup>. The Five Emperors and Three Rulers all had their teachers. I believe that this has been set up as an example for mankind.

Somebody may object that mere cogitation might be recommended as well, and that there is no need for learning. Things may be difficult to be grasped without any alien assistance, still the talents of Worthies and Sages are equal to it.

The so-called spirits have knowledge without learning, and the so-called Sages require learning, to become Sages. Since they are compelled to study we know that they are not Sages <sup>4</sup>.

Among the creatures between Heaven and Earth that are not provided with innate knowledge, the rhinopithecus knows the past and the magpie, the future <sup>5</sup>. The heavenly nature which pervades them thus acts spontaneously. Should Sages resemble the rhinopithecus, then they ought to belong to the same class *viz.* of beasts and birds.

The queer ditties of boys are known without study, and may be described as supernatural and prescient. If Sages be put on a level with these songs, they would be uncanny like these songs.

Or are the divine Sages on earth held to be sorcerers ? Ghosts and spirits

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<sup>1</sup> See chap. XXIII.

<sup>2</sup> *Analects* XIX, 22 [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>3</sup> *Analects* II, 4 [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>4</sup> Their wisdom is not supernatural.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 358, Notes 3-5, and [Huai Nan Tse XIII, 14r.](#)

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speak to men through the mouths of sorcerers. If Sages be regarded as sorcerers, in this capacity they would likewise be preternatural. That which is of the same stuff as prodigies are, has nothing in common with Sages. Sorcerers differ from Sages, therefore the latter cannot be spiritual. Not being spiritual, they are akin to Worthies, and being akin to Worthies, their knowledge cannot be diverse.

As to their difference, Sages are quick in embracing the right principles, and Worthies, slow. Worthies have many talents, and Sages, great knowledge. Their objects of thought are the same, only the amount differs. They walk the same road, but in their progress one overruns the other.

Things are hard to be understood, or easy of apprehension, and call the attention of both Worthies and Sages. For example, the alternation of culture and simplicity, the repetition of the three systems of government <sup>1</sup>, the succession of the first days of the first moon, the concatenation of the abolitions from, and improvements upon the institutions of the various dynasties, all these things p2.127 Worthies and Sages equally know. Water and fire of ancient times are the water and fire of the present day, and sounds and colours of the present are the sounds and colours of later ages. As regards beasts and birds, plants and trees, the goodness and wickedness of men, we learn to understand antiquity from the present, and from what is now infer what is to come. Between a thousand years back and ten thousand generations hereafter there is no diversity. In investigating remotest antiquity and in inquiring into future ages, in such matters as civilization and primitive simplicity, or water and fire, Worthies and Sages are equal. In observing omens and noticing signs as well as in drawing schemes showing people's destiny, Worthies and Sages are equal. Meeting with anomalies, they know their names and have no doubts about them, Worthies no less than Sages.

Things that may be known Worthies and Sages equally know, and things that may not be known, Sages do not comprehend either. I prove it thus :

Suppose that a Sage by mental abstraction foresees a rainfall, then his nature excels in one thing, but if his understanding does not reach to the

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<sup>1</sup> See Vol. I, p. 475.

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remotest principles with all their details, it is not worth speaking of. What we speak of is the gift of prescience, and an intelligent mind, completely understanding the natures of all creatures, and fully apprehending thousands of important methods. If somebody is familiar with one thing, but not with the second, or if he knows the left and ignores the right, he is one-sided and imperfect, crippled in mind and not accomplished, and not what we call a Sage. Should he pass for a Sage it would be evident that a Sage has no superiority, and men like *Chan Ho* would be Sages, as *Confucius* and his equals are considered Sages. Then Sages would not distinguish themselves from Worthies, or Worthies come short of Sages.

If Worthies and Sages both possess many abilities, wherefore are Sages held in higher respect than Worthies ? If they are both dependent on their schemes and devices, why do not Worthies come up to the standard of Sages ? As a matter of fact, neither Worthies nor Sages are apt to know the nature of things, and want their ears and eyes, in order to ascertain their real character. Ears and eyes being thus indispensable, things that may be known are determined by reflexion, and things that may not be known are explained after inquiry. If things under Heaven or worldly affairs may be found out by reflexion, even the stupid can open their minds, if, however, they are unintelligible, even Sages with the highest intelligence cannot make anything out of them.

*Confucius* said

[— I have been the whole day without eating, and the whole night without sleeping — occupied with thinking. It was of no use. The better plan is to learn.] <sup>1</sup>

Those things under Heaven which are incomprehensible are like knots that cannot be undone. By instruction one learns how to untie them, and there are no knots but can be undone. In case they cannot be untied, even instruction does not bring about this result. Not that instruction does not qualify to undo knots, but it may be impossible to untie them, and the method of undoing

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects XV, 30 \[Couvreur\]](#).

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them is of no use <sup>1</sup>.

The Sage knowing things, things must be knowable, if, however, things are unknowable, neither the Sage can understand them. Not that a Sage could not know them, but things may prove incomprehensible, and the knowing faculty cannot be used. Therefore things hard to grasp may be attained by learning, whereas unknowable things cannot be comprehended, neither by inquiry, nor by study.

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<sup>1</sup> There are things plain and intelligible by reflexion, others require instruction to be understood, and many remain incomprehensible in spite of learning, baffling all our endeavours.



## CHAPTER XIV

### A Definition of Worthies

80. XXVII, I. *Ting-hsien*

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p2.129 Sages are difficult to know, and it is much easier to recognise a Worthy than a Sage. Ordinary people are unable to recognise a Worthy, how then could they find out a Sage ? Although they pretend to know Worthies, this is a random statement. But from what signs may Worthies be known, and by what method ?

Are officials holding high positions and being wealthy and honoured to be looked upon as Worthies ?

Wealth and honour are heavenly fate. Those who by fate are wealthy and honoured, are not Worthies, nor can those who by fate are poor and miserable be held to be depraved. Should wealth and honour be made the criterion of virtue and vice, then officials would have to rely solely on their abilities, and not on fate.

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Are those Worthies who in serving their sovereign take care to gloss over everything and never to give offence ?

These are those pliant courtiers, sycophants, and favourites who never say a word, without considering its effect upon their master, and in all their doings are opportunists. They never show any backbone, or dare to make opposition, and consequently never run the risk of being dismissed or cashiered. Or they have a stately and handsome bodily frame and a pleasing appearance, so that the emperor does not look at them with disfavour, which assures their good fortune, for they enjoy the imperial grace to an extraordinary degree. Still they cannot be called Worthies.

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Are those Worthies whom the government chooses for employment, and

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who thus come to honour ?

Of those who make a show of themselves and are known to others, a great many are promoted, whereas those living in obscurity and retirement and unknown to the world, very seldom are recommended. This was the case with *Shun*. *Yao* wishing to employ <sup>p2.130</sup> him, first inquired about *Kun* and *Kung Kung*<sup>1</sup>. Thus even the chiefs of the mountains<sup>2</sup> were unqualified. Therefore, the selection and promotion of a man does not inform us about his real character. Sometimes men of superior virtue are recommended by very few persons, whereas a great many intercede for men of inferior talents. An enlightened ruler, wishing to employ good men, in order to find out whether they are really good or bad, inquires into the faults of all those introduced to him.

Moreover, he who consorts with many people and tries to win the heart of the masses, is generally liked and praised. On the other side, whoever is so pure and upright, that he does not feel at home with his own kindred, and whose lofty aspirations preclude any intimacy with low characters, loses the general sympathy, and people dislike and slander him. Thus, a name is often won by the art of ingratiating one's self, and defamation often a consequence of the loss of sympathy.

King *Wei* of *Chi*<sup>3</sup> enfeoffed the great officer of *Chi-mo*<sup>4</sup>, in spite of his having been slandered, and caused the great officer of *O*<sup>5</sup> to be boiled, notwithstanding his fame. The former had great merits, but no fame, whereas the latter had done nothing, but was very celebrated<sup>6</sup>.

[*Tse Kung* asked how a person was who was liked by all his fellow-

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<sup>1</sup> *Yao* inquired in open court whom he might employ. First *Kun* and *Kung Kung* were recommended to him, but not thought well qualified. At last *Shun* was mentioned to him. See *Shuking* Part I, 10 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 23](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> Title of the chief ministers of which *Kun* and *Kung Kung* were two. Cf. [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 50, Note 1](#).

<sup>3</sup> 378-343 B. C.

<sup>4</sup> In *Shantung*, near *Kiao-chou*.

<sup>5</sup> In the *T'ai-an* prefecture of *Shantung*.

<sup>6</sup> This story is told in full in the *Shi-chi* chap. 46, p. 7v. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. V, p. 243](#)). In addition to the governor of *O*, all the sycophants about him were thrown into a cauldron and boiled.

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villagers. *Confucius* replied that that was not sufficient. He then asked again about a man hated by all his fellow-villagers. The master replied that that would not do either. The best thing would be, if all the good ones among the villagers esteemed and all the bad ones amongst them hated him.] <sup>1</sup> Accordingly, it does not follow that a person praised and belauded by the majority, whom big and small, all declare to be a man of honour, is a Worthy. If the good speak well of him, and the wicked disparage him, so that one half defames, the other extols him, he may be a Worthy.

p2.131 Then, provided that a man meet with the approval of the virtuous and be vilified by the wicked, may we see a Worthy in him ?

Thus Worthies would be recognised conformably to the principle laid down by *Confucius*. But we do not know whether he who praises somebody be virtuous, or whether another speaking ill of him, be a bad man. It happens that those who praise are wicked, and that those disparaging are good. People are thus led astray and cannot draw a distinction.

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May those be taken for Worthies to whom the masses turn and who assemble hosts of guests and retainers ?

Those to whom the masses turn are oftentimes persons having intercourse with many people. The public likes and esteems them and turns to them in great numbers. Either are they noble and exalted, and may be of use, or they are partial to warriors and condescending to guests, forgetting their dignity and waiting upon Worthies. The princes of *Hsin Ling*, *Mêng Ch'ang*, *P'ing Yuan*, and *Ch'un Shên* <sup>2</sup> entertained thousands of guests and were called worthy peers and great generals, but *Wei Ch'ing* <sup>3</sup> and *Ho Ch'ü Ping* <sup>4</sup> had not a single guest in their houses and, nevertheless, were celebrated generals. Thus many guests and followers assemble in the palaces of kind and condescending princes and of Worthies who may be useful or

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects XIII, 24 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> About these men see Vol. I, p. 501, Note 2.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 169.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. I, p. 364, Note 5.

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dangerous. If somebody is not fond of soldiers he must not be held in low repute for that, although the masses do not turn to him, and the warriors do not follow him.

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Is he a Worthy who is in a position to govern others, and who wins people's hearts to such an extent, that they sing songs in his praise ?

To gain the affections of the people does not differ from currying favour with the warriors. Propitiating the people by empty favours, one takes their fancy, and they are pleased and happy. We may adduce *T'ien Ch'êng Tse* of *Ch'i* <sup>1</sup> and King *Kou Chien* of *Yüeh* <sup>2</sup> as examples. *T'ien Ch'êng Tse* wishing to usurp the <sup>p2.132</sup> authority in *Ch'i*, would use a big bushel, while lending out grain, and a small one, when taking it back, so that people were enchanted. *Kou Chien*, with a view to wiping out the disgrace of *Kuei-chi* <sup>3</sup>, insinuated himself with his people by condoling, when somebody had died, and inquiring after people's health, so that all were charmed. Both had their own selfish ends, for which they needed the support of others, and merely humbugged their people. There was no sincerity in them, yet people were contented.

The prince of *Mêng-Ch'ang* <sup>4</sup> wished to pass through a gate of *Ch'in* during the night, but the cocks had not yet crowed, and the gate was not yet open. One of his inferior retainers, who occupied a low position, beat his arm <sup>5</sup> and imitated the cock-crow, when all the cocks responded, and the gate was thrown open, so that the prince could pass <sup>6</sup>. As cocks can be moved by false sounds, so men may be imposed upon by fictitious grace, and as men are subject to such impostures, even Heaven may be induced to respond, by tricks. In order to stir up the heavenly fluid, the spirit should be used, but people will employ burning glasses, to attract the fire from the sky.

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<sup>1</sup> A noble in *Ch'i*, whose descendants, later on, became dukes of *Ch'i*. He died about 460 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> He came to the throne in 496 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> On Mount *Kuei-chi* he had been surrounded by the king of *Wu*, and had to sue for peace.

<sup>4</sup> See above p. 131, Note 1.

<sup>5</sup> The noise thus made probably served to produce the crow.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. the biography of *Mêng Ch'ang* in the *Shi-chi* chap. 75, p. 4v.

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By melting five Stones and moulding an instrument in the fifth month, in the height of summer, one may obtain fire. But now people merely take knives and swords or crooked blades of common copper, and, by rubbing them and holding them up against the sun, they likewise get fire. As by burning glasses, knives, swords, and blades one may obtain fire from the sun <sup>1</sup>, so even ordinary men, being neither Worthies nor Sages, can influence the fluid of Heaven, as *Tung Chung Shu* was convinced that by a clay dragon he could attract the clouds and rain, and he had still some reason for this belief <sup>2</sup>. If even those who in this manner conform to the working of Heaven, cannot be termed Worthies, how much less have those a claim to this name who barely win people's hearts ?

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May he be considered a Worthy who, holding office, achieves merit and proves successful ?

p2.133 But what is to be accounted merit or success of an office bearer ? That the populace turn to him ? However, the masses can be won by feigned favours.

When the *Yin* and the *Yang* are in harmony, there is a time of public peace. At such periods of harmony, even the depraved fall in with general tranquillity, whereas in times of unrest, even Sages are involved in catastrophes. Should the harmony of the *Yin* and the *Yang* determine the worthy or unworthy character of a man, then *Yao* ought to have been degraded owing to the Great Flood, and *T'ang* should have been thrown into the background in view of the Great Drought.

If merit and success be regarded as action, then merit appears and manifests itself by the activity of the body. But the success of designs based on principles is invisible and not apparent. The drum does not belong to the Five Sounds, but the Five Sounds <sup>3</sup> do not accord without a drum <sup>4</sup>. The

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<sup>1</sup> See Vol. I, p. 378.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. chap. XXXII.

<sup>3</sup> The Five Notes of the Chinese musical scale.

<sup>4</sup> The drum plays an important part in Chinese music.

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teacher has no place in the Five Degrees of Mourning, but they do not become practical without a teacher <sup>1</sup>. Water does not belong to the Five Colours, but in default of water the latter do not shine <sup>2</sup>. So principles are the root of merit, and merit is the upshot of principles. If people be called Worthies because of their merits, they would be the unworthy ones of the Taoists <sup>3</sup>.

When *Kao Tsu* came to the throne he rewarded the merits of all his ministers, and *Hsiao Ho* got the highest prize, because the acknowledgement of merit by *Kao Tsu* was like a hunt, when the hunter lets loose his dog. The dog alone catches the beast, but the hunter has the merit of it. All the ministers of the emperor took a personal part in the war like the dog, but *Hsiao Ho* did the chief part like the hunter. If those pass for Worthies who have achieved merit, then *Hsiao Ho* had no merit. Consequently merit and reward cannot be proofs of worth. That is the first objection.

p2.134 Sages and Worthies have their methods of governing the world. He who knows these principles obtains merit, he who ignores them fails like a physician curing a disease. Possessing a prescription, he may cure even a serious illness, without it he cannot even remove small ulcers <sup>4</sup>. A prescription is like a method, a disease like a disorder ; the physician corresponds to the official, and his physics to reforms. The prescription is used, and the physic administered, and so a method is employed, and reforms carried out. By these reforms disorder is stopped, and by the use of physics a disease is cured. A drug curing a disease must not of necessity be better than another without these medical properties, and an official qualified to govern a State is not necessarily worthier than another without such ability. A prescription may be obtained by chance, and a man may happen to know a certain method.

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<sup>1</sup> The teacher has to inculcate them.

<sup>2</sup> Quotation from the *Liki, Hsiao-chi* ([Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVIII, p. 90](#)) [[Couvreur](#)], but with slight alterations.

<sup>3</sup> The Taoists despise external merit.

<sup>4</sup> This expression is nowhere explained, the *Appendix* to the *Pei-wên-yün-fu* merely cites this passage. [ ] means an ulcer on the legs, but what is a 'hare ulcer' ? From the opposition to [ ] [ ] we may infer that it is some small disease, perhaps only an excoriation, which the Germans call 'wolf'.

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The administration of a State requires a method to secure success, but there are also times of a natural disorder, when no methods are of any use to bring about anything ; and there are other times, when, by nature, peace must prevail, and merit may be achieved even without any method. Thus statesmen hitting upon the proper time, may accomplish their ends, when they lose it, they fail. Men possessing some method may achieve merit in accordance with time, but are not apt to bring about peace in opposition to the right time.

Good physicians may save the life of a man who is not yet about to die, but when his life-time is finished and his span terminated, no prescriptions are of any avail whatever. When there is to be a revolution, even *Yao* and *Shun* cannot accomplish anything with all their methods, and when a person is doomed to die, even the medicaments of *Pien Ch'io* cannot cure his illness.

Archers and charioteers as well as other artisans and handicraftsmen all have their methods, by means of which they acquire merit, and do business, so that their success becomes visible. Statesmen must be looked upon as being on a level with handicraftsmen. The achievement of merit being like the doing of business, then if those having merit be called Worthies, all handicraftsmen must likewise be Worthies.

*Shou Wang* of *Wu-ch'iu* <sup>1</sup>, a native of *Chao* <sup>2</sup>, was an expectant *hanlin* in the time of the emperor *Wu Ti* <sup>3</sup>. The sovereign bade him follow *Tung Chung Shu* and receive the *Ch'un-ch'iu* from him. His talents were of the highest order, and he thoroughly understood business. Subsequently he became military governor of *Tung-chün* <sup>4</sup>, and, in view of his excellence, the emperor did not appoint a civil governor <sup>5</sup>. But at one time military expeditions had to be organized, the people were in excitement, the year was bad, and robbers and thieves were rampant. Then the emperor sent a letter to *Shou Wang* running thus,

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<sup>1</sup> The *Han-shu* has the first reading.

<sup>2</sup> State in *Shansi*.

<sup>3</sup> *Han Wu Ti*, 140-87 B. C.

<sup>4</sup> A circuit in northern *Honan*.

<sup>5</sup> *Shou Wang* filled both posts, that of a [ ] *tu-wei*, military governor and of a *tai-shou*, civil governor.

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« When you were in my presence, you became the centre of all our deliberations, and I imagined that you had not your equal in the world, and that there were not two men like you within the Four Seas. You were given the control of more than ten cities, and your post was a double one of 4 000 piculs <sup>1</sup>. What is the reason that now robbers and thieves on boats attack my arsenals to seize their arms, and that the present time so little tallies with the past ?

*Shou Wang*, by way of excuse, said that there was nothing to be done. He again was appointed commander of the Imperial Palace and constantly kept about His Majesty <sup>2</sup>. All his judgments and proposals were sound and just, so great were his talents, and so profound his knowledge. He understood everything and had the greatest experience. Albeit yet during his administration of *Tung-chün*, the year was bad, robberies and thefts were rampant, and the excitement of the people could not be stopped. I wonder whether *Shou Wang* did not know a method for governing *Tung-chün*, or whether this province had just again to pass through a revolution, and the administration of *Shou Wang* just coincided with this time ?

Thus even a worthy like *Shou Wang* in his administration of *Tung-chün* could not achieve merit. Should Worthies be judged <sup>p2.136</sup> by their achievements, then even a *Shou Wang* would be rejected and not be promoted. I am afraid that in the world there are a great many persons of the type of *Shou Wang*, yet the critics are unable to see the value of people in default of their merits.

In *Yen* there was a valley where in consequence of cold air the Five Grains did not grow. *Tsou Yen* by blowing the flute attracted a fluid by which the cold was changed into heat, so that in *Yen* they could sow millet, and the millet grew in great abundance. Up till now the valley bears the name of 'millet valley' <sup>3</sup>. The harmonisation of the *Yin* and the *Yang* requires the most exquisite wisdom and virtue, yet by *Tsou Yen's* blowing the flute the cold

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<sup>1</sup> The income of a military governor was of 2 000 piculs and that of a civil one the same amount.

<sup>2</sup> So far the text literally agrees with the biography of *Shou Wang* in the *Ch'ien Han-shu* chap. 64a, p. 13v.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 114.



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valley became warm, and grain and millet sprouted luxuriantly. Accordingly, all who have achieved merit have a method like *Tsou Yen* blowing the flute. Consequently, if they are in possession of some system, even the wicked are successful, and many Worthies and Sages would be unfitted for government in case they have not the proper method. Therefore merit is no criterion of virtue. This is the second point.

When people undertake something their will may be most earnest, still they have no success. Their plan is not carried out though their energy would pierce a mountain. Such was the case of *Ching K'o* and of the physician *Hsia Wu Chü*.

*Ching K'o* entered *Ch'in* with the intention to rob the king of *Ch'in* and convey him alive to *Yen*, but meeting with an unlucky accident, he was himself caught in *Ch'in*. When he was pursuing the king of *Ch'in*, who ran round a pillar, the surgeon *Hsia Wu Chü* hit him with his medicine bag, nevertheless *Ching K'o* won world-wide fame as a hero. The king of *Ch'in* rewarded *Hsia Wu Chü* with two hundred *yi*<sup>1</sup> of gold<sup>2</sup>. Being himself arrested in *Ch'in*, the planned capture and conveyance of the king alive could not be accomplished by *Ching K'o*, and the hitting a would-be assassin with a medicine bag, served to save the king's life. Yet either of them was praised or rewarded, owing to the great sincerity of the one, and the wonderful strength of the other. The scholars of the world did not forbear extolling the honesty of *Ching K'o* though he did not accomplish his object, and the king of *Ch'in* rewarded *Hsia Wu Chü* although his action had no consequence.

p2.137 The purpose being good, it matters not whether a result be achieved, and an idea being excellent, one does not think of the outcome. In case an idea is admirable, but the success inadequate, or a purpose grand, but the result small, the wise will reward, and the unwise, punish. If one always has the success in view, no account being taken of the intention, and if only the outward result is insisted upon, without paying attention to the inward motives, then the story of *Yü Jang*<sup>3</sup> drawing his sword and cutting the

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<sup>1</sup> One *yi* of gold equal to 20 ounces.

<sup>2</sup> For a more detailed account see Vol. I, p. 503.

<sup>3</sup> His second attempt to assassinate the viscount *Hsiang* of *Chao* having failed, he

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cloak of Viscount *Hsiang*, would not be worth mentioning, *Wu Tse Hsü's* flogging the corpse of King *P'ing* <sup>1</sup>, would not be worthy of note, and *Chang Liang's* dealing a blow at *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* and, by mistake, hitting the accompanying cart <sup>2</sup>, would have no interest.

All three had to suffer from unfavourable circumstances and could not accomplish their designs. They had the power, but not the success ; they formed plans, but could not carry them out. Therefore Worthies cannot be gauged by their merits. This is the third objection.

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Then can people become Worthies by their filial piety towards their father, or their brotherly behaviour towards their elder brothers ? In that case a dutiful son and a good brother must have a father or an elder brother. These two being unkind, then their filial piety or brotherly love become manifest. *Shun* had *Ku Sou*, and *Tsêng Shên* had *Tsêng Hsi* as father. Thus the filial piety could become apparent, and their fame was established, so that everybody belauded them. If, however, there be no father or elder brother, or if these be kind and good, there is no occasion to show these virtues, and the name of a dutiful son or a good brother cannot be acquired.

Loyalty to one's sovereign is similar to this : The loyalty of *Lung Fêng* <sup>3</sup> and *Pi Kan* <sup>4</sup> shone forth in *Hsia* and *Yin*, because *Chieh* <sub>p2.138</sub> and *Chou* were both wicked, whereas the fealty of *Chi* <sup>5</sup>, *Hsieh* <sup>6</sup>, and *Kao Yao* <sup>7</sup> remained

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asked permission to pass his sword through the cloak of the viscount, which was granted him. Having thus revenged his master, Earl *Chih*, symbolically, he committed suicide. See also Vol. I, p. 358, Note 1.

<sup>1</sup> King *P'ing* of *Ch'u*, who had put to death the father and elder brother of *Wu Tse Hsü* (*Wu Yuan*). The latter fled to *Wu*, inveighed the prince of this State to an expedition against *Ch'u*, which was vanquished. As victor *Wu Tse Hsü* caused the grave of King *P'ing* to be opened and his corpse to be publicly flogged.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 235.

<sup>3</sup> *Kuan Lung Fêng*, a minister of *Chieh Kuei*, who remonstrated with him and therefore was put to death.

<sup>4</sup> For having dared to object to the excesses of *Chou*, the last emperor of the *Yin* dynasty, *Pi Kan* had a similar fate as *Kuan Lung Fêng*. Cf. Vol. I, p. 485, Note 6.

<sup>5</sup> The ancestor of the *Chou* dynasty.

<sup>6</sup> Minister of *Shun*.

<sup>7</sup> Minister of *Shun*.

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concealed in *T'ang* and *Yü*<sup>1</sup>, since *Yao* and *Shun* themselves were virtuous. As the light of a glow-worm is eclipsed by the effulgence of the sun and the moon, so the name of a loyal official is overshadowed by the renown of his virtuous sovereign.

To die for a prince in disgrace, and to sacrifice oneself for him, falls under the same head. When an officer just happens to live at such a time and dies for his lord, his righteousness becomes known, and he earns great fame. A great Worthy, however, passes through this life, flying about and settling down and rising on apprehending some danger<sup>2</sup>. The ruin of a perishing prince does not involve him, nor does the calamity of a tottering State affect his family. Then, how should he meet with such a misfortune, or share the disaster of his lord ?

*Chan* of *Ch'i* asked *Yen Tse*<sup>1</sup> how a loyal minister had to serve his master. The other replied,

— So that he does not die with him nor see him off, when he leaves his country to go into exile.

— If a man, rejoined *Chan*, who has been given plenty of land and been the recipient of many honours lavishly bestowed upon him by his sovereign, if such a one does not die for his prince, when the latter is ruined, nor see him off, when he leaves his country, how can he be called loyal ?

— How can, said *Yen Tse*, a minister die, provided that his advice be followed ? Or how can he see the prince off, provided that his remonstrances be effective, so that his sovereign is never in his whole life compelled to quit the country ? If his advice be rejected, and the minister die for his lord, this would be a reckless death, and if his remonstrances be repudiated, and the minister see off his sovereign going into exile, this would be deception. Thus a loyal minister may share the happiness of his prince, but he cannot be engulfed with him in the same catastrophe.

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<sup>1</sup> *T'ang* and *Yü* were the territories of *Yao* and *Shun*.

<sup>2</sup> Allusion to *Analects* X, 18.

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According to this reply of *Yen Tse*, in seeking the Worthies of this world, those who die, because their sovereign is ruined, and thereupon base their claim to loyalty, do not count. Great Worthies have few accomplishments that may be named, and small Worthies do many things worthy of praise. Such faults <sup>p2.139</sup> for which people may be bamboosed, are only small ones, and so are all quantities that may be measured : For the greatest crimes the bamboo is not sufficient, and for the greatest quantities pints and bushels will not do. Inferior actions are easily described, and they usually occur in times of decay, when they are easily recognised. Thus virtuous acts are manifest, and their fame is heard of <sup>2</sup>.

Floating on the ocean, one may be thrown to the east or the west owing to the vastness of the water ; navigating on a creek, one knows the traces left by the oars of the boats on account of its smallness <sup>3</sup>. Small things are easy to see and, in times of disorder, easily brought to light. As long as an age is not in jeopardy, remarkable deeds are not taken any notice of, and unless the ruler be wayward and perverse, loyalty cannot be exhibited. The highest and noblest feelings are displayed under a *régime* at the verge of ruin, and the purest and finest acts done in an epoch of universal decay <sup>4</sup>.

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Are those Worthies who safeguard themselves from all injuries, so that they do not suffer any punishments like *Nan Jung* who was afraid about the white sceptre-stone <sup>5</sup> ?

To avoid all injuries is chance and a propitious fate. They are not to be prevented by abilities and knowledge, or to be averted by repressive measures. A divine snake may be cut in two and again grow together, but it

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<sup>1</sup> An officer of *Ch'i*, 6th century B. C., who died 493 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> These sentiments savour a good deal of Taoism.

<sup>3</sup> On a small sheet of water one knows exactly the course one has taken but not on the ocean where east and west become uncertain.

<sup>4</sup> Great virtue becomes visible by contrast and shines forth when there is wickedness all around.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Analects XI, 5* [*Couvreur*]. *Nan Jung*, to whom *Confucius* married the daughter of his elder brother. He used to repeat the lines of the *Shiking* 'A flaw in a white sceptre-stone may be ground away ; but for a flaw in speech nothing can be done'. See *Legge, Classics Vol. I*, p. 238, Note 5.

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cannot hinder men from cutting it, and so may Sages and Worthies be pressed hard and again liberated, but they cannot prevail upon others not to injure them. *Nan Jung* could free himself from capital punishment, but *Kung Yeh*, though quite innocent, was loaded with fetters <sup>1</sup>. *Chü Po Yü* <sup>2</sup> could preserve his principles in a degenerate State, whereas *Wên Wang* was kept a prisoner in *Yu-li* and *Confucius* endangered in *Ch'ên* and *Tsai* <sup>3</sup>. These are not disasters brought about by one's own <sup>p2.140</sup> doings and coming down upon a man, but unavoidable calamities in which he becomes implicated. This impossibility of avoiding calamities is like the inability to prolong one's life. The allotted span being terminated, no Worthy can extend it of his own accord, and when the time is perilous, no Sage is apt to save himself.

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Are those to be deemed Worthies who quit their country, giving up their dignity, and who reject wealth and honour, preferring penury and misery ?

To quit one's own country, one must be under compulsion, as *Po Yi* <sup>4</sup> was, who yielded the State to his brother, lest he should be suspected of struggling with him for his share. When the Old King *Tan Fu* <sup>5</sup> had fought several battles, his people all quitted the country. One gives up one's dignity, when one's principles prove impracticable, and one does not obtain one's ends. As long as his principles are successful, and his aims attained, nobody thinks of renouncing his dignity. Thus, for quitting one's country and giving up one's dignity one always has one's reasons. If such persons be called Worthies, are those not affected by similar reasons, to be termed unworthy ?

Moreover, only in case there is a State or a dignity, they may be abandoned and parted with, but there being no State or any high dignity, how can they be rejected ?

The spending of wealth and giving their share to those below, is similar to

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. [Analects V, I \[Couvreur\]](#). To *Kung Yeh Ch'ang Confucius* gave his daughter to wife.

<sup>2</sup> See Vol. I, p. 66, Note 2.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. I, p. 499, Note 2.

<sup>4</sup> See Vol. I, p. 168, Note 2.

<sup>5</sup> The grandfather of *Wên Wang*, founder of the *Chou* dynasty, who removed his capital in consequence of the constant raids of barbarian tribes.

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this. But if there really be no wealth, what can be given away ? When the mouth is hungry, what can be yielded to others ?

While the granaries are full, people know rites and ceremonies, and when food and clothing are sufficient, one is sensible of honour and disgrace. Unselfishness grows from abundance, and strife is engendered by scarcity <sup>1</sup>. People may sometimes share their wealth with others. The general *Yuan* <sup>2</sup> again divided his <sub>p2.141</sub> family property with his nephew, and many saw in this a great kindness and generosity.

At the foot of Mount *K'un* <sup>3</sup>, jade is as common as pebbles, and on the banks of Lake *P'êng-li*, they feed dogs and pigs with fish. Provided that a liberal man whose wealth is like the jade of Mount *K'un* and the fish of Lake *P'êng-li* <sup>4</sup> again divide his family property, this would not be sufficient.

If *Han Hsin* sent food to the village elder in *Nan-ch'ang* <sup>5</sup>, did he part with his wealth ? And does the fact that *Yen Yuan* contented himself with a bamboo dish of rice and a gourd dish of drink <sup>6</sup> constitute a renunciation of his property ?

*Kuan Chung*, in dividing money, took the greater part for himself. Being very poor and destitute, he did not possess disinterestedness, and his moral sense was weakened <sup>7</sup>.

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Is it possible to become a Worthy by avoiding the world and keeping aloof from all that is common, purifying one's self and one's actions ? That would be much the same as abandoning one's country and giving up one's dignity.

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<sup>1</sup> Virtues, as it were, are luxuries ; to practise them, people must at least be provided with the necessities of life. The state of morality, to a great extent, depends on purely economical conditions.

<sup>2</sup> I only found one *Yuan Ch'ang* whom *Wang Ch'ung* may have in view, a contemporary of his who, during the reign of *Ho Ti*, 89-105 B. C., was appointed general.

<sup>3</sup> The same as the *K'un-lun*. The Yellow River is believed to have its source in Mount *K'un*. See also Vol. I, p. 254.

<sup>4</sup> Old name of the *Poyang* Lake.

<sup>5</sup> Now capital of *Kiangsi* Province.

<sup>6</sup> Allusion to [Analects VI, 9](#) [Couvreur].

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 133.

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Wealth and honour are generally coveted, and big posts and high rank are a source of pleasure. To abandon them and retire can only be the consequence of a life full of disappointments and of the failure of one's plans.

*Ch'ang Chü* and *Chieh Ni* <sup>1</sup> both left the world to live in retirement. *Po Yi* and the recluse of *Wu Ling* <sup>2</sup> rejected honour and put up with meanness. But this was not their real desire.

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May those be looked upon as Worthies who are unpassionate and desireless, who do not care to fill an office, merely wishing to preserve their bodies and cultivate their natures ?

These are men like *Lao Tse*. The *Taoists* belong to another class than the Worthies. The sorrow for the world and the wish to help people in their difficulties, were a cause of great agitation for <sup>p2.142</sup> *Confucius*, and gave much trouble to *Mê Tse* <sup>3</sup>. Those who do not co-operate with *Confucius* and *Mê Tse* and, on the other side, in their dealings follow *Huang Ti* and *Lao Tse*, are not Worthies <sup>4</sup>.

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Are those to be considered Worthies who carry on righteousness a thousand Li and who as teachers, making friends, never disregard propriety ?

Then people belonging to rich families and living in opulence, who, besides, have strong and powerful muscles, would best meet these requirements. The weak are unable to carry on propriety, and the feeble, unfit to travel very far, and therefore would not come up to it. Families with heaps of gold do not lack friends even outside their country, and States of a thousand chariots <sup>5</sup> never stand in need of allies, for they have always enough to spend. If food were as common as water and fire, then even the

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<sup>1</sup> Two hermits of *Ch'u* met by *Confucius*. See [Analects XVIII, 6 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 53, Note 2 and Vol. I, p. 427.

<sup>3</sup> The philosophy of *Confucius*, and in a still higher degree that of *Mê Ti*, propounds altruism, the Taoism, indifference and self-cultivation.

<sup>4</sup> Worthies in the Confucian sense.

<sup>5</sup> War chariots by the number of which the military power of a State was gauged.

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covetous and avaricious would distribute it beyond the frontier of their country. When there are few resources, not a single one of the fundamental rules is fulfilled, whereas, when there is plenty, gifts are made thoughtlessly to thousands of families. It is a very hard task to induce poor people who do not call a peck or a bumper their own to make friends and to spend much.

Men who carry heavy burdens a thousand Li, are strong men whose feats are admired even in distant countries. Their hands and feet are hardened, their faces dark, they do not feel painful diseases, and their skin and sinews must be different from those of other people. If we compare with them such officers as have proved important witnesses to their princes, in so far as no bodily pain could force a confession from their mouths, their flesh and bones must likewise have been very strong. The strong can conceal something and uphold righteousness, the weak speak ill of their time and defame morality.

*Yü Jang*<sup>1</sup> so disfigured himself, that his own wife did not recognise him, *Kuan Kao*<sup>2</sup> was so doubled up, that not a single p2.143 piece of flesh on his body was left uninjured. Both must have had bodies different from those of other people, whence their proceedings were not like those of the majority either<sup>3</sup>.

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Are those Worthies who know the Classics, have many pupils, and attract the masses ?

Those well versed in the Classics are the Literati, and one becomes literate by study. The Literati have studied, and students are the same as the Literati. They transmit the doctrines of former teachers, and learn the oral precepts of their professors, to impart them to others. But they have no original ideas in their heads, and are unfit to argue the *pros* and *cons* of a question. In this respect they resemble postmen conveying letters, and door-keepers

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<sup>1</sup> See above p. 137 and Vol. I, p. 358.

<sup>2</sup> A minister of *Chao* who intended to assassinate *Han Kao Tsu*. This plan was discovered, and *Kuan Kao* with all his accomplices and relations to the third degree, were executed. Cf. Vol. I, p. 117 and *Shi-chi* chap. 8, p. 32r. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 391 and 392](#)).

<sup>3</sup> Virtue and self-sacrifice are easier for persons with a strong constitution than for weak ones. They have more courage and feel bodily pain much less.



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transmitting an order. As long as the covers are intact, so that no part of the letter is lost, and that orders are taken care of and not tampered with, they have done their duty. The scholars transmit the teachings of the ancients, without altering a single word, so that the old sayings of former teachers have been preserved down to the present day. Yet, although they have followers a hundred and more, and themselves have obtained the rank of professors and academicians, they are on a level with postmen and door-keepers <sup>1</sup>.

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May those be called Worthies who possess a vast knowledge of things ancient and modern, and remember all sorts of secret records and chronicles ?

They rank but after the scholars above mentioned. Whoever possesses great talents and many interests, will devote himself to study, and never flag, like heirs specially provided with everything who, in possession of all the writings left by their forefathers, are thus enabled to complete these works, perusing and reciting them, as archivists do their papers. They are like the Grand Annalist and *Liu Tse Chêng* who, being in charge of all the records, have become famous for their great learning and vast erudition.

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May those be deemed Worthies who, by their wonderful influence and cunning, are apt to command troops and lead the masses ?

p2.144 They would be men like *Han Hsin* <sup>2</sup>, who in contending States win laurels and become celebrated generals ; but in peaceful times they cannot exert themselves and plunge into disastrous adventures. When the high-flying bird is dead, they store the good bow away, and after the cunning hare has been caught, the good greyhound is cooked <sup>3</sup>. A potent and wily officer is like the bow used for the high-flying bird and the greyhound chasing the cunning

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<sup>1</sup> A hard word, but true, even of many of our philologists.

<sup>2</sup> One of the Three Heroes to whom the accession of the *Han* dynasty is due. See p. 119, Note 6.

<sup>3</sup> An old adage which was used by *Fan Li*, minister of *Yüeh*, 5th cent B. C. Cf. Vol. I, p. 310, and also by *Han Hsin*, when he was seized and arraigned for high-treason.

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hare. In times of peace, there is no use for him, wherefore the bow is stored away, and the dog, cooked. In peaceful times, the ruler does not disdain such an officer, or slight a hero, but he cannot give that assistance to the sovereign which the time requires.

Had the talent of *Han Hsin* been so versatile, that he could have acted like *Shu Sun T'ung*<sup>1</sup>, he would never have planned an insurrection nor miserably perished by execution<sup>2</sup>. He was endowed with strength and heroism, but had not the wisdom of preserving peace ; he knew all the devices to marshal troops, but did not see the benefits of a settled state. Living in a time of peace, he plotted a rebellion, whereby he was deprived of his glory, lost his country, and did not obtain the name of a Worthy.

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Are those Worthies who are able debaters with sweet words and clever speech ?

Then they would resemble *Tse Kung*. As a debater *Tse Kung* surpassed *Yen Yuan*, nevertheless *Confucius* placed him below the latter, because his real talents did not rank so very high.

People very much appreciate an able speaker. Since *Wên Ti* gave his favour mostly to the guardian of the tiger cage, and thought little of the intendants of the imperial parks, *Chang Shih Chih*<sup>3</sup> p2.145 commended *Chou P'o* and *Chang Hsiang-Ju*<sup>4</sup>, and the emperor became aware of his error. Able debaters are like the guardian of the tiger cage and can hardly pass for Worthies.

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Then are Worthies those proficient in penmanship whose style and calligraphy are equally good ?

Penmanship is not much different from speech. What the mouth utters

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 380, Note 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Han Hsin's* plan to seize the Empress *Lü Hou* and the heir-apparent having been divulged, he was decapitated, and his whole family exterminated in B. C. 196.

<sup>3</sup> A high officer of *Wên Ti*, B. C. 179-157.

<sup>4</sup> Both were raised to the rank of marquis.

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becomes a word, and what the pencil writes, a character. The talents of controversialists are not of a very high order, and so the knowledge of clever writers is not very varied.

Furthermore in what must these penmen be well versed ? They must be familiar with office work. Among the office work nothing is more laborious than law-suits. A case being doubtful, a judgment is asked for. There was no better judge in the world than *Chang T'ang* whose writings were very profound, yet at the court of the *Han* he was not accounted a Worthy. The Grand Annalist in his introduction classes him with the cruel, and the proceedings of the cruel are not those of Worthies <sup>1</sup>.

In the forests of *Lu* a woman cried because a tiger had eaten her husband, and it again devoured her son, without her leaving the place, for the government was good and not oppressive, and the officers were not tyrannical <sup>2</sup>. The cruel are of the same type as the oppressive and tyrannical, and it is impossible to take them for Worthies.

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Do those deserve this name who are skilled in panegyrics and irregular verse, writing a pompous and highly polished style ?

*Sse-Ma Hsiang-Ju* <sup>3</sup> and *Yang Tse Yün* <sup>4</sup> would be the right persons. Their style was refined, and their subjects grand, their p2.146 expressions exquisit, and their meaning deep, but they could not find out right and wrong, or discriminate between truth and falsehood. Although their diction was as brilliant as brocade and embroidery, and as deep as the *Yellow River* and the *Han*, the people did not learn thereby the difference between right and wrong, nor did they help to bring about reforms aiming at the furtherance of truth.

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 62, Note 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Confucius* met this woman near the *T'ai-shan*, while proceeding to *Ch'i*. He sent *Tse Lu* to question her, and was told that formerly her husband's father had been devoured by a tiger, then her husband, and last her son. *Confucius* then said to his disciples, 'Remember this my children. Oppressive government is more terrible than tigers'. *Liki* ([Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 190](#)) [[Couvreur](#)] and the Family Sayings of *Confucius*, where *Tse Kung* takes the place of *Tse Lu*.

<sup>3</sup> A distinguished scholar and poet of the 2nd cent. B. C.

<sup>4</sup> The philosopher *Yang Hsiung*. Elsewhere (Vol. I, pp. 81 and 88) *Wang Ch'ung* deals more generously with him.

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May those be called Worthies who live in perfect purity, never submitting to any defilement of their person?

Such are people who flee from the world and avoid all that is vulgar, like *Ch'ang Chü* and *Chieh Ni*<sup>1</sup>. Although they did not shun the company of common people altogether, they lived as if they had left the world, purifying their persons and not serving their sovereign, adhering to their principles and not troubling their fellow-citizens.

A great Worthy lives in this world in such a way, that when the time requires action he acts, and when it demands inaction he remains passive. Considering what is proper and what not, he upon that determines pure and impure actions. *Tse Kung* was yielding, but his goodness was limited; *Tse Lu* liked to receive, and passed for a virtuous man. Yielding is unselfishness and receiving, covetousness. Covetousness is profitable and unselfishness, injurious. Analogically human dealings cannot always be pure and without blemish<sup>2</sup>.

*Po Yi* cannot be considered an ideal. *Confucius* disapproves of him<sup>3</sup>, and he cannot be held to be a Worthy, his doings being opposed to those of a sage.

[Some one inquired of *Confucius* saying,

— What kind of a man is *Yen Yuan* ?

— A benevolent man, replied *Confucius*, and I am not his equal.

— And how is *Tse Kung* ?

— He is an excellent debater, and I do not come up to his standard.

— And *Tse Lu* ?

— He is a hero, said *Confucius*, and I cannot compete with him.

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<sup>1</sup> See above p. 141, Note 6.

<sup>2</sup> Perfect purity is not required to be a Worthy. *Tse Lu* was one in spite of his covetousness.

<sup>3</sup> On the contrary. *Confucius* commends him and calls him a Worthy. See [Analects VII, 14 \[Couvreur\]](#) and [XVI, 12 \[Couvreur\]](#).

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— These three gentlemen are all superior to you, Master, the stranger went on to say, why then do they serve you as their master ?

— I am benevolent, said *Confucius*, and at the same time submit to <sup>p2.147</sup> ill-treatment, I am a clever disputant and a bad speaker, I am bold and timid. It is impossible to interchange the accomplishments of the three gentlemen with my ways.

*Confucius* knew how to use his faculties.] <sup>1</sup> Those who possess high talents and lead a pure life, but ignore how to employ their gifts, are really like imbeciles who do not act at all.

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Consequently, all have their faults, then can the faultless be considered Worthies ?

They would be like those good people of the villages of whom *Mencius* says,

[— If you would blame them, you would find nothing to allege. If you would criticise them, you would have nothing to criticise. They agree with the current customs. They consent with an impure age. Their principles have a semblance of right-heartedness and truth. Their conduct has a semblance of disinterestedness and purity. All men are pleased with them, and they think themselves right, so that it is impossible to proceed with them to the principles of *Yao* and *Shun*. On this account *Confucius* said that those good people of the villages are the thieves of virtue. Because they seem what they really are not, *Confucius* hated them.] <sup>2</sup>

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Then, how are the real Worthies to be recognised, and which method is to be used to acquire this knowledge ? People at large noticing great talents and

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted almost literally from *Huai Nan Tse* XVIII, 17r. Another parallel passage is furnished by *Lieh Tse* IV, 4v [[Couvreur](#)], but its wording is somewhat different and fuller, so that it may have been the archetype for *Huai Nan Tse*. There the questioner is *Tse Hsia*, who inquires about four disciples, adding *Tse Chang*.

<sup>2</sup> *Mencius* Book VII, Part II, 37 [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)].

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brilliant gifts, and that a person has achieved success, call him a Worthy. Accordingly it is very easy to find out, wherefore then should it be difficult to know a Worthy ?

The *Shuking* says,

« To know a man one must be wise, but the emperor finds it difficult <sup>1</sup>.

If a man be called a Worthy in view of his great abilities and extraordinary accomplishments, whence does the difficulty arise which is referred to ? There is a reason for this difficulty. For the emperor *Shun* it was not <sup>p2.148</sup> easy to know men, the statement of ordinary people that they are able to know a Worthy is, therefore, erroneous.

Then are Worthies altogether unrecognisable ? No, they are easy to be recognised. Those who find it an arduous task, do not know how they may be recognised, and therefore put forward this difficulty. A Sage is not easy to know. Knowing his criteria, even persons of moderate abilities may recognise him.

It is like artisans making a vessel. For those who understand their business, it is not difficult, for those who do not understand it, it is not easy. Worthies are more easily recognised than vessels produced. But in the world no difference is made, and true Worthies are mixed up with common scholars. Common scholars, by their eloquence and complaisance, the distinction of the official positions they occupy, and by the marks of conspicuous favour which they may expect, obtain the names of Worthies. The latter live in small alleys, poor and wretched they terminate their lives, having suffered from defamation, although they could not be convicted of any crime.

But, under these circumstances, when may they be recognised ? Wishing to recognise them, one must look at their good hearts. The abilities of Worthies must not of necessity be of a very high order, but their hearts are bright, and though their intellectual power be not very great, they do what is right.

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the *Shiking* Part II, Book III, 2 ; but transposed (*Legge, Classics* Vol. III, Part I, p. 70).

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How then can their hearts be known ? From their speech : those who have a good heart speak good words. They serve to investigate their dealings. Good words are accompanied by good actions. Words and proceedings being right, in governing the family, all relations are assigned their proper places, and in governing the State, high and low have their proper ranks. Those with bad hearts cannot distinguish between white and black, and make no difference between good and bad. Their administration causes disorder and confusion, and their institutions lack the right measure.

Consequently with a good heart a man is always good, and with a bad heart he can never be good. Having a good heart, he is apt to distinguish between right and wrong. The principles of right and wrong being established, and the excellence of the heart in evidence, a person may be poor and wretched, troubled and miserable, his undertakings may fail, and no success be achieved, still he is a Worthy. In government not the result is to be considered, the important thing being whether the means employed are proper, and of actions the effect is not decisive, but it must <sup>p2.149</sup> be hoped that what has been done is correct. This correctness and propriety being manifest, it is not necessary that there be a flow of words or a great many actions. Therefore it has been said :

« Words must not be many, but their meaning must be ascertained ; deeds must not be far-reaching, but their source should be examined.

This signifies that those possessing a well-principled heart, although they be bad speakers and debaters, discuss these questions in their bosoms. Men like the discussion of the heart, and not that of the mouth. When the heart is discussing, the words may be awkward, but no injustice is done. When the mouth is discussing, there are beautiful phrases perhaps, but there is no result. *Confucius* referring to the wickedness of *Shao Chêng Mao* <sup>1</sup> said that his words were bad, but overflowing, and that he conformed to what was wicked, but was very smooth. If people are wicked inwardly, but outwardly are able to dissimulate it, the masses do not see it and take them for

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 362, Note 1.

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Worthies.

As those who are vicious inwardly, but specious, are looked upon as Worthies by the world, so those possessing intrinsic merit who cannot make a show of it, in the eyes of the public are unworthy. When right and wrong are confounded and there is no real government, only a Sage knows it, and when the words and deeds of a man are mostly like those of *Shao Chêng Mao*, only a Worthy perceives it. Much is said in this world in which right and wrong are interchanged, and many things are done in which truth and error are confounded. To discriminate between such erroneous statements and to adjust such a confusion, but Sages and Worthies are qualified.

The heart of a Sage is bright and never beclouded, that of a Worthy well-principled and never perplexed. If this enlightenment be used to inquire into wickedness, it all comes out, and if those principles be employed to weigh the doubts, all doubts become settled, quite another result than that arrived at by the world.

What is the reason that the masses, although the words spoken be true and correct, do not understand this ? It is because they have been too long befooled by common prejudices, that they have not the force to retrace their steps and to follow truth. For this reason true and correct statements are rejected by the people, and all customs departing from the ordinary are criticised by the public.

p2.150 *Kuan Tse*<sup>1</sup> said that a superior man speaking in a hall, fills the hall, and speaking in a room, fills the room. I wonder how his words can fill an apartment. True and correct words being uttered, and the people of the hall all possessing a true and correct knowledge, they afterwards will fill the hall. But how can they fill it, if their knowledge be not true and correct, so that they feel surprised, and find fault with what they hear ?

When songs are very beautiful, there are very few who can sing them in a chorus, and when a speech is to the point, those who approve of it are not many. Falling in with a song and hearing a speech is about the same thing. A song being beautiful, people are not all able to chime in, and a statement

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<sup>1</sup> See Vol. I, p. 73, Note 3.



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being true, not all believe it.

Duke *Wên* of *Lu* sacrificing contrary to the custom, three men went away, and Duke *Ting* having made an offering according to the rules, five men rebelled <sup>1</sup>. Those used to old customs are forward to believe that the rites are not proper.

The number of those who know the rites is very small, and similarly those knowing the truth are but few. How then can the words of a superior man fill halls or rooms ? Therefore, unless it were said of men that they fill the world, one could not see whether the words spoken are true <sup>2</sup>.

The traces of ink and pencil left on boards and tablets, are unmistakable signs. Therefore *Confucius*, not becoming an emperor, composed the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, in order to make known his ideas. Although the *Ch'un-ch'iu* was but a mere literary work, yet it showed that *Confucius* possessed the virtues qualifying him for an emperor. *Confucius* was a Sage, and if the productions of anybody be like those of *Confucius*, this is a sufficient proof of his being a Worthy, though he have not the genius of *Confucius*.

Worthies and Sages walk the same way, but bear different names. When Worthies can be known, it is also possible to discourse on Sages. However, if *Confucius*, upon investigation, had not discovered that the ways of the *Chou* were corrupt, he would <sup>p2.151</sup> not have written the *Ch'un-ch'iu*. The production of this work originated from the corruption of the *Chou*. Had the principles of the *Chou* dynasty not been so degenerate, *Confucius* would not have written the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, yet for that he would not have been without talents, only he would not have had an occasion to write his book.

Consequently, the fact of *Confucius* having written the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, would not be a sufficient proof of his sagehood, and we cannot be sure whether those whose productions are like those of *Confucius* are real Worthies.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 74, Note 6 and *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Ting* 8th year (*Legge, Classics Vol. V, Part II, p. 769 seq.*) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> If, according to the opinion of *Kuan Tse*, the words of a superior man attract so many people, that they fill rooms and halls, then the effect produced on the hearers would be a criterion of truth. In that case the utterances of all the people ought to fill the whole world to be trustworthy. That is impossible, consequently the principle of *Kuan Tse* cannot be right.

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I reply to this objection that, owing to the depravity of the principles of *Chou*, *Confucius* took occasion to write his work, with a view to commending and denouncing right and wrong. He used a right method and did not commit the fault of wrongly condemning or favouring, whence the virtue of *Confucius* becomes evident. In default of utterances, we examine into the writings, and if there be none, we consider the utterances. Had *Confucius* written nothing, there would still be the words which he left behind. Such words have been elicited by something just as literary works have their *raison d'être*. It suffices to examine the quality of the writings, without troubling about their origin.

There are many works current in which no distinction is made between right and wrong, and where truth and falsehood are not determined. *Huan Chün Shan* <sup>1</sup>, in his reflections, may be said to have hit the truth. His discussions are an investigation into the truth. In so far he is a Worthy of the *Han* time.

Before *Ch'ên P'ing* <sup>2</sup> became an officer he cut meat in a village, and he divided the pieces so equally, that his qualification for the post of a prime minister became apparent. Between the cutting of meat and the cutting of words there is no great difference. If *Huan Chün Shan* might have governed the *Han*, *Ch'ên P'ing*, if he had devoted himself to discussions, would have had about the same result as the other. *Confucius* did not become an emperor, but the work of a typical emperor was embodied in the *Ch'un-ch'iu*. And so the traces of *Huan Chün Shan's* fitness to become a typical chief minister, are to be found in his 'New Reflections'.

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<sup>1</sup> See Vol. I, p. 467, Note 7.

<sup>2</sup> One of the Three Heroes of the *Han* time, cf. Vol. I, p. 305, Note 2. On one occasion, being appointed by the village elders to distribute sacrificial meats at the local altar, he performed this duty with such impartiality, that the elders wished he might manage the affairs of the empire in a similar manner.

## CHAPTER XV

### Fictitious Phenomena

17. IV, II. *Pien-hsü*

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p2.152 There is a tradition that [during the time of Duke *Ching* of *Sung*, the Planet *Mars* stood in the constellation of the *Heart* <sup>1</sup>. The duke, alarmed, summoned *Tse Wei* <sup>2</sup> and asked him what it meant that *Mars* was in the *Heart*.

*Tse Wei* replied,

— *Mars* means a punishment of Heaven. *Sung* is that part of the earth which corresponds to the *Heart*. A misfortune is menacing Your Highness. Nevertheless, it can be shifted on the prime minister.

— The prime minister, said the duke, is required for the administration of the State. To bring death upon him would be most unfortunate.

*Tse Wei* suggested that it might be shifted upon the people, but the duke retorted by saying,

— When the people are dead, whom have I to care for ? It is better that I die alone.

*Tse Wei* said that it might be shifted on the year.

— If the people starve, replied the duke, they will perish. Should a ruler of men contrive the death of his people, with a view to preserving his own life, who would still consider me a sovereign ? It is inevitable that my life must come to a close, therefore speak no more of it.

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<sup>1</sup> This phenomenon happened after 480 and before Duke *Ching's* death in 451 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> The astrologer of the court, cf. Vol. I, p. 158, Note 1.

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*Tse Wei* took his leave, but turned to the north, he bowed again and said,

— Your servant begs to congratulate Your Highness. Heaven is on high, but it hears what is below. Your Highness has uttered three maxims worthy of a superior man. Heaven surely will confer upon you three favours. This night the planet will pass through three solar mansions, and the life of Your Highness will increase by 21 years.

Upon the duke inquiring how he knew this, he replied,

— Your Highness has three accomplishments <sup>1</sup>, hence the three favours, p2.153 and the three motions which the planet must make. By each it will pass seven stars <sup>2</sup>. One star is equivalent to one year. Three times seven makes 21. Therefore 21 years will be added to the life of Your Highness. Your servant desires to fall down on the steps of the palace and to await the event. Should the planet not pass, your servant is willing to die.

The same night the planet *Mars* really passed through three solar mansions,] <sup>3</sup> just as *Tse Wei* had predicted <sup>4</sup>. Thus, in fact, the prolongation of the duke's life by 21 years came into effect. Since the planet really passed, this prolongation took place, and, this prolongation being apparent, Heaven rewarded the duke for his goodness. Consequently, if some one be able to act like the duke, he would be sure to obtain the same blessing.

All this is absurd. Provided that almighty Heaven was wreaking its anger, and caused *Mars* to stay in the constellation of the *Heart*, owing to Duke *Ching's* personal wickedness, then even if he had listened to *Tse Wei's* advice, it would not have been of any benefit to him. In case Duke *Ching* was not the object of Heaven's wrath, although he took no heed of *Tse Wei's* words, it could not injure him.

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<sup>1</sup> *Huai Nan Tse* repeats : [...] 'three maxims of a superior man'.

<sup>2</sup> *Huai Nan Tse* : 'through each mansion it will move seven Li'.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted with some few alterations from [Huai Nan Tse XII, 11v](#). See also Vol. I, p. 328, Note 5.

<sup>4</sup> The same story is related in the *Shi-chi* chap. 38, p. 15v. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. IV, p. 245](#)), but more condensed, and the end is omitted. The planet passes through three degrees.

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[In the time of Duke *Ching* of *Ch'i* there appeared a comet <sup>1</sup>, and the duke enjoined upon the people to avert it by prayer. *Yen Tse* <sup>2</sup> declared,

— It boots not, and it is but a superstition. Heaven's way is not hidden, and its will must not be suspected. Why then deprecate it ? Moreover Heaven uses the Sweeping Star to sweep away filth. Your Highness' virtue is not filthy, wherefore should you pray ? Should however your virtue be tarnished, of what use would these deprecations be ?

The *Shiking* says : [This king *Wên*, Watchfully and reverently, With entire intelligence served God, And so secured the great blessing. His virtue was without deflection ; And in consequence he received the allegiance of the p2.154 States from all quarters.] <sup>3</sup>

If Your Highness' virtue does not degenerate, all the States round about will submit to you, what evil can befall you through a comet ?

The *Shiking* likewise has it that : « I have no beacon to look at, But the Sovereigns of *Hsia* and *Shang*. It was because of their disorders That the people fell away from them <sup>4</sup>. »

If the virtue declines and degenerates, the people will be scattered and lost, and all the incantator's and historiographer's prayers would be of no avail.

The duke was pleased and had his orders countermanded.] <sup>5</sup>

The prince of *Ch'i* wanted to avert the calamitous presage of the comet, as *Tse Wei* was endeavouring to remove the misfortune which *Mars* was portending. The duke of *Sung* would not listen to the advice which was given

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<sup>1</sup> In the year 516 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> A counselor of the duke of *Ch'i*.

<sup>3</sup> *Shiking* Part III, Book I, 2 ([Legge, Classics Vol. IV, Part II, p. 433](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>4</sup> A lost Ode.

<sup>5</sup> Quotation from the *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Chao* 26th year ([Legge, Classics Vol. V, Part II, p. 718](#)) [[Couvreur](#), p. 417]. This event is also recorded in the *Shi-chi* chap. 32, p. 19v. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. IV, p. 76](#)), but in quite a different way, especially *Yen Tse* uses other arguments.

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him, just as *Yen Tse* declined to comply with his master's order. Thus the prince of *Ch'i* was like *Tse Wei*, and *Yen Tse* took the place of the duke of *Sung*. The same calamity was sent down on both sovereigns, but Heaven only recognised the virtue of the duke of *Sung*, by making *Mars* pass through three solar mansions and adding 21 years to his span, and did not, for *Yen Tse's* sake, cause the comet to disperse nor prolong his life. Why was Heaven so biased and unjust in requiting goodness ?

When an honest man does good, his goodness springs from his heart, and his good maxims issue from his mind. They flow from a common source and are essentially the same. When Duke *Ching* of *Sung* worded the three excellent sentiments, his conduct must have been good before he gave utterance to them. That being the case, his administration was likewise good, and under a good government propitious omens abound, and bliss and happiness supervene. Then does the planet *Mars* not intrude upon the *Heart*. If, on the other hand, something was amiss in the dealings of Duke *Ching*, so that his administration became vitiated, under a perverted government dreadful prodigies must have appeared.

*Mars* staying in the *Heart* was like the paper-mulberry tree growing in court <sup>1</sup>. *Kao Tsung* removed this portent by his <sup>p2.155</sup> administration, not by words. In the same manner Duke *Ching* should have averted the extraordinary phenomenon of the planet *Mars* by his actions. Provided that Duke *Ching's* proceedings were blameworthy, and that, for this reason, *Mars* was staying in the *Heart*, how could he hope to touch Heaven, or how would Heaven have responded, if, instead of changing his government and reforming, he had merely propounded three excellent sentiments, but done nothing ? How can we substantiate our view ?

Let us suppose that Duke *Ching* had enounced three wicked maxims, could he have induced *Mars* to take its place in the constellation of the *Heart* thereby ? Since three bad maxims would not have had this effect, how should the three excellent sentiments have caused the planet to revert three solar mansions ? If by three good maxims 21 years were obtained, would, by the

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 161.

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utterance of a hundred fine things, the span of human life be extended to a thousand years ? The idea of a heavenly reward of virtue is preposterous, in reality there is nothing but fortune.

According to what *Tse Wei* said, Heaven is high, but hears what is low. The prince having spoken three maxims of a superior man, Heaven would confer three graces upon him.

Heaven has a body, and in this respect does not differ from earth. In all creatures possessed of a body, the ears are joined to the head, and it does not happen that the ears and the body are separated. As to Heaven's height, it is many ten thousand Li distant from us. Now, in case the ears be attached to Heaven, hearing words at the distance of several ten thousand Li, it would be unable to understand them. If a man, sitting on a high tower, were to look out for the ants on the ground, he could not distinguish their forms ; and how should he hear their sounds ? The simple reason is that the bodies of ants are so minute and not so big as the human, and that their sounds cannot transcend the vast expanse of air. Now the altitude of Heaven is quite a different thing to that of a tower, and the proportion of the human body, compared to Heaven, not merely like that of ants and man. They say that there is no such relation between man and Heaven as between ants and man, and urge that Heaven hears what man says and, according to its quality, sends good or bad luck. That is a misconception.

When the Savages from the four quarters come to China, they must use interpreters, to make themselves understood. Although they are similar to the Chinese in body and mind, their speech is unintelligible. Even the Five Emperors and the Three Rulers could p2.156 not do without interpreters, and understand the savages alone <sup>1</sup>. Now fancy Heaven with a body quite other than the human ; must not its speech be different as well ?

Man is not cognisant of Heaven's proceeding ; how should Heaven know what man is about ? If Heaven has a body, its ears are too high and far away, to hear what men say, and if it be air (air like clouds and fog), how could such hear human speech ?

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<sup>1</sup> Their wisdom and sagemess did not enable them to understand foreign languages.

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The phenomenalists assert that man lives between heaven and earth as fish in the water. By his actions he can affect heaven and earth, just as fish beat and agitate the water. The fish moving, the water is shaken and the air stirred up.

This is not true. Should it really be so, human influence would not reach up to Heaven. A fish, a foot long, moving in the water, would only stir up the water by its side in a circumference of several feet. If it were only as big as a man, the waves caused by it would not proceed farther than a hundred steps. Beyond a Li, the waters would remain tranquil and unruffled, owing to the distance.

If human activity affect the air far and near, it must be similar to that of the fish, and the air thus affected and responsive to the impetus, would be like the water. A tiny corporeal frame of seven feet <sup>1</sup> and in this frame a subtle breath <sup>2</sup> would hardly be more powerful than the fire rising from a sacrificial vessel, and should it, ascending from the earth, have any influence upon august Heaven with its tremendous height ?

Furthermore, Duke *Ching* was but a worthy. Worthies in their dealings do not come up with sages above, nor do they pass the line of wickedness below <sup>3</sup>. Of all the ages none were truer sages than *Yao* and *Shun*, and none greater criminals than *Chieh* and *Chou*. The proceedings of *Yao* and *Shun* were full of excellence, yet they had not the effect of moving the planet *Mars*. The government of *Chieh* and *Chou* was very wicked, but they overthrow the argument that Duke *Ching* escaped misfortune. Provided that, because of Duke *Ching's* three excellent sentiments, his life time was increased by 21 years, then *Yao* and *Shun* ought to have obtained a thousand years, and *Chieh* and *Chou* ought to have died early. That was not so ; they all completed their full span. *Yao* p2.157 and *Shun* as well as *Chieh* and *Chou* became nearly a hundred years old. Consequently *Tse Wei's* remarks are altogether without foundation, and what he says about the lengthening of life, is erroneous.

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<sup>1</sup> The small foot of the *Chou* time.

<sup>2</sup> Man.

<sup>3</sup> They are not bad, but not very good.



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*Tse Wei* also stated that Mars was Heaven's agent, that *Sung* was the territory on earth corresponding to the Heart, and that misfortune was awaiting its sovereign. Under these circumstances Heaven would have employed *Mars* to inflict calamity upon Duke *Ching*, but how could it be diverted upon the premier, the year, or the people ?

Heaven uses *Mars* as the king does the chief of the princes. When a feudal lord has been guilty of a capital crime, the king sends the chief of the princes, to besiege his State and take possession of it. The prince, then, is tried before the king's deputy, who knows that the guilt lies upon the prince <sup>1</sup>. He may, however, try to turn it off upon one of his own ministers or his subjects. Should a prince, following the counsel of a minister, instruct him to turn the guilt upon the State, would the chief of the princes, upon hearing of this, be inclined to entertain such a proposal ? Would he absolve the sovereign of all guilt and shift it upon his subjects ? The chief would not consent, because the guilt is the sovereign's and not the people's. Since he would not consent, the prince's guilt being too evident, how should *Mars* agree to divert the calamity upon the people ? Therefore *Tse Wei's* view is wrong.

Let us presume that Duke *Ching* had listened to the counsel of *Tse Wei*, how could he have affected Heaven by so doing ? Would, in case a prince disregarded the advice of his minister and took all the guilt upon himself, the chief of the princes, hearing of his resolution, acquit the culprit and dismiss him ? He would not condone his crime ; why then should *Mars* consent to pass through three solar mansions ?

Listening and not listening have nothing to do with luck and merit <sup>2</sup>. The alleged movement of the planet can therefore not be taken as a fact.

Heaven and man have the same law, in which good and evil do not differ. If something is impossible by human law, we know that it would not come into effect under heavenly law either.

p2.158 *Sung, Wei, Ch'ên, and Chêng* were simultaneously afflicted with a

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<sup>1</sup> In the later *Chou* epoch the king was much too weak to punish feudal lords either himself or by deputy.

<sup>2</sup> The exceptional phenomenon was either due to luck or merit, but not to the duke's listening to the counsel of *Tse Wei*.

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conflagration <sup>1</sup>. A change in the air could be observed in the sky. *Tse Shên* <sup>2</sup>, foreseeing the disaster, asked *Tse Ch'an* whether it might be averted, but *Tse Ch'an* took no notice. The law of Heaven had to be fulfilled, and human endeavour was powerless against it. Would the four States have got rid of the calamity in case *Tse Ch'an* had listened to *Tse Shên* ?

At the time when *Yao* met with the great flood, his ministers, no doubt, were no less clever than *Tse Shên* or *Tse Wei*, still they could not avert it. *Yao* had the same feeling as *Tse Ch'an*.

According to *Tse Wei's* statement *Mars* was Heaven's agent, the *Heart* had its corresponding place in *Sung*, and misfortune was threatening its sovereign. If these were facts, the disaster could not be avoided, and the planet not be averted.

Whenever heat and cold are anomalous, or wind and rain unseasonable, the philosophers on government hold that some fault has been the cause, and that good government and virtuous acts are apt to bring about the normal state again.

If, when *Mars* takes its position within the *Heart*, death and ruin are sure to follow, how can they be avoided, and how can administrative and moral reforms avert them ? Good government and virtuous acts cannot ward them off, and to say that the utterance of three inane sentences averted the planet, turned off the disaster, increased the years of life, and procured the enjoyment of a long time of bliss, is a mistake. According to *Tse Wei's* reply Duke *Ching* spoke of the calamity, which was threatening from *Mars*. That has no reference to heat and cold, wind or rain, but was an omen implying death and the end of life.

When a State is about to perish, or an individual to expire, a strange air is perceived in the sky, and a peculiar look in the face, and this look of the face no righteous deeds can wipe off, for it is the sign of death, which thus becomes visible. Since that expression on the face cannot be got rid of by words, how should the strange phenomenon on the sky be removed by

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<sup>1</sup> This great fire took place in B. C. 524, and is described in the *Tso chuan*, Duke *Chao* 18th year [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> A great officer of *Lu*.

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government ?

When a sick man is at the point of death, that peculiar expression is seen on his face, of which people sometimes say that it is the mark of certain death. Nevertheless it might be transferred on the neighbours or the slaves. But would that look of <sup>p2.159</sup> the dying man, who just cannot speak any more, be wiped off by some appropriate words, or his life, which comes to a close, be lengthened ? That expression cannot be done away with, and his life does not admit of any prolongation. Therefore, how could the planet *Mars* be averted, and how the years of Duke *Ching* be added to ?

Ergo, when *Mars* stood in the *Heart*, we do not know what happened that Duke *Ching* did not die.

Then it is said that the planet passed through three solar mansions. What does that mean ? Did the star three times transcend one mansion, or did it at once pass through three mansions ?

*Tse Wei* said that the prince had spoken three maxims worthy of a superior man, wherefore Heaven would certainly bestow three favours upon him. That very night the planet would transcend three mansions, and, in fact, the star went through three solar mansions. Now Duke *Ching* put forward three precious arguments at one sitting, whereupon the planet moved through three mansions. Provided that he had uttered ten excellent thoughts, would the star then have gone through ten mansions ?

*Mars* occupying the *Heart*, reverted owing to the excellent sentiments ; if, conversely, Duke *Ching* had enunciated three bad ones, would *Mars* then have eclipsed the *Heart* ? Good words made it revert, and bad ones, proceed ; in case the speech of the duke had been neither good nor bad, would it then have remained quiet and motionless ?

Sometimes when *Mars* stands in the *Heart*, a drought, but not the death of the duke is imminent, and *Tse Wei*, ignorant of this, took it for an ill omen of death, trusting like common people in the efficiency of perfect sincerity <sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Sincerity and earnestness of purpose are supposed to move Heaven and cause phenomenal changes.

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It just so happened, no doubt, that *Mars* had to leave its position of itself, and that Duke *Ching* was not to die. The world then imagined that *Tse Wei's* words were true and that Duke *Ching* touched Heaven by his sincerity.

Or perhaps *Tse Wei* was aware that the planet in its course was just about to move, and he gave himself the air of knowing personally that this movement was the result of the prince's selflessness in regard to his subjects. Seeing that the number of stars was seven, he then called seven stars a mansion and obtained 21 years, computing the number of years from stars and mansions.

p2.160 His case is analogous to that of the Great Diviner of *Ch'i*. [Duke *Ching* of *Ch'i*, asked the Great Diviner, what he could do with his wisdom. The other returned that he could shake the earth. When *Yen Tse* called upon the duke, he said to him,

— I have asked the Great Diviner what his art availed him, and he replied that he could shake the earth. The earth is steady, can it be shaken ?

*Yen Tse* remained silent and made no reply. He went out, met the Great Diviner and said,

— Formerly I have observed that, when the *Hook* star is between the *House* and the *Heart*, an earthquake is imminent.

The Great Diviner assented. When *Yen Tse* had left, the Great Diviner went to see the duke.

— Your servant, said he, cannot shake the earth. It is steady and will move of its own accord.] <sup>1</sup>

*Tse Wei's* allegation as to the progress of the planet is like the Great Diviner's remark on the earthquake. The earth, being steady, moves of its own accord, yet the Great Diviner contended that he could move it. The planet is likewise steady and shifts its position of itself, but *Tse Wei* maintained that the prince could move it. If *Yen Tse* had not said that the *Hook* star was between the *House* and the *Heart*, the artful reply of the Great

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<sup>1</sup> Quotation from [Huai Nan Tse XII, 22r](#). See also Vol. I, p. 112.

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Diviner would not have been detected. In *Sung* there was no officer with *Yen Tse's* knowledge, therefore this one utterance of *Tse Wei* was afterwards held to be true.

In the chapter *Hsü Ch'in of Tse Wei's Shu-lu*,<sup>3</sup> we also have the notice that *Tse Wei* said,

— The prince spoke three excellent maxims, and *Mars* was liable to move. He then waited for this event, and, in fact, it left the solar mansion.

Nothing is said about three. Perchance the planet was bound to move, and *Tse Wei* took it for a corroboration of his view. It really withdrew from one mansion, of which, by exaggeration, people made three mansions. As they carelessly magnified the number of solar mansions, they likewise invented the 21 additional years.

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## CHAPTER XVI

### Fictitious Prodigies

18. V, I. *Yi-hsü*

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p2.161 At the time of the emperor *Kao Tsung* of the *Yin* dynasty a mulberry and a paper-mulberry tree <sup>1</sup> grew together in his court <sup>2</sup>. After seven days, they were so thick already, that they would take two hands to span them. *Kao Tsung* summoned his physiognomist and asked him about it. The physiognomist replied that, though he knew, he could not tell it. Then *Tsu Chi* was questioned, who said,

— The mulberry and the paper-mulberry are wild plants ; their growing in the court denotes the down-fall of the dynasty.

*Kao Tsung* terrified began to practise virtue with stooping body. He would ponder over the government of former kings, illustrate the principle of feeding the old, regenerate extinguished States, re-establish the succession of extinct princely houses, and raise obscure scholars. Upon this the two trees died. Three years later, the princes of six States appeared at his court with interpreters <sup>3</sup>, and subsequently he enjoyed a hundred years of happiness <sup>4</sup>.

*Kao Tsung* was a wise sovereign. Alarmed at the growth of the two trees, he interrogated *Tsu Chi*. Following his counsel, he reformed his administration and personally changed his proceedings. The prodigy of the two trees then disappeared, the princes offered their allegiance, and he reigned many years. Owing to the earnestness of his reforms, plenty of lucky auguries and

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<sup>1</sup> For the last character, *Giles* No. 6229, (*Giles* 6228) = *Broussonetia papyrifera* should be written.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 328, Notes 1 and 2.

<sup>3</sup> They were non-Chinese States requiring interpreters to offer their submission.

<sup>4</sup> The same legend is referred to in the *Preface to the Shuking*, 22 (*Legge, Classics* Vol. III, Part I, p. 6), in the *Bamboo Annals* [*Biot*], and in the *Shi-chi* chap. 3, p. 7r. [*Chavannes*] and chap. 28, p. 2r. [*Chavannes*]. But in all these texts the phenomenon is said to have happened under the reign of *T'ai Mou*, 1637-1563 B. C. who consulted his minister *Yi Chih*. In the *Shi-chi* the two trees got a circumference of two spans in one evening.

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blessings came down upon him. This is a fiction.

*Tsu Chi* declared that the down-fall of the dynasty was impending. The ruin of a dynasty is like the death of an individual. p2.162 A man being about to die, miracles appear. When a dynasty is on the verge of ruin, its time is up, and when a man expires, his fate is fulfilled. After his death he does not live again, nor does he continue to exist after his departure. How could *Tsu Chi's* reference to the government have averted the ruin, or how could *Kao Tsung's* reforms have helped to avoid the disaster ? A private person, beholding horrid signs, does not obtain luck by doing good ; how then should *Kao Tsung*, on perceiving the prodigy, be able to avert the misfortune by changing his government ? It being impossible to avert misfortune, how can the six States have been attracted, and how the king's life been prolonged up to a hundred years ?

Human life and death depend on the length of the span, not on good or bad actions, and so is the subsistence and decay of a State determined by the duration of its time <sup>1</sup>, not by the management or mismanagement of affairs. *Tsu Chi* explained the mulberry and paper-mulberry as an augury of decay. When this sign of ruin had already appeared, the discharge of filial duties was of no avail. What evidence can we adduce ?

Under Duke *Chao* of *Lu* a *mainah* appeared and built its nest <sup>2</sup>. *Shi Chi* traced up a queer ditty of boys of the time of *Wên* and *Ch'êng* referring to the *mainah*, and seeing that now it really had come and built its nest, he explained it as a bad omen. Subsequently Duke *Chao* was expelled by the *Chi* family and retreated to *Ch'i*. His dukedom in fact became empty and desolate, and his capital deserted. The appearance of the wild bird, which built its nest, was in *Shi Chi's* opinion indicative of misfortune, and so he explained it.

If Duke *Chao*, upon hearing *Shi Chi's* interpretation, had reformed and improved his administration, following *Kao Tsung's* example, he would, after all, not have succeeded in breaking the spell, because the portent of the queer saying concerning the *mainah* had already appeared, and the calamity

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<sup>1</sup> Which is fixed beforehand.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 3, Note 1.

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of the duke's flight was already completed, for this portent of the mainah had become manifest during the time of Duke *Wên* and *Ch'êng*. If a branch has leaves, why should it not blossom ? And if a spring pours out its water, why should it not grow ? <sup>1</sup>

p2.163 But this event is of comparatively recent date and may not suffice to bear out our thesis. When the downfall of the *Hsia* dynasty was imminent, two dragons fought together in the court. They spat their saliva and vanished. The king of *Hsia* preserved it in a casket. The *Hsia* were destroyed and succeeded by the *Yin*, and the *Yin* were destroyed and succeeded by the *Chou*. They all did not open the casket, until under king *Yu* <sup>2</sup> it was opened and inspected. The saliva oozed out in the court and was transformed into a black lizard, which slipped into the seraglio, where it had commerce with a woman. This, later on, resulted in the birth of *Pao Sse* <sup>3</sup>.

When *Pao Sse* was introduced into the palace of *Chou*, King *Li* <sup>4</sup> became stultified by her, and the State went to rack and ruin. The time from the age of Kings *Yu* and *Li* to the *Hsia* epoch was more than a thousand years <sup>5</sup> ; when the two dragons struggled, *Yu*, *Li*, and *Pao Sse* were not yet born. The presage of the destruction of the *Chou* dynasty already appeared long before it came to pass.

When a bad augury comes forth, the calamity cannot but be completed, and when a lucky sign appears, felicity is sure to arrive. If the two dragons, at the time of their contest, said that they were two princes of *Pao* <sup>6</sup>, this was a proof of the future birth of *Pao Sse*. The dragons bearing the name of *Pao*, *Pao Sse* could not help being born, and she being born, King *Li* could not help being deprived, and he being deprived, the State could not avoid being

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<sup>1</sup> The queer ditty portending the duke's disaster had developed, so to speak, and become realised as naturally as leaves blossom, and water flowing from a spring swells and grows.

<sup>2</sup> This seems to be a mistake. The *Shi-chi* writes king *Li* ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 282](#)). He reigned from 878-828 B. C., king *Yu* from 781-771.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 321.

<sup>4</sup> This must be king *Yu*, whose favourite *Pao Sse* became.

<sup>5</sup> That is not quite correct. The *Hsia* dynasty came to a close in B. C. 1766.

<sup>6</sup> See Vol. I, p. 230, Note 5.



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ruined. The signs were there, and even if the Five Sages <sup>1</sup> and the Ten Worthies <sup>2</sup> had interceded to remove them, all their endeavours to blot them out would have been in vain.

Good and evil are similar so far. When good omens come forth, a State is sure to flourish, and when evil ones become visible, a dynasty must needs perish. To say that evil portents can be removed by good actions, is like affirming that good auspices can be wiped away by bad government.

p2.164 The *Yellow River* springs from the *K'un-lun*, and then branches off into nine channels. Should *Yao* and *Yü* have attempted to turn the waters back by their excellent administration, they would have been utterly powerless to make them revert, for such is the nature of water, that human force cannot stop it. The springs of the *Yellow River* could not be stopped, and the two dragons not be removed. Accordingly, it was impossible to prevent the mulberry and the paper-mulberry trees from growing.

A king's life about to prosper is like the breath of spring becoming summer, and his death like the autumnal air becoming winter. Beholding the leaflets of spring, one knows that in summer there will be stalked leaves, and viewing the dropping fruit in autumn, one foresees the dried branches of winter. *A propos* of the growth of the mulberry and the paper-mulberry, it is also quite plain that they must be like the vernal leaves and the autumnal fruit. How could they be removed by a thorough overhauling of the government and personal reforms ?

Now, the presage of the down-fall of the *Chou* dynasty appeared already in the *Hsia* epoch ; how do we know but that the growth of the two trees was denoting the fall of King *Chou* <sup>3</sup> ? Perhaps *Tsu Chi* believed in the explanation of wild plants which he gave, but did not estimate the distance of time correctly. *Kao Tsung*, having questioned *Tsu Chi*, took to doing good, his body bent down, and accidentally the princes of the six States arrived at his court. *Kao Tsung's* life was naturally long and not yet near its close ; then people

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<sup>1</sup> The Five Sages are : *Yao*, *Shun*, *Yü*, *T'ang*, and *Wên Wang*.

<sup>2</sup> Ten Worthies are mentioned in Chinese literature but for more recent times, and we do not know whom *Wang Ch'ung* had in view.

<sup>3</sup> The last ruler of the *Hsia* dynasty.

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said that, after the inquiry concerning the two trees, he changed his government, reformed his own conduct, and enjoyed a hundred years of happiness.

The mulberry and paper-mulberry grew most likely for *Chou's* sake, or perhaps they were lucky and not inauspicious, wherefore the *Yin* dynasty did not decline, and *Kao Tsung's* life lasted long. *Tsu Chi*, however, trusting in his interpretation that they were wild plants, declared them to be signs of an impending catastrophe.

At the time of the *Han* emperor, *Hsiao Wu Ti*, a white unicorn was caught. It had two horns, but they touched. The gentleman-usher *Chung Chün* was called upon to give his opinion.

— It is a wild animal, he said, its horns joined together as the land under heaven unites and forms one whole <sup>1</sup>.

p2.165 The unicorn is a wild animal, and the mulberry and paper-mulberry trees are wild plants. Both being wild, what difference is there between the animal and the plants? *Chung Chün* pronounced the animal to be auspicious, but *Tsu Chi* held the wild plants to be inauspicious.

When *Kao Tsung* was sacrificing in the temple of *Ch'êng T'ang*, a pheasant came flying along, alighted on the tripod, and screamed. *Tsu Chi* saw in it the announcement of the arrival of men from distant lands <sup>2</sup>. The commentators of the *Shuking*, on the other hand, regard pheasants as inauspicious. Both views are conflicting. According to *Tsu Chi's* statement the arrival of pheasants is propitious.

Pheasants hide amidst wild plants, which screen the bodies of wild birds. If people live in a straw hut, can they be said to be auspicious, but their cottage to be inauspicious? When such people go into the capital, they are not held to be inauspicious <sup>3</sup>. Why then cannot wild plants growing in a court

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. chap. XXVIII.

<sup>2</sup> See chap. XXVIII.

<sup>3</sup> Pheasants cannot be looked upon as inauspicious because they hide among wild plants, as men do not become so, by living in a cottage and in the country.

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be propitious ? Pheasants must, in this respect, be treated like men <sup>1</sup>.

If living creatures with blood in their veins are held to be auspicious, then the arrival of a tall *Ti* <sup>2</sup> would be so as well, why then call it unlucky ? Should all that comes from the *I* and the *Ti* <sup>3</sup> not be auspicious, the visit of *Ko Lu* of *Chieh* <sup>4</sup> at court must have been unlucky. If, however, plants and trees are believed to be unpropitious, then the appearance of the 'vermilion grass' and of the 'monthly plant' were not auspicious.

The vermilion grass and the monthly plant are both herbaceous ; they should grow in the country and, if they grow in court, it is not auspicious. Why then are they looked upon as lucky omens ? According as a wild growing thing comes or goes, it is treated either as lucky or unlucky. If the vermilion grass and the monthly plant are believed to be auspicious, owing to their excellence, then the presage depends on goodness or badness, and their quality is not influenced by the site of their growth, whether it be in the capital or in the country.

p2.166 During the *Chou* period, universal peace reigned throughout the empire. The *Yüeh-ch'ang* <sup>5</sup> presented the Duke of *Chou* with pheasants. *Kao Tsung* likewise obtained one, which he regarded as lucky. A pheasant is also a creature living in the grass and in the country, for what reason is it considered to be a good omen ? If it is on account of a portion of the character *chih* (pheasant) bearing a resemblance to *shih* (a scholar), then there is also a likeness between a deer, *chün*, and a superior man, *chün*.

*Kung-Sun Shu* <sup>6</sup> got a white stag ; wherefore did he explain it as an unlucky augury ? Ergo we come to the conclusion that it is impossible to know whether a pheasant be propitious or not, nor can we prove whether the meaning of a mulberry and a paper-mulberry be good or bad.

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<sup>1</sup> They are not to be taken for bad omens.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 486, Note 3.

<sup>3</sup> Wild tribes in the West and the North.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 122, Note 2. The homage of this chieftain to the Duke of *Lu* was, on the contrary, believed to be a good augury.

<sup>5</sup> See Vol. I, p. 505, Note 2, where this people is called [a][b] instead of [a][c]

<sup>6</sup> A *Han* general of the 1st cent. B. C. who conquered *Szechuan* and proclaimed himself emperor of *Shu*, and took white as his imperial colour.

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Perhaps they were something good, intimating that scholars from afar would walk into the temple of *Kao Tsung*, therefore the latter obtained luck and happiness, which he enjoyed ever so long.

Those arguing on calamitous prodigies stand convinced that Heaven makes use of calamitous phenomena for the purpose of rebuking the emperor. When the emperor has faults, prodigies appear in the State. If he does not change, calamities become visible on plants and trees, if he does not change then, they manifest themselves on the Five Grains, and should he not reform even then, they attain his own person <sup>1</sup>.

The 'Spring and Autumn' of *Tso Ch'iu Ming* says that there are few States which have not five harvests, when they are going to perish. Calamities become visible on the Five Grains ; how then can they grow ripe ? Their not ripening is a sign of impending ruin, for ruin is likewise a feature of calamity, to which the not ripening of the Five Grains corresponds. When Heaven does not <sup>p2.167</sup> mature them, this may be a calamity or a blessing <sup>2</sup>, happiness and misfortune are therefore difficult to distinguish, and what is said about the mulberry and the paper-mulberry cannot be correct.

The theorists all write in their books and their notes that, when Heaven rains grain, this is an ill omen, and in various books and chronicles we read that, [when *Tsang Hsieh* invented writing, Heaven rained grain, and the ghosts cried during the night.] <sup>3</sup> This must be accounted a lugubrious prodigy ; why did Heaven use something so harmonious to produce it ? The production of grain is a kind gift from Heaven, very harmonious and also looked upon as something excellent. And the grain produced came down following upon rain ? If we thoroughly go into the matter, for what reason must it be an ill omen ? When the *Yin* and the *Yang* harmonise, the harvest grows, otherwise it is spoiled by calamities and disasters. The harmony of *Yin*

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<sup>1</sup> This theory is explained and combatted in the chapter 'On Reprimands' in Vol. I, p. 119 seq.

<sup>2</sup> Five harvests being foreboding the ruin of a State, the not ripening of cereals ought to be a lucky augury ; conversely, an impending calamity affects the grain, so that it does not ripen. Then its not ripening is a bad augury as well. Such contradictions should have shown *Wang Ch'ung* the futility of such researches.

<sup>3</sup> See Vol. I, p. 244, Note 3. The passage is quoted from [Huai Nan Tse VIII, 5r.](#)

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and *Yang* resulting in the production of grain, how can it be called inauspicious ?

Raw silk is wrought into pongees, and of hempen threads cloth is made. To present a man with silk and hemp is already conferring a valuable gift upon him, but how much more precious would be silken fabrics and woven cloth ? Silk and hemp correspond to the *Yin* and the *Yang*, pongees and cloth are like the ripe grain. A present of pongees cannot be called bad, why then should grain, this heavenly gift, be considered unlucky ? Since the good or bad presage of raining grain cannot be made out, the statement about the mulberry and the paper-mulberry must also remain doubtful.

If 'fragrant grass' grew in the *Chou* epoch, at times of universal peace people would have brought presents of this grass with them. It also grows in the open country exactly like the mulberry and the paper-mulberry. If the *I* and the *Ti* had presented it, it would have been lucky, but should it have grown in the court of *Chou*, would it also have been deemed good ?

Fragrant grass can be used for the distillation of spirits, its perfume being very intensive. By pouring out this perfumed wine at sacrifices, the spirits are called down. Provided that this grass had spontaneously grown in the court of *Chou*, it would not have <sup>p2.168</sup> been different from auspicious grain, vermilion grass, or the monthly plant <sup>1</sup>.

Furthermore, mulberry trees feed the silk-worms, which make silk. This silk is worked into pongees, and these pongees, into dresses. Clad in these robes, people enter the ancestral temple, using them as court-dresses. The evolution is similar to that of the fragrant grass, why then are those trees held to be a bad augury ?

When the heir-son of Duke *Hsien* of *Wei* <sup>2</sup> arrived at the *Spirit Tower*, a snake wriggled round the left wheel of his chariot. The charioteer said to him,

— Prince descend and pay your respects. I have heard say that, when a snake curls round the left cartwheel of the son of the chief of a State, he will soon be seated on the throne.

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<sup>1</sup> All these plants pass for suspicious portents.

<sup>2</sup> 576-559 B. C.

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But the Prince did not descend and returned to his residence.

The charioteer called upon him, and the prince said,

— I have heard say that a man's son lives in perfect accord with his master. He does not cherish selfish desires and receives his commands with reverence and awe. He does nothing which might impair the health of the sovereign. If I now come into possession of the State, the sovereign must lose his health. To see only the lustre of the crown and forget the welfare of the ruler is not what a son ought to do. That I prostrate myself, in order to come to the dukedom, would hardly be according to the sovereign's wishes. He who disobeys the duties of a son, is undutiful, and he who acts contrary to the wishes of his sovereign, is not loyal. And yet you desire me to do it ? The dangers of my wishing to assume the reins of government are evident enough.

Then he tried to commit suicide by jumping down from the palace. His charioteer attempted to stop him, but in vain. He threw himself into his sword and gave up his ghost <sup>1</sup>.

If the curling of a snake round the left wheel really implied the speedy accession of the prince, he ought not to have died, and Duke *Hsien* should have expired at once. Now the duke did not die, but the crown-prince fell into his sword. Therefore the explanation of the charioteer was the idle talk of common people.

Perhaps the snake foreshadowed the imminent death of the prince, and the charioteer, placing confidence in the popular <sup>p2.169</sup> interpretation, failed to grasp the real meaning of the portent. The growth of the mulberry and paper-mulberry resembles the snake curling round the left wheel. As a matter of fact, its arrival was unlucky, but the charioteer fancied it to be lucky, and so the two trees were in fact auspicious, but *Tsu Chi* thought them of ill omen.

[When *Yü*, on his journey south, crossed the *Yangtse*, a yellow dragon carried his boat on its back. The men in the boat turned pale as ashes, but *Yü*

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<sup>1</sup> This story is referred to in the *Hsin-hsü* of *Liu Hsiang* (*T'ai-P'ing-yü-lan*).

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was amused and said laughing,

— I have received the decree of Heaven and harrass myself to succour the thousands of people. My life lasts awhile, and death is a return. It being but a return, how can it upset my serenity ? I look upon a dragon as a lizard.

Then the dragon disappeared.] <sup>1</sup>

In ancient and modern times the arrival of a dragon is commonly regarded as something very lucky, *Yü* alone declared a yellow dragon to be a bad presage, and when they saw it lifting the boat, the men in the boat took fright.

The mulberry and the paper-mulberry may be compared with the dragon, for, though their auguries be reversed, there is still a similarity. Wild plants growing in court are held to be unlucky, but, there being an extraordinary case like the yellow dragon carrying the boat, they became lucky, and the *Yin* dynasty did not perish.

Duke *Wên* of *Chili* was going to try issues with King *Ch'êng* of *Ch'u* at *Ch'êng-p'u* <sup>2</sup>, when a 'broom star' <sup>3</sup> proceeded from *Ch'u*, which held its stick <sup>4</sup>. The matter was referred to *Chiu Fan* <sup>5</sup>, who replied,

— In fighting with brooms he who turns them round wins.

Duke *Wên* dreamt that he was wrestling with King *Ch'êng*, who gained the upper hand, and sucked his brains. *Chiu Fan* being p2.170 questioned, rejoined,

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from [Huai Nan Tse VII, 8v](#). See also Vol. I, p. 352, Note 1. *Huai Nan Tse* has the following conclusion : 'He did not change countenance. Then the dragon dropped its ears, wagged its tail, and fled'.

<sup>2</sup> The site is not certain. It was either in the prefecture of *K'ai-fêng-fu* (*Honan*) or in *Ts'ao-chou-fu* (*Shantung*). The battle took place in B. C. 632. Cf. *Ch'un-ch'iu*, Duke *Hsi* 28th year [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>3</sup> A comet.

<sup>4</sup> *I. e.*, the stick or the tail of the comet was turned towards the kingdom of *Ch'u*.

<sup>5</sup> An officer of Chin.

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— Your Highness could look up to Heaven, while *Ch'u* was bending down under the weight of its guilt. The battle will prove a great victory <sup>1</sup>.

The duke followed his advice and completely defeated the army of *Ch'u*. Had Duke *Wên* consulted an ordinary officer previously, he would certainly have denied the possibility of a victory, for a broom star is inauspicious, and the upper hand in wrangling not an adverse prognostic.

The mulberry and the paper-mulberry were pronounced ill-omened, as the fact of *Chin* being opposite to the besom and the duke's succumbing in the struggle, were deemed bad auguries. These trees were significant of luck all the same, like the curious phenomena of being over against the broom star and looking up to Heaven, whence *Kao Tsung's* long reign and the salvation of the *Yin* dynasty.

If Duke *Wên* had not asked *Chiu Fan*, if the latter had not been aware of the lucky augury, and if then a great victory had been won, the people would have urged that, by virtue of his extreme wisdom, Duke *Wên* had worsted iniquitous *Ch'u*, and that, in spite of the prodigy appearing in the sky and of the horrible dream, the adverse presage and the unfavourable portent were wiped out and dispersed, and happiness secured. The *Yin* could not boast of a man with *Chiu Fan's* extraordinary knowledge, having only their *Tsu Chi*, who shared the common prejudices. Accordingly the narrative of the two trees has been handed down without ceasing, and up to the present day the notion that misfortune can be transmuted into happiness has not yet been rectified.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 189, Note 6.



## CHAPTER XVII

### Fictitious Influences

19. V, II. *Kan-hsü*

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p2.171 In the books of the Literati which have come down to us they say that at the time of *Yao* ten suns rose simultaneously, so that everything was scorched up. *Yao* shot at the ten suns on high, whereupon nine out of them were removed, and a single one began to rise regularly <sup>1</sup>. This is a myth.

When a man is shooting with arrows, at a distance of no more than a hundred steps, the arrows lose their force. As regards the course of the sun, it moves upon heaven like a star. The interstice between heaven and man measures several ten thousand Li <sup>2</sup>, and if *Yao* had shot at it, how could he have hit the sun ? Provided that, at *Yao's* time, the distance from heaven to earth had not been upwards of a hundred steps, then the arrows of *Yao* might have just reached the sun, but they could not go farther than a hundred steps. Under the supposition of the short distance of heaven and earth at the time of *Yao*, his shots might have touched the suns, but without damaging them, and why should the suns have disappeared, if they had been damaged ?

The sun is fire. If fire on earth is employed to kindle a torch, and if the bystanders shot at it, would they extinguish it, even if they hit it ? Earthly fire is not to be extinguished by arrow-shots, how could heavenly fire be put out in this manner ?

This is meant to imply that *Yao* shot at the suns with his spiritual essence <sup>3</sup>. Whatever is touched by it, even metal and stones, crumbles to pieces, for it knows no hardness nor distance. Now, water and fire have a similar nature. If fire could be extinguished with arrows, it ought to be

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<sup>1</sup> See Vol. I, p. 272, Note 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* reckons the distance at 60 000 Li. Vol. I, p. 275.

<sup>3</sup> We are not told how this is possible.

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possible to remove water by shooting at it likewise.

At the time of the Great Flood, China was inundated by the waters causing great damage to the people. Why did *Yao* not put forth his spiritual essence then, removing the waters by shooting ? p2.172 He was able to shoot at the suns, preventing their fire from doing injury, but he could not shoot at the Yellow River, to hinder the ravages of its floods. Since the water could not be removed by shooting, we know that the story about shooting at the suns is an invention and unreliable.

Some hold that the sun is a fluid and that, although an arrow may not reach it, the spiritual essence can extinguish it. Now Heaven is also far off ; in case it is a fluid, it must be similar to the sun and the moon, and should it be corporeal <sup>1</sup>, it would be on a level with metals and stones. If the essence of *Yao* extinguished the suns and destroyed metals and stones, could he also perforate Heaven, while sending his arrows ?

As an example of the perversity of *Chieh* and *Chou* people relate that they shot at Heaven and lashed Earth, and in praise of *Kao Tsung* they narrate that, by his virtuous government, he did away with the mulberry and the paper-mulberry <sup>2</sup>. Now if *Yao*, incapable of extinguishing the ten suns by his virtue, shot at them nevertheless, his virtue did not equal that of *Kao Tsung*, and his depravity could match that of *Chieh* and *Chou*. How could he have obtained a response from Heaven by his essence ?

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It is on record that [when *Wu Wang*, on his expedition against *Chou*, crossed the *Mêng* ford <sup>3</sup>, the waves of *Yang-hou* <sup>4</sup> rushed against him. A storm was raging, and there was such a darkness, that men and horses became invisible. Upon this, King *Wu*, grasping the yellow halberd with his left and holding the white standard in his right, with flashing eyes waved it and

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<sup>1</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* conceives heaven as something solid, a firmament. Vol. I, pp. 257 and 509.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. chap. XVI.

<sup>3</sup> In *Honan*, west of *Huai-ch'ing-fu*.

<sup>4</sup> The commentary to *Huai Nan Tse* says that *Yang-hou* means the marquis of *Yang* viz. of *Ling-yang*, whose territory was contiguous to the river and whose spirit could cause big waves, the marquis having been drowned in the river.

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exclaimed,

— While I am in the empire, who dares thwart my plans ?,

whereupon the storm abated, and the waves subsided.] This narrative is preposterous <sup>1</sup>.

When *Wu Wang* was crossing the *Mêng* ford, the hosts of his army were cheerful and merry, singing in front and gamboling in the rear. There being a certain sympathy between Heaven and p2.173 man, it would not have been the proper thing for Heaven to grumble, when man was pleased, but it is not sure whether there was really singing in front and dancing in the rear, and the stopping of the storm by waving a flag likewise looks like an invention.

Wind is air, and some speculative minds see in it the commanding voice of Heaven and Earth. Now, provided that the punishment of *Chou* by *Wu Wang* was right, then Heaven should have kept quiet and rewarded him ; if, however, his destruction was not right, then the storm was expressive of Heaven's anger.

Had *Wu Wang* not received the command of Heaven and not inquired into his own guilt, then, by saying, with flashing eyes. 'While I am in the empire, who ventures to thwart me ? he could not but double Heaven's anger and increase his own depravity ; how would the wind have stopped therefore ? When parents are angry with their son for not mending his faults, would they be willing to pardon him, if, with flashing eyes, he talked big ?

In case wind is the fluid of misfortune produced by Heaven, it must be spontaneous as well as unconscious, and angry looks or waving flags would not cause it to stop. Wind is like rain. If *Wu Wang* with flashing eyes had waved his standard to the rain, would it have ceased ? Since *Wu Wang* could not stop the rain, he could not stop the wind either. Perhaps just at the moment, when he waved his flag, accidentally the wind stopped of itself, and the people, extolling his excellence, then contended that *Wu Wang* could stop the wind.

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<sup>1</sup> It is derived from *Huai Nan Tse* VI, 1v.

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There is a report that, [when Duke *Hsiang* of *Lu* was at war with *Han*, and the battle was hottest, the sun went down. The duke, swinging his spear, beckoned to it, when the sun came back for him, passing through three solar mansions] <sup>1</sup>. This is an invention.

Whoever can affect Heaven through his spiritual essence, must be single-minded and engrossed with one idea. Discharging all other affairs from his thoughts and concentrating his mind, he may communicate with Heaven by means of his spiritual essence, and Heaven may then exhibit some extraordinary phenomenon, though I do not admit even this. Duke *Hsiang's* interest was entirely absorbed by the battle, when the sun sank, and he beckoned to it. How could he induce it to revert ? If a sage would beckon to the <sup>p2.174</sup> sun, it would not return by any means ; who was Duke *Hsiang*, that he could cause it to come back ?

The *Hung-fan* <sup>2</sup> has it that [some stars are fond of wind and others of rain. The course of the sun and moon brings about winter and summer, and when the moon follows the stars, there is wind and rain] <sup>3</sup>. Now the stars are of the same stuff as the sun and the moon. When the latter follow the stars, these change again <sup>4</sup>, and it is evident that, as long as the two luminaries keep their regular course, they do not yield to the likes and dislikes of the stars. How then should it be possible that the desire of Duke *Hsiang* was fulfilled ?

The stars on Heaven are the mansions of the sun and the moon, as on earth the postal stations serve as residences of the higher officials. These 28 solar mansions <sup>5</sup> are divided into degrees, one mansion measuring 10 degrees, more or less. The allegation that the sun returned through three mansions would therefore denote 30 degrees. The sun proceeds one degree every day, at the moment of beckoning it would therefore have gone back the same distance which it had made during 30 days. If we regard a *shê* (station)

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<sup>1</sup> Quotation from *Huai Nan Tse* VI, 1v. See also Vol. I, p. 89, Note 6.

<sup>2</sup> A chapter of the *Shuking* [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 277, Note 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Viz.* their *penchant* for wind or rain, which only manifests itself when the moon approaches them.

<sup>5</sup> See Vol. I, p. 257.

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as one degree <sup>1</sup>, then three degrees would be a three days course, and at the moment, when the spear was waved, the sun would have been made to revert three days.

When Duke *Ching* of *Sung* exhibited his sincerity and uttered three excellent maxims, the planet *Mars* passed through three solar mansions, a story which sober-minded critics still call an invention <sup>2</sup>. Duke *Hsiang*, during the fighting, was displeased with the sun's setting, accordingly he waved his spear, but he had no earnest purpose <sup>3</sup>, nor did he say any excellent words <sup>4</sup>. That the sun should revert for his sake, was most likely not his idea.

Moreover, the sun is fire. A sage giving a signal to fire would in no wise be able to make it return, and Duke *Hsiang* should have caused the sun to revert by his signal ?

p2.175 While the battle was going on, the sun was in the middle of *mao* <sup>5</sup>, and, bewildered by the fighting, the duke fancied that the sun was setting <sup>6</sup>. Waving his flag, he turned round to the left, describing a curve, and was under the impression that the sun was reverting. People naturally fond of the marvellous then spoke of the sun's reverting, which cannot be upheld in earnest.

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It is related in historical works that, when, at the instance of the heir-prince of *Yen*, *Ching K'o* attempted to murder the king of *Ch'in*, a white halo encircled the sun, and that, [while the master from *Wei* was devising the plan of the *Ch'ang-p'ing* affair for *Ch'in*, *Venus* eclipsed the *Pleiades*] <sup>7</sup>. This means to say that the spiritual essence affected Heaven, so that it produced those phenomena. To say that a white halo surrounded the sun, and that *Venus* eclipsed the *Pleiades* is allowable, but the assertion that the design of *Ching*

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<sup>1</sup> Taking the character [ ] in the acceptance of degree, not of solar mansion.

<sup>2</sup> See above p. 152 seq.

<sup>3</sup> Which according to the view of many scholars may work wonders.

<sup>4</sup> Like Duke *Ching* of *Sung* who is believed to have caused *Mars* to pass through three solar mansions.

<sup>5</sup> The east point.

<sup>6</sup> Whereas in fact it was rising. This conjecture is not very plausible.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Shi-chi* chap. 83, p. 9v. and Vol. I, p. 117.

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*K'o* and the plan of the master from *Wei* exercised such an influence upon august Heaven, that a white halo encircled the sun and *Venus* eclipsed the *Pleiades*, is erroneous.

Striking a bell with chopsticks and beating a drum with counting-slips, one cannot bring them to sound, because the sticks used to beat them are too small. Now, the human body does not measure more than seven feet, and with the spirit within these seven feet one hopes to bring about something. The energy may be concentrated ever so much, it is still like striking a bell with chopsticks or beating a drum with counting-slips ; how can it move Heaven ? The mind may be quite in earnest, but the implements employed to cause a motion are insufficient.

The intention to injure being directed against men, these are not affected by it, and Heaven should be ? Man's evil designs should be able to operate on Heaven ? No, that is impossible.

When *Yü Jang* was about to kill the viscount *Hsiang* of *Chao*, *Hsiang's* heart palpitated, and when *Kuan Kao* was planning his rebellion against *Han Kao Tsu*, the heart of the latter felt an emotion likewise <sup>1</sup>. The two men thus harbouring their designs, the two lords became agitated.

I reply that, when a calamitous change is at hand, strange signs spontaneously appear about the persons threatened, and are <sup>p2.176</sup> not their own work. My reason is this : Sometimes we meet lunatics on the road who with a weapon hurt themselves, without having the intention to injure their own bodies, but, before this, their bodies have already been conspicuous by miraculous signs. From this I infer that miracles are symptoms of calamitous changes and spontaneous disasters, and not the result of suicidal designs.

Furthermore an unlucky man divining by shells, will receive a bad omen, and appealing to straws, he will fall in with an unpropitious diagram. Going out, he sees inauspicious things. His forecasts point to dangers, and he beholds a calamitous fluid, which shows itself in the face, as the white halo and *Venus* appear in heaven. Phenomenal changes appear in heaven, whereas prognostics become visible in man. Above and below are in accord

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<sup>1</sup> Vol. I, p. 117, Notes 5 and 6.

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and spontaneously respond to one another.

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It has been chronicled that, when *Tan*, the heir-prince of *Yen*, paid a call at the court of *Ch'in*, he was not allowed to go home again. He asked of the king of *Ch'in* permission to return, but the king detained him and said with an oath,

— In case the sun reverts to the meridian, Heaven rains grain, crows get white heads and horses horns, and the wooden elephants on the kitchen door get legs of flesh, then you may return.

At that time Heaven and Earth conferred upon him their special favour : the sun returned to the meridian, Heaven rained grain, the crows got white crowns and the horses horns, and the legs of the wooden elephants on the kitchen door grew fleshy. The king of *Ch'in* took him for a Sage and let him off <sup>1</sup>. — This narrative is fictitious.

Who was this prince of *Yen*, *Tan*, that he could thus influence Heaven ? Sages imprisoned have not been able to move Heaven. Prince *Tan* was but a worthy, how could he have carried this out ? If Heaven favoured him and produced all those wonders with a view to his deliverance, it might as well have appeased the feelings of the king of *Ch'in*, in order to remove all the prince's hardships. His captivity was one matter only and easy to deal with, whereas the miracles were five rather difficult things. Why did Heaven omit the easy matter and do the five difficult things ? Did it not fear the trouble ?

*T'ang* was confined in *Hsia-t'ai* and *Wên Wang* in *Yu-li* <sup>2</sup>, and *Confucius* was in great straits between *Ch'ên* and *T'sai*. During the <sub>p2.177</sub> captivity of the three Sages, Heaven could not help them, causing their tormentors to see the blessings sent down upon them, understand their sagehood, and dismiss them with high honours.

Some one may object that those three Sages bear no relation to the three

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<sup>1</sup> The *Pei-wên-yün-fu* cites this passage. See also Vol. I, p. 115, Note 4.

<sup>2</sup> Vol I, p. 142, Notes 1 and 2.

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oaths. Their hearts were desireless, consequently there was no reason for the manifestation of omens of celestial protection. Heaven helps man, as one lends a utensil to somebody : unless he asks for it, one does not give it.

I reply that, when the heir-prince was desiring that Heaven might send an omen, no words were spoken, it being merely the wish of his heart. When *T'ang* was imprisoned in *Hsia-t'ai*, and *Wên Wang* detained in *Yu-li*, their hearts were likewise yearning for a release, and *Confucius*, distressed between *Ch'ên* and *T'sai*, was craving after food. Wherefore did Heaven not let the locks of the gates in *Hsia-t'ai* and *Yu-li* be spoiled, that *T'ang* and *Wên Wang* could make their escape, or rain grain in *Ch'ên* and *T'sai* for *Confucius*, to appease his appetite ?

The Grand Annalist remarks,

« People say of prince *Tan* that he induced Heaven to rain grain and make the horses grow horns. All this is most likely idle talk <sup>1</sup>.

The Grand Annalist is a man who writes the truth about the *Han* time. His expression 'idle talk' is all but synonymous with untrue.

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We learn from historical books that the wife of *Ch'i Liang* cried, turned towards the city wall, which collapsed in consequence. This intimates that on *Ch'i Liang* not returning from a military expedition, his wife, in her despair, cried in the direction of the city-wall, and so heart-felt were her sorrow and her laments, that her feeling affected the wall, which tumbled down in consequence <sup>2</sup>. That the woman cried, turned towards the wall, may be true, but the subsequent collapse of the city-wall is an invention.

There has never been a man whose tears and cries were more pathetic than those of *Yung Mên Tse*. When he cried in the presence <sup>p2.178</sup> of *Mêng Ch'ang Chün* <sup>3</sup>, the latter choked with emotion <sup>1</sup>. By the sincerity of grief

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<sup>1</sup> *Sse-Ma Ch'ien* makes this remark at the end of *Shi-chi* chap. 86, but in our text he does not say [] but simply [] 'it is a great exaggeration'. In *Shi-chi* chap. 34, p. 9r. we read that Prince *Tan* was kept a hostage in *Ch'in*, but in B. C. 232 contrived to escape to *Yen* [*Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. IV, p. 149*].

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 116 and 117.

<sup>3</sup> A general of *Ch'i* of the 3rd cent. B. C. See Vol. I, p. 161, Note 1.



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those present are moved to sympathy. Now, *Yung Mên Tse* could touch the heart of *Mêng Ch'ang Chün*, but not affect his dress, for garments are insensible of pity and proof against human feelings. The city-wall is of earth, and earth, like cloth. Being devoid of a heart and intestines, how could it be moved by sobs and tears and fall down? Should the sounds of genuine grief be apt to affect the earth of a wall, then complaints uttered among the trees of a forest, would tear the plants and break the trunks.

If somebody should weep, when turned towards a water or a fire, would the water boil up, or the fire go out? Plants, trees, water, and fire do not differ from earth, it is plain therefore that the wife of *Ch'i Liang* could not be answerable for the *délabrement* of the wall.

Perhaps the wall was just going to tumble down of itself, when the wife of *Ch'i Liang* happened to cry below. The world is partial to fictions and does not investigate the true cause of things, consequently this story of the down-fall of the city-wall has, up till now, not faded from memory.

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The histories record that *Tsou Yen* was confined in *Yen*, though he was innocent. In the fifth month of summer he looked up to Heaven, heaving a sigh, whereupon Heaven sent down a shower of hoar-frost<sup>2</sup>. This is on a level with the wife of *Ch'i Liang's* subverting a city-wall by her wails. The statement that he was kept in jail without any guilt, and that in summer he sighed, looking up to Heaven, is true, but the assertion as to Heaven raining frost, a mere invention.

Ten thousand persons raising their voices and emitting their moans and sighs simultaneously still fail to touch Heaven, how then could *Tsou Yen*, one single individual, by his passionate sighs over his ill-treatment call the hoar-frost down? His wrongs were not worse than those of *Tsêng Tse* and *Po Ch'i*. *Tsêng Tse* being suspected, hummed<sup>3</sup>, and *Po Ch'i*, on being banished, sang.

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<sup>1</sup> [] which seems to stand for [], the two words used by *Huai Nan Tse* VI, 2r. where he speaks of *Yung Mên Tse*. The commentator remarks that this man was famous as a guitar-player and for his weeping, by which he touched the hearts of others. He wished to obtain something from *Mêng Ch'ang Chün*.

<sup>2</sup> See Vol. I, p. 281, Note 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Tsêng Tse* having been all but killed by his wicked father for some small

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Suspicion p2.179 and imprisonment are alike <sup>1</sup>, and humming and singing are similar to sighing. *Tsêng Tse* and *Po Ch'i* were unable to attract cold ; who was *Tsou Yen*, that he alone could make the frost fall ?

Banishment is perhaps not yet sufficiently painful to be taken into consideration, but *Shên Shêng* <sup>2</sup> fell upon his sword, and *Wu Tse Hsü* had to cut his own throat <sup>3</sup>. The one being exceedingly dutiful to his father, was doomed to die, and the other, the most loyal subject, had to suffer capital punishment. When they were near their end, they doubtless made complaints, and these complaints are nothing else than the sighs of *Tsou Yen* towards Heaven. If Heaven felt no sympathy for these two men, being moved only by *Tsou Yen*, his captivity must have given it great pain, whereas it did not commiserate the blood-shed. The innocent suffering of *Po Ch'i* was of the same sort, but it had not the same effect on Heaven.

Provided you light a candle and try to heat a cauldron full of water with it, then, after a whole day, it will not yet be hot. Or take a lump of ice, a foot thick, and place it into the kitchen : after a whole night the room will not yet have become cooled. The reason is that small and tiny things cannot affect big and huge ones. Now the sighs of *Tsou Yen* were but like a candle or a lump of ice, and the grandeur of majestic Heaven is not merely on a par with that of a water kettle or a kitchen.

How easy is it to move Heaven, and how easily does hoar-frost descend, if a sigh towards Heaven suffices to cause a fall of frost ! Pain is to be compared with pleasure, and joy is the counterpart of anger. Provided that, by the expression of his sorrow, *Tsou Yen* prompted Heaven to send frost down, would he be able to make Heaven warm in winter time, if, on receiving an unexpected kindness, he laughed to it ?

The phenomenalists contend that, when a ruler rewards in autumn, the

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inadvertence, played the guitar and sang when he had recovered consciousness.

<sup>1</sup> Few will be willing to admit this.

<sup>2</sup> Heir-apparent of *Chin* who committed suicide, having been deposed and calumniated by the intrigues of the wife of duke *Hsien*. He was not put to death as stated in Vol. I, p. 247, Note 4.

<sup>3</sup> A faithful minister of *Wu* who in 485 B. C. received a sword from his sovereign to kill himself. Cf. Vol. I, p. 140, Note 2.

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weather becomes warm, and, when he punishes in summer, it turns cold. But unless coldness is joined with the proper season, frost does not descend, and unless warmth comes together with the proper days, ice does not melt. How easy would be the change of temperature and how facile a revolution of the seasons, if, upon one man in his distress giving one sigh, Heaven did at once send frost. Heat and cold have their natural periods, which does not agree with the view of the phenomenologists.

If we argue on their lines, perhaps the king of *Yen* enjoyed inflicting punishments, consequently cold weather had to set in. Then *Tsou Yen* sighed in jail, and at that very moment hoar-frost chanced to come down of itself. But the people remarking that frost just happened to fall, when he sighed, took it for the effect of *Tsou Yen's* sighing.

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Historical works report that, when the music-master *K'uang* played the air 'White snow', wonderful creatures descended, and a storm with rain broke loose. Duke *P'ing* began to pine away henceforward, and the *Chin* State became parched up and barren. Another version is that, when *K'uang* first played a tune in *A major*, clouds rose in the north-west. When he played again, a tempest came, accompanied by torrents of rain. The tents were rent to pieces, the plates and dishes smashed, and the tiles of the verandah hurled down. The guests fled in all directions, and Duke *P'ing* was so frightened, that he fell down under the porches. The *Chin* State was then visited with a great drought. For three years the soil was scorched up. The duke's body began to pine away thereafter <sup>1</sup>.

'White snow' and *A major* are perhaps only different names for the same melody, for the misfortune and havoc wrought was in both cases identical. The chroniclers have recorded it as genuine, and ordinary people reading it, have reposed confidence in this narrative. But he who tests its authenticity, must become aware that it is illusive.

What manner of a tune is *A major* to bring about such a result? *A major* is the sound of 'wood', accordingly it causes wind, and if wood makes wind,

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<sup>1</sup> See Vol. I, p. 222.

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rain comes along with it <sup>1</sup>. How does a piece of wood three feet long <sup>2</sup> and the sound of some chords possess the wonderful faculty of affecting Heaven and Earth ? p2.181 That would be like the *délabrement* of the city wall by tears, or the fall of frost through a sigh.

The ability of the music-master *K'uang* to thrum *A major* must have been acquired and cannot have been an innate faculty. When he first studied it, he practised night and day and not only once or twice. Provided that what the chronicles relate be true, then, when the music-master was studying *A major*, wind and rain ought to have set in.

Some books narrate that, while *Hu Pa* <sup>3</sup> was playing the lute, the fish in the ponds came out to listen <sup>4</sup>, and when the music-master *K'uang* was touching the guitar, the six kinds of horses looked up from their fodder <sup>5</sup>. According to another version about *K'uang's* performing in *A major*, when he played the first part, two times eight black cranes came from the south, and alighted on the top of the exterior gate. When he played again, they formed themselves into rows, and when he played the third part, they began crowing, stretching their necks and dancing, flapping their wings. The notes *F* and *G* were struck with the greatest precision, and their sound rose to heaven. Duke *P'ing* was enraptured, and all the guests were enchanted <sup>6</sup>.

The *Shuking* says,

« [I smite the music-stone, I strike the stone, and the various animals begin dancing together.] <sup>7</sup>

This we can believe in spite of its strangeness, for birds and beasts are partial to sentimental music, and their ears are like the human. Seeing man

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<sup>1</sup> According to the old Chinese symbolism the note A corresponds to wood, which again is supposed to cause wind, a confusion of cause and effect, for the branches of trees are agitated by wind, but do not produce it.

<sup>2</sup> The guitar.

<sup>3</sup> A famous lute-player of primitive times.

<sup>4</sup> A quotation from *Hsün Tse*. *Lieh Tse* observes 'While *Hu Pa* was playing the guitar, the birds danced and the fish jumped'. *Huai Nan Tse* XVI, 1v. writes [...], ascribing to *Po Ya* what our author says of *K'uang*.

<sup>5</sup> Vol. I, p. 379, Note 2.

<sup>6</sup> Vol. I, p. 379, Note 2.

<sup>7</sup> *Shuking* Part II, Bk. I, 24 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 49](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

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desirous of eating something, they likewise wish to have it, and why should they not be jubilant, on hearing him rejoicing ? That the fish listened, the horses looked up, the black cranes stretched their necks, and the various animals began dancing, are facts therefore, but that wind and rain set in, and that the *Chin* State was visited with a great drought, that its soil was scorched up for three years, and Duke *P'ing* pined away, is most likely fictitious.

p2.182 Perchance, when *A major* was struck, it happened to blow and to rain, and, after this shower, the *Chin* State met with a drought. Duke *P'ing* being too fond of music and immoderately indulging in fun and frolic, accidentally was afflicted with *marasmus*. Consequently the writers put faith in the story, and the people witnessing all these circumstances, believed in it. Yet, as a matter of fact, the musical sounds cannot be productive of such a result, which we prove as follows : When wind and rain set in with great vehemence, there is a confusion of the *Yin* and the *Yang*. If music can confound them, it must also be able to set them in order. For what reason, then, do the rulers rectify their persons, improve their conduct, and far and wide exhibit their righteous administration ? Provided it suffices to play a song adjusting the *Yin* and the *Yang*, then harmony comes of itself, and universal peace of its own accord.

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It is being reported that, after *T'ang* had been afflicted with a drought for seven years, he prayed personally in a mulberry grove, impeaching himself with the Six Crimes, when Heaven sent down rain. Some speak of five years. The prayer was couched in these terms :

— If I alone am guilty, may my guilt not affect the ten thousand people, and if the guilt be theirs, may it fall on me alone.

Since, because of one man's folly, Heaven employed God and the spirits <sup>1</sup> to injure people's lives, *T'ang* cut his hair and bound his hands, offering himself as a victim. In such a way he begged happiness of God, who was so pleased,

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<sup>1</sup> A remarkable statement. Heaven here is treated as a being superior to God = *Shang-ti*, who has to obey its commands.

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that rain fell at once <sup>1</sup>. — That *T'ang* personally prayed in the mulberry grove, and his self-indictment was as mentioned, that he cut his hair and bound his hands, thus offering himself as a victim, and that he implored God, all this is true, but the statement that the rainfall was owing to *T'ang's* self-impeachment and personal supplication seems to be a fallacy.

[*Confucius* being very sick, *Tse Lu* asked leave to pray for him. He said,

— May such a thing be done ?

*Tse Lu* replied,

— It may. In the Eulogies it is said, 'Prayer has been made for thee to the spirits of the upper and lower worlds'.

The Master said,

— It is a long time, since I prayed.] <sup>2</sup>

p2.183 The Sage rectified himself and regulated his conduct, and the days when he used to pray were long gone. Heaven and Earth and the spirits knew him to be faultless, hence he could say that it was a long time since he prayed.

We read in the *Yiking*,

[« The great man equals Heaven and Earth in virtue, the sun and the moon in brightness, the four seasons in regularity, and the ghosts and spirits in happiness and misfortune.] <sup>3</sup>

That means to say that a sage displays his virtue in the same manner as Heaven and Earth or ghosts and spirits. Should prayer be required to secure happiness, this would not be the same. *T'ang* as well as *Confucius* were sages, and the time when they were wont to pray had long passed. *Confucius* would not have *Tse Lu* pray to cure his disease, — how then could *T'ang* obtain rain through prayer ? In spite of *Confucius's* regular prayers, he was taken seriously ill. *T'ang* would likewise pray, and yet years of great drought ensued.

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<sup>1</sup> See above p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> [Analects VII, 34 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>3</sup> Quotation from the *Yiking* : [...], ed. 1880, chap. I, p. 7v., not to be found in *Legge's* translation.

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Inundations and droughts of Heaven and Earth are like human maladies. A serious ailment cannot be expelled by self-indictment, and so it is plain that floods and droughts are not to be removed by prayers and penitence. Had *T'ang* caused the drought by his faults, he would not have equalled Heaven and Earth in virtue <sup>1</sup>, and unless he had caused the drought by his guilt, his self-accusation and craving for mercy was likewise of no use.

Man's bodily frame measures but seven feet, and within this frame there reside the Five Virtues and eventually consumption. Yet though fixing all the guilt upon one's self, one cannot cure it. Now fancy immense Heaven <sup>2</sup> ! If at the time of a natural calamity, like a flood or a drought, *T'ang* with his body of seven feet and his earnest purpose residing in it had impeached himself and prayed for mercy, how could he have obtained rain ?

When a man stands on the top of a high building of many stories, and another below prostrates himself and asks for something on the building, the one on the top hearing his words may, out of compassion, grant his request. In case, however, he does not understand what the other says, the latter never obtains his end <sup>p2.184</sup> in spite of the greatest sincerity of his feelings. Now the distance from Heaven to man is not only like the height of a storied building. How could Heaven, although *T'ang* took the responsibility upon himself, become aware of it and send him the rain ?

A drought is a phenomenon of heat, as an inundation is an exceptional state of the water. The Great Flood which *Yao* encountered may well be termed an inundation. Still *Yao* did not impeach himself or personally offer prayers. The flood was to be regulated by *Shun* and *Yü*, and he knew that such a state of water required regulation. An inundation is not removed by prayers, and a drought must be treated in the same way. Consequently the prayers of *T'ang* could not bring down the rain.

Perhaps the drought had been lasting for a long time, when rain fell of itself, and *T'ang* likewise just happened to lay the long duration of the drought to his charge. The people of that period, observing the fall of rain just

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<sup>1</sup> He would not have been the sage he was.

<sup>2</sup> We cannot cure the diseases within the small compass of our body ; how could immense Heaven do it, Heaven taken as the empyrean ?

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consequent upon *T'ang's* self-indictment, then considered that *T'ang* had obtained the rain by his invocations.

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Some books relate that, [when *T'sang Hsieh* invented the art of writing, Heaven rained grain, and the ghosts cried during the night] <sup>1</sup>. This signifies that, when writing was invented, by degrees disorder broke out, whence the supernatural apparitions : Heaven raining grain, and the ghosts crying. What they say about Heaven raining grain and the ghosts crying during the night is true, but the affirmation that this was in response to *T'sang Hsieh's* invention of writing, is wrong.

The Plan put forth by the *Yellow River* and the Scroll emerging from the *Lo* <sup>2</sup> were lucky auguries for sage emperors and enlightened kings. There is no difference between the signs of the Plan and the Scroll and those characters, which were invented by *T'sang Hsieh*. Heaven and Earth produced the Plan and the Scroll, while *T'sang Hsieh* invented the written characters. His proceeding was like that of Heaven and Earth, and his idea agreeing with that of ghosts and spirits. What wrong was there and what evil to cause such prodigies as the raining of grain and the weeping of ghosts ? If Heaven and Earth and the spirits resented that man had written books, then their production of the Plan and the Scroll was p2.185 unjustifiable, if, on the other hand, Heaven did not grudge mankind the possession of writing, what wrong was there in its invention to lead to such monstrosities ?

Perhaps *Ts'ang Hsieh* just happened to make his invention, when Heaven rained grain, and the ghosts chanced to weep during the night. The raining of grain as well as the laments of the spirits had their cause, but people seeing them take place as if in response to the invention, imagined that the writing had produced these revolutionary signs, and that they were occasioned by the event. *A propos* of the raining of grain the critics claim that it fell down from Heaven as the product of an extraordinary phenomenon, but, if our discussion starts from clouds and rain, this phenomenon cannot be deemed supernatural

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<sup>1</sup> See above p. 167. Quotation from [Huai Nan Tse VIII, 5r](#).

<sup>2</sup> Vol. I, p. 294, Note 1, and p. 295, Note 1.



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for the following reason :

The rain from clouds originates on hills and mountains. Descending and spreading, these clouds become rain. Beholding it falling down from above, people are under the impression that it is Heaven which rains water. On a summer day, rain is water, whereas in winter, when Heaven is cold, it freezes and turns into snow. Under all circumstances, it comes from cloudy vapours on hills and mountains, and it is evident that it cannot descend and gather on earth from heaven above <sup>1</sup>.

When it rains grain, the clouds likewise scatter it, and it also rises from the earth. Having been carried away by a strong wind and blown up to heaven, it falls down again to the earth. Noticing its descent from heaven, people then speak of Heaven raining grain.

In the 31st year of *Chien-wu* <sup>2</sup>, it rained grain at *Ch'ên-liu* <sup>3</sup>, and the grain descending covered the ground. Upon examining the shape of the grain, they found it to be like tribulus, but black, and it bore resemblance to the grains of panic grass. Perhaps this grain had grown in the country of the *I* and *Ti*. These tribes not eating corn, this grain had grown in the country and, when ripe, had perhaps fallen upon the ground. Meeting with a strong gale, it had been hurriedly carried off, blown away and flying along with the wind, until, the wind subsiding, it had alighted and descended in China. The Chinese becoming aware of it, then spoke of the raining of grain. My reasons are the following :

p2.186 When a wild-fire burns the hills and marshes, the leaves of plants and trees in them are all reduced to ashes, which, carried away by a gale, are blown aloft as high as heaven, but, when the wind relaxes, these leaves come down upon the roads. Now the grain from heaven is like the burned leaves of plants and trees, which fly about and fall down, but people regard it as rain, and the authors look upon it as a wonderful prodigy.

Heaven confines itself to emitting its fluid, whereas Earth governs the

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 277.

<sup>2</sup> In the year 55 A. D.

<sup>3</sup> In the province of *Honan*.

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growing of things. All plants with leaves and eatable fruit are a produce of Earth, and not made by Heaven. Now, grain is not produced by the fluid and requires earth for its development. Although they call it a miracle, miracles are bound to certain species. Provided that things growing from the earth could conversely descend from heaven, could celestial things likewise issue from the earth ? The productions of Earth are like the stars of Heaven. The stars do not change their nature and grow from Earth, why then should grain alone grow from Heaven ?

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Some books contain a notice that, [when *Po Yi* <sup>1</sup> made a well, a dragon mounted a black cloud, and the spirits alighted on the *K'un-lun*] <sup>2</sup>. This means to say that the dragon was injured by the well, which was the reason of the phenomenon of the dragon and the spirits.

The allegation that the dragon mounted a black cloud is trustworthy, but the remark concerning the spirits alighting on Mount *K'un-lun*, and ascribing the rise of the dragon and the flight of the spirits to the building of a well, is unreliable.

Wells are made for the purpose of drinking, and fields are planted for the sake of food, which amounts to the same. If *Po Yi*, by making a well, caused such extraordinary events, why do such phenomena not appear, when the soil is first tilled ?

*Shên Nung* <sup>3</sup> shaped a crooked stick into a plough, and taught people how to till. Then they first began eating grain, and grain was first sown. The tilled ground becomes a field, and a dug out hole, a well. From the well comes water to slake the thirst, and on the field grows grain to appease the hunger. Heaven and Earth, p2.187 ghosts and spirits are all agreed on this. Wherefore then does the dragon rise on a black cloud, and the spirits alight on the *K'un-lun* ? The mounting of a dragon on a black cloud has happened in olden as well as modern times, and it did not only commence to do so when *Po Yi* dug

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<sup>1</sup> Baron *Yi*, the forester of *Shun* and assistant of *Yü*. See Vol. I, p. 253.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from [Huai Nan Tse VIII, 5r.](#)

<sup>3</sup> The tutelary deity of agriculture, a legendary emperor.

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his well.

At present, in midsummer, when thunder and rain appear simultaneously, dragons frequently rise on clouds. There being a certain relation between clouds and dragons, the dragon rides on clouds and rain <sup>1</sup>. Things of the same class attract one another, but there is no purpose in this.

In *Yao's* time a man of fifty was beating clods of earth on the road. An observer remarked,

— Grand indeed is the virtue of *Yao* !

The man who was playing with earth, replied,

— At sunrise I begin my work, and at sunset I take my rest. I dig a well to drink, and labour my field to eat. What sort of energy does *Yao* display ? <sup>2</sup>

Accordingly, in *Yao's* time, wells must have been known.

Under the reign of *Yao* and *Shun*, dragons were reared and domesticated and always kept at court. When towards the end of the *Hsia* dynasty, the government degenerated, the dragons concealed themselves <sup>3</sup>, and it was not only when *Po Yi* had dug his well, that they rose on clouds.

And who are those spirits that are mentioned ? It must be the hundred spirits <sup>4</sup>. For what reason should these hundred spirits resent so much that men made wells ? If the spirits are similar to men, they must also have a desire to drink, and, with such a craving, to detest wells and run away would be self-contradictory. Even if *Po Yi* had not dug the well, the dragon would not have mounted a cloud on account of the digging of some well, nor would the spirits have alighted on the *K'un-lun* for that reason. This is a misconception of some writers and of their invention.

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<sup>1</sup> Vide Vol. I, pp. 353 and 357.

<sup>2</sup> The *Pei-wên-yün-fu* quotes a similar passage from the *Ti-wang shi-chi*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 355.

<sup>4</sup> The various kinds of existing spirits.

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There is a report that Mount *Liang*<sup>1</sup> collapsed and blocked a river, which for three days did not flow. The prince of *Chin* was very much distressed, *Po Tsung*<sup>2</sup>, following the counsel of a p2.188 carriage-driver, bade Duke *Ching* dress in plain white silk and bewail the extraordinary case. Upon this the water of the river came back<sup>3</sup>.

This is preposterous. A mountain tumbling down and blocking a river is like a tumor caused by an abscess, which prevents the circulation of the blood. Could such a tumor be cured by putting on white clothes and crying ?

In *Yao's* time the Great Flood was surging up to the sky, encircling mountains and overtopping hills<sup>4</sup>. The emperor *Yao* sighed and was anxious to find some clever helpmate. The waters were worse than the blocking of a river, and *Yao's* sorrow deeper than that of Duke *Ching*, but we have not heard that, by dressing in white silk and giving vent to his grief, he could overcome the water. Had *Yao* no device of some able man like the carriage-driver ?

It is impossible to remove a cataclysm like the Great Flood by such means as sounds and dresses. White silk and tears are tantamount to repentance and self-indictment. *Yao* and *Yü* regulating the waters did it by means of personal labour, and not by self-reproaches.

Mount *Liang* was a mountain in *Yao's* time<sup>5</sup>, and the river that was blocked was a river of the same period. Both catastrophes, the falling mountain blocking the river as well as the rain from heaven and the rise of the water, were not different, but *Yao* and *Yü* regulated the water by personal work, whereas the carriage-driver had recourse to self-accusation, to put the blocked river in order. The catastrophes were similar, but the measures taken, different ; the people were alike, but their methods inconsistent.

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<sup>1</sup> A mountain in the province of *Shensi*, 90 Li north-east of *Han-ch'êng-hsien*.

<sup>2</sup> An officer of *Chin*.

<sup>3</sup> The *Shi-chi* chap. 39, p. 31r ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. IV, p. 322](#)) informs us that this mountain collapsed in B. C. 586. *Po Tsung* was of opinion that this was not to be looked upon as a prodigy.

<sup>4</sup> A reminiscence of *Shuking* (*Yao-tien*) Part I, 11 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 24](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>5</sup> It existed already at that early period.

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The true system of the wise and the phenomenologists is otherwise, I should say. According to their principles, such categories must be called into play as can affect one another, *e. g.* if there be cold, the former state may be restored by warmth, and warmth may again be dispelled by cold. Thus with dragons they attract rain, and by punishments expel heat <sup>1</sup>. In all these instances the p2.189 fluids of the Five Elements are set in motion, which either affect or overcome each other <sup>2</sup>. What have white silk and crying over a blocked river to do with these principles ?

Perhaps, when the river was dammed and the mountain collapsed, first the earth was heaped up, and the water was not strong enough to break through. Three days later, the water had increased, so that the earth was dispersed, and the obstruction destroyed. After the removal of the obstruction, the current set in again and began flowing eastwards. At the suggestion of *Po Tsung* who listened to the carriage-driver, the duke dressed in white silk and cried, whereupon the water commenced running again. Upon this they contended that the extraordinary deviation of the river was adjusted by these measures. As a matter of fact this is wrong, but how can we know ?

If the collapse of the mountain was something natural, white silk and tears were of no advantage, and if it was a divine calamity in response to some acts, then the government and the administration ought to have been changed. Were silk and tears in any way connected with a change of government, that they might remove a divine calamity ?

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In some books we find the following narrative : The filial piety of *Tsêng Tse* was such, that a peculiar sympathy existed between him and his mother. Once, when *Tsêng Tse* had gone out to gather fuel in the country, a guest arrived and wanted to leave again. *Tsêng Tse's* mother told him to remain, since her son would soon be back, and with her right hand she squeezed her left arm <sup>3</sup>. *Tsêng Tse* at once felt a pain in his left arm, and forthwith he came

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<sup>1</sup> See Vol. I, p. 280.

<sup>2</sup> A similar category is believed to attract a similar and to repel a dissimilar one.

<sup>3</sup> The common version is that *Tsêng Tse's* mother bit her finger, whereupon he felt a pain in his finger too. Cf. *Mayers' Manual* No. 739 and *Giles, Bibl. Dict.* No. 2022, also

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back to his mother, and asked of her the reason why his arm had pained him. His mother replied,

— To-day a guest arrived and wanted to go away. I squeezed my arm, in order to call you <sup>1</sup>.

For extreme piety leads to a spiritual communication with father and mother, and a sickness of the body directly affects the spirit.

This is a mistake, I dare say. Since great filial piety and brotherly love evidently make an impression upon the spirits, one <sup>p2.190</sup> says that the effects of virtue extend to Heaven and Earth. From this common people infer that extreme piety and love move the soul. If the pain in the arm of *Tsêng Tse's* mother was likewise felt in his arm, was *Tsêng Tse* also sick, when his mother was taken ill, or did he die at once, when his mother expired ? We learn from history that, when *Tsêng Tse's* mother died first, he did not follow her. This shows that the spirit may be moved in a minor degree, but that it cannot be affected to any great extent.

People say that, during the night, *Shên Hsi* <sup>2</sup> heard his mother sing. His heart being touched, he opened the door to inquire who was the singer, and it appeared that it was his mother. Hearing his mother's voice, the sound affected him. His heart was agitated, and his mind roused, so that he opened the door to inquire. That may be true. Now the mother of *Tsêng Tse* was in the house, while her son was in the country and could not hear her calls. How could a little pinching of the arm on the part of his mother affect the son ? Methinks people have embellished the facts. Hearing that as a dutiful son *Tsêng Tse* had not his peer on earth, they invented the story of his mother squeezing her arm.

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the *Shang-yu-lu*.

<sup>1</sup> *Kanghi's* Dictionary quotes this passage.

<sup>2</sup> The dictionaries do not know such a man, but *Huai Nan Tse* XVI, 1v. refers to the story here related, saying [...]. Consequently *Shên Hsi* cannot have lived later than the 2nd cent. B. C. The commentary adds that *Shên Hsi* was a native of *Ch'u*. In his youth, he had lost his mother. Once he heard a begging woman sing in the street. The voice impressed him so much, that he went out and recognised his mother.

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People say that *Cho*<sup>1</sup> of *Nan-yang*<sup>2</sup> following *Hou's* counsel, the locusts did not enter his territory. Owing to his extraordinary wisdom, the calamitous insects did not infest his country<sup>3</sup>. This also is a fallacy. Great wisdom may make itself felt upon creatures of a similar kind, which are able to understand the character of one of their kindred, and afterwards feel a certain respect for him. Locusts belong to the class of mosquitoes and p2.191 gadflies<sup>4</sup>. What do they hear, and what do they know to become aware of *Cho's* proceedings? Provided that a wise man lived in the country, far away in the interior, would mosquitoes and gadflies not enter his cottage? They would not shun the hut of a sage, wherefore then should the locusts keep aloof from *Cho's* territory?

If they say that the calamity of locusts has nothing in common with mosquitoes and gadflies, they will admit at least that heat and cold can also prove calamities. Now, in case cold prevails throughout a circuit, and that in one of its districts there lives a wise man, could the area of this one district alone remain warm? Heat and cold do not recoil from the district of a wise man, why then should the locusts not enter the territory of *Cho*?

Consequently it was merely by chance that the locusts did not ravage his country. The fame of *Cho's* wisdom being in every mouth, people conceived the idea that he could avert locusts.

When locusts appear in the country, they cannot go everywhere nor completely cover the ground. At their gatherings they are more numerous in some places, and in others less. If their swarms are concentrated upon one place, it is not necessary that robber *Chê* should dwell there, nor is the country which they spare inhabited by *Po Yi*<sup>1</sup>. They alight or pass in greater or smaller numbers, and do not completely cover everything. As in falling down upon a place, they are many or few, so in passing a district, they either

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<sup>1</sup> *Cho Mao*, a distinguished scholar and excellent official who by *Kuang Wu Ti* was ennobled as Marquis and died in 28 A. D. See *Giles, Bibl. Dict.* No. 411.

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

<sup>3</sup> Under the reign of *P'ing Ti*, 1-5 A. D., twenty districts of *Honan* province were infested by locusts, and only *Mi-hsien* where *Cho* was magistrate was spared.

<sup>4</sup> [][]. The first character must here mean an insect, a meaning not found in the dictionaries. [] stands for [] 'mosquito' ... The combination 'mosquitoes and gadflies' is common. Cf. *Chalmers, Structure of Chinese Characters* p. 93, the *Chêng-tse t'ung* and *Giles, Dict.* No. 7788.

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remain or leave again. From their number no conclusion can be drawn as to goodness or badness ; how then should their appearance or non-appearance be a criterion of a man's wisdom ? Hence it is plain that, when locusts pass of their own accord, we have no right to say that they do not come into the territory of a wise man.

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<sup>1</sup> A paragon of integrity.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### Praise of the *Han* Dynasty

#### 57. XIX, I. *Hsüan Han*

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p2.192 The Literati contend that the Five Emperors and the Three Rulers brought the empire the blessings of universal peace, and that since the accession of the *Han* dynasty there has not yet been general peace. By saying that the Five Emperors and Three Rulers brought about a time of uninterrupted tranquillity, and that the *Han* have not yet enjoyed such a state, they imply that the Five Emperors and Three Rulers were sages, for only the virtue of sages can have such an effect, and the allegation that the *Han* have not had such a peaceful time means to say that there were no sage emperors, because the influence of worthies is not sufficient <sup>1</sup>.

Furthermore, they remember the words of *Confucius* saying :

— The phœnix does not come ; the River sends forth no Plan : it is all over with me ! <sup>2</sup>

At present, we have no phœnix and no Plan of the River, and numerous are the omens that persist in not coming. Wherefore they say that we are not living in a period of general peace. This view is preposterous.

Universal peace manifests itself by the establishment of government, when the people respond, by being cheerful and at ease. *Confucius* teaches that one renders the people happy by cultivating one's own self <sup>3</sup>. The fact that *Yao* and *Shun* were toiling for the welfare of their people proves that at that time there was universal peace. For governing others the individual must be the starting point. The people being at ease, the *Yin* and the *Yang* are in harmony, and when they harmonize all things grow and develop ; such being the case, strange omens come forth. How about our empire ? Is it at ease or

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<sup>1</sup> *Viz.* to bring about universal peace.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 405, Note 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Analects XIV, 45* [*Couvreur*].

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in jeopardy ?

Being at ease, it is at peace, and then even the absence of omens would not be hurtful to the peaceful state. The style of government becomes manifest from its institutions and appears from the real state of affairs. When these manifestations are not visible the true conditions cannot be ascertained. Sometimes all may be <sup>p2.193</sup> in perfect order, but there are no witnesses to prove it. Therefore, as regards the principles of government, provided that its institutions be true and real, it is not requisite that they should all be manifest. A wise ruler in his administration aims at universal peace, and it is not indispensable that there should be corresponding omens.

The omens of universal peace are like the features of sage sovereigns. Since the physiognomies of sage rulers must not of necessity be similar, wherefore should those portents always be of the same type ? The scholars know that in the time of *Yao* and *Shun* a phoenix as well as a 'brilliant star' <sup>1</sup> became visible, and there were issued the Plan of the River and the Scroll of the *Lo*. Do they imagine that future monarchs, ruling the empire, must again have this kind of thing, in order to bring about universal peace ? If they go so far, they likewise ought to require of *Yao* again to possess joined teeth <sup>2</sup> and of *Shun* again to have eight eyebrows <sup>3</sup>.

The holy features of emperors and rulers have not been the same at various times, consequently there is no reason why the portents obtained of yore and at present should be identical, and it is erroneous to assert that we have no period of general peace, because the present sovereigns have no phoenix and no Plan of the River. *Confucius* speaking of the phoenix and the Plan merely used former prodigies for exemplification, but does not intend to say that every age must again have its phoenix and its Plan.

The omens of the emperors and rulers were manifold and not only a single one, either a phoenix and a unicorn, or the Plan of the *Yellow River* and the Scroll of the *Lo*, or sweet dew and wine springs, or the harmonious blending

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 323 seq.

<sup>2</sup> As the emperor *Ti K'u* had, Vol. I, p. 304.

<sup>3</sup> We read *loc. cit.* that the eyebrows of *Yao* had eight colours, not that he had eight eyebrows.

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of the *Yin* and the *Yang*, or the excellent order and the tranquillity of the people. The present omens must not agree with the old ones, nor must the latter be conformable to the former. It is not necessary that there should be an unbroken chain of the portents met with, and this will become evident from the following :

When emperors and rulers arose, their fate and luck were by no means the same. The *Chou* encountered a crow and a p2.194 fish <sup>1</sup>, the *Han* destroyed a big snake <sup>2</sup>, and we may be sure that the sovereigns of *T'ang* and *Yü* were in a similar position as those of *Chou* and *Han*. The events and circumstances of their rise and accession to the throne were not homogeneous ; why then should the presages of universal peace be identical ? To infer future auguries from those omens which happened would be like watching the trunk of a tree in wait for a hare and hiding oneself, after having destroyed the nets <sup>3</sup>.

When peace reigns throughout the empire, the omens and presages may be very different ; as when a man is wealthy his goods are not the same. Some hoard up rice and grain, others collect silks and others, fabrics, others breed cattle and horses, or they acquire landed property and houses. Those partial to rice and grain do not care for silks and fabrics, and the cattle and horse-breeders do not appreciate land and buildings. Therefore they will say that rice and grain are better than fabrics, or that cattle and horses have a greater value than lots of land and houses. Now, provided that the people live at peace and there are omens, those who object that the old omens *viz.* the Plan of the River and the phoenix did not appear, and that therefore there cannot be peace, those who say so are like rice-eaters that, upon arriving in a country where everybody eats millet, and no rice is to be seen, declare millet not to be any grain.

As a matter of fact, the empire enjoys universal peace. But unless there

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 130, Note 1.

<sup>2</sup> About the event see Vol. I, p. 234, Note 1.

<sup>3</sup> *I. e.*, it would be foolish. The story here alluded to of a peasant of *Sung* who having seen a hare running against the trunk of a tree and breaking its crown, fancied this to be an easy way of catching hares, and therefore settled down near the tree in wait for one, has been told by *Han Fei Tse* XIX, 1v. See *Pétillon, Allusions* p. 175.

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be sages, how could this be effected ? And how can the truth of this assertion be borne out in the absence of a phoenix ? If we ask the scholars of our age they do not know a sage ; then how do they know whether there are no sages at present ? How could our contemporaries, on perceiving a phoenix, recognise it as such ? Since they do not know it, how can they be sure that there are no phoenixes now ? They really ignore whether there are sages or not, nor are they able to distinguish a genuine phoenix <sup>p2.195</sup> from a false one. Consequently they are unqualified to ascertain whether the present time may boast of universal peace or not.

*Confucius* said,

[— If there is a true emperor it would still require a generation, and then virtue would prevail] <sup>1</sup> ;

after thirty years, the world is at peace. From the beginning of the *Han* dynasty up to *Wên Ti* there were upwards of twenty years <sup>2</sup>. Then *Chia Yi* was the first to suggest that, in view of the harmony pervading the empire, the first day of the first moon, the colour of dresses, and several customs should be changed. The official titles should be fixed, and rites and music receive a new impetus. When *Wên Ti* ascended the throne he was ever yielding and accommodating <sup>3</sup>. According to *Chia Yi's* proposals, in the time of *Wên Ti*, there was already general peace.

These more than twenty years after the rise of the *Han* would agree with the dictum of *Confucius* that a generation would be required before virtue prevailed. The number of years making up one generation being already completed, universal peace must have been established. *Chia Yi* was aware of it, and fancy now nearly three hundred years later <sup>4</sup> to say that there is not yet general peace ! A big mistake, indeed.

The generation alluded to by *Confucius* is thirty years. The house of *Han*

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects XIII, 12 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> From 206 to 179 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in an abridged form from the biography of *Chia Yi* in the *Shi-chi* chap. 84, p. 8r.

<sup>4</sup> The *Lun-hêng* was written in 82 or 83 A. D. Cf. p. 207 and I, p. 9.

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has reigned three hundred years, ten emperors <sup>1</sup> have become illustrious by their virtues, and should not the time of universal peace have already come ?

The era of *Wên Ti* was, no doubt, perfectly peaceful already. The following ages kept up the peace, until under *P'ing Ti* the former *Han* dynasty was extinguished <sup>2</sup>. *Kuang Wu Ti* restored it <sup>3</sup>, and again it arrived at universal peace.

The following question might be put : *Wên Ti* had omens, and his reign deserves to be termed a time of universal peace. But *Kuang Wu Ti* had no such omens, how then could he be credited with universal peace ?

p2.196 My answer is that omens and auguries of emperors and rulers are dissimilar at different periods. Even though there should be no ominous things at all, yet the peaceful gathering of the people and the harmonious blending of wind and air would likewise be ominous. How can we show this to be the case ?

When emperors and rulers had pacified the empire they were in the habit of ascending Mount *T'ai*, to offer the hill-sacrifice and announce the peace. *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* also did so, but encountered a violent thunderstorm with rain, because his government was anything but peaceful, and the air by no means harmoniously mixed. When *Kuang Wu Ti*, however, went up the mountain to sacrifice, the sky was bright and cloudless <sup>4</sup>, a phenomenon attending universal peace. His government was peaceful and the air corresponding. Under *Kuang Wu Ti's* reign the air was harmonious, the people at peace, and ominous creatures appeared of various kinds. But, notwithstanding these proofs afforded by the people and the air, those critics still cherish their doubts.

In the second year of *Yuan-k'ang* <sup>5</sup> of *Hsiao Hsüan Ti's* time, a phoenix

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<sup>1</sup> From *Han Kao Tsu* down to *Chang Ti*, under whom the *Lun-hêng* was completed, there are ten emperors altogether, the empress *Lü Hou* excepted.

<sup>2</sup> In 5 A. D. *Ju Tse Ying*, 6-8 A. D., was a child and reigned only nominally till in 9 A. D. *Wang Mang* snatched the empire from him.

<sup>3</sup> In 25 A. D.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 206.

<sup>5</sup> 64 B. C.

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alighted on Mount *T'ai* and subsequently, also, in *Hsin-p'ing* <sup>1</sup>. In the fourth year <sup>2</sup>, spiritual birds perched on the *Ch'ang-lo* palace and some in the *Shang-lin* park, and the *Chiu-chên* <sup>3</sup> brought a unicorn as a present. In the second year of *Shên-chio* <sup>4</sup>, a phoenix and sweet dew descended on the capital, in the fourth year <sup>5</sup> a phoenix alighted in *Tu-ling* <sup>6</sup> and in the *Shang-lin* park. In the third year of *Wu fêng* <sup>7</sup>, when the emperor was offering sacrifice in the southern suburb, a divine splendour appeared simultaneously, or it rose in a valley and illuminated the feasting hall for at least ten days <sup>8</sup>. In the following year, when the emperor was sacrificing to the manes of *Hou Tu*, the glamour appeared again in the same manner as when he went to the southern suburb. Sweet dew and a spiritual bird descended on the *Yen-shou* and the *Wan-sui* palaces. In the third month of the same year, a *luan* and a phoenix alighted on a tree within the eastern gate of the *Chang-lo* palace. In the first year of *Kan-lu* <sup>9</sup>, a yellow dragon arrived and was seen in *Hsin fêng* <sup>10</sup>, and wine springs flowed abundantly <sup>11</sup>.

Those phoenixes arrived five or six times, and either it was the same bird appearing several times, or each time it was a different bird coming independently. The unicorn, the spiritual birds, the yellow dragon, the *luan* bird, the sweet dew, the wine springs, the divine splendour and supernatural light occurring at the sacrifices to *Hou Tu* and to Heaven and Earth, all these omens must be admitted to be very numerous, nay superabundant. Though the reign of *Hsiao Ming Ti* <sup>12</sup> could not boast of a phoenix, yet it was distinguished by a unicorn, sweet dew, wine springs, spiritual birds, white

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<sup>1</sup> The modern *Pin-chou* in *Shensi*.

<sup>2</sup> 62 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> An *Annamese* tribe. See Vol. I, p. 370, Note 2.

<sup>4</sup> 60 B. C.

<sup>5</sup> 58 B. C.

<sup>6</sup> East of *Hsi-an-fu* in *Shensi*, the modern *Hsien-ning-hsien*.

<sup>7</sup> 55 B. C.

<sup>8</sup> The *Han-shu* has [] instead of [] 'ten odd quarters of an hour' *i. e.*, about two hours and a half.

<sup>9</sup> 53 B. C.

<sup>10</sup> A place in *Shensi*. Cf. Vol. I, p. 364, Note 2.

<sup>11</sup> All these portents are mentioned in the *Han-shu* chap. 8, p. 21v. seq. also.

<sup>12</sup> 58-75 A. D.

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pheasants, purple boletus, and auspicious grain. Gold was found, and tripods turned up. Separated trees again grew together.

The presages of the Five Emperors and Three Rulers mentioned in the Classics and the Records are not more numerous than those of *Hsiao Ming Ti*. If universal peace be measured by presages, the years of *Hsiao Ming Ti* must have been twice as peaceful as those of the Five Emperors and Three Rulers. Accordingly, the eras of *Hsiao Hsüan Ti* and *Hsiao Ming Ti* deserve to be called ages of universal peace.

Those apt to bring about general peace are sages. Why do the scholars of the present time contend that our age has no sages? Was the fluid derived from Heaven so copious during former generations and is it so scanty in later times?

The *Chou* had three sages: *Wên Wang*, *Wu Wang*, and *Chou Kung* all flourishing simultaneously. Why must the *Han*, being a dynasty as well, rank below the *Chou* in this respect, and why must the wise emperors of the *Chou* be more numerous than those of the *Han*? The *Han* emperors *Kao Tsu* and *Kuang Wu Ti* would correspond to *Wên Wang* and *Wu Wang* of the *Chou* dynasty, and *Wên Ti*, *Wu Ti*, *Hsüan Ti*, *Hsiao Ming Ti* and the reigning emperor <sup>1</sup> surpass the *Chou* kings *Ch'êng*, *K'ang*, and *Hsüan*. Not that, because I am personally living in the *Han* epoch, I am prone unduly to p2.198 extol and eulogize them, trying to coax and flatter, my only aim being to explain how matters stand, and how far the views held by scholars are justified.

Usually people incline to praise what is distant and belaud antiquity. In regard to omens they admire those of remote ages, and as to government they regard the old kings as worthies. Noticing something wonderful at the present time, they do not believe in it. Should *Yao* and *Shun* be re-born now, I am afraid that they would not be styled sages.

When hunters are chasing wild animals, lookers-on take a keen interest in the hunt, but do not care for fishing, which they have not seen. Thus those people look to *Ch'i*, but are indifferent to *Lu*, or they ramble through *Ch'u* and

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<sup>1</sup> *Chang Ti*, 76-88 A. D.

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have no regard for *Sung*<sup>1</sup>. Of *Yao* and *Shun*, the *Hsia*, and the *Yin* dynasty there are records on tablets of two feet four inches<sup>2</sup>. It is those that the Literati pore on, studying from morning till night, whereas they do not look at the books of the *Han* time, saying that the productions of the *Han* are worthless and not up to those of the ancients. Just so the spectators of the hunt do not care for fishing, and those roaming over *Ch'i* and *Ch'u* pay no heed to *Sung* and *Lu*. If a great literary genius should arise and put on record the history of the *Han* time, his work would become a *Shuking* or a *Ch'un-ch'iu*. The scholars would take it up and study it most carefully, and, by adding it to the six old Classics, they would have seven<sup>3</sup>.

From our most illustrious sovereign up to *Kao Tsu* all were sage emperors. According to the panegyrics on the *Han*, presented by *Tu Fu* and *Pan Ku*<sup>4</sup>, their achievements, virtues, and omens flowed forth as a mighty stream whose waters rushing on are immeasurable. When we pass *Yao* and *Shun* and enter the sphere of the first emperors, the three dynasties are like remote narrow gorges with very deep waters. The *Yin* era is not so very far from the time of the *Hsia* dynasty. But leaving alone *Yao* and <sup>p2.199</sup> *Shun*, the *Hsia* and the *Yin* and solely comparing the merits and accomplishments of the *Han* with those of the house of *Chou*, being the nearest to us, by weighing the *pros* and *cons*, we find that the *Chou* come short of the *Han* for the following reason :

The rulers of the *Chou* dynasty who received Heaven's command are *Wên Wang* and *Wu Wang*, in the *Han* time there are *Kao Tsu* and *Kuang Wu Ti*, but the miracles happening at the investiture of *Wên Wang* and *Wu Wang* are inferior to the auguries attendant on the accession of *Kao Tsu* and *Kuang Wu Ti*, and the omens of *Hsiao Hsüan Ti* and *Hsiao Ming Ti* are more conspicuous than those of the *Chou* sovereigns *Ch'êng*, *K'ang*, and *Hsüan Wang*. The portents of *Hsiao Hsüan Ti* and *Hsiao Ming Ti* may be said to have been the finest since the days of *Yao* and *Shun*.

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<sup>1</sup> The States *Ch'i* and *Lu* are of about equal importance, and so are *Ch'u* and *Sung*.

<sup>2</sup> Said of the length of the tablets. Cf. I, p. 456.

<sup>3</sup> Apart from the *Shi-chi* of *Sse-Ma Ch'ien* who describes only the beginning of the *Han* period, the history of the Former *Han* dynasty was written in the *Ch'ien Han-shu* by *Pan Ku* and that of the After *Han* in the *Hou Han-shu* by *Fan Yeh*, but though much esteemed, their works have not been raised to the rank of classics.

<sup>4</sup> *Pan Ku* wrote two poems descriptive of the eastern and western capitals of the *Han*.



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When our present emperor came to power he took over the State in perfect order with everything in abundance : The Four Seas <sup>1</sup> were united, the empire well settled, the omens were of the highest order, and mankind submitted to the glorious institutions. The black-haired people of the time of *T'ang* lived in harmony, and at present, likewise, benevolence is practised throughout the empire. When the year is not prosperous and the crop fails, yet we do not see the principles of morality trodden down in distant regions, or out-of-the-way places infested by bands of desperadoes. Under the *Chou* dynasty the *Yüeh-ch'ang* presented a white pheasant <sup>2</sup>, in our time the *Hsiung-nu*, the *Shan-shan* <sup>3</sup>, and the *Ai-lao* <sup>4</sup> bring cattle and horses as tribute. The domain of the *Chou* was confined to less than five thousand Li, the *Han* territory is so vast, that it extends beyond the uncultivated dependencies.

Cattle and horses are more valuable than white pheasants, and things near at hand not like the productions of distant countries. The territory of the ancient *Jung* and the *Ti* now forms part of China, the former Naked People now use court dress, the bare-headed people put on the caps, and the bare-footed people wear the shoes of the *Shang* dynasty. Barren and stony ground has been transformed into fertile soil, and truculent bandits have become law-abiding citizens. The roughness of the savages has been p2.200 smoothed down, and rebels have become peaceful people. If this is not universal peace, what else is it ?

As far as the transformations effected by virtue are concerned, the *Chou* do not outvie the *Han*, in the matter of omens and presages, however, the *Han* surpass the *Chou* dynasty. If their respective territories be measured, that of the *Chou* is much more limited than that of the *Han* ; why then should the *Han* not be equal to the *Chou* ? They pretend that the *Chou* had more sages, and that their administration brought about universal peace. The Literati in speaking of sages go much too far, placing them so high, that they

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<sup>1</sup> Figuratively for the border lands of China with their people.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 208.

<sup>3</sup> A people south of the *Lobnor*, said to be identical with the *Lou-lan* between *Hami* and *Turfan*.

<sup>4</sup> A people in *Yünnan*, in the present prefecture of *Yung-ch'ang*.

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leave no traces behind. They, likewise, make too much of government, so that they cut off universal peace, a continuation of which thus becomes an impossibility.

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## CHAPTER XIX

### Further Remarks on the State

#### 58. XIX, II. *Hui-kuo*

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p2.201 [*Yen Yuan*, in admiration of the Master's doctrine, sighed and said,

— The more I looked up to it, the higher it appeared to me, and the deeper I penetrated into it, the harder it became. ] <sup>1</sup>

This means that *Yen Yuan* having studied with *Confucius* month after month and year after year, found the doctrine becoming deeper and deeper. In the chapter entitled 'Praise of the *Han* Dynasty' <sup>2</sup> we have given the *Han* precedence over the *Chou* and endeavoured to show that the *Han* outrivalled the *Chou*, but our investigations were not yet exhaustive. If we expand them to the utmost limit, we shall acquire a still clearer conception of the greatness of the *Han* dynasty.

When a Classic is most thoroughly explained, all its remarkable beauties become visible. So an exhaustive treatise on a State brings out all its admirable features. From these additional remarks on the *Han* era it will become plain that it ranks above all other ages. My reasons are the following :

*Huang Ti* had to fight at *Cho-lu* <sup>3</sup>, and *Yao* led his troops to *Tan-shui*. In *Shun's* time the *Yu Miao* <sup>4</sup> did not submit ; at the commencement of the *Hsia* dynasty the *Hu* rebelled. *Kao Tsung* invested the 'Devil country' <sup>5</sup> and destroyed its people after three years. Under the *régime* of King *Ch'êng* of

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects IX, 10](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> On p. 192.

<sup>3</sup> The capital of *Huang Ti* in *Chili*.

<sup>4</sup> On *Tan-shui* and the *Yu Miao* see Vol. I, p. 494, Notes 3 and 4.

<sup>5</sup> An allusion to the [Yiking, 63th hexagram](#) (*Legge, Sacred Books* Vol. XVI, p. 205), The 'devil country' or 'demon region' means the barbarous hordes in the north of China.

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*Chou* there was an insurrection in *Kuan* and *T'sai* <sup>1</sup>, and *Chou Kung* had to undertake an expedition to the east. All this happened under the former dynasties.

p2.202 We do not hear of similar occurrences during the *Han* time. During the reign of *Kao Tsu*, *Ch'ên Hsi* <sup>2</sup> revolted and *P'êng Yüeh* <sup>3</sup> rebelled, but then peace was secured. When in the time of *Hsiao Ching Ti*, *Wu* and *Ch'u* levied troops against him, the emperor vented his resentment against *Ch'ao Ts'o* <sup>4</sup>. The *Hsiung-nu* were constantly making trouble and the calendar did not reach them <sup>5</sup>, but the emperor did not infest their naturally barren country with his soldiers. At present they all tender their allegiance and offer oxen and horses as tribute, because the power of the *Han* is so imposing, that they do not venture any opposition.

When *Chou* committed the greatest atrocities, the whole empire took up arms against him. King *Wu* enlisted troops all anxious to fight forthwith, and eight hundred feudatory princes appeared uninvited <sup>6</sup>.

*Hsiang Yü* displeased with the inferiority of his title, collected troops and rose simultaneously with *Kao Tsu*. Their power had not yet been balanced. As to the strength of *Hsiang Yü*, the breaking iron is much more difficult than breaking wood. *Kao Tsu* destroyed *Hsiang Yü* and broke his iron. *Wu Wang* in defeating *Chou* merely broke wood. Consequently, the strength of the *Han* surpassed that of the *Chou* by far.

The annihilation of one foe is comparatively easy, that of two, an arduous task, however. *T'ang* and *Wu* defeated *Chieh* and *Chou*, one enemy each. *Kao Tsu*, on the other hand, destroyed *Ch'in* and killed *Hsiang Yü*, vanquishing the

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Ch'ên Hsi* was a counsellor to the king of *Chao*. He caused an insurrection against *Kao Tsu* in 197 B. C. and was decapitated in 196. Cf. [Chavannes, \*Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 393 seq.\*](#) and 399.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 218, Note 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Ch'ao T'so* eked on five States to rebel against the *Han*. The plot failed, and *Ch'ao T'so* was put to death by order of the emperor in 154 B. C. Cf. [Chavannes \*loc. cit.\* p. 499](#) and [509](#).

<sup>5</sup> The acceptance of the Chinese calendar has always been regarded as a sign of submission.

<sup>6</sup> A fact mentioned in the *Shi-chi* ([Chavannes, \*Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 226\*](#)).

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two houses at the same time. His strength therefore must have been double that of *T'ang* and *Wu* <sup>1</sup>.

*Wu Wang* was chief of the west to *Yin*. He served *Chou* as a subject, and as a subject attacked his sovereign. Such was the p2.203 disgust of *Po Yi* and *Shu Ch'i* at this conduct, that, leading their homes behind them, they made remonstrances. But *Wu Wang* declined to hear them. Lest they should eat the millet of *Chou*, they died of starvation at *Shou-yang* <sup>2</sup>. *Kao Tsu* was not a minister of *Ch'in*, nor was *Kuang Wu Ti* an officer of *Wang Mang*. The punishment of a depraved sovereign and the annihilation of a vicious ruler do not call for the criticisms of *Po Yi*, and, in this respect, the moral standard of the two emperors may be declared higher than that of their *Chou* predecessors <sup>3</sup>.

It is easy to rise high from hills and mountains and easy to dive deep in abysses and gullies, but it is an arduous task to rise from low and humble spheres without any stepping-stone. Contrariwise, it is very convenient to inherit a title and succeed to an estate, noble ancestors having laid the foundation of one's fortune.

*Yao* came to the throne as a marquis of *T'ang*, and *Shun* succeeded to *Yao* as minister of finance when the latter abdicated. *Yü* followed *Shun*, on account of his merits, as minister of works. *T'ang* was in possession of an estate of seventy Li, *Wên Wang* had a hundred Li, and *Wu Wang* was margrave of the west and heir to *Wên Wang's* dignity in the metropolitan district <sup>4</sup>. The rise of these Five Monarchs and territorial lords had its good reasons and was easy because they had the necessary power.

*Kao Tsu* began his career as a headborough. Brandishing his sword three feet long, he conquered the empire. *Kuang Wu Ti* started from *Po-shui* <sup>5</sup> and exerted his prowess within the four seas. He did not call one foot of land his

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<sup>1</sup> This inference is wrong, of course, for we do not know whether the power of *Ch'in* and *Hsiang Yü* was, each of them, equal to that of *Chieh* or *Chou*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 168, Note 2 and p. 430, Notes 1 and 2.

<sup>3</sup> Who killed their rightful lieges.

<sup>4</sup> Lit. the 'three zones' round the capital. Cf. *Couvreur* Dict.

<sup>5</sup> A district in *Shensi*.

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own, or hold any position, but immediately received Heaven's decree and merely followed the trend of events. This was like rising from an abyss or a gully, or like diving from a hill or a mountain. Whose reigns were more remarkable, those of the Five Monarchs or those of these two sovereigns ?

We learn from several historical works that when *Wu Wang* was going to supersede *Chou*, *T'ai Kung* had devised a secret plan. He gave a small boy cinnabar to eat, so that his body turned red, and when he had grown up he taught him to say : 'The *Yin* are ruined'. The people of *Yin* beholding the red body of the small <sup>p2.204</sup> boy, took him for a heavenly spirit <sup>1</sup>, and, when he said that the *Yin* were ruined, they all believed that the *Shang* would perish.

When the soldiers arrived at the plain of *Mu*, at dawn they carried tallow-candles <sup>2</sup>. These artful devices deceived the people, and *Wu Wang* availed himself of *Chou's* unpreparedness. The *Chou* conceal this, but the world calls it imposture. When the *Han* conquered the empire, they did not use such false pretences.

In the chapter 'Completion of the War' <sup>3</sup> it is related that when the *Chou* defeated *Chou*, pestles were swimming in blood. This being recorded in the aforesaid chapter, the story about feeding a boy with cinnabar and lifting tallow-candles at dawn is probably true also.

When the *Han* smote the doomed *Hsin Huang Ti* <sup>4</sup>, *Kuang Wu Ti* had five thousand men under his command. *Wang Mang* dispatched two dukes at the head of thirty thousand men. When they were fighting at *K'un-yang* <sup>5</sup> it thundered and rained, and all was wrapped in obscurity, so that the front and the rear-ranks could not see each other. The soldiers of *Han* issued from the city of *K'un-yang* and attacked the armies of the two dukes. One man stood

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<sup>1</sup> This passage is quoted in the *T'ai-p'ing-yü-lan* chap. 985, p. 3v., but the text differs. There the boy does not eat the cinnabar, but smears his body with it. See also Vol. I, p. 484 where the corresponding passage, which owing to the conciseness of the text was mistranslated, must be corrected. *Tan Chiao* is not a name.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in the *Pei-wên-yün-fu*.

<sup>3</sup> Chapter of the *Shuking* [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)], see Vol. I, p. 484, Notes 4 and 5.

<sup>4</sup> *I. e.* *Wang Mang* who assumed the title the 'New Emperor'.

<sup>5</sup> A district in the *Ying-chou* prefecture of *Anhui*.

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for ten, and the troops of the two dukes were routed <sup>1</sup>. Heaven helped the *Han* with thunder and rain to overpower their enemies ; was not that quite something different from carrying tallow-candles and taking in the *Yin* by human tricks ?

Some say that when *Wu Wang* had defeated *Chou*, the latter threw himself into a fire and died. *Wu Wang* personally with a halberd cut off his head and hung it up on a great white standard <sup>2</sup>. King *Hsüan* of *Ch'i* pitied an ox whose blood was to be smeared on a bell, because he saw it trembling <sup>3</sup>. King *Chuang* of *Ch'u* condoned the guilt of the viscount of *Chêng*, on beholding his bare <sup>p2.205</sup> flesh and his emaciated body <sup>4</sup>. A superior man hates the wicked, but not his body. The sight of the corpse of *Chou* in the flames must have been a dismal one, much worse than the trembling of the ox or the emaciated person. How could *Wu Wang* bear to sever the head with a halberd and hang it up ?

When *Kao Tsu* entered *Hsien-yang*, *Yen Yüeh* had executed *Erh Shih Huang Ti*, and *Hsiang Yü* had killed *Tse Ying* <sup>5</sup>. *Kao Tsu* entered *Ch'in* with a placid look and did not mutilate the two corpses. At the arrival of *Kuang Wu Ti* in *Ch'ang-an*, *Liu Shêng Kung* <sup>6</sup> had already killed *Wang Mang*, but although he had his soldiers in readiness to punish the guilty, he did not lift his sword against the dead body. Which is greater, the barbarity of him who cut off the head of a corpse burned in fire or the clemency of sparing a body already cut to pieces ? Was this *Wu Wang's* revenge for *Yu-li* <sup>7</sup> ?

The imprisonment of a subject by his lord was not as blamable as the dethronement of the *Chou* by the *Ch'in* dynasty or the poisoning of *P'ing Ti* <sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In 23 A. D.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 235.](#)

<sup>3</sup> The story is related by *Mencius* Book I, Part I, chap. VII, 4 ([Legge, Classics Vol. II, p. 139](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>4</sup> In the year 596 B. C. the capital of *Chêng* was taken by *Ch'u* after a long siege. Then the scene alluded to took place. The narrative is found in the *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Hsüan*, 12th year [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>5</sup> See Vol. I, p. 319, Notes 4 to 7.

<sup>6</sup> Generally known as *Liu Hsüan*, a cousin to *Kuang Wu Ti*.

<sup>7</sup> The place where *Wên Wang*, the father of *Wu Wang*, was imprisoned by order of King *Chou*.

<sup>8</sup> The last emperor of the Former *Han* dynasty.

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by *Wang Mang*. In regard to the depravity of *Chieh* and *Chou*, *Tsou Po Ch'i* <sup>1</sup> is of opinion that it was not as bad as that of doomed *Ch'in*, and that doomed *Ch'in* was not as bad as *Wang Mang*. Yet in spite of his minor guilt the *Chou* punished King *Chou* so cruelly, and in spite of the more serious nature of their crimes the *Han* dealt so leniently with *Ch'in* and *Wang Mang*. Where was the greater generosity and where the greater narrow mindedness ?

When the mother of *Kao Tsu* was *enceinte*, a scaly dragon appeared above her, and in her dreams she met with a spirit. Her son was very fond of wine and would drink it on credit in a wine-shop. Forgetting to pay, he drank till he was intoxicated and fell asleep. Then always some portent would appear above him. Walking at night, he killed a snake, and the mother of the snake cried most lamentably. Together with *Lü Hou* he often repaired to a field-cottage and used to hide. Then a brilliant fluid would shine forth, so that *Lü Hou* knew his where-about. *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* p2.206 perceived the fluid of a son of heaven in the south-east <sup>2</sup>, and the Five Planets rose and assembled at the Eastern Well <sup>3</sup>. When the people of *Ch'in* looked out for the army of *Han* the clouds showed all sorts of tints.

At the birth of *Kuang Wu Ti* a phoenix alighted on the city, and a blade of auspicious grain grew in an apartment. At midnight, when no candles were burning, his deceased mother appeared floating in the air in a stream of light <sup>4</sup>. At first *Su Po A* observed that the air at *Ch'un-ling* was condensed and concentrated <sup>5</sup>, and when *Kuang Wu Ti*, on his progress, passed an old cottage, he beheld a wavering fluid going up to the sky.

No such phenomena have been recorded in connexion with the birth and the rise of the Five Emperors and the Three Rulers. The mother of *Yao* was moved by a red dragon, but no miraculous signs are reported attending his accession. The mother of *Yü* swallowed pearl-barley, and before she gave birth to her son obtained a black jade *bâton*. The mother of *Hsieh* consumed a

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<sup>1</sup> An author, see Vol. I, p. 469, Note 3.

<sup>2</sup> See Vol. I, p. 177 seq.

<sup>3</sup> A solar mansion corresponding to *Gemini*.

<sup>4</sup> See Vol. I, p. 180.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *loc. cit.* p. 181, where the reading *Ch'uang-ling* (ed. B.) must be corrected into *Ch'un-ling*.



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swallow's egg, and when *T'ang* put in an appearance, a white wolf carried a hook in its mouth. The mother of *Hou Chi* stepped into the foot-prints of a giant <sup>1</sup>. When *Wên Wang* came to the front he obtained a red bird, *Wu Wang* got a fish and a crow <sup>2</sup>, but in no case could they compete with the prodigies indicative of universal peace under the *Han* emperors.

In the times of *Huang Ti*, *Yao* and *Shun*, a phoenix was seen once, but very few were those of the numerous portents which became visible twice. *Han Wên Ti* had a yellow dragon and a jade staff, *Wu Ti*, a yellow dragon, a unicorn, and joined trees, under *Hsüan Ti* a phoenix came five times, besides there were a unicorn, spiritual birds, sweet dew, wine springs, a yellow dragon, and a supernatural glamour. *P'ing Ti* could boast of a white and black pheasant, *Hsiao Ming Ti* had a unicorn, spiritual birds, sweet dew, wine springs, a white and a black pheasant, felicitous boletus, joined trees, and auspicious grain, signs as wonderful as those of *Hsüan Ti* <sup>3</sup>. Then there was a supernatural tripod and gold found p2.207 in a miraculous manner <sup>4</sup>. So numerous and unceasing were the omens corresponding to the emperor's accomplishments. In view of the illustrious virtue of the *Han* dynasty, these auspicious auguries were so numerous.

After the demise of *Hsiao Ming Ti* our present Lord <sup>5</sup> ascended the throne. In the time between the first and second year <sup>6</sup> of his reign, the blessings of his virtue were felt everywhere. In his third year, five felicitous boletuses grew in *Ling-ling* <sup>7</sup>; in his fourth year, sweet dew fell in five districts, and in his fifth year boletuses grew again. In the sixth year, yellow dragons made their appearance, altogether eight, big and small ones <sup>8</sup>. When in former ages dragons had shown themselves, they never came in pairs, and two boletuses never grew together. Sweet dew did not fall but in one place. At present,

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<sup>1</sup> On these various miracles compare Vol. I, p. 318 seq.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 311.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 196.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 213.

<sup>5</sup> *Chang Ti*.

<sup>6</sup> 76-77 A. D.

<sup>7</sup> In the prefecture of *Yung-chou*, *Hunan*.

<sup>8</sup> More details on these eight dragons are given on p. 216.

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eight dragons came forth simultaneously, and of boletuses there grew as many as eleven, and sweet dew poured down on five districts<sup>1</sup>. The excellence of the *Han* was so abundant and conspicuous, that auguries happened in such numbers. Which of the ancient emperors and rulers ever attained to this ?

The Literati urge that sovereigns, after having developed their virtue, receive the decree of Heaven. In the chapter 'Heaven's Original Gift'<sup>2</sup> of the *Lun-hêng* we have maintained that rulers are already endowed with the heavenly fate at their birth, but it is difficult to know life.

In case we assume two endowments, then wine and food given twice are more abundant than given once. As the scholars say, the Five Monarchs received the decree of Heaven but once each, only the *Han* received it twice, consequently the fate granted them must be richer than that of their predecessors. If the statement of the *Lun-hêng* be correct, and the spontaneous fluid be received at birth, then likewise the quantity received by the house of *Han* must be greater. Having been cut off<sup>3</sup>, they were again restored, and having died, they revived again. In the world, persons that after death come to life again, are usually looked upon as p2.208 genii. The reign of the *Han* had been cut off and was renewed. The fact that *Kuang Wu Ti* regained the lost throne is something very remarkable.

*Wu Wang* defeating *Chou* availed himself of the savages of *Shu*<sup>4</sup>, who helped him in the battle of *Mu-yeh*. In the time of *Ch'êng Wang*, the *Yüeh-ch'ang*<sup>5</sup> presented a pheasant, and the *Japanese* brought odoriferous plants as tribute. When the power of *Yu* and *Li*<sup>6</sup> was shattered, the *Jung* and the *Ti* made an attack on the capital of *Chou*, and King *P'ing* proceeded eastward<sup>7</sup>, in order to avoid their aggressions, but under the *Han* dynasty the four kinds

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<sup>1</sup> All these portents are faithfully chronicled in the *Hou Han-shu* chap. 3, p. 6r. seq., only in the numbers and the years there are slight differences.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. I, p. 130.

<sup>3</sup> By the usurper *Wang Mang* who ousted the Former *Han* dynasty.

<sup>4</sup> The aborigines of *Ssechuan*.

<sup>5</sup> In Vol. I, p. 505 where the same statement is made.

<sup>6</sup> The two *Chou* emperors reigning from 878-828 B. C. (*Li*) and from 781 to 771 (*Yu*).

<sup>7</sup> He left the old capital *Hao-ching* in *Shensi*, and took up his residence farther eastward in *Lo-yi* (*Honan*).

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of savages <sup>1</sup> all appeared at court with tributes. In the first year of *Yuan-shih* <sup>2</sup> of the emperor *P'ing Ti*, the *Yüeh-ch'ang* appeared with interpreters for two languages <sup>3</sup> and offered one white pheasant and two black ones. Owing to the excellence of *Ch'êng Wang* and *Chou Kung's* assistance, they had presented one pheasant, but *P'ing Ti* received three.

Subsequently, in his fourth year, the *Ch'iang* tribes <sup>4</sup>, *Liang Ch'iao*, *Ch'iao Chung*, and *Liang Yuan* <sup>5</sup> and others outside the fortifications of *Chin-ch'êng* <sup>6</sup> offered their fish-ponds and their salt-land, and desired to become subjects of the *Han*. Afterwards, the *Han* even got possession of the stone house of *Hsi Wang Mu*, and established there the circuit of the 'Western Sea' <sup>7</sup>. In the *Chou* era p2.209 the *Jung* and the *Ti* attacked the king, in the *Han* period they became subjects of the empire, and offered their valuable land. The State of *Hsi Wang Mu* lies outside the farthest limits of the world, yet the *Han* annexed it. Whose virtue is greater and whose territory larger, that of the *Han* or the *Chou* ?

At present the *Ai-lao* and the *Shan-shan* are willing to tender their allegiance and to revert to virtue. Owing to the constant disturbances of the *Hsiung-nu*, generals were sent to chastise them, who captured thousands and ten thousands of their cattle.

*Yü*, the *Hsia* emperor, went naked into the country of the people of *Wu*, and *T'ai Po*, gathering medicinal herbs, cut off his hair and tattooed his

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<sup>1</sup> The savages from the four quarters.

<sup>2</sup> In 1 A. D.

<sup>3</sup> They could not converse with the Chinese through one interpreter, finding nobody who could understand their language and Chinese, and therefore required one more to translate their speech into a language from which it could be rendered into Chinese.

<sup>4</sup> Tribes in the west of China.

<sup>5</sup> Of these tribes only the *Liang Yuan* are mentioned in the *Han-shu*, Biography of *Wang Mang* (*Pei-wên-yün-fu*).

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

<sup>7</sup> The geographical part of the *Sui-shu* (quoted in the *Pei-wên-yün-fu*) informs us that the circuit of the 'Western Sea' includes the old city of *Fu-sse*, wherever that may be, and embraces the kingdom of *T'u-yü-hun*. There is the stone grotto of *Hsi Wang Mu* and the salt lake *Kukunor*. [Chavannes, Les Tou Kiue Occidentaux](#) p. 280 likewise places *T'u-yü-hun* on the banks of this lake. The *Hsi-yü-chuan*, on the other side, states that *T'iao-chih* which I take to be Syria, is conterminous with *Hsi-hai*, and that there are big birds whose eggs are like jugs (ostriches). It is impossible that the *Han* carried their conquests so far.

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body <sup>1</sup>. With reference to the territory of *Yao* and *Shun*, *Wu* ranked as an uncultivated dependency. The *Yüeh* were counted among the Nine Savages <sup>2</sup>. They wore woollen cloth and wrapped a sash round their heads <sup>3</sup>. Now they are all Chinese subjects wearing long dresses and using shoes. The people of *Pa*, *Shu* <sup>4</sup>, *Yüeh-sui* <sup>5</sup>, *Yü-lin* <sup>6</sup>, *Annam*, *Liaotung*, and *Yo-lang*, in the *Chou* time, wore their hair long and in tufts with hair-pins, now they wear fur-caps. In the *Chou* era they required two interpreters, now they chant the *Shiking* and the *Shuking*.

The *Ch'un-ch'iu* puts forward the principle that [the relations of sovereigns ought not to harbour wicked designs, and that if they do they deserve death.] <sup>7</sup> The king of *Kuang-ling*, *Ching* was led astray by a mischievous magician, and *Ying*, king of *Ch'u*, was beguiled by a mean fellow. Several times their plans became manifest, but *Hsiao Ming Ti* pardoned them three times. The two kings then swallowed poison <sup>8</sup>. *Chou Kung* executing *Kuan* and *T'sai* went much farther than this.

p2.210 The relations of King *Ch'u* from his mother's side, the *Hsü* family, conspired with him. *Hsiao Ming Ti* said,

— The *Hsü* family is related to the king, that they should wish him honour and glory is but human.

Thus his holy heart forgave them and did not treat them according to law.

The marquis *Fu* of *Yin Chiang* posted a letter in the market and in the villages, slandering the holy government. Our Lord regretting his treachery, deprived him of his title and his territory. Hating a man one dislikes his adherents left behind. Yet the emperor raised the sons of the two kings and thus pacified *Ch'u* and *Kuang-ling*, and allowed the younger brother of

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 131, Notes 1 and 2.

<sup>2</sup> See [Analects IX, 13 \[Couvreur\]](#) and Vol. I, p. 406, Note 6.

<sup>3</sup> An expression not found elsewhere.

<sup>4</sup> Two ancient States in *Szechuan*.

<sup>5</sup> The modern *Ch'u-hsiung-fu* in *Yünnan*.

<sup>6</sup> The present *Kuei-lin-fu*, *Kuangsi*.

<sup>7</sup> *Kung Yang*, Duke *Chuang* 32nd year.

<sup>8</sup> The king of *Kuang-ling* committed suicide in 67 A. D., the king of *Ch'u* in 70 A. D. See *Hou Han-shu* chap. 2, p. 13v. and p. 16v.

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*Chiang, Yuan* to continue the sacrifices to the *Yin* family <sup>1</sup>. The two kings were of imperial blood, and as feudatory princes, and kings, the equals of *Kuan* and *Ts'ai*. Yet the descendants of the latter were extinguished, whereas for the two kings their posterity was reinstated into all their honours, an act of clemency deserving the highest praise. *Yin Chiang* had another family name than the emperor, but out of respect for his ancestors the sacrifices were preserved.

The righteousness shown by raising *Wu Kêng* <sup>2</sup> and the kindness displayed in allowing *Lu Fu* to continue the sacrificial rites is not so very great, for the *Yin* <sup>3</sup> were emperors as well as the *Chou*, who levied troops to fight them, coveting the grandeur of the empire, and thus cut off the reign of *Ch'êng T'ang*. This was not an act of justice worthy of a holy sovereign, nor in accordance with Heaven's command. *Yin Chiang*, on the other side, was but a subject, and the reign of the *Han* was firmly established. The extinction of the *Yin* family would not have been contrary to justice, and its preservation, nevertheless, was due to the boundless kindness of *Hsiao Ming Ti*. His favours showered down on his own kindred within and on other families without. How could the liberality of *Yao* or the generosity of *Shun* exceed this ?

The dealings of *Huan Tou* were such, that he was at home with glib-tongued people and employed the perverse. *Kung Kung* <sup>p2.211</sup> intrigued with him and was, therefore, recommended to *Yao*. San Miao was an artful and cunning man, or as some say it was a guilty country. *Kun* could not regulate the waters, being at his wits' end. All were personally guilty and could not shift their guilt upon the emperor. Therefore *Yao* and *Shun* banished them, and they died in regions devoid of vegetation <sup>4</sup>. All those who maliciously plotted against the emperor, who resenting the strong hand of government revolted, who having to investigate something did not speak the truth, who injured the State or killed its officers, and whose offences were much graver

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<sup>1</sup> The family of *Yin Chiang*.

<sup>2</sup> The son of the last emperor of the *Yin* dynasty, also called *Lu Fu*. See [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 207, Note 4](#). But here two different persons seem to be meant.

<sup>3</sup> The *Yin* dynasty.

<sup>4</sup> On the banishment of these four criminals see the *Shuking* Part II, Book I, 12 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 39](#)) [[Couvreur](#)] and [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 67](#).

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than those of the above-named four criminals, all those were by *Hsiao Ming Ti* most graciously merely sentenced to banishment into the border-lands. Our present Lord in his utmost kindness caused them to return to their native places. Since the dawn of civilisation no similar mercy was ever shown.

*Yen Tse* said that, the Hook Star being between the House and the Heart, the earth would be moved <sup>1</sup>. An earthquake is naturally determined by time and not the result of government, but the emperor was terror-stricken <sup>2</sup> and attributed the event to his administration all the same, minutely investigating its merits and good qualities, and inquiring into its defects and shortcomings. *Kao Tsung* stooped down <sup>3</sup>, and *Ch'êng* of *Chou* opened the trunk <sup>4</sup>. Thus far did their zeal lead them. When grain grows and the year is normal, even a common ruler, by merely following his fate, is able to establish a virtuous government, but when calamities and dangers abound, only the sagest and wisest are successful in their efforts to reform. Thus every ordinary doctor knows how to deal with a small disease, but none but a *Pien Ch'io* can cope with a virulent attack <sup>5</sup>.

In the first year of the *Chien-ch'u* period <sup>6</sup>, a pernicious current arrived, causing all the diseases of the year, which was much worse than a drought and a want of rain, when the cattle die and the people are driven from their homes. The emperor exhibited his <sup>p2.212</sup> virtue : the best and worthiest men were in office, and the five presidents of the board of work supported the State in its troubles, sending about grain and giving relief. Although those left starving were not a few, yet the empire admired the emperor's virtue, and in spite of all those difficulties it did not revolt. The people were destitute of grain, but replete with principles and virtue, their bodies were roving about on the roads, but their hearts, returning to their native villages. Therefore no traces of robbery were to be found on the highways, and in hidden and out-of-the-way places no acts of violence were committed. Danger was changed

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 160, Note 1.

<sup>2</sup> This seems to refer to an earthquake which happened in *Wang Ch'ung's* time.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 161.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 18.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. p. 134, Note 1.

<sup>6</sup> 76 A. D.

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into security, and distress into comfort. Which of the Five Emperors and Three Rulers would have been fit to bring about such a state of things ?

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## CHAPTER XX

### Ominous Signs Investigated

59. XIX, III. *Yen-fu*

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p2.213 It was in the eleventh year of *Yung-p'ing*<sup>1</sup>. The inhabitants of the *Huan* marquisate<sup>2</sup> in *Lü-chiang*<sup>3</sup> were then in possession of a lake. There were two small boys in *Huan*, named *Ch'ên Chüo* and *Ch'ên T'ing*, both over ten years old, who together went angling on the banks of the lake. *Ch'ên T'ing* was the first to go. *Ch'ên Chüo* arrived later, and asked his comrade whether he had caught anything. Upon *Ch'ên T'ing* replying in the affirmative, he went home to fetch his rod and fishing-line. At a distance of 40 stops from *Ch'ên T'ing* he beheld a wine amphora of a bright yellow colour that had fallen into the water near the edge of the lake. *Ch'ên Chüo* mistook it for copper. He waded through the water to get hold of it, but it was so slippery and heavy, that he was unable to lift it. — *T'ing* seeing this from afar shouted,

— What have you got ?

*Chüo* rejoined,

— It is copper, but I cannot lift it.

*T'ing* came to his assistance and entered the water, but before he had seized the amphora it quite suddenly was transformed into a covenant vessel, sank into the deep through the movement, and again became invisible. But *T'ing* and *Chüo* who kept their eyes on it perceived something of bright yellow colour like so many coins, hundreds and thousands of pieces. They pushed and raised it, and with their hands full they went home and told their families.

The father of *Ch'ên Chüo* was a retired official of the State whose style was *Chün Hsien*. He inquired, full of amazement, where he had found this,

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<sup>1</sup> 68 A. D.

<sup>2</sup> The *Huan* district corresponding to the prefecture of *An-ch'ing*, the capital of the province of *Anhui*.

<sup>3</sup> Now *Lü-chou-fu*, 120 Li west of the present *Lü-chiang-hsien*.



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and *Chüo* gave a description. 'It is gold', quoth *Chün Hsien* and forthwith, along with *Chüo*, he hastened to the place of discovery, where there was still much left in the water. He himself entered the water and seized it. When the neighbours of *Chüo* and *T'ing* had heard the news, there was a general rush, and they together obtained upwards of ten pounds. *Chün Hsien* personally acquainted a minister who advised the prefect, and the prefect p2.214 sent his officers to receive the gold and instructed his private official *Ch'êng Kung* to take it over and present it to the throne, stating how he had got the gold. An imperial edict was issued to the effect that, if it was, as stated in the memorial, all was right, but if it was not, then capital punishment would be meted out. With this edict *Ch'êng Kung* returned to the prefect, who with his subordinates took cognisance of it. They had the impression that the emperor doubted the veracity and believed that something had been concealed and that the report had been unduly embellished. For this reason the prefect sent in a new report, stating that the gold had been discovered exactly as reported previously. Therewith the matter closed.

In the 12th year, *Chün Hsien* and his associates addressed the emperor stating how they had found the gold in the water of the lake, that the chief of the circuit had presented it to the throne, and that as yet no compensation had been received. In the imperial rescript to the authorities of *Lü-chiang* it seemed as if His Majesty was not willing to grant *Chün Hsien* and his associates the price of the gold, for the prefect had reported that the gold found by *Chün Hsien* and others came from a public lake, and not from the private waters of these persons. Consequently no compensation was given. In the 12th year, however, an edict appeared commanding the payment of the value of the gold to *Chün Hsien* and the others according to the actual market price of gold <sup>1</sup>.

The auspicious portents of the *Han* were manifold. The discovery of gold being very strange, it was put on record. The precious things, gold and jewels

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<sup>1</sup> This *soi-disant* lucky augury is shortly mentioned in the *Hou Han shu* chap. 2, p. 14r. where the lake in which the gold was found is called *Ch'ao-hu*, a lake in *Ho-fei-hsien* (*Anhui*) now famous for its gold-fish. As further portents which appeared in the same year are enumerated : a unicorn, a white pheasant, a wine spring, and auspicious grain.

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are divine, therefore their appearance is something extraordinary <sup>1</sup>. Something of a golden colour first appeared in the shape of a wine amphora and afterwards became a covenant vessel and, being moved, sank into the deep. Was not this a miracle ? <sup>2</sup>

p2.215 When the *Hsia* dynasty was flourishing distant countries made pictures of their produce, and the nine tribes offered gold as tribute. *Yü* regarded it as propitious and cast it into tripods. The Nine Tripods of the *Chou* <sup>3</sup> were the gold of these distant countries. No matter whether it was brought by people as tribute or whether it issued spontaneously from the water, it was the same after all and in both cases the upshot of conspicuous virtue and an omen for a sage emperor.

A golden and peerless age is accompanied with gold and gems. In the time of *Wên Ti* there appeared a gem flail. Gold and gems are the choicest omens. The sound of gold and the colour of gems are most appreciated by mankind.

In the *Yung-ch'ang* circuit <sup>4</sup> there was gold as well. The smallest lumps were as big as a grain of millet. In the sand of the banks of rivers people found five *shu* <sup>5</sup> of gold every day. Its colour was a uniform yellow. Earth produces gold, and the colour of earth is yellow. The ruling element of the *Han* dynasty is earth, which accounts for the production of gold <sup>6</sup>. Of metal there are three kinds <sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Extraordinary only for persons prejudiced and desirous to discover omens at all costs.

<sup>2</sup> No. The event was very simple and harmless and only construed into a miracle. Small boys, whose testimony is not worth much, saw some vessel in the water, which they first took for a wine amphora, then for something else. When they stirred up the water it disappeared for some time, but at last they succeeded in raising it.

<sup>3</sup> The history of these tripods, the insignia of imperial power, is related in Vol. I, p. 506 seq. *Wang Ch'ung* here assumes that they were made of gold, the general opinion is that they were made of bronze or copper.

<sup>4</sup> In *Talifu, Yünnan*.

<sup>5</sup> The twenty-fourth part of a Tael or a 1/24 ounce. In many Chinese rivers gold is found, but in such small quantities as mentioned here, so that the washing does not pay.

<sup>6</sup> It is needless to say that under all the other dynasties gold was found as well.

<sup>7</sup> The yellow metal = gold, the white metal = silver, and the red metal = copper. Cf. *Shuking, Yükung* (*Legge, Classics* Vol. III, Part I, p. 110, Note 43).

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When yellow is continually seen it becomes a lucky augury. The old man of the *Ch'i* bridge transmitted to *Chang Liang*<sup>1</sup> a book which turned into a yellow stone. This essence of the yellow stone became a charm. Stones belong to the same category as gold, their substance is different, but their colour the same, both are presages of earth.

In the third year of *Chien-ch'u*<sup>2</sup>, suddenly five stalks of boletus grew in the soil of the house of a woman from *Ch'üan-ling* in *Ling-ling*<sup>3</sup> of the name of *Fu Ning*. The longest measured a foot and <sub>p2.216</sub> 4 to 5 inches, the shortest 7 to 8 inches. Stalks and leaves were of a purple colour ; it was, in fact, the purple boletus. The prefect *Shên Fêng* deputed his private officer *Yen Shêng* to present these plants to the emperor, who was exceedingly pleased and gave him money, dresses, and food in return. He then summoned all the presidents, ministers, governors, *shang-chi*<sup>4</sup>, officers, and people and made known the boletus to the empire. When the empire heard the news, officialdom and citizens rejoiced, well knowing that, the excellence of the *Han* being so perfect and universally acknowledged, felicitous omens were sure to happen.

In the fourth year, sweet dew fell in the five districts of *Ch'üan-ling*, *Ling-ling*, *T'ao-yang*<sup>5</sup>, *Shih-an*<sup>6</sup>, and *Lêng-tao*<sup>7</sup> soaking all the leaves of the elm, cypress, cherry, and plum trees, which bending under its weight, caused it to trickle down. The people drank it and found that it tasted like sweets and honey.

In the fifth year, boletus — *viz.* six — grew again on the house of a man of *Ch'üan-ling*, *Chou Fu*. In colour and shape they resembled those of the

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<sup>1</sup> See Vol. I, p. 95 and 368.

<sup>2</sup> In 78 A. D.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 207, Note 4. *Ch'üan-ling* lies north of the modern *Ling-Ling-hsien* in *Hunan*. The *Hou Han shu* chap. 3, p. 6r. speaks only of *Ling-ling*, whence in the 3rd year of the emperor *Chang Ti's* reign purple boletus was sent as a present.

<sup>4</sup> These seem to have been comptrollers or revenue officers.

<sup>5</sup> Northwest of the present *Hsiang-yuan-hsien* in *Kuangsi*. The *Hou Han shu loc. cit.* mentions only these three places.

<sup>6</sup> In *Kuei-lin-fu*, *Kuangsi*.

<sup>7</sup> Under the *Han* dynasty a part of the *Ling-ling* circuit in *Hunan*.

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third year. Together with the former ones there were eleven in all <sup>1</sup>.

Where the river *Hsiang* <sup>2</sup> is 7 Li distant from the city of *Ch'üan-ling* there are masses of rocks above the river bearing the name of *Yen-shih* mountain. The mountain approaches the river from both sides, narrowing its passage. Under a protruding cliff the water disappears and forms an unfathomable abyss. There two yellow dragons put in an appearance. They had a length of over 16 feet <sup>3</sup> and were bigger than horses. To those who looked sharply at them they appeared like those dragons painted in pictures. The people of *Yen-shih-ch'iu* all saw them at a distance of some ten steps. They further perceived some animals shaped like colts, bigger and smaller ones, six altogether. They issued from the water and roamed about and played on the shore, being, no doubt, <sup>p2.217</sup> the children of the two dragons. Along with these they were eight in all. After they had stayed out of the water for some time, they again returned to it <sup>4</sup>.

Under the reign of *Hsüan Ti*, a phoenix alighted on the city of *P'êng* <sup>5</sup>, which gave notice of it. *Hsüan Ti* summoned the *shih-chung* <sup>6</sup> *Sung Wêng Yi* who said,

— A phoenix comes down on the capital and alights in the precincts of the son of Heaven. This phoenix having alighted far away in *P'êng-ch'êng* cannot be admitted <sup>7</sup>, for one must not have dealings with second-class birds.

The emperor replied,

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<sup>1</sup> The *Hou Han shu loc. cit.* merely reports that in the 5th year of the emperor (80 A. D.) purple boletus was sent from *Ling-ling*.

<sup>2</sup> The main river of the province of *Hunan* which falls into the *Tungting* Lake.

<sup>3</sup> All the editions here write 160 feet. I suppose that 尺 should be written, for else the sequel that the dragons were bigger than horses would give no sense.

<sup>4</sup> The *Hou Han shu* contents itself with the short statement that eight yellow dragons were seen in *Ch'üan-ling*, A commentator adds that the two big dragons playing in the *Hsiang* were of the size of horses and had horns, and that the six young ones were as big as colts, but hornless.

<sup>5</sup> A city in *Hsü-chou-fu*, *Kiangsu*. Cf. Vol. I, p. 507.

<sup>6</sup> On this function see [Chavannes, \*Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 526.\*](#)

<sup>7</sup> *I. e.*, as a genuine phoenix, and a lucky omen.

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— At present the empire forms one family, and there is no difference whether the phoenix alights in *P'êng-ch'êng* or in the capital <sup>1</sup>. Why do you say that one must have nothing to do with second-class birds ?

And he called upon his attendants who were versed in the Classics to argue the point with *Sung Wêng Yi*. The latter, pressed very hard, took off his cap, made obeisance and excused himself.

The time of *Hsüan Ti* does not differ from the present, and the alighting of the phoenix, and the appearance of the yellow dragons is similar. The distance of *P'êng-ch'êng* and *Ling-ling* is the same <sup>2</sup>, for, as regards the extension of the emperor's mansions, the four frontiers of the empire form the boundary lines within which *Ling-ling* is situated, so that it even may be considered near <sup>3</sup>.

*Kung-Sun Ch'ên* of *Lu* declared, in the time of *Hsiao Wên Ti*, that, the ruling element of the *Han* being earth, a yellow dragon should appear as corresponding omen. Subsequently, it was seen <sup>4</sup> in *Ch'êng-chi* <sup>5</sup> whose distance from the capital equalled that of *Ling-ling*. Under the régime of *Hsiao Wu Ti* as well as of *Hsiao Hsüan Ti* dragons made their appearance, and four times yellow dragons become visible in this place, which proves that earth <sup>p2.218</sup> was indeed the element of the *Han* dynasty <sup>6</sup>. *Chia Yi* was the first who in the court of *Wên Ti* proposed that as the colour of the *Han* yellow should be adopted, and that they should choose five as their number. From this circumstance that *Chia Yi*, an official of extensive erudition, declared himself in favour of the yellow colour and of number five <sup>7</sup>, it is evident that earth is

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<sup>1</sup> In *Hsüan Ti's* time, 73-49 B. C. the capital was *Chang-an* in *Shensi*.

<sup>2</sup> The distance from the capital.

<sup>3</sup> The whole empire is, as it were, the emperor's home, wherefore it is unnecessary to calculate the distance of cities from the capital.

<sup>4</sup> In 165 B. C. For further details on *Kung-Sun Ch'ên* cf. [Chavannes, \*Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 479.\*](#)

<sup>5</sup> 30 Li north from *Ch'in-an-hsien* in the province of *Kansu*.

<sup>6</sup> The colour of earth, according to Chinese ideas, is yellow like that of the yellow dragons which are supposed to have indicated it.

<sup>7</sup> Earth being the fifth of the Five Elements in the series of the *Shuking* : water, fire, metal, wood, earth, its number is five.

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the element of the *Han* <sup>1</sup>.

Boletus grows in earth. The fluid of earth being congenial, the boletus grows in it. Earth produces cereals ; cereals are sweet, therefore sweet dew descended <sup>2</sup>.

In former ages, dragons were not seen in pairs, only when the *Hsia* dynasty was at its height two dragons appeared in the court <sup>3</sup>. Since the two dragons which came forth in the present time agree with those of the *Hsia* dynasty in number, the present government must also be conformable to that of the *Hsia*.

When, formerly, dragons came out, very seldom their children were seen. Now six young dragons came out simultaneously, roaming about and playing like the six children of Heaven and Earth <sup>4</sup>, a sign of a numerous progeny.

In the era of *Yao* and *Shun* all the animals danced, at present the eight dragons likewise played and gambolled for a long while. Boletus is eaten by immortals, in order to prolong their lives. In former ages only one or two grew, now there are altogether eleven pieces indicating a longer duration of life ; and grain as high as a fir-tree was produced. When formerly sweet dew came down, it did so but in one place, now it poured down in five districts conformably to the number of earth, the power of which prevails everywhere.

The frequent occurrence of imperial omens is not in vain ; they always are illustrative of something, and correspond to some p2.219 virtue. *Confucius* said,

[— The knowing are cheerful, and the benevolent live long.] <sup>5</sup>

Our emperor is a holy man, consequently the boletus pointed to long life. If

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<sup>1</sup> The colour of the *Hsia* dynasty was black. In war they used black horses and for sacrifices black victims. The *Yin* dynasty adopted white as its colour, and the *Chou* dynasty red. See [Liki, Legge Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 125 \[Couvreur\]](#). The *Ch'in* dynasty again selected black ([Chavannes Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 130](#)). The colour of the present *Manchu* dynasty is yellow again.

<sup>2</sup> Again the shallow symbolism. Sweetness is the taste corresponding to earth.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 163.

<sup>4</sup> The names of the first and the last of the Eight Diagrams from which the other six, the children, were evolved.

<sup>5</sup> [Analects VI, 21 \[Couvreur\]](#).

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yellow things be produced they have the colour of earth, and its place is the centre <sup>1</sup>. Therefore did *Hsien Yuan* <sup>2</sup>, whose virtue was excellent, use yellow as his epithet. Our emperor is so kind and merciful, that his virtue approaches that of the 'Yellow Emperor', whence the colour of the dragons was yellow to show the identity of their virtue.

The east is called benevolent, and the dragon is the animal of the eastern region <sup>3</sup>. The emperor being a sage, benevolent omens appeared. Benevolence implies a taste for feeding and nursing. The emperor in his benevolence and kind-heartedness loved the black-haired people, therefore the sweet dew poured down <sup>4</sup> and dragons, that like to conceal themselves, publicly appeared, attracted from their rocks and caverns by the emperor's sagehood.

When portents appear they usually follow an excellent man, and lucky auguries always adhere to some fortunate person. The principle of Heaven being spontaneity, there must be some coincidence. The omens obtained by a holy sovereign surpass those of common worthies. The ruler being enlightened, and his minister judicious, everything prospers. When *Wên Ti* and *Wu Ti* received their decree, their strength was like that of the Dukes of *Chou* and *Shao*.

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<sup>1</sup> Earth is placed in the centre, whereas the four other elements correspond to the four cardinal points.

<sup>2</sup> Personal name of the 'Yellow Emperor' *Huang Ti*.

<sup>3</sup> The green dragon is the animal of the East, the scarlet bird that of the South, the white tiger that of the West, and the black tortoise that of the North.

<sup>4</sup> There is a supposed correspondence between the centre, earth, yellow, sweet, the heart, and *Huang Ti*. See Appendix to *Couvreur's* Dictionary.

## CHAPTER XXI

### The Necessity of Eulogies

60. XX, I. Hsü-sung

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p2.220 The rulers and sovereigns of antiquity having accomplished memorable deeds, wanted some able pen to eulogise and chronicle their achievements. Thus their deeds were made public, and all ages heard of them. If we ask the commentators of the *Shuking* who said the words following the passage [‘He was reverential, intelligent, accomplished, and thoughtful’]<sup>1</sup>, they will reply : the editor, and who is the editor ? *Confucius*. Consequently the able writer is *Confucius*<sup>2</sup>. [It was after his return from *Wei* to *Lu*<sup>3</sup> that he arranged the Odes, when the festive songs and panegyrics got their places.]<sup>4</sup> His great literary activity falls in this time.

Some maintain concerning the *Shang-shu* (*Shuking*) that *shang* means superior<sup>5</sup> : — what the superiors have done is written down by the inferiors. And who are these inferiors ? The officers. Ergo the officers commit to writing the actions of the superiors.

If we inquire of the scholars why rites are said to be instituted and songs to be composed, their reply will probably be that the rites are instituted by the superiors and therefore called institutions, whereas songs being composed by the inferiors are, on that account, termed compositions. When the empire enjoys perfect peace, panegyrics and tunes are composed. At

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the *Shuking*, Yao-tien 1 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 15](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> The words following the above passage are generally regarded as forming part of the original merely edited by *Confucius*. But we find nearly the same words [...] in the Preface to the *Shuking* which is attributed to *Confucius*.

<sup>3</sup> In 483 B. C. when *Confucius* was already 69 years of age.

<sup>4</sup> Quotation from the [Analects IX, 14](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>5</sup> Various explanations of the term *shang* in *Shang-shu* have been proposed by Chinese critics. It is said to mean the ‘highest’ *i. e.*, the most venerable book or the book of the ‘highest antiquity’ (cf. *Legge, loc. cit.* Note). *Wang Ch’ung* here takes it to signify the book treating of sovereigns.



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present there is universal peace throughout the empire ; might panegyrics, odes, songs, and tunes be composed ? The scholiasts would not know it and deserve to be called pedants.

In view of the inscription on the tripod of *K'ung K'ui*<sup>1</sup> of *Wei* the officers of *Chou* admonished one another, and because the emperor *Hsiao Hsüan Ti* praised the prefect of *Ying-ch'uan*<sup>2</sup>, *Huang Pa*<sup>3</sup> for his excellent service and bestowed a hundred pounds of gold on him, the *Han* officers exerted themselves in the administration. Thus a ruler of men praises his officers, and the officers should extol their sovereign. That is in accordance with propriety.

When under *Shun* the empire was at peace, *K'üei*<sup>4</sup> sang the virtue of *Shun*. The kindness of King *Hsüan*<sup>5</sup> was so perfect, that the *Shiking* extols his doings. Lord *Shao*<sup>6</sup> performed his duties in such a way, that in *Chou* they sang the song on the sweet-pear tree<sup>7</sup>. Thus there are 31 eulogies of *Chou*, 5 of *Yin*, and 4 of *Lu*, 40 in all in which the poets sing the praises of exalted persons<sup>8</sup>. Whence it is plain that subjects should eulogise their sovereigns.

The scholars contend that the *Han* have no sage emperors, and that their administration has not brought about universal peace. In our chapter entitled 'Praise of the *Han* Dynasty'<sup>9</sup> we have shown that the *Han* have holy emperors, and that their government has led to perfect peace, and in the chapter 'Further Remarks on the State'<sup>10</sup> we have investigated into the excellence of the *Han* and found out that it is extraordinary and far surpassing

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<sup>1</sup> A noble of the *Wei* State, 5th cent. B. C., who took a leading part in a revolution in *Wei*, which cost *Tse Lu* his life. The tripod with the inscription was conferred upon him by the duke. The encomiastic inscription, eulogising the ancestors of the recipient, is given in the *Liki*, *Chi-t'ung* p. 66r. ([Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVIII, p. 252](#)) [[Couvreur](#), § 28].

<sup>2</sup> A circuit in *Anhui*.

<sup>3</sup> *Huang Pa* was first thrown into prison by the emperor, but then re-instated and highly honoured. He died in B. C. 51. See *Giles, Bibl. Dict.* No. 865.

<sup>4</sup> A minister of *Shun* and director of State music. Cf. p. 257.

<sup>5</sup> 827-782 B. C.

<sup>6</sup> The duke of *Shao*, *Wu Wang's* brother.

<sup>7</sup> *Shiking*, Part I, Book II, Ode 5 ([Legge, Classics Vol. IV, Part I, p. 26](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>8</sup> These 40 odes form Part IV of the *Shiking* [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)]. The term [ ] eulogy is given a different meaning by modern commentators *viz.* 'songs for the ancestral temple' or 'sacrificial odes'. See *Legge, Shiking* Part II, p. 569, Notes.

<sup>9</sup> Chap. XVIII.

<sup>10</sup> Chap. XIX.

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that of all the other dynasties.

To illustrate virtue, and praise merits, and to extol and panegyriserulers, is nothing more than the eulogistic allusions of the *Shiking* and a duty of noble officers. It cannot be accounted virtue, should somebody forget his own family and look to other people's houses, or despise his own father, and speak in high terms p2.222 of the old gentlemen of strangers. The *Han* are the family now embracing the whole world, and compared to the present sovereign, people and officers, the former emperors are like the old gentlemen. To know the virtue of a monarch and praise his excellence, to see the greatness of a State and glorify its deserts is much better than to doubt and suspect them of incapacity.

[*Confucius* said,

— Great indeed was *Yao* as a sovereign ; it is only Heaven that is grand, and only *Yao* corresponded to it. The people could find no name for it. ] <sup>1</sup>

Some one of fifty was beating clods of earth on the road. An observer remarked,

— Grand indeed is the virtue of *Yao* !

The man who was playing with earth replied,

— At sunrise I begin my work, and at sunset I take my rest. I dig a well to drink, and labour my field to eat. What sort of energy does *Yao* display ? <sup>2</sup>

*Confucius* by saying 'Great indeed was the virtue of *Yao*' showed that he knew him. To be coeval with a sage and not to know the holy ruler, is like being blind and incapable of distinguishing between green and yellow, and to know such a holy ruler, but not to praise him, is like being dumb and unfit to discourse on right and wrong.

The present blind and dumb literati are no more gifted than the people of

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects VIII, 19 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 187. *Legge* in his Prolegomena to the *Shiking* p. 13 adduces the words of the peasant as the 'song of the peasants in the time of *Yao*'.

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*T'ang* beating the earth. *Confucius* and the man of *T'ang* who spoke of *Yao's* greatness were both aware of his virtue. It was paramount, and by inquiring how *Yao's* capacity was, the peasant beating the earth proved his ignorance of his virtue <sup>1</sup> ?

When at night a candle is lifted the space illuminated by its light may be measured, but when the sun shines over the world the places near and far, big and small reached by its rays are hard to be limited. Navigating on the *Huai* and the *Chi* <sup>2</sup>, all people know their windings and turnings, but on the eastern Sea they cannot make out north and south. The square-mensuration of very great planes offers many difficulties, and great depths are hard to be fathomed by wading through with tucked-up clothes. The excellence of the *Han* is as extensive as the sunlight reaching p2.223 beyond the ocean. The knowing know it, whereas the unintelligent have no idea of their grandeur.

The *Han* writers mostly go back as far as the *Yin* and *Chou* dynasties, and the various scholars working together all treat of other matters and have not a word of praise for the *Han* dynasty, which the *Lun-hêng* has. The State eulogies in the *Shiking* are called eulogies of *Chou* ; they bear a resemblance to the *Han* eulogies offered by *Tu Fu* and *Pan Ku* <sup>3</sup>.

Under the reign of *Hsüan Ti* portraits were painted of the entire body of *Han* officers. If some were left out, their descendants, later on, felt abashed that their ancestors had not been found worthy to be painted. A eulogy is much more than a simple picture. If after many generations people conversant with classical literature will find there nothing in praise of the *Han* dynasty, later ages must wonder at this omission. Formerly, officers well versed in the Classics were in the habit of recording the glorious feats of their rulers on bamboo and silk and of engraving encomiastic inscriptions regarding their illustrious virtue on tripods. Contemporaries of literary abilities would exert themselves on this behalf. If the fame of the *Han* falls short of that of the Six Reigns, it is owing to the incompetence of those writers.

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<sup>1</sup> I think that the question of the peasant has not this purport. He only means to say that he does not care for *Yao* in the least. In the 'song of the peasants' this idea is more clearly brought out [].

<sup>2</sup> Rivers in *Honan* and *Shantung*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 198.

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The earth has elevations and depressions, whence there are high and low places. But by means of picks and spades one may level the ground. All generations reading the Classics dealing merely with the Five Emperors and the Three Rulers, no notice being taken of the events of the *Han* era, must imagine that these sovereigns are far superior to those of the *Han* dynasty. But one may use arguments as picks and spades and, by diminishing the grandeur of the Five Emperors and Three Rulers, fill up the baseness of the house of *Han*, which is more than levelling, for the *Han* thus will become exalted and those rulers abased.

Ponds and lakes there are of various kinds and of different sites, and their depths may be measured by immersing poles. The *Han* have swayed the empire no less than all the other dynasties, and by a thorough investigation their respective merits and demerits may be ascertained. In default of long poles the depths cannot be measured, and without the arguments of the *Lun-hêng* we do not learn to know the real state of these dynasties. If the *Han*, being the last of all these dynasties, be contrasted <sup>p2.224</sup> with their predecessors in point of virtue, they can be compare ponds and lakes, but unless there be a clever writer, it is inevitable that a mediocre scribbler takes his place who admires antiquity and disparages the present, and we may expect that the *Han* will not barely not come up to the other dynasties, but be ranked below them.

A posthumous title is a trace left by a man's actions. Good titles are *Ch'êng* and *Hsüan*, bad ones, *Ling* and *Li* <sup>1</sup>. *Ch'êng T'ang* met with a drought and King *Hsüan* of *Chou* likewise, yet *Ch'êng T'ang* got the epithet *Ch'êng* and King *Hsüan* was called *Hsüan* <sup>2</sup>. These pernicious calamities could not affect their government, and the officials in appending the posthumous designations did not depart from truth. From this point of view *Yao* is also a good title <sup>3</sup>. In his time there was also the Great Flood, and the people were not at ease, still his case having been thoroughly examined, he was given the name of *Yao*. Even the one word of a posthumous title should be illustrative of its bearer,

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<sup>1</sup> On posthumous titles see Vol. I, p. 162, 208.

<sup>2</sup> [] means 'to expand, to propagate' scl. civilisation, consequently *Hsüan-wang* is the Civilising King.

<sup>3</sup> [] signifies 'high, eminent, lofty'.

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how much more ought this to be required of discourses containing many hundred words, or of eulogies numbering many thousands. Ships and carts carry people, but how can they equal the number of pedestrians, and how can simple carts and unadorned ships compete with those covered with polish and beautifully painted ? Excellent writers are the polish and adornments of the State-ship and the State-cart <sup>1</sup>.

Without strong husbandmen the crops do not grow, and unless a State possess vigorous writers its virtual remain hidden and are not made public. The ever-flowing virtue of the *Han* is lost among the many generations, because the vigorous writers among the literati do not record it. It is true that from *Kao Tsu* downward the books written discuss this subject :

*Sse-Ma Hsiang-Ju* of the *Han* time published a work on the hill sacrifice, but this book is very short and incomplete. *Sse-Ma Ch'ien* wrote on the time from *Huang Ti* till *Hsiao Wu Ti* <sup>2</sup>, *Yang Tse Yün* described the period from *Hsüan Ti* to *Ai Ti* and *P'ing Ti* <sup>3</sup>, p.2.225 *Ch'ên P'ing Chung* wrote on *Kuang Wu Ti*, and *Pan Ku* composed a eulogy on *Hsiao Ming Ti*. The merits and achievements of the house of *Han* may well be learned therefrom. Our reigning Lord, after his accession, has not yet found a panegyrist, therefore the author of the *Lun-hêng* has done his best for this purpose, whence originated the chapters : Equality of the Ages, Praise of the *Han* Dynasty, Further Remarks on the State, and Ominous Signs Investigated <sup>4</sup>.

Without clouds and rain, a dragon cannot soar to heaven. Great writers are the clouds and the rain of a State ; they carry in their records the virtue of the State, and transmit its fame, that it is still illustrious after numberless generations. Does this greatness not rise even higher than the sky ?

The earth of the city-wall is nothing but common soil which men have used their strength to ram down and raise near the moat. The great achievements of a State are loftier than a city-wall, and the strength of the

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<sup>1</sup> The people are the pedestrians, the rulers, those riding in the State-cart, and their panegyrists are compared to the adornments of this cart.

<sup>2</sup> In the *Shi-chi*.

<sup>3</sup> 73 B. C.- 1 A. D. The work alluded to was perhaps the *Yang Hsiung fu shih êrh p'ien* mentioned in the Catalogue of the *Han-chu* chap. 30, p. 32v.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. I, chap. XXXVIII and Vol. II, chap. XVIII-XX.

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gentlemen of the pen is greater than that of the rammers.

The brilliant virtue and the success of a holy ruler should, at all events, be praised and put on record ; how can the current of these records suddenly be drained and exhausted ?

When somebody has won laurels, either those who extol him hit the truth, or they would fain praise him, but cannot express themselves, or what they say is bad, and they are reluctant to speak their mind freely. Which of these three classes of people deserves the prize ? The epoch of the Five Emperors and the Three Rulers was particularly prosperous in this respect. During the time of *Hsiao Ming Ti*, plenty of lucky presages appeared together, and there was no lack of officers and functionaries, but of all encomiasts of the State only men like *Pan Ku* may be said to have praised it properly. Should we not rather use high-flown panegyrics, to make the virtue of the *Han* illustrious among all generations, that its emperors shine like sun and moon, than be ineloquent or speak badly and improperly ? <sup>1</sup>

When *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* travelled to the south-east and ascended Mount *Kuei-chi*, *Li Sse* composed a laudatory stone-inscription recording the excellent deeds of the emperor, and when the latter reached *Lang-yeh* he did the same <sup>2</sup>. *Ch'in* was a depraved State, but p2.226 in these stone-inscriptions the era was so embellished, that the readers must have taken it for the age of *Yao* and *Shun*, whence the necessity of eulogies becomes obvious. At present, we are not short of talents like *Li Sse* who might take part in the ascent of Mount *Kuei-chi* and pass over the terraces of *Lang-yeh*.

When musicians play beautiful airs on the guitar, and the audience does not applaud, the musicians become apathetic and lose their enthusiasm, because exquisite music is very difficult to play, and yet the spectators do not appreciate it. When a wise State keeps an excellent administration, and officialdom withholds its praise, but hopes to benefit by it, it will not be carried on. Now we possess many recipe books written on bamboo and silk

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<sup>1</sup> We do not appreciate panegyrists and their bombastic and coloured descriptions, but want true historians.

<sup>2</sup> See the reproductions and translations of *Ch'in* inscriptions in [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 544 seq.](#)

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which do not give the name of the inventor by whom the recipes were issued. The public does not use and overlooks them. If, however, it is stated in the headings that a recipe is that of Mr. So-and-so, and that it has already been tested, then those willing to try it will compete in copying the recipes and carving them in wood, and will regard them as a hidden treasure.

In the capital memorials are written, and in the provinces reports are drafted in order to recommend officials, praising them for their skill and their abilities. The publication of these memorials and reports induces the officials to virtue and honesty, because in the memorials their conduct is divulged, and through the reports their talents are exhibited. If the virtue of the State, in spite of its gloriousness, does not meet with applause, so that the holy State of the Great *Han* enjoys but scanty fame, the fault lies with the common scholars who do not make correct statements.

In ancient and modern times there has been no want of holy emperors, and the corresponding auspicious signs have also been very numerous. These signs must not, of necessity, be identical with former ones, and sometimes they had already appeared, but people ignored it. The ordinary scholars explaining omens are prone to magnify antiquity and detract from the present, and in speaking of omens they over-estimate the past and depreciate later ages. This should be changed. and the *Han* no more be slighted. When the *Han* have some real good things, those scholars do not mention them, conversely, they fervently believe in every imaginary excellent quality of antiquity. They trust in falsehoods, provided they be old and far away, and they despise truth, in case it be near and modern. This is the reason why the three chapters on p2.227 Exaggerations and the nine on Falsehoods <sup>1</sup> were written and those 'How to become a Sage' and on 'True Sagehood' <sup>2</sup> originated.

The Literati in their praise of the sages overshoot the mark, and when they contrast them with those of the *Han*, the latter do not come up with them, not because they do not equal them, but in consequence of the statements of the Literati which make it impossible. As a matter of fact, the

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<sup>1</sup> Books IV-VIII of the *Lun-hêng* (Chinese text).

<sup>2</sup> Both chapters are lost.

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*Han* are difficult to be equalled, under whom the crops ripen and the years pass in peace, owing to the influence of holy emperors thus successful in their efforts.

The chapter 'Periods of Government' <sup>1</sup> is an effusion for the *Han*. Order has its fixed time, and disorder has its period. To be able to change disorder into order, is excellent, and only an excellent man possesses this faculty. In the first year of *Chien-ch'u* <sup>2</sup>, a pernicious air arrived just at the time of a sage. The emperor through his virtue succeeded in averting the calamity <sup>3</sup>. Therefore in the chapters 'On the Rain Sacrifice' and 'Gentle Drums' <sup>4</sup> the sudden changes referred to are brought about by the good auguries of the *Han* dynasty.

Calamitous changes sometimes take place during the age of a sage, there being either a drought or an inundation. These calamities have been discussed with reference to the *Han*. The *Ch'un-ch'iu* period left a method for them which the *Lun-hêng* has explained.

If a person be turned from the gate to the court and listen to what is spoken in the hall and the inner rooms, he will miss nine words out of ten. If, however, he ascend the hall and peep into the rooms, he will not lose one word out of a hundred. The author of the *Lun-hêng* is living in an old desolate place at a greater distance (from the capital) than that between the gate and the courtyard <sup>5</sup>. In a quarter of an hour the sun traverses several thousand Li, yet people do not consider it far by reason of the great distance. When, on the fifteenth, there is much rain during the night, the light of the moon is not extinguished, but its splendour is not seen, being overshadowed. The holy emperor sheds the light of the sun and moon, but since he lives in the central province, and is concealed within a hundred Li, the reports about him that transpire and are heard afar, are not reliable. His glorious appearance not being well known, it is hard to discourse on it. Only when imperial edicts

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<sup>1</sup> Chap. II.

<sup>2</sup> 76 A. D.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 211.

<sup>4</sup> Chap. XXX and XXXI.

<sup>5</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* probably refers to some place in *Chekiang* province of which he was a native.



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are issued, or a *chi-li*<sup>1</sup> arrives, one learns something about his holy government. These are the reasons why the difference between the encomiums of his merits and reality are mountain high, and the eulogies on his excellence lack profusion and elegance. Only those at the foot of the throne who walk in the steps of *Pan Ku* and *Chia Yi*, can properly chaunt the praise of the emperor's attainments without omitting any smaller detail.

*Wu Wang* erected a tumulus for *Pi Kan*, and *Confucius* illustrated the three ways of amassing merit. The excellence of the great *Han* dynasty is not merely like that of *Pi Kan* or that acquired in the three ways. When on a highway a sign-post indicating the State is put up under which the road passes, all those looking at this post know their way exactly. The virtue of the *Han* is conspicuous, but nothing has as yet been said equivalent to such a sign-post, therefore their extensive virtue does not yet shed its lustre on the ages.

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<sup>1</sup> This seems to have been an official charged with the annual revision of the archives.

## CHAPTER XXII

### On Literary Work 82. XXVIII, II. *Shu-chieh*

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p2.229 Some people contend that for judging the character of a scholar, his literary productions are of no account. I answer that, when a man is an elegant writer, his character is perfect <sup>1</sup>. With plants it is different : there are some that have flowers, but no fruit, and some that bear fruit, but have no flowers <sup>2</sup>. The *Yiking* says that the feelings of a Sage appear from his utterances <sup>3</sup>. He opens his mouth to speak and joins tablets to write. His sayings and writings having been made public, his real nature shines forth in all its splendour.

Letters and virtue are the garments of mankind. Letters are unsubstantial signs, and virtue is practical action. Both are like over-clothes, donned by men. The greater a man's virtue, the more refined is his literary work, and the more illustrious his excellence, the more enlightened he is himself. A great man's virtue is vast, and his writings are brilliant, a small man's virtue may be remarkable, but his writings are unequal. A celebrated officer writes a great deal, and, side by side with high virtue, we find abundance of literary compositions.

A beautifully coloured and bright mat being a prerogative of a high officer, *Tsêng Tse*, who was laid up with a very serious illness, ordered *Yuan* to rise and change it <sup>4</sup>. We learn from this incident that garments serve to denote the rank of worthies. Worthies distinguish themselves by their literary ability. If dullards and clever men cannot be otherwise distinguished, one must fall

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<sup>1</sup> A statement contradicted by facts.

<sup>2</sup> This reminds us of [Analects IX, 21 \[Couvreur\]](#) [...]. The flowers, of course, are compared with literary productions, and the fruit with the author's character.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 274 Note 2.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Liki* ([Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 128](#)) [Couvreur] and p. 23.

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back upon their writings <sup>1</sup> (ornaments) to draw a distinction. This is not only true of men, the rule obtains for all animals likewise :

The dragon has ornaments on its scales, and therefore ranks above the snakes. The phoenix's plumage has five colours, p2.230 wherefore it is the king among the birds. The tiger is fierce, and its skin is coloured like that of the mole and the bull-frog <sup>2</sup>. The tortoise is wise, and carries characters on its back <sup>3</sup>. The bodies of these four animals are not quite plain, and in wisdom and knowledge they surpass all other animals.

Mountains without woods are barren mountains, land without vegetation is sterile, and men without letters are plain and simple people. Barren mountains are deprived of stags, sterile land lacks the Five Grains, and men without letters and virtue <sup>4</sup> do not prove themselves Worthies or Sages. High Heaven has plenty of celestial signs, and august Earth has many marks and lines. The two forces amalgamating, Worthies and Sages are endowed with them. Therefore they imitate their archetypes by a display of literature <sup>5</sup>. Lucky signs correspond with their lives, and they are not without letters :

When *T'ang Shu Yü* of *Chin*, *Ch'êng Chi Yo* of *Lu* and the consort of Duke *Hui* with the designation of *Chung Tse* were born, a miracle happened, for they all had characters on their hands <sup>6</sup>. When *Chang Liang* was on his way to high honour, he met with a spirit in his rambles. An old man presented him with a book <sup>7</sup>, and suddenly he was enfeoffed as a marquis of *Liu*.

The spirit of the *Yellow River* put forth the *Plan* on purpose, and the genius of the *Lo* deliberately emitted the *Scroll*. All wonderful things described on bamboo and silks do not issue from small ponds. Animals are covered with ornaments, and men base their supremacy on letters. *Chi Tse Ch'êng* desired to stop letters, but was censured by *Tse Kung* <sup>8</sup>. Those maintaining that

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<sup>1</sup> The expression [] means writings as well as ornaments.

<sup>2</sup> *I. e.*, its colour is black and yellowish.

<sup>3</sup> Signs, looking like Chinese characters, which are made use of for divination.

<sup>4</sup> Letters and virtue, in *Wang Ch'ung's* opinion, are always combined.

<sup>5</sup> Again mere symbolism which the old philosophers took for science.

<sup>6</sup> See Vol. I, p. 95.

<sup>7</sup> *Vid. loc. cit.*

<sup>8</sup> [Analects XII, 8 \[Couvreur\]](#), where *Chi Tse Ch'êng* is introduced saying :

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letters do not deserve to be held in respect, are on a par with *Chi Tse Ch'êng*.

p2.231 Those who themselves compose, are literary scholars, those who discourse on the Classics, ordinary scholars. These two classes are met with in the world, and we do not know yet to which the palm is to be awarded.

Some say that literary scholars come short of ordinary ones. The latter treat of the Classics of the Sages, and explain the records of the Worthies. Vast and profound is their knowledge of different meanings and principles, they hold sound views, and for that reason are always in office. Those most respected become professors, disciples crowd about them, and they attract students from a thousand Li's distance. Although their body dies, their doctrine survives, transmitted to posterity. Literary scholars do not profit the world with their polished and exquisite style and, therefore, are not called to office. Not a single pupil or student puts in an appearance, and when they die, their memory is not handed down. Consequently, they cannot compete with ordinary scholars.

I answer that this is not true : Ordinary scholars argue on all matters concerning the Sages, making the same investigations, and equally following up all their doings. The details may be divergent, but their scope is the same ; their words may differ, but their conceptions are very similar.

Why say that what literary scholars propound is of no advantage to mankind ? The work of ordinary scholars is very simple, and people learn it in great numbers. There being nothing to establish a distinction between them, all posts in the public service are filled with them. The work done by literary scholars is unusual and not easily imitated, and their books are seldom met with, but though their work cannot be taught, and they have no pupils, still their books are highly admired and handed down by the people. There is the empty talk of their rivals, and on the other side, their important writings. Weighing these two classes, which is the worthier ? <sup>1</sup>

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— In a superior man it is only the substantial qualities which are wanted ; why should we seek for ornamental accomplishments ?

<sup>1</sup> In many respects, these remarks apply still to our own times. Originality and genius but seldom qualify a man for a professorship. To obtain this it is much safer to keep in the beaten tracks, holding sound views viz. these just in vogue, and to show a fair mediocrity, as any superiority is calculated to offend the *amour-propre* of 'ordinary

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p2.232 In ancient times great and celebrated men wrote down their thoughts. They, at least, made use of their principles and became famous in their age. Although the ordinary scholars may have been more honoured at the time, yet unless they were taken notice of in the books of their literary rivals, their traces were soon obliterated.

The Duke of *Chou* adjusted the Rites <sup>1</sup> and Music, and his name was handed down uninterruptedly. *Confucius* wrote the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, and his memory has been preserved up to the present day. Their productions are more than mere researches <sup>2</sup>.

The literary geniuses of the *Han* era, *Lu Chia*, *Sse-Ma Ch'ien*, *Liu Tse Chêng*, and *Yang Tse Yün* are all but marvellous, and their glory does not depend on others. The world speaks also of the expositor of the *Shiking*, *Shên Kung* of *Lu* <sup>3</sup>, and of *Ou Yang* of *Ch'ien-ch'êng* <sup>4</sup> and *Kung Sun* <sup>5</sup>, both scholiasts of the *Shuking*, but if they had not fallen under the notice of the Grand Annalist, the world would not know them <sup>6</sup>.

Is it not better to earn fame by one's own efforts than to need others for that purpose ? And does he not rank higher who records the lives of hundreds of people than he who barely wins a name for himself ?

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Some hold that writers must be free from troublous thoughts, and that it is not their talents by which they exceed other people. Unless they enjoy quietude their ideas do not come. In case such writers have to look after all the affairs of every-day-life, or to do office work in some department of the State, they will compose, whenever they have some leisure from their

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scholars'.

<sup>1</sup> *Chou Kung* is believed to be the author of the *Chou-li*, the Rites of the *Chou* dynasty.

<sup>2</sup> They are creations, classical works.

<sup>3</sup> *Shên Kung* lived in the 2nd and 3rd cent. B. C. His edition of the *Shiking* is known as the *Lu-shi*, the *Shiking* of *Lu*.

<sup>4</sup> A scholar of the 2nd cent. B. C., born in *Ch'ien-ch'êng* in *Shantung*. He was a pupil of the famous *Fu Shêng* and is generally known as *Ou-Yang Shêng*.

<sup>5</sup> This seems to be *Kung-Sun Hung*, who died 121 B. C. The *Shi-chi*, however, does not mention him as a commentator of the *Shuking*, but couples his name with that of an expositor of the *Shiking*.

<sup>6</sup> Notices on these three scholars are given in the *Shi-chi* chap. 121.

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multifarious duties. p2.233 If common people be given plenty of time to concentrate their thoughts, they are also able to indite eighty and more chapters.

*Wên Wang* had no leisure to take his meals either during the day or in the evening <sup>1</sup>, and *Chou Kung*, bathing his hair once, had to grasp it three times <sup>2</sup>. What time had they to walk about for pleasure, or to cover tablets with the elegant compositions of their pen? *Confucius* wrote the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, and found no employment in *Chou*, *Sse-Ma Hsiang Ju* <sup>3</sup> was free from the duties of a statesman, and therefore could write his poem *Tse-hsü-fu* <sup>4</sup>, and *Yang Tse Yün* lived in the palace as *chung-lang* <sup>5</sup>, and thus had occasion to complete the *T'ai-hsüan-ching*, and to take up the *Fa-yen*. Had *Confucius* obtained imperial dignity, the *Ch'un-ch'iu* would not have been published, and had *Sse-Ma Hsiang Ju* and *Yang Tse Yün* been chief ministers, they would not have worked at the poem or the *T'ai-hsüan-ching*.

I beg leave to reply that *Wên Wang's* want of time to eat during the day or in the evening, implies that he elucidated the *Yiking* and increased the number of diagrams, and if *Chou Kung*, bathing once, grasped his hair thrice, it was because he changed and fixed the institutions of the *Chou* dynasty. If the principles of the *Chou* had not been corrupt, *Confucius* would not have written his work; he would have enjoyed repose, and his thoughts would have been unoccupied. But the laws of the *Chou* were loose and degenerate, and he could not abide by them.

Those who by Heaven and Earth are endowed with letters, will emit them from their bosoms, they do not write because they have nothing else to do, nor are there any days when they have no leisure. They are affected by what

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<sup>1</sup> Allusion to the *Shuking*, Part V, Book XV, 10 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part II, p. 469](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> [Huai Nan Tse XIII, 9r](#). uses these words with regard to the emperor *Yü*, ... adding that during one meal he had to rise ten times. The *Shi-chi* chap. 33, p. 3v. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. IV, p. 93](#)) refers them to *Chou Kung*. While washing his head, *Chou Kung* usually was disturbed by visitors three times.

<sup>3</sup> Great poet. See Vol. I, p. 123, Note 5.

<sup>4</sup> This poem so fascinated the emperor *Han Wu Ti*, that he summoned *Sse-Ma Hsiang Ju* to Court ([Giles, Bibl. Dict. No. 1753](#)).

<sup>5</sup> A title of certain officials of the imperial household.

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is wrong, and start from what is wicked, as a spring sends forth its waters, and vapours rise up. *Kuan Chung* as prime minister of Duke *Huan* brought about a confederacy of all the States <sup>1</sup>, and *Shang Yang* laid the p2.234 foundation of the imperial power of *Ch'in*, when he was minister of Duke *Hsiao* <sup>2</sup>. Yet both wrote books containing dozens of chapters <sup>3</sup>. *Sse-Ma Hsiang Ju* and *Yang Tse Yün* were their equals. Both being affected by external influences, their talents were called forth, and their talents being equal, their work was similar also. They were students and writers, but not because their minds had nothing else to think about.

The more one hears, the greater becomes his experience, and the harder his official duties are, the dryer is his knowledge. Unless one has rest, the thoughts do not come, and unless the thoughts come, the pencil is not quick at work. Simpletons and dullards may have a quiet home just fit for meditation, and be perfectly free from care, yet they are incapable of writing a single word. Those well gifted possess abilities, but it is not true that they have no time ; those without abilities cannot think, but it does not happen that somebody has knowledge, and cannot write. Persons with exceptional abilities may be anxious to write something, but find nothing to start from, whereas others with but little knowledge are able to record what they have learned by inquiry from others. Remarkable talents sometimes have no subject to write about, but they are never unqualified to speak, they may have nothing to look to, but it does not happen that they have no leisure for literary compositions.

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Some people are of opinion that writing requires the utmost concentration of the mental faculties, and that those authors who hold some office, are not apt to discharge their duties. A man's thoughts take a certain direction, consequently all his mental energy is used up in the pursuit of these thoughts. Writers are admirable in all they write or say, but in that their talents are exhausted, and their knowledge reaches its limit. In former times

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> See Vol. I, p. 463, Note 5.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 92, Note 5.

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many writers were in office, but to adjust what is scattered, and to join what is dispersed, to support the vacillating, and to bring peace to those in danger, exceeds the power of men of letters. They themselves have their troubles and their difficulties, which must have some cause. The cause are the hundreds of chapters <sup>p2.235</sup> and paragraphs which they have written. *Lü Pu Wei* composed a *Ch'un-ch'iu* <sup>1</sup>, and his whole family had to emigrate to *Shu* <sup>2</sup>, the Prince of *Huai-nan* wrote a book on Taoism, and misfortune overtook him, and destroyed his entire clan <sup>3</sup>, *Han Fei Tse* published a method of government, and he himself was thrown into prison in *Ch'in* <sup>4</sup>. Unable to preserve his own person, how could he have helped his State ?

Some people excel in one thing, but why should they not be deficient in another ? Some are deeply versed in composition, but why should they not be superficial in the administration ?

My answer is that people have their strong points, and likewise must have their weak ones ; they are skilful in one thing, and awkward in another. This is no inferiority, only their interest is not roused, nor any awkwardness, but the thing does not appeal to their imagination <sup>5</sup>. He whose desire centres in one thing, does not even perceive the *T'ai-shan*, and if his thoughts reach to a certain point, he has not the time to follow with his body.

As regards the much praised sharpness of the *Kan-chiang* sword <sup>6</sup>, when it is pointed it does not strike, and being fit to strike, it cannot be used for stabbing. Not that the blade is not sharp, but it cannot perform one and another thing.

Pulling the bow <sup>7</sup> for sparrows, one misses the wild swan, and shooting at

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<sup>1</sup> The *Lü-shih-ch'un-ch'iu*, Vol. I, p. 463, Note 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Lü Pu Wei* was banished to *Ssechuan* for his intrigues with the queen dowager and on suspicion of high-treason.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 338.

<sup>4</sup> See Vol. I, p. 170, Note 4.

<sup>5</sup> It is a useless attempt to deny this inferiority or awkwardness of men of genius in business. A great plus of mental power in one direction is usually counterbalanced by a minus in another.

<sup>6</sup> Vol. I, p. 504, Note 1.

<sup>7</sup> [ba], which the dictionaries only know as denoting the whirring of insects or the name of an insect. Here it seems to mean to make the bow-string whirl *i. e.*, to pull it, which is usually expressed by [ca].



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magpies, one misses the wild goose. Drawing square and round figures, one cannot complete them at the same time, and looking right and left, one does not see both sides simultaneously. Men may be able to do two things, but they cannot make them into one. Provided that the *Kan-chiang* sword be less pointed, then it strikes better, and if one gives up the magpies and merely aims at wild geese, then, shooting aloft, he does not miss the mark.

Of those who rejected literary productions and exclusively devoted themselves to the administration, no other men have left traces of greater fame behind them than *Tse Ch'an* and *Tse Chien*<sup>1</sup>. The majority of ancient authors did excellent practical work, but they were not employed. *Kuan Chung* and *Yen Ying* were as great statesmen as writers<sup>2</sup>, *Shang Yang*<sup>3</sup> and *Yü Ch'ing*<sup>4</sup> were as active in literature as in the administration.

When *Kao Tsu* had won the empire military plans were still in vogue. *Lu Chia* wrote the 'New Words', yet the emperor made but a moderate use of the work. The *Lü* clan caused an insurrection<sup>5</sup>, and the *Liu* family<sup>6</sup> was on the point of revolting. If it had not been for the devices of *Lu Chia*, the imperial house would not have been safe<sup>7</sup>.

Talents and experience may both be used, but their use depends on circumstances. In revolutionary times, experience procures merit, when there is prosperity and progress, talents may be used to write books. Words are pronounced by opening the mouth, and by joining together written sentences, chapters are formed. In days of yore many persons have achieved merit by their words, and those who have ruined themselves by their writings are few.

*Lü Pu Wei* and the Prince of *Huai-nan* committed some other fault, and did

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<sup>1</sup> A disciple of *Confucius*, *Fu Pu Ch'i* who was governor of *Shan-fu* in *Shantung* and has become celebrated for his administration.

<sup>2</sup> We have a work, going by *Kuan Tse's* name, in 24 chapters, and a *Yen Tse ch'un-ch'iu* in 8 chapters.

<sup>3</sup> *Shang Yang* as well as the two afore-mentioned persons rank as 'jurists'. See p. 62, Note 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Yü Ch'ing*, politician at the court of King *Hsiao Ch'êng* of *Chao*, 265-245 B. C. who wrote a work entitled *Yü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*.

<sup>5</sup> The family of the empress *Lü Hou*.

<sup>6</sup> The family of *Han Kao Tsu*.

<sup>7</sup> The empress *Lü Hou* attempted to supersede the house of *Liu* by her own family, but did not succeed.

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not become guilty through their books. In the case that their works were composed by their companions <sup>1</sup>, they did not write them themselves, and yet, although they did not write them, they were visited with those conspicuous calamities.

p2.237 People who in ancient and modern times trespassed, were not always authors straining their brains and their knowledge to the utmost. *Tsou Yang* presented a report, and was thereby saved from punishment in *Liang* <sup>2</sup>. *Hsü Yüeh* sent in a memorial, and was made a secretary of a board <sup>3</sup>. Their accomplishments were such, that by their writings they won distinction among men ; how then could they be reproached with not being able to protect their own persons ?

The State of *Han Fei Tse*, son to *Han Tsao Hsin*, did not collapse before his death. *Li Sse*, as it were, was a great admirer of *Han Fei Tse*, and of opinion that his writings and his extraordinary talents could never again be equalled. The beautiful plants of spring, when injured, often die away, whereas deformed plants which suffered no damage may groom until autumn. Provided that *Han Fei Tse* had not perished, we do not know what would have become of *Ch'in* <sup>4</sup>.

One may cause the actions of a genius to be revered, but one cannot induce people to imitate him, and one may set up his words as a standard, but one cannot prevail upon people to adopt them.

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Some say that, in former times and at present, there are many writers who set about boring holes into the core of the Classics, and in their records vitiating the true doctrine of the Sages, wherefore they are called filings. They are likened unto the splinters of jewels, and there is a saying to the effect that a cart-load of filings does not make a road, as a boxful of splinters does not make a precious stone. Formerly, these men were in contiguity with the

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<sup>1</sup> It has been maintained that they did not write those books ascribed to them, but merely lent their names.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 67, Note 1.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. I, p. 147.

<sup>4</sup> The State of *Han* might have won the supremacy instead of *Ch'in*.

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Sages, and yet they were filings ; how much more must this be true of those distant in time and of later ages ? Their writings cannot but be worthless, and their words, but dull ; how could they be used and put into practice ?

I would reply as follows : Sages write the classics, and Worthies produce the commentaries, explaining the ideas of the classical authors, and setting forth the views of the Sages. Thus <sup>p2.238</sup> the commentaries, needed for the classics, are all made by Worthies. But why are the classics and their commentaries alone held to be right, and all other books and records to be wrong ? Considering that the text of the commentaries to the classics is necessary for their explication, they think them right. Other books may dissent from the classics, or treat of new and other topics, therefore they regard them as wrong. Accordingly, the sole truth would be found in the Five Classics, and even though an assertion be true, they will not listen to it, except it be in the Five Classics.

Provided that the Five Classics, after having left the school of *Confucius*, down to the present day, had not been damaged, that they might be said to be of a piece, they would be trustworthy. But they have passed through the extravagant and depraved times of doomed *Ch'in*, had to bear the consequences of *Li Sse's* iniquitous advice, and were burned and proscribed. It is due to the goodness of *Fu Shêng* that the Classics were taken and concealed in some secret place <sup>1</sup>. After the rise of the *Han* dynasty, the Five Classics were recovered, but many books had been lost or were destroyed, and the rest was not intelligible. The chapters and paragraphs had been thrown into confusion and mixed up, and were not complete. *Ch'ao Ts'o* <sup>2</sup> and others separated the single words according to their own ideas. Thus the text was handed down from teacher to pupil, but how far its tenor was correct, nobody knew.

Doomed *Ch'in* was perverse, and brought confusion into the Classics, but, in spite of this perversity, it did not burn the works of the various schools of thought. The books of the various philosophers, one foot in length, and their lucubrations are all in existence. By studying them, we may correct the

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 447.

<sup>2</sup> See Vol. I, p. 448.

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statements made by others, and select passages for the instruction of the descendants of those writers. The descendants will write again as their forefathers have done. They are equally learned, and may commit their knowledge to writing. The thoughts, thus expressed, may be as far reaching as those of the Classics ; why then pretend that this sort of writings misses the truth inherent in the Classics ? Ergo the Classics are defective and incomplete. These writings are not short of one book, whereas in the Classics many chapters are wanting. Contrasting these two kinds of writings, which have more the character of filings ?

p2.239 The Changes take up the signs of things, the *Odes* are collected among the people, and then divided into chapters, the *Music* requires melancholy feelings <sup>1</sup>, and the *Rites* suppose a people living at peace. This subject matter must be there, before the chapters and sections of the Four Classics can be formed. The *Shuking* and the '*Spring and Autumn*' are culled from the State annals. These annals being extant, no extraordinary writings are required, for they embody the affairs of the people. These are the sources necessary for writing the Six Classics. Consequently, ordinary books may also be the beginning <sup>2</sup>, and the Classics the end, and the end may have lost the truth, whereas at the beginning the genuine principles are still preserved. If we compare these two kinds of writings, which are the splinters of jewels ?

Standing under the eaves, one knows that a house is leaking, in the wilderness one knows that the administration is deficient, and from the works of the various philosophers one learns that the Classics are full of mistakes. The text of the works of the philosophers is clear and to the point <sup>3</sup>. Those discoursing on the paragraphs and clauses of the Classics, do not attempt to explain and carefully to investigate them. One teacher hands them down to another. Those who first fixed the paragraphs and clauses cannot have had a very extensive sphere of ideas.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 257, Note 3.

<sup>2</sup> From which the Classics are compiled.

<sup>3</sup> This cannot, as a rule, be said of the Classics which without commentaries are hardly intelligible.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### Falsehoods in Books

16. IV, I. *Shu-hsü*

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p2.240 The world trusts in delusive books, taking everything indited on bamboo and silk for the records of wise and sage men and for absolutely true. In this belief they uphold, hum, and read them. When they see that really true records disagree with these fallacious books, they regard those records as light literature unworthy of faith. Recondite truth can still be found out, and profound or abstruse meanings, be determined. By explaining the words and elucidating the text, right and wrong are easily discovered. When all is recorded indiscriminately, the authors do not investigate things ; they are not critical enough, and do not think of what they say.

Those who transmit the sayings of scholars, mostly wish to produce something wonderful and unprecedented. They will write a book which causes ordinary readers to stand aghast and stare in blank amazement, and compose a work unheard of, to win the name of an uncommonly clever writer.

There is the following narrative :

When *Chi Tse*<sup>1</sup> of *Yen-ling*<sup>2</sup> was once travelling, he saw a piece of gold left on the roadside. It was the fifth month of summer, and there was a man who had put on a fur-coat and was gathering fuel<sup>3</sup>. *Chi Tse* shouted for the fuel-gatherer to fetch him the gold on the ground<sup>4</sup>.

The gatherer dropped his sickle, stared at him, and clapping his hands exclaimed,

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<sup>1</sup> A prince of *Wu*, Vol. I, p. 523, Note 1.

<sup>2</sup> See *ead.*, Note 2.

<sup>3</sup> This coat was probably the only garment which the man possessed, who seems to have been a sort of a hermit not caring for changes of temperature or worldly affairs.

<sup>4</sup> Notice the modern construction. Cf. p. 104, Note 2.

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— How haughty you are, and how you look down upon others !  
Your outward appearance is that of a <sup>p2.241</sup> gentleman, but you  
talk like a ruffian. Now, in the fifth month of summer I have  
donned my fur to gather fuel. Why should I take up gold ? <sup>1</sup>

*Chi Tse* apologised and inquired after his name and style, but the fuel-gatherer replied,

— You are a student who of human features knows nothing more  
than the skin. How could I tell you my name and surname ?,

and he took no further notice of him.

The world believes in the truth of this story, but it is idle talk, I dare say. *Chi Tse* was apprehensive of a revolution in *Wu*, because its people would have him become their lord. He would not consent, on any account, and proceeded to *Yen-ling*, never to return. His unselfishness remained the same from first to last.

*Hsü Yu* <sup>2</sup> yielded the empire, and he did not long for a marquisate. *Po Yi* turned his back upon his country, and died of hunger. He did not covet a crooked blade <sup>3</sup>. In the matter of disinterestedness we may draw an inference from great acts upon small ones, but should not surmise great ones from small ones.

*Chi Tse* was able to resign the throne of *Wu*, — how should he be covetous of gold lying on the ground ? When *Chi Tse* went on a mission to a powerful State, on his way he passed through *Hsü*. The prince of *Hsü* was fond of his sword, but at that time he did not yet give it him. On his return, the prince of *Hsü* was no more. Then he unbuckled his sword, suspended it on a tree over the grave, and went away. In his unselfishness he would not become unfaithful to his former intention <sup>4</sup>. How then should *Chi Tse*, who

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<sup>1</sup> So far the *Pei-wên-yün-fu* underquotes this story from the *Kao-shih-chuan* of *Huang-Fu Mi*, 3rd cent. A. D.

<sup>2</sup> A hermit. See p. 32, Note 1.

<sup>3</sup> [Huai Nan Tse XIII, 19r.](#) says the same of *Confucius* : 'Confucius refused *Lin-ch'iu* (a town which the duke of *Ch'i* had offered him as fief) and did not steal a crooked blade'. The crooked sword is perhaps used here as an emblem for a feudal lord.

<sup>4</sup> See Vol. I, p. 523.

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remained faithful to a deceased person and parted with his sword, out of greed call out to a living man to fetch the gold on the ground ?

Before *Chi Tse* had left *Wu*, he was a prince, and after he had left it, he was the sovereign of *Yen-ling*. When a prince or a sovereign goes out, he has his retinue in front and in the rear, and carriages are following. It is plain that he cannot walk quite alone on the highway. If he was not ashamed of taking the gold, p2.242 why did he not order his attendants to fetch it rather than to call upon the man in the furcoat ?

In regard to *Liu Hsia Hui's* behaviour, people say that even left in the dark and unseen, he would still continue his purification. The virtuous have the same conduct, and for a thousand years maintain the same ideals. Confined to a dark place, *Chi Tse* would still refrain from taking gold — how much less would he appropriate it on the road in bright daylight, and in the presence of all his men. That would not be like *Chi Tse*.

Perhaps it was thus that *Chi Tse*, seeing the gold lying about, out of pity for the fuel-gatherer in the fur, desired to help him with it, or at the time when he bade him take up the gold on the ground, he wished to give it him, and did not want it for himself, and then all the common traditions stated that *Chi Tse* wanted the gold.

\*

The books contain another report namely that *Yen Yuan* and *Confucius* both ascended Mount *T'ai* in *Lu*. *Confucius*, looking out to the south-east, saw that outside the palace gate of *Wu* a white horse was attached. He pointed it out to *Yen Yuan*, asking him whether he perceived the palace-gate of *Wu* <sup>1</sup>. *Yen Yuan* having replied in the affirmative, *Confucius* said,

— And what is outside the gate ?

The other rejoined,

— Something looking like suspended silk.

*Confucius* rubbed his eyes and corrected his error. Then both descended

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<sup>1</sup> In *Suchou* of the province of *Kiangsu* where the capital of the ancient kingdom of *Wu* was.

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together. Afterwards the hair of *Yen Yuan* turned white, his teeth fell out, and, subsequently, he died of sickness <sup>1</sup>. His spirit was not on a par with that of *Confucius*. Having overstrained his strength, all his brightness and vitality was consumed, therefore he died early. All common people who have heard of this, believe it, if, however, we go into the matter, we discover its futility.

In the text of the *Analects* there is no mention of this, neither have the *Six Classics* recorded it. If *Yen Yuan* was able to see farther than one thousand Li, he would have been equal to the Sage — wherefore then were *Confucius* and all the other scholars silent upon this ?

p2.243 The human eye can only see as far as ten Li, beyond this limit it does not perceive anything. The cause of this inability to distinguish is the distance. It is on record that Mount *T'ai* is of imposing height, but that at a distance of a hundred Li it does not appear as big as a snail, owing to the distance.

Between *Lu* and *Wu* the distance is over a thousand Li. If *Li Chu* <sup>2</sup> looked out for *Wu*, he would not perceive anything, and *Yen Yuan* should be able to distinguish it ? Provided that his talents were nearly perfect, and his sight different from that of other people, then the world ought to praise him as a second sage, instead of speaking of *Li Chu*.

The sight of the human eye is such, that big things are easily distinguished, whereas small ones are perceived with difficulty. Were *Yen Yuan* placed outside the palace-gate of *Wu* and turning his looks upon the shape of the *T'ai-shan*, it would be quite impossible for him to descry it, and it is still much more evident that viewed from the top of the *T'ai-shan*, the colour of the white horse would remain invisible to him. Not only could *Yen Yuan* not see it, even *Confucius* would be incapable of seeing it. How can we establish this proposition ?

The faculties of the ear and the eye are similar. As it is not possible to command a view of a hundred Li, so the ear cannot hear so far either. *Lu Chia*

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<sup>1</sup> At the age of 29, the hair of *Yen Yuan* had turned white, and at 32 he died. Cf. p. 89.

<sup>2</sup> A man of very keen sight of the time of *Huang Ti*, whose eyes were so good, that he could see the tip of a spikelet at a hundred paces distance. *Giles, Bibl. Dict.* No. 1116.



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says that, notwithstanding his keen sight, *Li Lou* <sup>1</sup> could not discern what was behind a curtain, and that the music-master *K'uang*, in spite of his keenness of hearing, could not hear beyond a hundred Li. The space between the palace-gate and Mount *T'ai* is more difficult to overlook than what lies behind a screen, or beyond a hundred Li.

King *Wu* of *Ch'in* conjointly with *Mêng Yüeh* lifted a tripod, which proved too heavy for him, for he burst a blood-vessel and died <sup>2</sup>. Lifting a tripod requires force, which issues from muscles and arteries. If these cannot stand the effort, they break, and death ensues. That is the natural course. Now *Yen Yuan* used his eyes to look to a great distance. Provided that the pupils of his eyes were unable to bear the strain, then he should have become blind, but the discolouring of his hair, and the loss of his teeth could not have been the consequence.

p2.244 The hair may turn white, and the teeth fall out in consequence of excessive study. If all the forces are strained without ceasing, the vital energy is exhausted, and this may lead to death.

*Po Ch'i* was deported, and his hair soon became white. We read in the *Shiking* that [by constant grief one becomes old] <sup>3</sup>. *Po Ch'i* thus tortured his mind, but *Yen Yuan* used his eyes and suddenly cast a glance at something for a moment. How could this have such a result ?

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The books of the Literati state that *Shun* was buried in *Ts'ang-wu* <sup>4</sup>, and *Yü* in *Kwei-chi* <sup>5</sup>. On their tours of inspection they had become old, and died, on their journey, in the border land. As sages they regarded the whole world as their home, and did not draw a distinction between far and near, or make a difference between inside and outside. Accordingly they were interred at

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<sup>1</sup> Another name for the afore-mentioned *Li Chu*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 89, Note 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Shiking*, Part II, Book V, Ode III, 2 ([Legge, Classics Vol. IV, Part II, p. 337](#)), [[Couvreur](#), § 2].

<sup>4</sup> A place in *Hunan* province. The *Shi-chi* likewise mentions it as the place where *Shun* died. [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 91, Note 3](#).

<sup>5</sup> *Loc. cit.* p. 162, Note 4 [[Chavannes, Mém. Hist.](#)]. *Kwei-chi* in the province of *Chekiang*.

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the place where they just halted.

To speak of *Shun* and *Yü* is right, but what they say about their progress, imaginary : *Shun* and *Yao* were both emperors reigning over a territory of 5 000 Li, which was situated between the *Four Seas*. The mode of government of the two emperors was continued uninterruptedly, and no change took place. According to the *Yao-tien* <sup>1</sup>, *Shun*, on his progress, went eastward as far as the *T'ai-Tsung* <sup>2</sup>, southward to Mount *Ho*, westward to the *T'ai-hua*, and northward to the *Hêng-shan* <sup>3</sup>. These were considered to be the *Four Sacred Mountains*. In the sphere within these four frontiers the feudal lords came and assembled at the foot of the sacred mountains. From far and near, and from the remotest out-of-the-way places they made their appearance <sup>4</sup>. Whatever the Sage undertook, he sought their welfare.

p2.245 *Yü* was a ruler like *Shun*, and things did not change. The places which he visited, on his inspections, were those where *Shun* had been. That *Shun* went to *Ts'ang-wu*, and *Yü* arrived at *Kuei-chi*, cannot be true <sup>5</sup>.

It is a fact that at the time of *Shun* and *Yü*, the Great Flood had not yet been regulated. *Yao* transmitted his power to *Shun*, who received it, and thus become emperor. He entrusted part of his work to *Yü*, viz. the regulation of the waters. After the decease of *Yao*, *Shun* was already old, and he banded over the empire to *Yü*. *Shun* regulated the waters in the south, and died in *Ts'ang-wu*, *Yü* worked in the east, and expired in *Kuei-chi*. Worthies and sages regard the world as their home, and they are buried accordingly.

*Wu Chün Kao* <sup>6</sup> asserts that *Kuei-chi* is originally the name of a mountain.

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<sup>1</sup> Chapter of the *Shuking*. *Shun's* tour of inspection, however, is not related in the *Yao-tien*, but in the next chapter, the *Shun-tien* ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 35](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> Another name for the *T'ai-shan* in *Shantung*.

<sup>3</sup> The mountains are not named in the *Shuking*, except the first, and generally explained as the *Hêng-shan* in *Hunan*, the *Hua-shan* in *Shensi*, and the *Hêng-shan* in *Shansi*, the so-called Four Sacred Mountains. *Ho-shan* is but another name for the *Hêng-shan* in *Hunan*.

<sup>4</sup> These tours of the emperor took place every five years.

<sup>5</sup> In *Wang Ch'ung's* opinion these places were too distant from the capital and not reached by the emperors.

<sup>6</sup> See Vol. I, p. 469.

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When, in the *Hsia* period, *Yü* made a tour of inspection, a review was held on this mountain. Hence a circuit was named. That would be the origin of *Kuei-chi*.

To say that a circuit received its name from a mountain is possible, but the assertion that *Yü*, on a tour of inspection, held a review on this mountain, is a fiction. On his tour he did not come as far as *Kuei-chi*, how could he hold a review on this mountain then ? If the view of *Wu Chün Kao* were to be accepted, and the meaning of *Kuei-chi* were really a review, how did *Yü* hold his review, when he arrived in the south ? In case *Yü* died already on his first progress to the east in *Kuei-chi*, *Shun* also, on his progress, arrived in *Ts'ang-wu* ; how about his review there ?

Provided that the many rulers, after having established their government, set out on a tour of inspection, and then, at once, held a review, then such reviews must have taken place on all the mountains in the four directions. In times of universal peace these rulers used to ascend Mount *T'ai* and sacrifice there. Of such sacrifices on Mount *T'ai* there are records of seventy-two, and those monuments which are obliterated and washed away, are innumerable. If really the emperors, on their progress, at once had a review, the places of such meetings round about must have been much more numerous than the sacrifices on Mount *T'ai*.

p2.246 The circuit cities have their names as things have theirs, which do not admit of explanation <sup>1</sup>. Should *Kuei-chi* alone make an exception ? In the *Chou* epoch its ancient name was *Wu* and *Yüeh* <sup>2</sup>. When these names originated, where did they come from ? When names were given during the time of the *Six States*, how had they to be formed ? The cities of the circuits of China are over a hundred <sup>3</sup>, the district cities exceed ten thousand, besides villages, boroughs, and hamlets, all have their proper names. Even sages would not be able to explain their meanings. *Wu Chün Kao* could account for *Kuei-chi*, but would be unable to interpret all the other geographical names,

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<sup>1</sup> This statement is too sweeping. Many local names can be explained.

<sup>2</sup> These are the names of the ancient kingdoms to which *Kuei-chi* may have belonged, but not names of a city.

<sup>3</sup> *Chavannes* in his list of the circuits of the *Han* dynasty ([Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 534 seq.](#)) enumerates 108.

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therefore his definition of *Kuei-chi* cannot be accepted either.

The object of those inspections was to examine and correct the methods of government. At *Yü's* time, *Wu* was a country inhabited by naked savages, who cut their hair and tattooed their bodies. There was no need for examining, and how could a review have taken place ?

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It is on record that, when *Shun* was interred at *Ts'ang-wu*, elephants tilled the ground for him, and that, when *Yü* was buried at *Kuei-chi*, crows laboured in his field <sup>1</sup>. This is believed to have been the upshot of the virtues of the sages, Heaven causing birds and animals to reward them by such blessings. There is nobody on earth who does not share this view, but a critical test will show the futility of the statement.

The virtues of *Shun* and *Yü* did not surpass that of *Yao*, who was buried in *Chi-chou* <sup>2</sup>, or, as some say, in *Chung-shan* <sup>3</sup>. At *Chi-chou*, birds and animals did not till for him. If they solely worked for *Shun* and *Yü*, why did Heaven grant its favours with such partiality ?

Some hold that *Shun* and *Yü*, while controlling the floods, had no resting-place, and that, therefore, *Shun* died in *Ts'ang-wu*, and *Yü* in *Kuei-chi*. By their toils they displayed merit, therefore <sub>p2.247</sub> Heaven recompensed them ; and they were far away from China, therefore it pitied them.

Now, if Heaven rewarded *Shun* and *Yü*, making the crows labour and the elephants till, what profit did *Shun* and *Yü* derive from it ? In order to requite *Shun* and *Yü*, Heaven should have caused *Ts'ang-wu* and *Kuei-chi* to offer sacrifices to them in perpetuity, however it made birds and beasts work, and did not cause the people to sacrifice. Oblations would have been made on the tombs of *Shun* and *Yü*, whereas the cultivation of fields benefitted other people only. How could Heaven, shedding its blessings on the Sages, be so inconsistent, that it did not do them any good ?

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> One of the Nine Provinces of *Yü*, comprising *Chili*, *Shansi*, and parts of *Honan* and *Manchuria*.

<sup>3</sup> In *Yung-ting hsien*, *Hunan*.

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These reasons must convince us that it is not correct to regard the labouring of the crows and the tilling of the elephants as special blessings conferred upon *Shun* and *Yü*. The facts are that *Ts'ang-wu* was a country where elephants abound <sup>1</sup>, and that in *Kuei-chi* hosts of birds used to alight. We learn from the *Yü-kung* that [the *P'êng-li* <sup>2</sup> being confined to its proper limits, the wild geese had places to settle on.] <sup>3</sup> The nature of Heaven and Earth finds expression in the doings of birds and beasts. Elephants stamp the ground of their own accord, and so do birds pick out plants. When the earth has thus been pounded, and the weeds are destroyed, it looks like a tilled field, and, when the soil has been loosened and the clods have been turned, man can forthwith proceed to plant.

There is a common saying that for *Shun* and *Yü* a grave was cultivated at *Hai-ling* <sup>4</sup>. A field tilled by a deer <sup>5</sup> is like one tilled by elephants, but how could the emperors have been buried in *Hai-ling* ?

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It has been recorded that the king of *Wu*, *Fu Ch'ai*, put *Wu Tse Hsü* to death, had him cooked in a cauldron, sewed into a p2.248 leathern pouch, and thrown into the River <sup>6</sup>. *Wu Tse Hsü* incensed, lashed up the waters, that they rose in great waves, and drowned people. At present, temples for him have been erected on the *Yangtse* of *Tan-t'u* <sup>7</sup> in *Kuei-chi* as well as on the *Chekiang* river of *Ch'ien-t'ang* <sup>8</sup>, for the purpose of appeasing his anger and stopping the wild waves. The allegation that the king of *Wu* put *Wu Tse Hsü*

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<sup>1</sup> This may have been the case in prehistoric times, but now-a-days there are no more elephants in *Hunan*.

<sup>2</sup> The *Poyang* Lake in *Kiangsi*.

<sup>3</sup> *Shuking* Part III, Book I, 38-39 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 108](#)) [[Couvreur](#)]. Our author seems to imply that in *Kuei-chi* there were as many birds as on the *Poyang* Lake.

<sup>4</sup> Probably a place in *Kiangsu*, see *Playfair* No. 2022.

<sup>5</sup> According to the popular tradition adduced by our author, a deer seems to have tilled the graves of the two emperors. I could not find any other reference to this story.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 140, Note 2.

<sup>7</sup> 18 Li south-east of the district of the same name forming the prefectural city of *Chinkiang* in *Kiangsu*.

<sup>8</sup> See Vol. I, p. 64, Note 5.

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to death and threw him into the River, is reliable, but it is absurd to say that, out of spite, *Wu Tse Hsü* lashed the waters, that they rose in waves.

*Ch'ü Yuan* full of disgust threw himself into the *Hsiang* <sup>1</sup>, but the waves of the *Hsiang* did not swell. *Shên T'u Ti* <sup>2</sup> jumped into the *Yellow River* and died, but the billows of the river did not rise. People will certainly object that as to violence and wrath *Ch'ü Yuan* and *Shên T'u Ti* did not equal *Wu Tse Hsü*. Now, in *Wei*, *Tse Lu* was pickled, and *P'êng Yüeh* was cooked in *Han* <sup>3</sup>. The valour of *Wu Tse Hsü* did not exceed that of *Tse Lu* and *P'êng Yüeh*. Yet these two men could not vent their anger, when they were in the tripod and the cauldron, they did not bespatter the bystanders with broth from the cooked flesh, or with sauce from the minced meat.

Moreover, *Wu Tse Hsü* first was put into the cauldron, and subsequently thrown into the river. Where was his spirit, when he was in the cauldron? Wherefore was it so timorous in the broth of the cauldron, and so bold in the water of the river? Why was his indignation not the same at these different times?

Furthermore, when he was thrown into the river, which river was it? There is the *Yangtse* of *Tan-t'u*, the *Chekiang* river of *Chien-sang*, and the *Ling* river of *Wu-t'ung*. Some maintain that he was thrown into the river near *Tan-t'u*, but the *Yangtse* has no great waves. Should any one say that he was thrown into the p2.249 *Chekiang* river of *Ch'ien-t'ang*, it must be borne in mind, that not only the *Chekiang* river, but also the *Shan-yin* and the *Shang-yü* <sup>4</sup> rivers have waves.

Since all the three rivers have huge waves, was perhaps the body in the pouch divided, and its parts cast into the three rivers?

For human hatred there is still some justification, as long as the deadly

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<sup>1</sup> The common tradition is that *Ch'ü Yuan* drowned himself in the *Mi-lo* river (see Biography of *Ch'ü Yuan*, *Shi-chi* chap. 84, p. 7r.). The *Mi-lo* is an affluent of the *Hsiang*, cf. *Tu-shih fang-yü chi-yao* chap. 80, p. 16v.

<sup>2</sup> See *Shi-chi* chap. 83, p. 11v. where the commentator says that *Shên T'u Ti* lived at the end of the *Yin* dynasty. *Chuang Tse* (*Giles* p. 394) relates of him that, no heed being paid to his counsels, he jumped into the river with a stone on his back.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 218, Note 5.

<sup>4</sup> Both *Shan-yin* and *Shang-yü* are cities in *Shao-hsing-fu* (*Chekiang*).

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enemy is alive, or some of his descendants are still left. Now the *Wu* State is destroyed since long, and *Fu Ch'ai* has no scions. *Wu* is the present *Kuei-chi*, which has been transformed into a prefecture. Why does the spirit of *Wu Tse Hsü* still resent the wrong once done him, and never cease to excite the waves ? What does he demand ?

At the time of *Wu* and *Yüeh*, they had divided the *Kuei-chi* circuit, so that *Yüeh* was governing *Shan-yin* <sup>1</sup>, whereas *Wu* had built its capital in the present *Wu*. South of *Yü-chi* <sup>2</sup>, all the land belonged to *Yüeh*, north of *Ch'ien-t'ang*, to *Wu*. The river of *Ch'ien-t'ang* formed the frontier between the two kingdoms. *Shan-yin* and *Shang-yü* <sup>3</sup> were both situated in the territory of *Yüeh*. When *Wu Tse Hsü* in the river of *Wu* caused the waves, they ought to have come into the *Wu* territory ; why did they enter the land of *Yüeh* ? That *Wu Tse Hsü*, harbouring a grudge against the king of *Wu*, wreaked his malice on the *Yüeh* river, is contrary to reason, and not the act of a spirit.

Besides, it is difficult to excite the waves, but easy to move men. The living rely on the strength of their nerves, the dead must use their soul. Alive, *Wu Tse Hsü* could not move the living, or take care of his body, and himself caused its death. When the strength of his nerves was lost and his soul evaporated and dispersed, how could he still make waves ?

There are hundreds and thousands in the predicament of *Wu Tse Hsü*, who, crossing a river in a boat, did not reach the other shore. But the body of *Wu Tse Hsü* alone was boiled in hot water in a cauldron. When his bones and his flesh had been cooked soft and become a stew with broth, could he still do any harm ?

King *Hsüan* of *Chou* killed his minister, the Earl of *Tu*, and Viscount *Chien* of *Chao*, his officer *Chuang Tse Yi*. Subsequently, the p2.250 Earl of *Tu* shot King *Hsüan*, and *Chuang Tse Yi* smote Viscount *Chien* <sup>4</sup>. These events seem to be true, and yet they are fictitious. Now not having his body intact, *Wu Tse Hsü* could not have acted like the Earl of *Tu* or *Chuang Tse Yi*, taking his

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<sup>1</sup> Part of the present prefecture of *Shao-hsing* in *Chekiang*.

<sup>2</sup> The modern *Hsiao-shan-hsien* in *Hang-chou-fu*, *Chekiang*.

<sup>3</sup> District in *Shao-hsing-fu*.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 202.

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revenge upon the king of *Wu*. How can the rolling to and fro of the waves be considered a revenge or a proof of *Wu Tse Hsü's* consciousness ?

Popular legends though not true, form the subjects of paintings, and, by these pictures, even wise and intelligent men allow themselves to be mystified <sup>1</sup>.

The earth has numerous rivers just as man, his veins and arteries. The blood flowing through them, these arteries throb and pulsate, and have their own times and measures. So it is with the rivers. Their flowing forwards and backwards in the morning and the evening <sup>2</sup>, is like human respiration *i. e.*, the inhalation and exhalation of air.

The nature of heaven and earth has remained the same from the oldest time. The Classic says,

[« The *Yangtse* and the *Han* pursued their common course to the sea.] <sup>3</sup>

So it was previous to *Yao* and *Shun* already. When the waters fall into the ocean, they merely accelerate their course, but, upon entering the three rivers <sup>4</sup>, they begin to roar and foam in their channel, which is usually shallow and narrow, and thus rise as great waves.

The *Ch'ü* river of *Kuang-ling* <sup>5</sup> has such great waves. A poet wrote the verse :

« How majestic rolls the *Yangtse*, and lo ! the billows of the *Ch'ü* ! <sup>6</sup>

They are caused by the narrow passage. If, after having been murdered in *Wu*, *Wu Tse Hsü's* spirit was producing the great waves at *Kuang-ling*, this

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<sup>1</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* seems to intimate that there were such pictures representing *Wu Tse Hsü's* wrath in the waves.

<sup>2</sup> This is only true of rivers near the sea, where the influence of the tide makes itself felt.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from the *Shuking* Part III, Book I, 47 (*Legge, Classics* Vol. III, Part I, p. 113).

<sup>4</sup> The above named three rivers of *Ch'ien-t'ang*, *Shan-yin*, and *Shang-yü* which have big waves.

<sup>5</sup> A place in *Kiangsu*.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted by the *Pei-wên-yün-fu* chap. 22b.



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would certainly not be a sign of its intelligence <sup>1</sup>.

p2.251 In deep channels the water flows quietly, but where there are shallows, sands, or stones, it rushes through, swells, and forms rapids. Billows and rapids are identical. If, as they say, *Wu Tse Hsü* is responsible for the great waves, who lives in the torrents to cause their rapids ?

When the billows enter the three rivers, they boil and wallop against the banks <sup>2</sup>, while in the middle no sound is produced. If *Wu Tse Hsü* is held to be the originator of these waves, then his body must lie extended in the deep water of the banks.

The rising of the waves follows the growing and waning, the bigness and smallness, the fullness and extinction of the moon <sup>3</sup>. If it is *Wu Tse Hsü* who causes the waves, his anger must be regulated upon the phases of the moon <sup>4</sup>.

Sometimes a storm excites the waters of the three rivers, that they drown people. Consequently *Wu Tse Hsü's* spirit must likewise cause the wind.

When *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* was about to cross the *Hsiang* river, he was overtaken by a storm. He inquired, which deities were sacrificed to on Mount *Hsiang*. His attendants replied, the daughter of *Yao* and the wife of *Shun*. *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti*, in a fit of rage, ordered three thousand criminals to cut down the trees on Mount *Hsiang* and trample upon it <sup>5</sup>. The assertion that *Wu Tse Hsü's* spirit caused the waves, is on a level with this statement that the ghosts of the two women produced the wind.

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<sup>1</sup> If the high waves of a river must be the work of an angry spirit, then those of the *Ch'ü* near *Kuang-ling* might likewise be caused by *Wu Tse Hsü*, but it would be senseless to cause floods in a place where he did not suffer any wrong.

<sup>2</sup> This refers to the famous spring-tide or *Hangchou Bore* occurring at regular intervals and entering the *Ch'ien-t'ang* river.

<sup>3</sup> The ancient Romans already had a vague idea of the cause of the tides. *Cæsar* observed that at full moon the tide used to be higher than usual, and *Pliny* distinctly ascribes this phenomenon to the influences of the sun and the moon. Kepler was the first who based it on attraction.

<sup>4</sup> An absurdity, therefore the said spring-tide and the usual tides as well are caused by the moon and not by *Wu Tse Hsü*.

<sup>5</sup> This story is told in the *Shi-chi* chap. 6, p. 18r. (*Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 154 seq.*). Instead of [] which *Chavannes* renders by 'painting in red', *Wang Ch'ung* writes [] 'to trample upon'.

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The books say that, when *Confucius* was buried on the shore of the river *Sse*, its waters flowed backwards <sup>1</sup>. This is meant to intimate that the virtue of *Confucius* was so excellent, that it made p2.252 the waters revert and not sweep away parts of the tomb. The world puts faith in this, and in consequence the Literati in their discussions hold that the descendants of *Confucius* should be appointed to office, basing this claim on the alleged flowing backwards of the *Sse*. But a careful consideration reveals the absurdity of such utterances.

How can *Confucius* dead be the same as alive ? While alive, he could in his practices follow up the right principles and conform to Heaven. But after death his actions ceased. Heaven rewards the highest virtue, therefore the Five Emperors and the Three Rulers attracted lucky presages, which they kept during their lifetime, but not after their death. *Confucius* met with rebuffs during his life, and no one wanted his services, wherefore he said, with a sigh,

— The phoenix does not come ; the River sends forth no Plan : it is all over with me ! <sup>2</sup>

Alive, he did not find favour, and after death, he was rewarded ? The death of *Confucius* does not differ from that of the Five Emperors and the Three Rulers, on whom Heaven did not bestow its blessings. If *Confucius* was done the recipient of Heaven's grace after death, his soul must have been holy, and the genius of the Five Emperors did not possess such excellence <sup>3</sup>.

The river *Sse* was not endowed with intelligence, that it might flow backwards for *Confucius'* sake. If the Spirit of Heaven made it do so, why did this Spirit not induce mankind to honour *Confucius*, while he was alive <sup>4</sup> ? If, by the flowing backwards of the *Sse*, Heaven wanted to secure appointments for the posterity of *Confucius*, why did it not appoint *Confucius* himself, while

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<sup>1</sup> See Vol. I, p. 223.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. I, p. 405, Note 1.

<sup>3</sup> According to Chinese ideas the Five Emperors rank above *Confucius*.

<sup>4</sup> The *T'ai-p'ing-yü-lan* quotes this passage.

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alive, whose merit and virtue were in accordance with Heaven, and desired these appointments for his descendants ?

That the *Sse* flowed backwards, is a hazard and a natural phenomenon. It happens that rivers revert in their course, for streams at times change their channels, or take a new course, which is the same as flowing backwards <sup>1</sup>. Therefore the flowing backwards of the *Sse* cannot be looked upon as a prodigy.

p2.253 Some records extolling the virtue of a prince of *Wei*, relate that his kindness was not only bestowed upon scholars, but that it even embraced birds and beasts. Once he was dining with some guests, when a hawk pounced upon a pigeon. The latter escaped under the prince's table, but the hawk pursued and killed it before his eyes. The prince was shocked, and called upon his men to spread nets everywhere. Several dozen hawks were caught. The prince charged them with the crime of having hit a pigeon. The one hawk which had done it bowed its head, and did not dare to look up. Upon this, the prince killed it. The world, by way of glorification, says that the prince revenged a pigeon, but that is idle talk.

A hawk is a creature whose feelings are other, and whose speech is different from ours. A sage would not be able to induce birds and animals to a moral conduct. Who is this prince, that he could cause a hawk to bow its head and accuse itself ? Such birds as hawks are counted by thousands, how could one single hawk, which, having previously hit upon a pigeon, had flown away, be caught again ?

If it bowed its head and acknowledged its guilt, it must have been a sage bird. Understanding the words of the prince, it must have known his ways as well, and knowing his ways, it would not have pounced upon a pigeon in his presence.

Even men cannot mend their faults. Birds differ from men ; to pretend that they can repent, is a prejudice of common people and a misapprehension of the real nature of the various classes of creatures.

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<sup>1</sup> This explanation is not very satisfactory, there being a great difference between flowing backwards and taking a new course. Perhaps *Wang Ch'ung* wanted to say that some natural obstacle forced the *Sse* to meander and eventually revert to its channel.

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Perhaps the prince really caught the hawk. Expecting that some one would get hold of its head, it violently turned its neck aside, which caused it such pain, that it inclined its head, and therefore could not look up. Since the prince was a kind and just man, people, by saying that the hawk admitted its guilt, meant to belaud him. In the course of conversation many empty compliments are made, and real deserts usually are embellished by all sorts of fictions.

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It has been recorded that Duke *Huan* of *Ch'i* <sup>1</sup> married his seven cousins. That cannot be true, for it would be incest and a violation of the laws of consanguinity <sup>2</sup>. It is the nature of birds <sub>p2.254</sub> and beasts not to take heed of the relation between ascendants and descendants, therefore they mix, unconscious of the laws of relationship. Duke *Huan* united all the feudal princes and set the empire right, guiding the masses with virtue, and ruling them with authority. For this reason the lords followed him, and nobody dared to disobey. This would not have been the case, if his private life had been so flagitious, that he imitated the instincts of beasts and birds.

He prevailed upon the princes to do homage to the royal house, for it was distasteful to him that the king should be deprived of his power, and his subjects disrespectful to him. If before the world he resented a want of decorum so much, how could he degrade himself at home by such utter disregard of propriety? If there had been such a discrepancy between his public and his private life, he would never have distinguished himself or won any influence <sup>3</sup>.

As to the depravity of *Chieh* and *Chou*, they are not charged with incestuous intercourse with their kin. Sober-minded critics are of opinion that the wickedness of *Chieh* and *Chou* was less than that of doomed *Ch'in*, and that the crimes of doomed *Ch'in* fell short of those of *Wang Mang*. Incest has never been laid at their charge. Had Duke *Huan* married his seven cousins,

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<sup>1</sup> 685-643 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> 'One must not marry a wife of the same surname' says the *Liki*, *Ch'ü-li* ([Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 78](#)) [[Couvreur](#)]. This prohibition is still in force to-day.

<sup>3</sup> As the leading prince.

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his viciousness would have left behind that of *Chieh* and *Chou* and be worse than that of *Ch'in* and *Wang Mang*.

The *Ch'un-ch'iu* commends the smallest merit and condemns the slightest wrong. For what reason then did it not condemn the great crime of Duke *Huan*? *Wên Chiang* of *Lu* was a sister to Duke *Hsiang* of *Ch'i*, who had intercourse with her, for we read in the *Ch'un-ch'iu* under the second year of Duke *Chuang* :

[« In winter, the (deceased duke's) wife, the Lady *Chiang*, had a meeting with the marquis of *Chi* in *Kao*.] <sup>1</sup>

Why was the *Ch'un-ch'iu* so hard upon Duke *Hsiang*, recording his lewdness, and why so lenient to Duke *Huan*, concealing his crime and having no word of reproof for it? Should the passage have been lost in the Classic, wherefore do the commentators, *Tso Ch'iu Ming*, *Kung Yang*, and *Ku Liang* all hush it up?

The fault of Duke *Huan* consisted in his too great condescension towards the ladies of his harem. Six concubines enjoyed his special <sup>p2.255</sup> favour, and five princes contended to become his heirs <sup>2</sup>. *Ch'i* was thrown into confusion, and, when the duke died, it was not until three months later that his death was officially announced <sup>3</sup>. People hearing of these six favourites, and that no distinction was made between the sons of his wife and his concubines, then said that he misbehaved himself with his seven cousins.

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There is a notice in some books to the effect that Duke *Huan* of *Ch'i* carried his wife, when he received the feudal princes in audience. This would show that the duke's lust reached the last degree of indecency. If Duke *Huan* carried his wife on his back at great audience, how could he have outdone this feat at the wildest Bacchanal?

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<sup>1</sup> *Legge, Classics Vol. V, Part I, p. 74.*

<sup>2</sup> On this episode cf. *Shi-chi* chap. 32, p. 12v. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. IV, p. 58 seq.](#)).

<sup>3</sup> According to the *Shi-chi loc. cit.* the corpse of the duke was left sixty-seven days on his death-bed, before it was placed into a coffin, so that the vermin crept through the door.

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He had refined the manners of the scholars, inspiring them with awe and reverence by his majesty, — how could he, with his wife on his back, have led on the princes to do homage to the royal house ?

At the meeting of *K'uei-ch'iu* <sup>1</sup>, Duke *Huan* was very proud and elated. The Heads of nine States then revolted from him. His angry looks could not prevent the revolt of the nine States. Now fancy the duke carrying his wife and affording them such a spectacle of lasciviousness ; would that have induced them to stand by him ?

Some say that *Kuan Chung* informed the princes that his master had ulcers on his back, which would not heal without the wife's assistance. The princes believed *Kuan Chung* and therefore did not rebel.

[Now in all places of ten families <sup>2</sup> an honest man like *Confucius* can be found.] <sup>3</sup> At that time, the princes had assembled over a thousand men. There was, doubtless, one among them experienced in the art of curing ulcers, so that the services of the duke's wife could be dispensed with.

p2.256 *Kuan Chung* concealed the duke's fault. Well aware that *Kuan Chung*, by doing so, deceived the princes, the latter would, no doubt, have become angry and revolted. How could the duke, under these circumstances, have presided over their meetings for long, or been successful as their leader ?

Some hold that in reality Duke *Huan* was unprincipled, but using able men and making *Kuan Chung* his minister, he acquired supremacy.

An unprincipled man is not better than a tyrant. He would believe slanderers, remove the virtuous, and injure the benevolent and the righteous. How could such a one employ a man like *Kuan Chung*, or keep officers to serve under him ?

*Chieh* killed *Kuan Lung Fêng* <sup>4</sup>, and *Chou* murdered the son of the king <sup>1</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> This meeting was held in 651 B. C. Cf. *Legge, Classics Vol. V, Part I, p. 152* and *Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. IV, p. 55*.

<sup>2</sup> In the smallest hamlets.

<sup>3</sup> *Confucius* in his modesty says so himself, *Analects V, 27 [Couvreur]*, but it is evident that not every hamlet possesses a *Confucius*.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 1.

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*Pi Kan*. An unprincipled sovereign cannot employ wise men. Provided that *Kuan Chung* was wise, then Duke *Huan* could not employ him, and if he did employ him, then Duke *Huan* cannot have committed all those excesses.

When the sovereign is virtuous and intelligent, he has pure and honest ministers. Virtuous ministers presuppose an enlightened ruler. How, then, can Duke *Huan* be accused of wantonness ?

An opponent might say that Duke *Ling* of *Wei*<sup>2</sup> was a sovereign without principles, who, all the same, knew virtuous ministers, and whom *Kuan Chung* assisted. Then from what does it follow that Duke *Huan* was not wanton ?

Duke *Ling* was unprincipled indeed, but the fact that he employed three able men, merely sufficed to preserve his life ; he did not achieve anything grand. Duke *Huan* honoured the arithmeticians<sup>3</sup> and raised *Ning Ch'i*<sup>4</sup> from his cart. To punish *Ch'u* for not having sent its tribute of reeds and grasses, he invested it with all his forces<sup>5</sup>. He united the feudal barons, and, quite alone, set the empire in order. He is such a hero as appears only once in a p2.257 thousand generations. That he should have carried his wife on his back, is nonsense.

The scholiasts to the *Shuking* relate that Duke *Chou* as a regent wore the silken ribbons of the emperor and his hat, and that, his back turned upon a screen and facing the south, he gave audience to the princes.

A partition between the door and the window is called a screen (*i*) Facing the south indicates the high dignity. If in sitting one turns the back upon the screen and looks southward, the screen is behind. Now, when Duke *Huan* held an audience of all the princes, he was perhaps sitting with his face

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<sup>1</sup> *Pi Kan* was the son of king *T'ai Ting*, 1194-1192 B. C. and an uncle of his murderer, king *Chou*. [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 199, Note 1.](#)

<sup>2</sup> 534-493 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> A short reference to this fact is found in the *Han-shu, Biography of Mei Fu* chap. 67, p. 9v.

<sup>4</sup> A poor cart-driver, who was heard singing and beating the time on the horns of his oxen by Duke *Huan*. He took him into his service, and subsequently made him Privy Councillor. *Giles, Bibl. Dict.* No. 1568.

<sup>5</sup> This expedition took place in 656 B. C.

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turned to the south, and his wife stood behind. This has given rise to the popular tradition that he carried his wife on his back. It is like the story that *K'uei* had but one leg, or that Duke *Ting* of *Sung*, in digging a well, found a man in it.

At the time of *Yao* and *Shun*, *K'uei* was a great officer. He was by nature a great musician, and the tunes he played were most plaintive <sup>1</sup> and beautiful. People then used to say that playing like *K'uei* was full perfection. Of this popular tradition made the phrase that *K'uei* had but one leg <sup>2</sup>.

The emperor *Shun* was seeking everywhere a candidate for the post of president for sacrificial worship. Every one recommended *Po Yi*, [but he made obeisance and declined in favour of *K'uei* and *Lung*] <sup>3</sup>.

p2.258 The office of a minister of ancestral worship would correspond to that of a *tsung-chêng* of the *Han* time. The cutting of one leg would be an abnormality of the legs, and how could a man move about with only one leg ?

The *Hsia* emperor *K'ung Chia* was once hunting on the *Tung-ming* <sup>4</sup> mountain, when it began to rain and to become very dusky. The emperor entered a private house, where the mistress was just nursing a baby. Some said that a child to which an emperor had come would be noble, but others

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<sup>1</sup> To be appreciated by the Chinese, music must be melancholy. Light music appears to them frivolous and licentious.

<sup>2</sup> This explication is ingenious, but not sufficiently grounded. It seems to be derived from *Huai Nan Tse* :

‘Duke *Ai* of *Lu* asked *Confucius* saying,

— Is it credible that *K'uei* had only one leg ?

— *K'uei*, replied *Confucius*, was a man and in no way different from others but in his knowledge of tunes. *Yao* said ‘*K'uei* alone suffices’, and he made him director of music. There can be no question of one leg.

A fuller version of this story is to be found in the *Lü-shih-ch'un-ch'iu* XXII, 6v.

A simpler explanation is that *k'uei* originally is the name of some one-legged monster, and that this peculiarity was ascribed to the bearer of this name as well. *Giles* would identify it with the *walrus* and accordingly translates a passage of *Chuang Tse* chap. VI, p. 14r.

‘The walrus said to the centipede, ‘I hop about on one leg, but not very successfully. How do you manage all these legs you have ?’ (‘*Giles, Chuang Tse* p. 211.)

<sup>3</sup> Quotation from the *Shuking* Part II, Book I, 23 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 47](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>4</sup> As another reading *Tung-mo* is given. Neither name seems to be mentioned elsewhere. The *Lü-shih-ch'un-ch'iu* VI, 2v., from which this story appears to be taken, writes : ‘the *P'in* mountain of *Tung-yang*, a region at the frontier of *Chili* and *Honan*.



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urged that a child not born for grandeur must needs remain mean. *K'ung Chia* said,

— If it becomes my son, who will make it mean ?,

and he took the child with him. Once, when the boy was carving rafters, the axe cut his legs, and he finally became a doorkeeper <sup>1</sup>. Since *K'ung Chia* wished to ennoble him as his son, he had the greatest expectations, nevertheless, when he had cut his legs, he was of no use and therefore made a doorkeeper.

Now *K'uei* could not walk about with one leg. He might have made music even sitting, but for discharging the duties of a minister of ancestral worship one leg would not do <sup>2</sup>, as the doorkeeper, after having lost his legs, could not obtain rank and honour. *K'ung Chia* did not find a noble son, and *Po Yi* could not have yielded the post to *K'uei*.

Duke *Ting* of *Sung* <sup>3</sup> was a man of *Sung*. Before the well was bored, somebody had always to be despatched to fetch water. It was calculated that every day one man was thus occupied. After digging the well, he was no more sent to carry the water, and it could be reckoned that every day one man's day's work was economized. Therefore they said that Duke *Ting* of *Sung*, digging p2.259 a well, found a man. Popular tradition went a step farther, pretending that Duke *Ting*, digging the well, found a man in it <sup>4</sup>.

Man is born from man and not from earth. Piercing the earth and boring a well is not done with the object of finding a man.

In point of analogy, the story of Duke *Huan* carrying his wife comes in the

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 432, Note 2.

<sup>2</sup> As a rule a cripple cannot become an official in China.

<sup>3</sup> Of the 11th or 10th cent. B. C.

<sup>4</sup> This interpretation is much too far-fetched and not convincing. The story was probably believed, when it had been invented, and no further philological or psychological arguments are required to explain this simple fact.

The *Lü-shih-ch'un-ch'iu* XXII, 6v. gives a variation of this story :

'Mr. *Ting* of *Sung* had no well in his compound, and there was always a man employed in fetching water from outside, until he himself bored a well. Then he said to others : 'I have bored a well, and got a man'. This report spread and reached the prince of *Sung*, who summoned him and asked for an explanation. Then the man replied : I obtained a man's service, but not a man in the well.'

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same category. He was sitting, his back turned upon his wife, whence the statement that his wife was on his back. Knowing that having one's wife on one's back is indecent, they concocted the story of *Kuan Chung* curing ulcers through the wife.

If Duke *Huan* had laid aside his princely robe, when his wife was on his back, perhaps the female fluid could remove the ulcers, and his boils could be cured by his wife. But, on receiving the lords, Duke *Huan* was clad in heavy garments, and his wife likewise wore thick clothes. The female fluid thus being checked, of what benefit would it have been to carry his wife ?

Duke *Huan* bestowed much thought on the *savants*. He illuminated his palace, and was sitting there at night. By his meditations he attracted the scholars, and how should he have received the princes with his wife on his back during the day ?

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It is recorded in some books that *Nieh Chêng*<sup>1</sup> in *Yen Wêng Chung's*<sup>2</sup> service assassinated the king of the *Han* State. That is a falsehood, for at *Nieh Chêng's* time *Lieh* was marquis of *Han*<sup>3</sup>. In the third year of his reign, *Nieh Chêng* stabbed *Hsieh Lei*, a minister of *Han*<sup>4</sup>. In his twelfth year, the Marquis *Lieh* died, seventeen years<sup>5</sup> after the assassination of *Hsieh Lei* by *Nieh Chêng*. The p2.260 notice that the latter assassinated the king of *Han* is an invention of worthless books and unimportant chronicles, and not to be trusted<sup>6</sup>.

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There is another report that *Tan*, the heir-prince of *Yen* procured a bravo, *Ching K'o*, to assassinate the king of *Ch'in*, but he failed and was executed<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> A famous bravo in *Honan*, who died in 397 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> Better known as *Yen Chung Tse*, an officer of *Han* and an enemy of *Hsieh Lei*.

<sup>3</sup> 399-387 B. C.

<sup>4</sup> In 397 B. C.

<sup>5</sup> This number, of course, is wrong. We must read ten years.

<sup>6</sup> The *Shi-chi* chap. 86, p. 8r. in the biography of *Nieh Chêng* only speaks of his assassination of *Hsieh Lei*, but the *Chan-kuo-ts'ê* says that, while stabbing *Hsieh Lei*, the assassin also struck the Marquis *Ai*, who reigned from 376-370 B. C.

<sup>7</sup> See Vol. I, p. 503, Note 2.

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Subsequently *Kao Chien Li* <sup>1</sup> again went to pay a visit to the king of *Ch'in* and play the harp for him. The king was pleased, but knowing *Kao Chien Li* to be a partisan of the prince of *Yen*, he had him blindfolded first, and then called upon him to thrum the harp. *Kao Chien Li* had put lead into his instrument, to make it heavy. While he was playing, the king of *Ch'in* could not restrain his feelings and, on his knees, moved nearer. *Kao Chien Li* then took his harp and struck him on the forehead <sup>2</sup>. The king began to sicken, and three months later died of the wound.

The assertion that *Kao Chien Li* struck the king of *Ch'in* with his harp is true, but the report that the king being struck, ailed three months and died, is false.

The king of *Ch'in* is nobody else than *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti*. In the 20th year of his reign, Tan, heir-prince of *Yen*, instigated *Ching K'o* to stab *Shih Huang Ti*, but *Shih Huang Ti* put *Ching K'o* to death ; that is known. In his 21st year, he ordered his general *Wang Chien* to attack *Yen*. He brought back the head of the crown-prince. In his 25th year, a new invasion was made into *Yen*, and its king *Chia* taken prisoner <sup>3</sup>. Later on — the year is not known — *Kao Chien Li* struck at *Shih Huang Ti*, but missed him and was beheaded. In his 27th year <sup>4</sup>, the emperor made a journey through the empire. He went to *Kuei-chi* and came to *Lang-yeh*. North he went as far as the *Lao* and *Ch'êng* Mountains and the sea. When in the west he arrived at *P'ing-yuan* Ferry, he was taken ill, and having reached the *P'ing* terrace in *Sha-ch'iu*, he expired <sup>5</sup>.

The Book of Prophecies <sup>6</sup> writes that if the emperor returned to *Sha-ch'iu*, he would come by his death. Some writers also state that, having suffered

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<sup>1</sup> A native of *Yen* and friend of *Ching K'o*. After the execution of the latter, he changed his name and, for a time, lived as a poor man and unknown, until his musical talent was found out. *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* pardoned his former connexion with *Ching K'o* and wished to hear him.

<sup>2</sup> The *Shi-chi* chap. 86, p. 18v. narrates the event, but says that *Kao Chien Li* failed to hit the emperor and was put to death.

<sup>3</sup> All these details are to be found in the *Shi-chi* chap. 6.

<sup>4</sup> This is a mistake. This journey was made in the 37th year = 211 B. C. Cf. *Shi-chi* chap. 6, p. 26v. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 184](#)). In his 27th year the emperor made another journey.

<sup>5</sup> *Vid.* Vol. I, p. 231 and 232.

<sup>6</sup> Vol. I, p. 319, Note 1.

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from the braises caused by the harp for three months, he ended his life in *Ch'in*. Thus the same person is by some believed to have died in *Sha-ch'iu*, by others in *Ch'in*, and concerning his death, people say that he had always been ailing from sores. The statements of this class of books is very often irreconcilable with truth, but ordinary people are unable to settle such questions.

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## CHAPTER XXIV

### Literary Exaggerations

27. VIII, II. *Yi-tsêng*

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p2.262 It is a common weakness of human nature to exaggerate the truth, while relating something. In compositions and speeches truth is drowned in a flood of words. Praising some goodness, they over-estimate its excellence, and referring to some wickedness, they over-colour the guilt. This is due to the bias of ordinary people for the marvellous, for they do not care for any but strange stories. Consequently, unless in belauding somebody you magnify his merits, the hearers are not pleased, and unless in running him down you aggravate his crimes, the audience is not satisfied. Hearing one thing, by exaggeration they make ten of it, and seeing a hundred, they increase them to a thousand. A plain and simple object is cut into ten pieces and split into a hundred particles, and a true statement is turned round and round again a thousand or ten thousand times <sup>1</sup>.

*Mê Tse* wept over boiled silk, and *Yang Tse* over by-roads <sup>2</sup>, for they were sorry that people should lose their original nature, and regretted their departing from truth. Flying rumours and numerous traditions emanate from the mouths of uncultured people, and are current in lanes and alleys. They are such exaggerations. The words of the philosophers however, the lucubrations of their pens, the writings of wise men, and the collections of fine thoughts, should all agree with truth, and yet even here we find exaggerations.

As regards the classical literature, in point of truthfulness, there are no

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<sup>1</sup> Here *Wang Ch'ung* himself commits the fault which he lays at other people's door. All Orientals like big numbers, which have become quite a special feature of the Chinese language, in which a hundred, a thousand, or ten thousand merely serve to express many.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 374, Notes 3 and 4.

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utterances more reliable than those of the Sages <sup>1</sup>. The classical literature continues immutable through all the ages <sup>2</sup>, and yet it is not quite devoid of hyperboles over-charging the truth. But these coloured reports are all based on some facts and not p2.263 maliciously made to misguide people, small things having been exaggerated. Those who seriously study this question, maintain that there is a difference between the exaggerations of classical literature and common sayings and traditions. These classical exaggerations are of various kinds. Usually something conspicuous is put forward with a view to captivating those who still harbour some doubts. It goes to their hearts and enters their heads, thus opening their understanding and awakening their intelligence.

The remark of the *Shuking* that [harmony was established among ten thousand countries] <sup>3</sup> is intended to extol *Yao's* virtue, which leads to universal peace, the effects of which were not only felt in China proper, but also among the *I* and *Ti* tribes. The affirmation that harmony prevailed in the border lands is correct, but the ten thousand countries are an exaggeration.

Under *Yao* and during the *Chou* period, the entire domain did not embrace more than five thousand Li. In the *Chou* time, there were one thousand seven hundred and ninety-three feudal States. Adding the wild dependencies, those of the *Jung*, and the guarded ones, together with the people without the Four Seas <sup>4</sup> which do not live on grain, such as the tribes with covered breasts, with hanging ears, the *Pigmies*, and the *Po-chung* <sup>5</sup>, we obtain an aggregate

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<sup>1</sup> We foreigners cannot admit this.

<sup>2</sup> This statement is open to criticism : all the classical texts have undergone some alterations in course of time.

<sup>3</sup> *Shuking* Part I, chap. I, 2, *Yao-tien* ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 17](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>4</sup> The utmost limits of the habitable land.

<sup>5</sup> All these semi-fabulous tribes are in the *T'ai-p'ing-yü-lan* ranked among the southern barbarians. The *Ch'uan-hsiung* seem to have received their name from a peculiar sacklike costume merely covering their breasts. The *Tan-êrh* were in the habit of disforming their ears, that they hang down upon their shoulders. The *Chiao-chiao* = *Pigmies* are often mentioned in Chinese literature. *Lieh Tse* gives them a height of 1 foot 5 inches, in the *Chia-yü Confucius* describes them as 3 feet high. According to the *Hou Han-shu* they live in the surroundings of *Yung-ch'ang-fu* in *Yünnan* and measure 3 feet. About 110 A. D. three thousand of them submitted to the *Han* and sent as tribute ivory and zebus. They live in caverns and are dreaded by birds and beasts. For *Po-chung*, who are nowhere else mentioned, we had better read *Ch'i-chung*, a tribe said

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sum of less than three thousand. All countries which Heaven covers and Earth sustains, are within the number of three thousand. The ten thousand people mentioned by the *Shuking* must therefore be held to be an exaggeration overshooting the mark, meant as a homage to *Yao*, implying his excellence and that great multitudes fell under its influence. All China as well as the p2.264 savages were in perfect accord, whence the term ten thousand countries, which comes near the thousands and hundred thousands of descendants mentioned in the *Shiking* <sup>1</sup>.

This is a tribute paid to the virtue of King *Hsüan* of *Chou* <sup>2</sup>. In recognition of his diligence in serving Heaven and Earth, these latter blessed him with so many descendants, that they amounted to thousands and hundreds of thousands. One may well say that his progeny was extremely numerous, but to speak of thousands and hundreds of thousands is straining the point, for however numerous they were, it could not be thousands or hundreds of thousands. From a desire to praise, the poets of the *Shiking* have gone beyond the truth.

From the time, when *Hou Chi* <sup>3</sup> was invested with *T'ai* <sup>4</sup>, down to King *Hsüan* <sup>5</sup>, he with all his nearer and farther blood-relations could not be thousands and hundreds of thousands <sup>6</sup>. A thousand and ten thousand are names of big numbers : ten thousand denotes a great many. Therefore the *Shuking* speaks of ten thousand countries, and the *Shiking* of thousands and hundreds of thousands.

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The *Shiking* says that [the crane cried amidst the nine pools of the

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to walk on tiptoe.

<sup>1</sup> *Shiking* Part III, Book II, Ode V, 2 ([Legge, Classics Vol. IV, Part II, p. 482](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> *Legge loc. cit.* p. 481, Note says that there is no evidence to whom the Ode is addressed. Some hold that it is King *Ch'êng*.

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

<sup>4</sup> The original fief of the *Chou* in *Shensi*, with which they were invested by *Shun* 2255-2206 B. C.

<sup>5</sup> 827-782 B. C.

<sup>6</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* is mistaken here ; calculating is not his strong point. One couple after about 42 generations may well have tens of thousands of descendants.

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marches, and that its cry was heard in the sky.] <sup>1</sup> The meaning is that the crane cried in the marshes, which were divided into nine pools, and that its sound was still heard in the sky, an illustration of the cultivation of virtue by the superior man, whose name reaches the court in spite of his humble position. I agree that the sound may be heard at a great altitude, but to say that it was heard in the sky, is hyperbolic.

They urge that the sound was heard in the sky. Beholding a crane crying in the clouds, they hear it from the earth, and conjecture that, since this sound is heard on the earth, it must also be possible to hear it in the sky. For, when a crane cries in the clouds, man hears its voice, and looking up, his eyes decry p2.265 its shape. The ear and the eye possess the same power. When the ear hears its voice, the eye perceives its form. But hearing and vision do not extend beyond ten Li. A cry in the empyrean is inaudible for us. Why ? Because the distance between the sky and man measures several ten thousand Li <sup>2</sup>. Consequently the eye cannot see, and the ear cannot hear so far. If we hear a crane crying from below, it is because it is near us, but the inference that, on account of its voice being audible from below, its cry ought to be heard in the sky, when it is uttered on the earth, is erroneous.

When a crane cries in the clouds, man hears it from below, but when it cries in the nine marshes, man is not up in the sky ; what means has he to know that it is perceptible there ? He does not know it, but makes this inference by analogy. Perhaps the poet was not aware of this and earnestly believed what he said, or he knew the fact, but wished to use it by way of illustration, and therefore stretched the point.

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The *Shiking* says that among the black-haired people of *Chou* not a single one was left out <sup>3</sup>. This signifies that, in the time of King *Hsüan* of *Chou*, the empire was afflicted with a great drought. Aggrieved by the severity of this

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<sup>1</sup> *Shiking* Part II, Book III, Ode X, 2 ([Legge, Classics Vol. IV, Part II, p. 297](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> More than 60 000 Li. Vol. I, p. 275.

<sup>3</sup> *Shiking* Part III, Book III, Ode IV, 3 ([Legge, Classics Vol. IV, Part II, p. 530](#)) [[Couvreur](#)]. *Mencius* remarked that this passage must not be taken literally (*Legge, Classics Vol. II, p. 353*).



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drought, under which the people had to suffer, the poet said that not a single person was left but shared in the general distress. The drought may have been very severe, but to maintain that not a single individual was left out is an exaggeration.

The people of *Chou* are like the people of to-day. When the latter are visited with a great drought, the poor and the destitute who have not stored up provisions, beat their breasts and yearn for rain, whereas the rich who have a sufficient supply of grain and food, and whose granaries and store-houses are not empty, do not feel the pangs of hunger in their mouths and bellies. Wherefore should they be grieved then ?

When Heaven sends down a drought, mountain and forest tracts are not dried up, and, when Earth has an inundation, the tops of hills and mounds are not submerged. Mountain and forest <sup>p2.266</sup> tracts are the rich and noble, who are sure to escape. The allegation that not a single person was spared, is merely a figure of speech designed to describe the intensity of the drought.

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In the *Yiking* there is the following passage :

[« It shows its subject with his house made large, but only serving as a screen to his household. When he looks at his door, it is still, and there is nobody about it.] <sup>1</sup>

There is not nobody, but no wise men. The *Shuking* says,

« Do not leave the various offices vacant <sup>2</sup>.

Vacant is empty, and various, many : Let not all the offices be empty. To leave, for want of men, is equivalent with letting empty, whence this expression.

Now all short-witted people are imbued with the Five Virtues, but their gifts are scanty and inadequate, so that they cannot become fully wise. They

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<sup>1</sup> [Diagram Fêng No. 55](#). Legge, *Yiking, Sacred Books* Vol. XVI, p. 186.

<sup>2</sup> *Shuking* Part II, Book III, 5 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 73](#)) [[Couvreur](#)]. Legge gives a different interpretation of the passage : 'Let him not have the various officers cumberers of their places', which does not agree with *Wang Ch'ung's* explanation.

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are not wilfully obtuse and doltish, but their innate wisdom is incomplete. Virtue may be great or small, and talents of a higher or a lower order. Those who are in office and fill a post, all strive to do their best in the service, the officers of the *Shuking* and the inmates of the *Yiking*, therefore, can still be of use ; why then speak of emptiness and nobody ? The *Shiking* says,

[« How numerous were the scholars ? *Wên Wang* was blessed with them.] <sup>1</sup>

That means to say that *Wên Wang* found many more wise men than imbeciles. Now the *Yiking* ought to say, 'it is still, and there are but few persons', and the *Shuking* should say, 'Let not be there too few officers for all the offices'. 'Few' is the proper word, 'empty' and 'nobody' are likewise exaggerations.

The Five Grains are such that they all, when eaten, appease hunger. The taste of rice and millet is sweet and savoury, beans and barley are coarse, it is true, yet they satiate as well. Those eating beans and barley are all agreed that they are coarse and not sweet, but they do not pretend that, having eaten them, their stomachs remain empty, as if they had eaten nothing. Bamboo and wooden sticks both can support a sick man, but the strength of a bamboo stick is weak and does not equal wood. If somebody takes a bamboo stick, he says that it is not strong, but not that his p2.267 hand is empty and holds nothing in its grasp. Weak-minded officials are like beans, barley, and bamboo sticks.

For the *Yiking* to say that there is nobody, whereas all the officials are kept in the houses, is really too disdainful. In all the officials of the *Shuking* those of minor talents are also included, the remark that the offices must not be left vacant is too cutting therefore.

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We read in the *Analects*,

[« Great indeed was *Yao* as a sovereign ! How grand was he ! The people could find no name for it.] <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Shiking* Part III, Book I, Ode 1 ([Legge, Classics Vol. IV, Part II, p. 429](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

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Furthermore, there is a record that a man of fifty was beating clods of earth on the road. An observer remarked,

— Grand indeed is the virtue of *Yao* !

The man who was playing with earth, replied,

— At sunrise, I begin my work, and at sunset, I take my rest. I dig a well to drink, and labour my field to eat. What sort of energy does *Yao* display ? <sup>2</sup>

These words are supposed to corroborate his grandeur, which no language could express. The term grandeur may well be used, but the assertion that the people could find no name for it is a stretch of fancy.

That, throughout the land within the Four Seas and amongst thousands of people, nobody could find a name for *Yao's* virtue must be impossible. Now the utterance of the man beating the earth 'What sort of virtue does *Yao* display' implies that the people could not find an expression for it <sup>3</sup>. But the observer had said, 'Grand indeed is the virtue of *Yao*', ergo the people still knew of what sort it was. If something is possible, but those who know deny it, they exaggerate.

The works of the Literati also narrate that the people of *Yao* and *Shun* might have been called to office house by house. That means to say that in every family they behaved like superior men, so that all might have been made officials. It is admissible to say that they might be called to office, but the remark 'house by house' is an exaggeration.

A man of fifty is a father of a family. If such a father does not know his sovereign, how can he instruct his son ?

p2.268 During an age of universal peace, every family consists of superior men, every one observes propriety and righteousness, the father does not infringe the laws of decorum, and the son does not neglect his duty. Those who do their duty possess knowledge, and nobody knows the sovereign better

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects VIII, 19 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> *Vid.* p. 187.

<sup>3</sup> The meaning of this question would rather seem to be that the peasant scorned the idea of *Yao's* excellence and therefore disdainfully asked about it. Cf. p. 222, Note 3.

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than the officials. Officers as well as wise men know their sovereign, and knowing him, can govern the people. Now, how could those who were ignorant of *Yao*, be appointed to official posts ?

The man of fifty playing with earth, on the road, was in this respect a playfellow of small boys not yet grown up, but how could he be accounted a wise man ?

When [*Tse Lu* got *Tse Kao* appointed governor of *Hou*] <sup>1</sup>, *Confucius* took exception on the ground that he had not yet studied, nor acquired knowledge. The man with the earth was an ignoramus ; how could he be called to office ? Praising *Yao's* grandeur, one cannot say that house by house the people might have been appointed <sup>2</sup>, and contending that house by house there were wise men fit to be appointed, one cannot propose simpletons and ignorant fellows <sup>3</sup>. Keeping in view the man playing with earth, it is difficult to say 'house by house', and taking this second alternative <sup>4</sup>, it is awkward to insist upon *Yao's* grandeur. The dilemma owes its origin to an exaggeration overcolouring *Yao's* excellence.

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The *Shuking* tells us that *Tsu Yi* <sup>5</sup>, remonstrating with *Chou*, said,

[« Among our people to-day there is none but desires the king's death. ] <sup>1</sup>

None means nobody : The people of the whole empire all wish the king dead. One may say that they wished the king dead, but to pretend that all had this wish is going too far. Although *Chou* was depraved, yet many of his subjects and officers had received his favours. But *Tsu Yi* would use high flying words, with the object of frightening the king. Therefore I say that, unless the words be highly coloured, the heart does not take alarm, p2.269 and, without alarm, the mode of action is not altered. Exaggerations are used, in order to frighten

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects XI, 24 \[Couvreur\]](#), where, however, the place is called *Pi* and not *Hou*. Cf. the quotations in Vol. I, p. 407 and 449 with the reading *Pi*.

<sup>2</sup> Which is an exaggeration ; men like the ignoramus would have to be excluded.

<sup>3</sup> Like the husbandman referred to.

<sup>4</sup> That there were people like the man playing with earth ignoring *Yao's* virtue.

<sup>5</sup> A minister to the emperor *Chou*. Cf. Vol. I, p. 185, Note 2.

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and to stir up.

*Su Ch'in*<sup>2</sup> told the king of *Ch'i* that [in *Lin-tse*<sup>3</sup> the naves of the chariot-wheels were knocking together, and the men thronging shoulder to shoulder. Lifting their sleeves they formed tents, and the fronts of their coats joined together were the curtains. Their perspiration wiped off fell down like rain.]<sup>4</sup> In spite of all its splendour, *Ch'i* could not come up to that. *Su Ch'in* employed such high-flown language, for the purpose of rousing the king of *Ch'i*. *Tsu Yi's* admonitions of *Chou* are like the remonstrances addressed to the king of *Ch'i* by *Su Ch'in*.

In the fanciful reports of the wise and the sages, the events thus described have not always a true basis. From the chapter 'Completion of the War'<sup>5</sup> we learn that, when *Wu Wang* overthrew *Chou*, so much blood was spilled, that the pestles swam in it<sup>6</sup>. So numerous were the combatants standing up for *Wu Wang*, that their blood flowed like that, all wishing the annihilation of *Chou*. But would they have been willing to fight in such a wholesale destruction? The remark of *Tsu Yi* that everybody wished the death of *Chou* is like *Su Ch'in's* exaggeration and the reference in the chapter 'Completion of the War' to the pestles floating in streams of blood, which is likewise overshooting the mark.

The blood of the slain is shed, of course, but how could pestles swim in it? When *Wu Wang* smote *Chou* in the plain of *Mu*, the country north of the river was elevated, and the soil no doubt scorched up and dry. The weapons being blunted, and the blood flowing forth, it must at once have entered the hot soil; how could pestles have floated in it then? The warriors of *Chou* and *Yin* all carried their provisions with them, and perhaps had prepared dried preserves, therefore they needed no pestles or mortars; where then did these pestles come from?

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<sup>1</sup> *Shuking* Part IV, Book X, 4 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 271](#)) [[Couvreur](#), § 4].

<sup>2</sup> Famous politician of the 4th cent. B. C. See Vol. I, p. 304, Note 8.

<sup>3</sup> Capital of *Ch'i*, the present *Ch'ing-chou-fu* in *Shantung*.

<sup>4</sup> Quotation from the Biography of *Su Ch'in* in the *Shi-chi* chap. 69, p. 12v.

<sup>5</sup> Chapter of the *Shuking*, cf. Vol. I, p. 484, Note 4.

<sup>6</sup> *Eod.* Note 5.

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This statement about the pestles swimming in blood is meant to imply that, when *Chou* was destroyed, the weapons were blunted, and the soldiers wounded, and that, in consequence, the pestles floated in the blood.

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p2.270 'During the 'Spring and Autumn' period, on the *hsin-mao* day, in the fourth month of summer, in the seventh year of Duke Chuang, at midnight, the common stars were invisible, and stars fell down like rain'. *Kung Yang* in his commentary asks :

[« What does 'like rain' mean ? It is not rain ; then, why use this expression ? 'The unrevised *Ch'un-ch'iu'* says, 'Like rain. The stars, previous to approaching to within a foot of the earth, departed again'. The Sage corrected this, and said, 'The stars fell down like rain'.]

'The unrevised *Ch'un-ch'iu'* refers to the time, when the *Ch'un-ch'iu'* was not yet revised. At that time the Chronicle of *Lu* had the following entry : 'It rained stars, and before they came near the earth, at a distance of over a foot, they seemed to depart again'. The Sage denotes *Confucius*. *Confucius* revised it, and said 'The stars fell like rain'<sup>1</sup>. Like rain means like rain in appearance.

The vapours of mountains become clouds. Above, they do not reach up to the sky, and below, they form clouds. When it rains stars, the stars falling revert to the sky, before they have touched the earth. Whence the expression 'like rain'. *Confucius* has employed the proper words. Stars falling either reach the earth or not, but it is difficult to ascertain the number of feet, and the statement of the chronicle that the distance was of one foot is also a stretch of fancy. For there are towers and high buildings, hills and mountains on the earth ; how can they speak of one foot's distance ? *Confucius* said 'like rain', and that was correct. *Confucius* wrote the *Ch'un-ch'iu'*, and then altered the text into 'like rain'. Had *Confucius* not written the *Ch'un-ch'iu'*, the reading that the stars came near the earth within a foot's distance, would have been handed down to the present day.

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<sup>1</sup> Repeated almost literally from Vol. I, p. 274.

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Under the reign of the emperor *Kuang Wu Ti*<sup>1</sup>, a clerk of a ministry, *Pên Kuang* of *Ju-nan*<sup>2</sup> sent in a report containing the statement that the emperor *Hsiao Wen Ti*<sup>3</sup> lived in a palace of brilliant splendour, and that only three men were sentenced in the whole empire<sup>4</sup>. This was a compliment paid to the emperor *Wên Ti*, setting forth his achievements. But *Kuang Wu Ti* replied that, in *Hsiao Wên Ti*'s time, they did not live in a palace of brilliant splendour, and that there were not only three men sentenced.

p2.271 All accomplishments and virtues are put down to those who are famous, therefore the superior man loathes the company of low class people<sup>5</sup>. *Pên Kuang* presented his report to a *Han* emperor, the *Han* epoch is our age, yet he exaggerated their merits and excellent qualities, going beyond the truth. Now, fancy the rulers and sovereigns of times out of mind, which have long passed away. When wise men of later ages give glowing reports of them, it is of frequent occurrence that they miss the truth and deviate from the historical facts. Had *Pên Kuang* not met with *Kuang Wu Ti*, but made his report ages after, this narrative about *Hsiao Wên Ti* would have found its way into the classical literature, and nobody would have known that the splendour of the palace and the three sentenced men were exaggerations, and they would have been taken for undeniable facts.

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<sup>1</sup> 25-57 A. D.

<sup>2</sup> Place in *Honan*.

<sup>3</sup> 179-157 B. C.

<sup>4</sup> Punishments were unnecessary, all the people following the good example of their virtuous ruler.

<sup>5</sup> The latter half of this sentence is quoted from the [Analects XIX, 20 \[Couvreur\]](#).

## CHAPTER XXV

### Lost Texts

#### 61. XX, II. *Yi-wên*

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p2.272 The emperor *Hsiao Wu Ti* conferred upon his younger brother the title of Prince *Kung* of *Lu*. Prince *Kung*, while demolishing the house of *Confucius*, for the purpose of building a palace, discovered there a *Shuking* in a hundred chapters, a *Li(ki)* in three hundred, a *Ch'un-ch'iu* in thirty <sup>1</sup>, and a *Lun-yü* in twenty-one. When the wall was opened sounds of singing and guitar-playing were heard. The prince alarmed caused the hole again to be closed and plastered, and sent word to *Wu Ti*, who despatched an official, to fetch the old Canons and the *Lun-yü*. At this time they all were brought to light <sup>2</sup>. When the Classics were taken out from the hole, there were sounds of singing, and playing of guitars. The texts were to be recovered by the *Han*, and the gay music was a portent accompanying the happy event. They had to be transmitted to the *Han*, and therefore lay concealed in the wall. Prince *Kung* pierced it, and the holy emperor occasioned the magical music, for the old texts were not to remain hidden, and the *Han* were expecting them as felicitous signs.

The emperor *Hsiao Ch'êng Ti* wishing to read the hundred chapters of the *Shuking*, and none of the professors and secretaries understanding it, an invitation was issued to every one in the empire who could adjust the *Shuking*. *Chang Pa* of *Tung-hai* was well versed in the *Ch'un-ch'iu* of *Tso Ch'iu Ming*. Following the order of the hundred chapters, he elucidated them with the help of the *Tso-chuan*, and thus produced one hundred and two chapters, which he presented to the emperor, when they were completed. *Ch'êng Ti* took the *Shuking* that had been stored away, to compare and examine the new book, but not one character was the same. Then he handed *Chang Pa*

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<sup>1</sup> Ed. A and C write 300 books (pien).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 448, Note 6 and p. 462, Note 1.



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over to the judges, who investigated his offence and pronounced it to be a case of great disrespect and irreverence. But *Ch'êng Ti* being a great admirer of *Chang Pa's* p2.273 talents, pardoned him, nor did he destroy his work. Consequently the one hundred and two chapters became current among the people <sup>1</sup>.

*Confucius* said that [talents are difficult to find.] <sup>2</sup> He whom his genius and his imagination enabled to write a Classic in one hundred chapters, must have been endowed with quite remarkable gifts, and been an exceptional man, such as is seldom met with. *Ch'êng Ti* forgave him in appreciation of his writings, for although they were spurious and not true, yet, by following the order of the chapters and sections and adhering to the subjects, they made the impression of being genuine, and therefore were not burned.

In a box of memorials a book is often circulated consisting of ten and more documents, memorials and reports to the throne, the productions of high officials and well worth reading. Their reading gives great pleasure, and not one out of a hundred officials is able to write such documents <sup>3</sup>. *Chang Pa* was so ingenious, that he composed a hundred chapters. The *Han* era is in fact so like antiquity, that *Ch'êng Ti* did well to forgive *Chang Pa*.

When *Yang Tse Shan* <sup>4</sup> was *chi-li* <sup>5</sup> in a circuit, he saw that the *san-fu* were unable to write a record on the *Ai-lao* <sup>6</sup>. He transmitted a report to his chief, who sent it up to the emperor. *Hsiao Ming Ti* <sup>7</sup> was struck with it and summoned him to the imperial library <sup>8</sup>. The officers of the *san-fu*, in spite of the great amount of their united talents, could not complete a single chapter, so that *Yang Tse Shan* wrote it, of which the emperor took cognisance. But was this record quite correct? *Yang Tse Shan* wrote it, according to his

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<sup>1</sup> See Vol. I, p. 448.

<sup>2</sup> [Analects VIII, 20 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>3</sup> This passage is very doubtful, and my translation not much more than a guess.

<sup>4</sup> Alias *Yung Chang*, a native of *Ch'êng-tu-fu* in *Ssechuan*, possessing great literary talents.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. p. 228, Note 1.

<sup>6</sup> A tribe in *Yünnan*, see p. 199, Note 4.

<sup>7</sup> 58-75 A. D.

<sup>8</sup> *Yang Tse Shan* was attached to the library.

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informations, which the officers of the *san-fu* were incapable of, with all the documents at their disposal. Since *Yang Tse Shan* could do it, the thing must not have been very difficult for him. Was, therefore, *Ch'êng Ti* not justified in pardoning *Chang Pa* ?

Under the reign of *Hsiao Wu Ti* <sup>1</sup>, all the officials were convoked to a literary competition, when the essay of *Tung Chung Shu* won the prize. In the time of *Wang Mang* the secretaries of the various <sub>p2.274</sub> boards were called upon to send in reports, and the memorial of *Liu Tse Chün* <sup>2</sup> was the best. An elegant form, provided it be not a cover for emptiness, reveals great talent and profound knowledge. The *Yiking* says that the feelings of a sage appear from his expressions <sup>3</sup>. From his good or bad style we may make an inference on a man's talent.

In the *Yung-p'ing* period <sup>4</sup>, flocks of spiritual birds alighted. *Hsiao Ming Ti* issued instructions that panegyrics on these birds be presented to him. All the officials sent in their productions, but they were no better than stones and tiles, only the five eulogies of *Pan Ku*, *Chia K'uei* <sup>5</sup>, *Fu Yi* <sup>6</sup>, *Yang Chung* <sup>7</sup>, and *Hou Fêng* <sup>8</sup> were gold and gems. *Hsiao Ming Ti* read them. Must it not have been a matter of surprise for him that among the great host of officials, the numerous secretaries included, five men only produced good compositions ?

*Hsiao Wu Ti* <sup>9</sup> was partial to works of fiction and poetry and therefore invited *Sse-Ma Hsiang-Ju* <sup>10</sup>, *Hsiao Ch'êng Ti* <sup>1</sup> delighted in voluminous

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<sup>1</sup> 140-87 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> *Liu Hsin*, 1st cent. B. C. and A. D., son of the famous *Liu Hsiang*, an author like his father and *protégé* of *Wang Mang*.

<sup>3</sup> *Chou Yi Ch'êng-chuan* 1883, chap. 7, p. 12r.

<sup>4</sup> 58-75 A. D.

<sup>5</sup> An eminent scholar, 30-101 A. D., who together with the historian *Pan Ku* was appointed historiographer.

<sup>6</sup> A *savant* who by *Hsiao Ming Ti* was given a post at the Imperial Library, where, conjointly with *Pan Ku* and *Chia K'uei*, he supervised the edition of books. He wrote himself 28 chapters of various poetry and died young.

<sup>7</sup> See above p. 273, Note 4.

<sup>8</sup> *Hou Fêng* seems to be unknown to other writers. The *Pei-wên-yün-fu* merely quotes this passage.

<sup>9</sup> 140-87 B. C.

<sup>10</sup> The well known scholar and poet. Cf. Vol. I, p. 123, Note 5.

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writings and favoured *Yang Tse Yün*. Even at his hunting parties *Yang Tse Yün* followed in a carriage. Had *Sse-Ma Hsiang-Ju*, *Huan Chün Shan*, and *Yang Tse Yün*<sup>2</sup> been officers unable to fill up their documents or to connect their words to phrases, how would *Wu Ti* have liked, or *Ch'êng Ti* have appreciated them ? Therefore I say that to read *Yang Tse Yün's* chapters affords a greater pleasure than to be an official with a thousand piculs a year, and holding the book of *Huan Chün Shan* in one's hands, one is richer than having heaped up treasures.

p2.275 The work of *Han Fei Tse* was current in the court of *Ch'in*, and *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* said with a sigh :

— Alas ! that I cannot live together with this man !<sup>3</sup>

Each time that *Lu Chia*<sup>4</sup> presented a new chapter of his 'New Words', the attendants of *Kao Tsu* exclaimed

— Ten thousand years !<sup>5</sup>

Can this passionate remembrance of a man and the enthusiastic exclamation 'Ten thousand years' have been for nothing ? They were outbursts of joy from the innermost heart, upon clearly seeing the excellence of these persons.

Meteorologists look up to the sky, but not on the earth, for they derive their information from the heavenly signs. Upper and lower garments cover the body, but the embroidery is on the upper, not on the lower ones. So far dresses resemble heaven. Palmisters examine the left palm, and do not look at the right one, because the lines on the left are decisive. Contrariwise, diviners turn to the right side, and neglect the left, for the signs at the right are conclusive. The *Yiking* says :

[« The great man changes as the tiger (changing its stripes), his signs are brilliant, the superior man changes as the panther (changing its spots), his signs are elegant.]<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 32-7 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> On the last two named scholars see Vol. I, p. 361, Notes 1 and 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Vid.* Vol. I, p. 72, Note 1.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. I, p. 388, Note 3.

<sup>5</sup> That is, 'may he live ten thousand years'.

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And further :

[« We look at the signs of Heaven, and look at the signs of man. ] <sup>2</sup>

That means : Heaven and man are to be judged by their signs, and the actions of the great man and the superior man depend on their signs.

When *Kao Tsu* was still in his mother's womb, she reposed on the banks of a lake. Then a scaly dragon appeared on high, emitting a glare of brilliant light. When *Kao Tsu* started from *Ch'u*, to meet the army of *Han*, a fluid formed five colours, and when he was about to enter *Hsien-yang*, five stars united near the 'Eastern Well' <sup>3</sup>, and these stars had five different colours <sup>4</sup>. Perhaps Heaven was indignant at the destruction of literature by *Ch'in* and p2.276 wished the *Han* to renew it, and therefore first invested *Kao Tsu* and used those signs as omens <sup>5</sup>.

The designs of wicked people, at different periods, are in-consistent. *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* first sighed over the work of *Han Fei Tse* and afterwards, at the instigation of *Li Sse*, caused the text of the Five Classics to be burned, and enacted a law restricting the use of books. The scholars of the Five Canons took the Classics and concealed them ; men like *Fu Shêng* stealthily buried them in the earth <sup>6</sup>. Wiping out the texts of sages and worthies is a most heinous crime, and the descendancy of the culprit was already cut off with his grandsons <sup>7</sup>. *Li Sse* who devised this plan, had to suffer one of the Five Punishments <sup>8</sup>. The *Han* dynasty, after its accession, changed the rules of doomed *Ch'in* and obliterated the traces of *Li Sse*. *Kao Tsu* first ordered *Lu Chia* to write books, but the Five Canons did not yet come to light at that

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<sup>1</sup> [Diagram Ko, No. 49](#). Legge, *Sacred Books* Vol. XVI, p. 168, Nos. 5 and 6.

<sup>2</sup> [Diagram Pi, No. 22](#). Legge, *loc. cit.* p. 231, No. 4.

<sup>3</sup> The 22nd of the Twenty-eight Solar Mansions, consisting of eight stars in *Gemini*.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 177 and 178.

<sup>5</sup> This supposition is incompatible with *Wang Ch'ung's* principle of spontaneity which he proclaims for Heaven. He sometimes falls back into the inveterate ideas of his countrymen which he combats elsewhere.

<sup>6</sup> Vol. I, p. 447.

<sup>7</sup> The son of *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti* lost the throne, and his family was destroyed.

<sup>8</sup> On the Five ancient Punishments in use under the *Chou* and *Han* dynasties see p. 81. *Li Sse* was torn to pieces by carts. See Vol. I, p. 171.

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time. From *Hui Ti* and *Ching Ti*<sup>1</sup> downward to *Yuan Ti* and *Ch'êng Ti*<sup>2</sup> the Canons and the books were simultaneously revised. The glory of the *Han* dynasty and what we hear of its declarations are quite something else than those of doomed *Ch'in*.

Owing to the perversity of *Wang Mang*<sup>3</sup>, the armies of the *Han* began swarming about. Halls and palaces fell into ruin, and books and manuscripts were scattered about. After *Kuang Wu Ti* arose<sup>4</sup>, the preservation of old books was not yet very careful. The era of *Hsiao Ming Ti*<sup>5</sup> was very favourable for men of letters, officers were appointed to the imperial library, and the heroes of literature assembled. When our present sovereign had taken the reins of government<sup>6</sup>, the search for lost antiquities was authorised by edict, and they were bought with gold. Can this age not lay a claim to the fame of being a literary one ?

p2.275 The period of *Yao* and *Shun* being so remote<sup>7</sup>, the books of that time which existed are lost<sup>8</sup>. The *Yin* and the *Chou* dynasties<sup>9</sup>, however, are so near, that their writers have been preserved<sup>10</sup>. The works handed down since the commencement of the *Han*<sup>11</sup> do not reach very far, but the experiences made are five times as many as those of *Yao* and *Shun*, and ten times those of the *Yin* and *Chou* dynasties. There has never been a more delightful and a more glorious time than the present. The sky is bright and clear, the stars glow with brilliant light<sup>1</sup>, the characters of the people are excellent, and they handle literature with a sublime elegance. The *Han* are now at their acme, whence the profuseness of literary productions.

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<sup>1</sup> 194-188, and 156-141 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> 48-33, and 32-7 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> 9-22 A. D.

<sup>4</sup> In 25 A. D.

<sup>5</sup> 58-75 A. D.

<sup>6</sup> In 76 A. D.

<sup>7</sup> According to tradition which has not yet been historically tested, this period would last from 2357 to 2205 B. C.

<sup>8</sup> It is more than doubtful whether there have been books at all at that time.

<sup>9</sup> 1766-1123, and 1122-255 B. C.

<sup>10</sup> Whether the *Han* had any books dating as far back as the *Yin* dynasty is open to doubt.

<sup>11</sup> 206 B. C.

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*Confucius* said,

[— *Wên Wang* is no more, but have we not here his writings ?] <sup>2</sup>

The writings of *Wên Wang* were transmitted to *Confucius*. He composed his works for the *Han*, to whom they came down.

Literary men receive their writings from Heaven and should, therefore, be held in respect. The Five Canons and the Six Arts form one class of literature, the records of the various writers are another, essays and treatises are one class, memorials and reports are one, and so are the descriptions of generous and virtuous actions. The representatives of these five classes of literature are all worthies. The composition of essays and the writing of discourses requires the greatest efforts, for to give expression to the thoughts of one's heart and to discuss the events of life, is a more arduous task than to comment upon old Classics, or to supplement old texts. Arguments are one's own ideas, for which the signs are formulated by the hand. That exceeds the faculties of the expositors of the Classics and arts.

In the periods of the *Chou* and *Ch'in*, a great many philosophical writers were busy, but they all took up other subjects, neither praising the sovereign nor profiting the State nor promoting civilisation. The essayists eulogise the emperor and exalt the State, p2.278 so that its dignity is upheld for a thousand years, and the sovereign's virtue equals sun and moon. That is what the writings of the philosophers cannot accomplish <sup>3</sup>.

Memorials suggest practical measures, and reports recommend officers, the first are in one's own interest, the second in that of others <sup>4</sup>. The style may be rich and refined, but the memorials do not mention meritorious deeds. He who cultivates his moral self has his own interests in view and not those of the ruler. Consequently, among the five classes of literature, essays have the highest value and should be estimated accordingly <sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> This brightness of the sky and the stars is regarded as a lucky augury.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 302, Note 6.

<sup>3</sup> And we are glad of it.

<sup>4</sup> At present these terms are not restricted in this way, and I doubt whether they really were so in the *Han* time.

<sup>5</sup> The reasoning of this paragraph is not very convincing.

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*Confucius* remarked respecting the *Chou*,

[— The time of the dynasties of *T'ang* and *Yü* is outshone now ; the virtue of the house of *Chou* may be said to have reached the highest point indeed.] <sup>1</sup>

*Confucius* was a literary man of the *Chou* epoch. Had he lived in the *Han* time, he would also have pronounced the virtue of the *Han* to have reached the highest point.

*Chao T'o* as king of the southern *Yüeh* revolted from his lord, disregarded his commands, and did not observe the institutions of the *Han*. He would squat down, his hair bound into a tuft, and completely abandon himself to the customs of the savages. *Lu Chia* spoke to him of the virtue of the *Han* and so overawed him with the emperor's majesty, that his conscience awoke, he felt remorse, and suddenly rose up from his seat <sup>2</sup>.

The narrow-minded scholars of our age live under the same delusion as *Chao T'o*, and the remonstrances of great writers are like the reproofs of *Lu Chia*, which rouse those who hear them from their lethargy.

*Chao T'o's* conversion was not owing to extraordinary reports about the glory of the house of *Han*, but the placid serenity of a man of letters <sup>3</sup> were signs of the prosperity of the State. From their magnificent buildings we recognise noble families, and high p2.279 trees indicate an old capital. The fact that eminent literary men live in a State proves that it is the age of a sage.

*Mencius* would judge people from the pupils of their eyes <sup>4</sup> : the heart being pure, the pupils are bright, *viz.* the colour of the eyes is bright. The prognostics for a State and the divination for an individual give the same result : when the ruler of a State is a sage, men of letters assemble, and when the heart is kind, the eyes are brilliant.

An exquisite silk embroidery being dragged through the mire every spectator feels shocked. To be able to pity a piece of embroidery, and to have

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects VIII, 20 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 124 and 382.

<sup>3</sup> *Lu Chia*.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 385, Note 4.

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no idea of the worth of a man of letters, discloses a great ignorance of analogies.

As regards the signs of Heaven and the signs of man, does their writing merely consist in mixing the ink and plying the pen, with the object of producing beautiful and elegant pictures? No, these signs record men's actions and give publicity to their names. Honest men desire to be taken notice of and strive for virtue; wicked once, on the other side, dislike publicity and do all they can to frustrate it. Thus the pencil of men of letters encourages the good and censures the depraved. This is the manner in which posthumous titles illustrate virtue and stigmatise crime.

Even by the addition of a posthumous name in one character, people may be praised or censured, and knowing this, every one is on his guard. Much greater still is the power of pen and ink, which determines goodness and badness. All the sayings and doings are put on record, perhaps in thousands of words, handed down from generation to generation, and giving a picture of the deceased, therefore not to be despised.

When *Yang Tse Yün* was writing his *Fa-yen*<sup>1</sup>, a rich man of *Shu* sent him an enormous sum of money, to the end that he might be mentioned in the book, but *Yang Tse Yün* refused, for a rich man neither benevolent nor righteous, is but like a stag in a fence, or an ox in a hurdle; why should he be mentioned without reason?

*Pan Shu P'i*<sup>2</sup>, in continuing the work of the Grand Annalist, also mentioned his fellow-citizens as a warning for wicked people, p2.280 for the iniquitous and unprincipled thus clearly marked out and signalled, could not eschew the shame. As *Yang Tse Yün* did not belaud for wealth, so *Pan Shu P'i* was not disturbed by sympathies, for the pen of a writer cares for nothing but justice. Worthies and sages having confided their thoughts to the pen, many strokes of the pen form a word, and a number of words bring out a sentiment, the reading of which enables later ages to distinguish between

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<sup>1</sup> This work embodies the philosophical views of *Yang Tse Yün* = *Yang Hsiung*, emphasising the value of the *Analects*, whereas his *T'ai-hsüan-ching* is especially devoted to the elucidation of the *Yiking*.

<sup>2</sup> *Pan Piao*, the teacher of *Wang Ch'ung* and father to *Pan Ku*.



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right and wrong, for why should a false statement be made ?

Feet walking on the ground leave prints that may be nice or ugly, and the words formed of strokes may indicate a good or a bad character. Therefore, by explaining the foot-prints, one gets an idea of the feet, and from reading the words, one learns to know the character of the person described. [Should one sentence express the purport of all the 300 Odes of the *Shiking* it would be :

« Do not harbour wicked thoughts,] <sup>1</sup>

and for ten and more chapters of the *Lun-hêng* one device might be chosen, viz.

« Hate fictions and falsehoods.

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects II, 2 \[Couvreur\]](#).

## CHAPTER XXVI

### The Knowledge of Truth

79. XXVI, II. *Chih-shih*

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p2.281 Whenever people in their discussions depart from truth and do not bear out their propositions by evidence, their arguments may be never so pleasing, and their reasons never so abundant, yet nobody believes them. If we urge that Sages are not in possession of superhuman powers or prescience, and that in this prescience they do not possess a peculiar kind of knowledge, this is not a frivolous assertion or futile talk, but the result of conclusions drawn from the human faculties, and there are proofs and testimonies to establish the truth. How shall we show it ?

[*Confucius* asked *Kung-Ming Chia* about *Kung-Shu Wên*, saying,

— Is it true that your master speaks not, laughs not and takes not ? Is this so ? <sup>1</sup>

*Kung-Ming Chia* replied,

— This has arisen from the reporters going beyond the truth. My master speaks when it is the time to speak, and so men do not get tired of his speaking. He laughs when there is occasion to be joyful, and so men do not get tired of his laughing. He takes when it is consistent with righteousness to do so, and so men do not get tired of his taking.

*Confucius* said,

— Is it so with him ? Is it so with him ?] <sup>2</sup>

There are men on earth as selfless as *Po Yi* who would not accept a straw from others, but none that would neither speak nor laugh. Since his own

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<sup>1</sup> These words are wanting in the *Analects*.

<sup>2</sup> [Analecets XIV, 14 \[Couvreur\]](#).

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heart did not tell *Confucius* this, that he might have decided for one alternative, his heart wondering and not believing the reports, he cannot have had a penetrating intellect or seen things from afar, thus being able to determine the truth. He had to ask *Kung-Ming Chia*, to know the matter. This is the first proof that *Confucius* did not possess foresight.

*Ch'ên* [*Tse Ch'in* asked *Tse Kung* saying,

— When our master comes to any country, he does not fail to learn all about its government. Does he ask his information, or is it given to him ?

p2.282 *Tse Kung* said,

— Our master is benign, upright, courteous, temperate, and complaisant, and thus he gets his information.] <sup>1</sup>

Benignity, uprightness, courteousness, temperance, and complaisance are tantamount to obsequiousness. Men are well disposed to him who is obsequious to them, and being well disposed, they will give him information. Thus *Confucius* obtained his information about government from what people told him. This was neither supernatural nor an independent knowledge.

Duke *Ching* of *Ch'i* inquired of *Tse Kung* whether his master was a Worthy.

— My master, rejoined *Tse Kung*, is a Sage ; why should he merely be a Worthy ? <sup>2</sup>

Duke *Ching* was not aware that *Confucius* was a Sage, and *Tse Kung* corrected the term. *Tse Ch'in* neither knew whence *Confucius* derived his information about government, and *Tse Kung* had to communicate to him the true facts. Since he answered Duke *Ching*,

— My master is a Sage, why should he merely be a Worthy ?,

he also ought to have given to *Tse Ch'in* the reply that he was superhuman and endued with spontaneous knowledge, so that he needed not listen to

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects I, 10 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> The *Yuan-chien lei-han* chap. 268, 8v. quotes this passage from the *Hui-yuan*.

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what others said. The reply of *Tse Kung* to *Tse Ch'in* is the second proof that Sages have no foresight.

When *Yen Yuan* was cooking his food some dust fell into his pot. If he had left it there his food would have been impure, had he thrown it away he would have spilled the rice, therefore he picked it out and ate the rice. *Confucius*, witnessing it from a distance, was under the illusion that *Yen Yuan* ate stealthily <sup>1</sup>. This is the third evidence that Sages have no foresight.

Fierce highwaymen lie in ambush, leaning on their swords, and ferocious tigers crouch in jungles, gnashing their teeth, in wait for their prey. Those who know it do not venture to proceed, and if somebody does not know it, he runs into the swords of the fierce highway robbers, or falls into the teeth of ferocious tigers. The people of *K'uang* <sup>2</sup> surrounded *Confucius* <sup>3</sup>. Had he foreseen it, p2.283 he ought to have taken another road in time, to avoid the danger. But he did not foresee it, encountered it, and came to grief. This surrounding of *Confucius* is the fourth proof that Sages have no foresight.

[The Master was put in fear in *K'uang*, and *Yen Yuan* fell behind. *Confucius* said,

— I thought you had died.] <sup>4</sup>

If *Confucius* had been foreknowing he ought to have known that *Yen Yuan* would certainly not have met with destruction, and that the people of *K'uang* would not have wreaked their animosity against him. It was not before *Yen Yuan* arrived that he knew that he was not dead, for before he arrived he imagined that he had died. This is the fifth proof that Sages have no foresight.

[*Yang Huo* <sup>5</sup> wished to see *Confucius*, but *Confucius* did not wish to see

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<sup>1</sup> This incident is told, though somewhat differently, in the 'Family Sayings' quoted by the *Pei-wên-yün-fu*. There *Yen Yuan* simply eats the rice. *Confucius* desires to have some for an oblation, when *Yen Yuan* explains why he ate it, and that, owing to the impurity, it was unfit for an offering.

<sup>2</sup> A State in the modern *K'ai-fêng-fu* in Honan.

<sup>3</sup> *Confucius* was mistaken for *Yang Hu*, an enemy of the people of *K'uang*, and therefore kept prisoner five days. See *Legge, Classics Vol. I*, p. 217, Note 5.

<sup>4</sup> [Analects XI, 22](#) [Couvreur].

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 107, Note 2. *Yang Huo* is also called *Yang Hu*.

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him. On this, he sent a present of a pig to *Confucius*, who, having chosen a time when *Yang Huo* was not at home, went to pay his respects. He met him, however, on the way.] <sup>1</sup>

*Confucius* did not wish to see him. The circumstance that, when he went to pay him a visit, he chose the time when he was not at home, shows that he did not wish to see him, but he met him on the road. The meeting of *Confucius* with *Yang Hu* is a sixth proof that Sages do not possess foresight.

[*Ch'ang Chü* and *Chieh Ni* were at work in the field together, when *Confucius* passed by them, and sent *Tse Lu* to inquire for the ford.] <sup>2</sup>

If *Confucius* knew the ford he ought not to have inquired for it again. A critic might object that he merely wished to have a look at the work done by the two recluses. However, being prescient, *Confucius* must have known even this of himself and required no inspection. If he did not know and had to ask, this is the seventh evidence of his not possessing any foresight.

When the mother of *Confucius* had died, he did not know the grave of his father, and therefore provisionally buried her on the highway of *Wu-fu*. The people seeing it, thought that it was the final burial, for a joint burial being impossible, and the rites for <sup>p2.284</sup> the provisional one being performed with great care, they took it for the final one. The mother of *Man Fu* of *Tsou*, a neighbour, informed *Confucius* about the grave of his father. On this, he buried his mother together with his father in *Fang* <sup>3</sup>. The burial place was in *Fang*. The fact that *Confucius* first buried her on a highway is the eighth proof that Sages have no foresight.

Having buried his mother together with his father, [*Confucius* returned, leaving the disciples behind. A great rain came on ; and when they rejoined him, he asked them what had made them so late.

— The earth slipped, they said, from the grave at *Fang*.

They told him this thrice, without his giving them any answer. He then wept

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

<sup>2</sup> [Analects XVIII, 6](#) [Couvreur].

<sup>3</sup> This episode is found in the *Liki*, *T'an-kung*, II, 5r. ([Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 124](#)) [Couvreur], but the text differs. Chinese critics take it for apocryphal.

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freely, and said,

— I have heard that the ancients did not need to repair their graves.] <sup>1</sup>

Had *Confucius* been prescient he would have known the collapse of the tomb in *Fang* beforehand, and, when his pupils arrived he should have awaited them with tears, but he only learned it after their arrival. That is the ninth evidence of a Sage not possessing foresight.

[The Master, when he entered the grand temple, asked about everything.] <sup>2</sup> He did not know, therefore he asked, to set an example to mankind. *Confucius* had not yet entered the grand temple ; in the temple there was a great variety of sacrificial vessels and, though a Sage, *Confucius* could not know them all. It has been supposed that he had already seen them, and knew all about them, and that he asked again, to set an example. *Confucius* says that, being in doubt, one asks <sup>3</sup>. Now, must he ask that is in doubt, or must he who already knows the truth, ask again, with the object of setting an example to others ?

*Confucius* knew the Five Canons, and his disciples learned them from him. He should have asked again about them, to set an example to mankind ; why did he directly impart them to his pupils by word of mouth ? Regarding the Five Canons with which he was familiar, he did not ask again, but concerning the grand temple with which he was well acquainted likewise, he inquired again, to set an example to others. Wherefore did he not show the same diligence in both cases ? The visit of *Confucius* to the grand temple affords the tenth proof that Sages have no foresight.

When a host invites a guest, food and drink are at the disposal of the latter whenever he likes them, and he is lodged as if he were in his own house. If, however, the guest has heard that in the family of the host there are reprobate sons and grand-sons who prompt their parent to withdraw the dainty dishes and keep back the choice food, so that there is nothing to eat or

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the *Liki eod.* 4r. (*Legge* p. 123). See also Vol. I, p. 197, Note 2.

<sup>2</sup> [Analects III, 15](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>3</sup> Allusion to [Analects XVI, 10](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

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drink, and to close his halls and shut his house to visitors, the guest, if he is in his mind, on no account accepts an invitation, for he knows that he would have no pleasure from it, he would go in vain, and have nothing but annoyance, and expose himself to insult. In case he goes he has no enjoyment, and returns annoyed and insulted. He who does not know a family is not acquainted with its real character. The real nature of men is difficult to know, and it is not easy to foretell good or bad luck.

If *Confucius* had been prescient he would have been aware that the feudatory lords were humbugged by malicious ministers, and would never have employed him, and that all his efforts would have been in vain, and only have brought disgrace upon him. When the invitations and summonses arrived, he should have stayed at home, and not have gone. A superior man does not do useless things, nor venture upon undertakings calculated to bring him dishonour. He would not travel about in response to invitations, only to suffer the ignominy of having his foot-prints wiped out, nor have wasted his admonitions on unworthy rulers, only to come into danger of being cut off from his supplies <sup>1</sup>. Accordingly *Confucius* did not even know things quite near him.

It will perhaps be objected that *Confucius* himself knew quite well that he would not find employment, but his holy heart could not bear the idea that his doctrine should not be carried out, and that the people would continue living in a state of abject misery. Probably he wished to assist the princes, in order to carry out his principles and save the people, wherefore he accepted the invitations and travelled about, undaunted by shame and disgrace. He thought of his doctrine and not of himself, therefore he did not hesitate to brave all dangers ; solicitous for the people and not for his name, he did not care about the aspersions cast upon his character.

p2.286 I say this is not true. [*Confucius* said,

— I returned from *Wei* to *Lu*, and then the Music was reformed, and the Songs and Dithyrambs all found their proper places.] <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 499.

<sup>2</sup> [Analects IX, 14](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

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That means to say that *Confucius* himself knew the proper time. How did he know it? *Lu* and *Wei* were the most virtuous states on earth. Since *Lu* and *Wei* could not employ him, nobody in the world could employ him, wherefore he retired and produced the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, and revised the *Shiking* and the *Shuking*. From this return from *Wei* to *Lu* we infer that *Confucius* himself was in the dark as to the proper time for going and accepting an invitation.

As long as there were no signs or indications, the Sage did not find out the truth, but when *Wei* and *Lu* declined his services, he knew that the end had come, and when the people of *Lu* caught a unicorn <sup>1</sup>, he was convinced that all was over. His doctrine had come to an end, and his career was stopped. These signs being manifest, all the hopes cherished by his heart were frustrated, and he retired to quiet meditation.

Restlessly wandering about, he was like a sick man who, before he dies, prays and divines, with a view to curing his disease. Before the signs of death appear, he still hopes to retain his life. Thus *Confucius*, before seeing indications that all was over, obeyed the calls, expecting to find employment. When the marks of death appear, the diviners are dismissed, and the physicians <sup>2</sup> sent home. *Confucius*, then, resolutely grasped the pencil and revised the books. His acceptance of the invitations and his wanderings are the eleventh proof that Sages have no foresight.

*Confucius* said,

[— The swimming animals can be caught with a line and those running <sup>3</sup>, be shot with an arrow. As regards the dragon, I do not know, whether it can ride on the wind and the clouds, and thus rise on high. To-day I saw *Lao Tse*. Should he perhaps be like a dragon?]

A Sage knows all creatures and their actions. *Lao Tse* and the dragon are

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 359, Note 1.

<sup>2</sup> Note the interesting character  for , which shows that in ancient times physicians were taken for a kind of sorcerers .

<sup>3</sup> The parallel passage I, p. 358 says 'those flying', which is better. The prototype in the *Shi-chi* reads as follow, 'I know that birds can fly, that fish can swim, and that beasts can run. Those running may be ensnared, those swimming may be caught with a line, and those flying be shot with an arrow'.



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a human and another creature, and their doings in the sky and on the earth are actions. Why did he not know <sup>p2.287</sup> them ? If *Lao Tse* was a spirit, a dragon is also a spirit, and a sage likewise. All spirits obey the same law, and their spiritual fluids are entwined. Why did he not know them ? *Confucius'* ignorance about the dragon and *Lao Tse* is the twelfth proof that Sages have no foresight.

[*Confucius* said,

— Filial indeed is *Min Tse Ch'ien*. Men have no words of disparagement <sup>1</sup> for his conduct in reference to his parents and brothers.] <sup>2</sup>

*Shun* of *Yü* was a great sage, who hushed up the crimes of his own flesh and blood, and so far still surpassed *Min Tse Ch'ien*. *Ku Sou* and *Hsiang* <sup>3</sup> bade *Shun* build a granary and excavate a well, with the intention to bring about his death <sup>4</sup>. *Shun* should have seen the attempt made upon his life and, in time, have remonstrated and averted it, or if he had no means to do so, he should have made his escape, and not have carried out the orders. If he disliked such a course, then why did he allow his father and brother to become guilty of murder, so that still after thousands of generations people hearing of such a father and brother detested them ? That *Shun* did not foreknow this is the thirteenth proof that Sages have no foresight.

When *Wu Wang* was ill *Chou Kung* asked for Heaven's decree. When the altars had been erected, the straws were consulted, and the prayer was spoken, he was still in doubt whether Heaven had granted his request or not, therefore he divined from three tortoises, and all three gave a favourable reply <sup>5</sup>. If Sages were prescient, then *Chou Kung* ought to have known whether Heaven granted his prayer, and it was not necessary still to divine by means of three tortoises. But the Sage would not make a law of his own view, wherefore he still prayed for a decree, which being hidden cannot be seen, for

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<sup>1</sup> *I. e.* they did not disparage.

<sup>2</sup> *Analects XI, 4* [*Couvreur*].

<sup>3</sup> The father and the brother of *Shun*.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 173.

<sup>5</sup> See Vol. I, p. 187, Note 1.

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the will of Heaven is hard to be known. Consequently, he divined and compared the various omens. The omens having brought a decision, his mind was settled, and he acted accordingly. This is the fourteenth proof that Sages do not possess foresight.

*Yen Tse* <sup>1</sup> had arrived in *Lu* with a message of friendly inquiries. One does not hurriedly walk up the hall, but *Yen Tse* did p2.288 it, and presenting a jewel, one does not kneel, but *Yen Tse* knelt. The disciples wondering, asked *Confucius* about it, but *Confucius* did not know it either and inquired of *Yen Tse*. When the latter had explained the reason he understood it <sup>2</sup>. This is the fifteenth proof that Sages have no foresight.

[*Ch'ên Chia* asked *Mencius* saying,

— What kind of man was the duke of *Chou* ?

— A sage, was the reply.

— Is it the fact that he appointed *Kuan Shu* to oversee *Yin*, and that *Kuan Shu* rebelled ?

— It is.

— Did the duke of *Chou* know that he would rebel, and purposely appoint him to that office, or did he not know ?

*Mencius* said,

— He did not know.

— Then, though a sage, he still fell into error ?

— The duke of *Chou*, answered *Mencius*, was the younger brother, *Kuan Shu* was his elder brother. Was not the error of *Chou Kung* in accordance with what is right ?] <sup>3</sup>

*Mencius* is a man qualified to examine into a thing to the very bottom. He says that the Duke of *Chou* administering the affairs under his sway, according to his sagehood, did not know that *Kuan Shu* was going to rebel. That is the sixteenth proof that Sages have no foresight.

*Confucius* said,

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<sup>1</sup> An official from *Ch'i*.

<sup>2</sup> The *Pei-wên-yün-fu* chap. 91, p. 5v. quotes this story.

<sup>3</sup> *Mencius* II, Part II, 9 [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)]. Our text seems somewhat shortened.

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[— *T'se* did not receive Heaven's decree, but his goods are increased by him, and his calculations are generally correct. ] <sup>1</sup>

*Confucius* finds fault with *Tse Kung* for being too much given to opulence. Observing the rising and falling of prices, he succeeded, by his calculations, in hitting upon the right moment for his speculations, and his wealth increased to such a degree, that he was as rich as *T'ao Chu* <sup>2</sup>. The prescience of a Sage bears some resemblance to the computations and correct calculations of *Tse Kung*. A Sage takes signs and omens to investigate the nature of things, which he thus comprehends. Upon seeing extraordinary phenomena, he gives them their proper names, and, by his extensive learning, he knows them. He is an able thinker, never short of ideas, with vast views and an excellent memory. From small indications he draws his inferences, and considering the present, he foresees, in his mind, a thousand years still to come. His knowledge is like a vast ocean, so to say.

The glance of *Confucius* fell into every corner, noticing the smallest minutiae, his mind was penetrating, his talents and intellect p2.289 both most remarkable, his energy never flagging, and his eyes and ears outvying those of other people in keenness. But he could not look through obstacles, or know things unknowable to mankind. If the Sage had been able to look through things, or perceive them from the greatest distance, to hear through solid bodies, or catch imperceptible sounds, or if he could talk to Heaven and Earth and converse with ghosts and spirits, then he would know everything in the heavens and on earth, and might well be regarded as a spirit, endowed with foresight, and far superior to man. But now his eyes and ears see and hear like those of other people, and coming across something, or perceiving some object, he does not behave himself otherwise. He barely surpasses worthies by one degree ; why then should he be held to be a spirit and totally different ? Sages are like Worthies, and the most excellent among men are called Sages ; consequently Sages and Worthies are merely designations for a higher and a lower degree, but not names indicating a total difference, as may be gathered from the following story :

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 376, Note 2 and 408.

<sup>2</sup> See Vol. I, p. 146, Note 1.

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Duke *Huan* of *Ch'i*<sup>1</sup>, together with *Kuan Chung*, planned an attack upon *Chü*<sup>2</sup>. Before this plan was carried out, it was already rumoured in that State. Duke *Huan* amazed, asked *Kuan Chung* saying,

— What is the reason that the scheme I just laid with you of attacking *Chü* has already transpired in that State, before it is carried out ?

— There must be a Sage in that State, said *Kuan Chung*.

After a short while, *Tung-Kuo Ya* arrived, and *Kuan Chung* said,

— This, no doubt, is he,

and he caused him to be treated as a guest and to be given the place of honour, all the others taking their places according to their rank.

*Kuan Chung* said,

— Is it you that spoke of an invasion of *Chü* ?

— Yes, was the reply.

— I do not invade *Chü*, said *Kuan Chung*, wherefore do you speak of an invasion of *Chü* ?

— Your servant, replied *Tung-Kuo Ya*, has heard that a superior man is great in forming plans, whereas small people are skilful in finding them out. I have ventured to do so.

— I did not say, rejoined *Kuan Chung*, that I was going to attack *Chü*; why do you suppose it ?

— I have heard, answered the other, that a superior man has three different airs : buoyant joy and merriment, the air of bells and drums, sorrow and stillness, the air of mourning, and anger running through arms and legs, the warlike air. When you make p2.290 a wry face and do not open your mouth, you think of *Chü*, and when you lift your arm and point with your finger, you have *Chü* in view. Your servant begs leave to contend that the small

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<sup>1</sup> 685-643 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> A State in the present *Yi-chou-fu*, *Shantung*.

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State disliked by all the princes can only be *Chü*, therefore I said so.

*Kuan Chung* was a man with a splendid intellect, well fit for nice distinctions and investigations. His statement that there must be a Sage in the State, was perfectly correct, for there was one. When *Tung-Kuo Ya* arrived he said that this, no doubt, was he *i. e.*, that *Tung-Kuo Ya* was a Sage. If Sages and Worthies were two totally different classes, *Kuan Chung* knew that at that period there were no men like the Twelve Sages, and he should have said that there must be a Worthy in the State, instead of saying a Sage. The plan being spoken about in the State before it was made public, *Kuan Chung* supposed that there must be a Sage, that means to say that a Sage is prescient. Upon seeing *Tung-Kuo Ya*, he declared that this man must be he *i. e.*, that a Worthy was a Sage. *Tung-Kuo Ya* knew the plan, and in no wise differed from a Sage.

A gentleman introduced *Ch'un-Yü K'un*<sup>1</sup> to King *Hui* of *Liang*<sup>2</sup>. He saw him twice, but never uttered a syllable. The king was surprised at it, and, by way of reproach, said to the gentleman,

— In praising *Ch'un-Yü K'un*, you said that he outstripped *Kuan Chung* and *Yen Ying*, but when he saw me, I had nothing of him. Am I not worthy to be spoken to ?

The gentleman informed *Ch'un-Yü K'un* who replied,

— It is true. When I first saw the king, his mind was far away, and when I saw him a second time, it was engrossed with sounds, wherefore I remained silent.

The gentleman having apprized the king, the latter greatly astonished, exclaimed,

— Dear me ! *Ch'un-Yü K'un* is a Sage indeed. When he came the first time somebody had presented me with a dragon horse<sup>3</sup>, and

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<sup>1</sup> A famous controversialist and ready wit of the *Ch'i* State of the 4th cent. B. C. He was the son-in-law of the king of *Ch'i*. A sketch of his life is contained in the *Shi-chi* chap. 126.

<sup>2</sup> 370-334 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> Dragon was the name for a horse eight feet high (*Erh-ya*).

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I had not yet had time to look at it ; at that moment *Ch'un-Yü K'un* arrived. Afterwards, somebody had offered me a song which I had not yet tried, when *Ch'un-Yü K'un* arrived. Although I had dismissed my attendants, my heart was still occupied with those things.

p2.291 Thus *Ch'un-Yü K'un* saw that King *Hui's* mind was absent or intent on sounds. Even the sagacity of *T'ang* and *Yü* could not have gone farther. The mind is in the bosom, but hidden and invisible, still *Ch'un-Yü K'un* did know it. If men like *Ch'un-Yü K'un* be deemed Sages, then he must have been one ; if his equals be not regarded as Sages, then how does the knowledge of Sages exceed that of *Ch'un-Yü K'un* respecting King *Hui* ?

Those who from a person's looks draw inferences as to his character, want some data on which to base their reasoning : When King *Ling* of *Ch'u* had a meeting with the other feudal lords <sup>1</sup>, *Tse Ch'an* of *Chêng* declared that *Lu*, *Chu*, *Sung*, and *Wei* <sup>2</sup> would not come. When the meeting took place the four States really did not attend.

When *Chao Yao* was registrar in the seal department, *Fang Yü Kung*, a native of *Chao* spoke to the registrar-general *Chou Ch'ang* saying,

— Your registrar, *Chao Yao*, will by and by succeed to your office.

In course of time *Chao Yao* really became registrar-general.

*Tse Ch'an* discovered the reason why the four States would not attend the meeting, and *Fang Yü Kung* saw from outward appearances that *Chao Yao* would be made registrar-general. By searching the reason and observing appearances one may make manifest the future, and thus comprehend it.

*Kung-Sun Ch'ên* <sup>3</sup> of *Lu*, under the régime of *Hsiao Wên Ti*, sent in a memorial to the effect that, the ruling element of the *Han* being earth, its correlate, a yellow dragon, ought to become visible. Subsequently a yellow

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<sup>1</sup> 538 B. C. in the principality of *Shên*. This meeting is referred to in the *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Chao*, 4th year [[Couvreur](#), § 2] and in the *Shi-chi* chap. 40, p. 10v. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. IV, p. 358](#)).

<sup>2</sup> The *Tso-chuan* writes *Tsao* instead of *Sung*, the *Shi-chi* replaces *Chu* by *Chin*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 217, Note 8.

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dragon put in an appearance and became the style of a reign <sup>1</sup>. Consequently, *Kung-Sun Ch'ên* had foreseen the appearance of the yellow dragon, and ascertained it by his calculations.

The knowledge of Worthies and Sages requires research. Both are possessed of the faculty of foresight, but to practice this foresight, they have recourse to their devices, and use their computations, or they are excellent thinkers and shrewd wits. Sages are not endowed with spontaneous knowledge, and miracles and <sup>p2.292</sup> prodigies belong to quite another sphere than that of Sages and Worthies. Their knowledge does not exceed all bounds, and they use their mental faculties in a similar manner ; nor does any miracle take place when they are in a perplexity. Wherefore their names may be interchanged, for Worthies and Sages are designations implying excellency, virtue, wisdom, and genius. Spirits are obscure, diffuse, and formless entities. The substances being different, the natures cannot accord, and the substances being equal, their manifestations cannot be inconsistent. The names of Sages and spirits are not the same, therefore Sages are not looked upon as spirits, nor are spirits held to be sage.

*Tung-Kuo Ya*, by his acuteness, knew the affairs of the State, and *Tse Kung*, by his shrewdness, acquired a fortune and made great profits. The foresight of a Sage is that of *Tung-Kuo Ya* and *Tse Kung*. It being equal to that of these two men, *Tung-Kuo Ya*, *Tse Kung*, and the like must be Sages as well. Accordingly, the nature of Worthies and Sages is the same, only their designations differ, but that does not disclose any divergence between their talents or any discrepancy between their knowledge. [A high officer asked *Tse Kung*, saying,

— May we not say that your Master is a Sage ? How various is his ability !

*Tse Kung* said,

— Of course Heaven has endowed him unlimitedly. He is about a Sage. And, moreover, his ability is various.] <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The style *Huang-lung* 'Yellow Dragon' under the emperor *Hsüan Ti*, 49-48 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> [Analects IX, 6 \[Couvreur\]](#).

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'About' is as much as 'will be', and signifies that he was not yet a Sage, but would be one, *i. e.*, that sagehood was not yet reached by *Confucius*. A Sage is like a Worthy : they regulate their lives and polish their conduct. Before his conduct is well ordered, it is said of a person that he will be a Worthy. In this case it is stated that *Confucius* is going to become a Sage, sagehood being in his reach.

[*Confucius* said,

— At fifteen, I had my mind bent on learning. At thirty, I stood firm, at forty, I was not tempted astray, at fifty, I knew the decrees of Heaven, and at sixty, my ear was an obedient organ.] <sup>1</sup>

In the interval between the time when he knew the decrees of Heaven and the time when his ear was an obedient organ, his learning was completed, and his wisdom expanded, certain signs <sup>p2.293</sup> of complete sagehood. To the period before the age of fifty and sixty was reached, when he was still ignorant of the decrees of Heaven, until the ear became an obedient organ, the term 'will be' is applicable. The time when *Tse Kung* replied to the high officer, was most likely the period of thirty and forty years.

King *Chao* of *Wei* <sup>2</sup> questioned *T'ien Ch'ü* saying,

— When I was in the eastern palace, I heard you express the opinion that to be a Sage is easy. Is that so ?

— It is, rejoined *T'ien Ch'ü*, what I have learned.

— Then, quoth the king, are you a Sage ?

*T'ien Ch'ü* replied,

— To know a Sage, before his having won distinction, is like *Yao's* knowing *Shun* ; to know him only after he has made his mark, is like the market people knowing *Shun*. Now, I have not yet won laurels, and Your Majesty asks me whether I am a Sage. May I venture the counter-question whether Your Majesty perhaps is a *Yao* ?

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects II, 4 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> 295-277 B. C.



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Sagehood may be learned, therefore *T'ien Ch'ü* declared it to be easy. If it were entirely beyond human power, and a spontaneous faculty, received with the original nature, how could it be learned then or acquired? *T'ien Ch'ü* averred that it was easy; if sagehood could not be acquired, then *T'ien Ch'ü* could not have made the statement that it was easy. His reply to the king that it was what he had learned, would seem to be consistent with truth <sup>1</sup>. Worthies can learn sagehood, and only their efforts made to that end may differ. Consequently the benevolent as well as the wise are entitled to the name of Worthy or Sage.

[*Tse Kung* asked *Confucius* saying,

— Master, are you a Sage?

*Confucius* answered him,

— A Sage is what I cannot rise to. I learn without satiety, and teach without being tired.

*Tse Kung* said,

— You learn without satiety : that shows your wisdom. You teach without being tired : that shows your benevolence. Benevolent and wise : Master, you are a Sage.] <sup>2</sup>

It may be seen from this that the benevolent and the wise may be called Sages. [*Mencius* said,

— *Tse Hsia*, *Tse Yu*, and *Tse Chang* had each one member of the Sage. *Jan Niu*, *Min Tse Ch'ien* <sup>3</sup>, and *Yen Yuan* had all the members, but in small proportions.] <sup>1</sup>

All <sup>p2.294</sup> these six disciples, at their time, possessed the talents of the Sage, but either these talents were very refined, but not complete, or they were complete, but not very brilliant. Nevertheless, they were all called Sages, sagehood, therefore, is attainable by exertion.

*Mencius* also said,

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<sup>1</sup> This is not true : Sagehood, the highest degree of wisdom and virtue, is inborn and cannot be learned. An intelligent man may increase his knowledge by study and do good work, but he will never become a genius.

<sup>2</sup> *Mencius* II, Part I, 2 (19) [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>3</sup> *Mencius* writes *Min Tse*.

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[— Not to serve a prince whom he did not esteem, nor command a people whom he did not approve ; in a time of good government to take office, and on the occurrence of confusion to retire : this was the way of *Po Yi*. To say : 'Is he whom I serve not my master, and are those whom I command not my people ?', in a time of good government to take office, and when disorder prevailed, also to take office : that was the way of *Yi Yin*. When it was proper to go into office, to go into it ; when it was proper to keep retired from office, then to keep retired from it ; when it was proper to continue in it long, then to continue in it long ; when it was proper to withdraw from it quickly, then to withdraw quickly : that was the way of *Confucius*. These were all Sages of antiquity.] <sup>2</sup>

And again he said,

[— A Sage is the teacher of a hundred generations : this is true of *Po Yi* and *Hui* of *Liu-Hsia*. Therefore when men now hear the character of *Po Yi*, the corrupt become pure, and the weak acquire determination. When they hear the character of *Hui* of *Liu-Hsia*, the mean become generous, and the niggardly become liberal. Those two made themselves distinguished a hundred generations ago, and after a hundred generations, those who hear of them, are all aroused in this manner. Could such efforts be produced by them, if they had not been Sages ? And how much more did they affect those who were in contiguity with them, and felt their inspiring influence !] <sup>3</sup>

*Yi Yin*, *Po Yi*, and *Hui* of *Liu-Hsia* did not equal *Confucius*, yet *Mencius* called them all Sages. Worthies and Sages fall under the same category, and for that reason may be denoted by the same name. *Tsai Yü* <sup>4</sup> said,

— In my opinion the Master is a greater Worthy than *Yao* and *Shun* by far.

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<sup>1</sup> *Mencius* II, Part I, 2 (20) [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> *Mencius* II, Part I, 2 (22) [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>3</sup> *Mencius* VII, Part II, 15 [[Legge](#)][[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>4</sup> Disciple of *Confucius*. Vol. I, p. 312, Note 3.

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*Confucius* being a Sage, he ought to have said 'a greater Sage than *Yao* and *Shun*' in lieu of saying a greater Worthy. Worthies and Sages are about the same, wherefore their names are promiscuously used.

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## CHAPTER XXVII

### On Preeminence 39. XIII, III. *Ch'ao-chi*

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p2.295 They who have worked through more than a thousand chapters and less than ten thousand books, who know how to explain this plethora of fine sayings, and how to fix the meaning and the reading, and who as teachers impart to others the results of their studies, are very learned. If they can analyse their ideas, abridge or enlarge the texts, report to the throne and memorialize <sup>1</sup>, argue a point and discuss a question, adding paragraph to paragraph and chapter to chapter, they are men of letters and eminent scholars. Hard working students of profound learning and imposing erudition there are ever so many, but not one among ten thousand is qualified to write books or compose essays on subjects of the past or the present time. Only men of great learning understand to avail themselves of these subjects for literary purposes.

The big and small trees which we see on a mountain are a familiar sight to us, and in the higher or lower plants which we discover in the country we find nothing new. Still we cannot cut down the trees, and work them into cottages, or gather the plants, and prepare medicines from them. We know trees and plants, but cannot use them. A learned man may have an extensive knowledge, but he is unable to gather it into an essay. Such a man remains an obscure scholar and is merely book-learned.

In so far as *Confucius* is believed to have read three hundred Odes and transmitted them for the benefit of those ignoring the principles of government, he is on a level with those who cannot fell trees or collect herbs. But, on the other hand, *Confucius* took the chronicle <sup>2</sup> and transformed it into

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<sup>1</sup> The Chinese have always bestowed great care on their state papers, so that reports to the throne pass for literary productions and are often collected and edited.

<sup>2</sup> The chronicle of *Lu*.

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the *Ch'un-ch'iu*. When he came to setting forth his own views and developing his ideas, praising and condemning, rewarding and punishing, without regard to the chronicle, his wonderful thoughts poured out from his heart. <sup>1</sup>

p2.296 That which is so much esteemed in learned men is their creative power. Those who do nothing but reading, reciting verses and humming over learned treatises, may peruse over a thousand chapters, they are after all but talking parrots. The imaginative faculty necessary for books and stories and a rich and smooth diction are special gifts of men of genius. Well informed people there are plenty in every age, but writers are rare even in successive generations.

In recent times *Liu Tse Chêng*, father and son, *Yang Tse Yün*, and *Huan Chün Shan* <sup>2</sup> have flourished simultaneously like *Wên Wang*, *Wu Wang*, and *Chou Kung*. Otherwise such men appear sporadically, resembling pearls and jewels, which owing to their preciousness are never found in masses.

Whoever is able to explain one Classic is a scholar. Those well versed in ancient and modern literature are learned, those who collect books and records and present memorials to the throne, are men of letters, and those never in need of ingenious thoughts to compose themselves, joining paragraphs and chapters, are eminent scholars. Thus scholars surpass common people, the learned outvie the scholars, men of letters outrival the learned, and eminent scholars are superior even to men of letters. Eminent scholars are, so to speak, twice superior. To contrast them with ordinary scholars, in spite of their double superiority, is like comparing an elegant carriage with a common cart, or a silk embroidery with a quilted garment, for they leave them far behind. Setting them against common people is like collating the foot and the summit of Mount *T'ai* with the plant and the neck of a tall *Ti* <sup>3</sup>; a comparison is impossible.

Hills and mountains are formed of earth and stones, copper and iron are

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<sup>1</sup> We find nothing of all this in the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, which are but very dry chronological tables, but the Chinese interpret them in such an artificial way, according to their preconceived ideas, that they discover the deepest meanings in the plainest words, where an unprejudiced reader sees nothing but the statement of simple facts.

<sup>2</sup> All authors of the *Han* period often mentioned by *Wang Ch'ung*.

<sup>3</sup> Gigantic savages said to have come to China.

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very seldom found in them. Copper and iron are rare, but eventually mountains harbour even gold and gems. Eminent scholars are the gold and the gems of their age. They are rare in the second degree, but though so extraordinary, they still eclipse one another by their talents.

p2.297 There are various degrees of learning. Scholars apt to explain the meaning of words in a school are far ahead of uncultured persons. Some are unable to interpret one Canon <sup>1</sup> and teach their pupils, others gather crowds of disciples around them ; their words flow like a stream, and they are regarded as experts of the Classics. Some cannot complete one tablet or write one essay, others discourse on right and wrong and offer their advice to the government. Their words resemble those of the Classics and records, and their style is as luminous as the moon and the stars. Those of the highest order come up to *Ku Tse Yün* and *T'ang Tse Kao* <sup>2</sup>. Commentators move in the same sphere as memorialists <sup>3</sup>, they are not productive themselves.

Some *savants* collect and enumerate historical facts of ancient and modern times and narrate things that have happened. Such are *Sse-Ma Ch'ien* and *Liu Tse Chêng* <sup>4</sup>. They have thus compiled a great number of chapters, and their sentences are counted by tens of thousands. They surpass *Ku Tse Yün* and *T'ang Tse Kao* by far. But they rely on accomplished facts and merely record former events, without producing anything from their own minds like *Lu Chia* and *Tung Chung Shu* <sup>5</sup>, who, arguing on the affairs of the world, propound their own ideas and do not borrow from without. All shallowness thus becomes easily manifest. Nevertheless the readers will call their productions records.

*Yang-Ch'êng Tse-Chang* wrote the Classic of Music and *Yang Tse Yün* the *T'ai-hsüan-ching* <sup>6</sup> for the furtherance of thought, works so profound and

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<sup>1</sup> They possess only an elementary learning, knowing how to read and write, but the Classics are too high for them.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 88, Note 2.

<sup>3</sup> Ed. B. Ed. A and C read [] for [], which would not agree with *Wang Ch'ung's* appreciation of memorialists whom he places above mere commentators.

<sup>4</sup> See Vol. I, p. 388, Note 2.

<sup>5</sup> Vol. I, p. 388, Notes 3 and 6.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 88.

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abstruse, that but a man of almost perfect talents could have produced them. *Confucius* wrote the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, and the two scholars each produced a Classic. They most remarkably followed the traces left by *Confucius*, as it were, and by their grandeur and elegance proved themselves to possess the genius of second sages.

*Wang Kung Tse* asked *Huan Chün Shan* about *Yang Tse Yün*. *Huan Chün Shan* replied that from the rise of the *Han* dynasty p2.298 there had not been such a man. In discriminating talents he may be said to have correctly distinguished between high and low. The minds of the lapidaries are more admirable than their precious stones, and the skill of those who perforate tortoise-shells is more wonderful than that of the tortoises. Similarly he who knows how to discriminate between the talents of all the scholars and assign his rank to each, must be superior to those thus ranked <sup>1</sup>.

Besides *Huan Chün Shan* wrote the 'New Reflections', in which he treats of the affairs of the world, clearly distinguishing between truth and falsehood. Unfounded assertions, lies, and fictions are all reduced to their proper entities. Among critics like *Yang-Ch'êng Tse-Chang* and *Yang Tse Yün*, *Huan Chün Shan* is the foremost <sup>2</sup>. From him downwards there have been many great and brilliant talents, and we have had excellent works. The style writing words, the heart must have produced the ideas. Words issue from the bosom, and the heart manifests itself through words. If these words appear unusually fine and remarkable, we may say that we have an able writer.

Consequently, prolific authors are a pride of mankind. They have their roots below, their leaves and blossoms above, their solid kernels within, and their husks without. The painted characters and the expressions are the leaves, the flowers and the husks of the writers. Their genuine ideas are in their bosoms, and the written words appear on bamboo and silk. Thus there is an interaction and a harmony between inside and outside. When the mind sets to work, the pencil follows suit. Then characters appear, and the kernels

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<sup>1</sup> This is evidently wrong. A critic must not be superior to those he criticises. They are in most cases much above him.

<sup>2</sup> In Vol. I, p. 466 *Wang Ch'ung* seems to assign the first place among the writers of the *Han* time to *Sse-Ma Ch'ien* and *Yang Tse Yün*, not to *Huan Chün Shan*.

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come out.

A man of letters resembles a bird with feathers. These feathers are variegated and all grow on the body. Should there be no idea illustrated by the letters, it would be like a variegated plumage of a bird growing ruffled and disorderly.

At a competition of archery the mind must be tranquil, the body straight, the bow and the arrow firmly grasped, then the mark may be hit. Arguing is like shooting arrows : the arguments must be in accordance with reason, as the arrows must hit the target. An archer proves his skill by hitting the mark with his arrow, and a debater shows his superiority by his writings. Both abilities proceed from the mind, their essence is the same.

p2.299 In writing deep thoughts and vast schemes may find expression. Somebody may not be able personally to put into action the administrative devices of sovereigns and their ministers, or to fix them by word of mouth, but he can give expression to his feelings and prove himself qualified to carry out those designs. *Confucius* wrote the *Ch'un-ch'iu* in which he reveals the ideas of the princes. Thus the *Ch'un-ch'iu* of *Confucius* is a chronicle of the usual way of living of rulers. The records of other scholars describe the usual proceedings of ministers. From the *Ch'un-ch'iu* we learn to know the minds of princes, and the other scholars acquaint us with the thoughts of ministers <sup>1</sup>.

They say that the cutting of meat by *Ch'ên P'ing* <sup>2</sup> was a forecast of his future premiership, and that *Sun-Shu Ao's* <sup>3</sup> finding a new channel for the *Ch'i-sse* river foreshadowed his becoming a prime minister. The study of historical works and adjusting government matters is more than those presages of the meat and the water-channel.

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<sup>1</sup> This distinction is rather arbitrary. The *Ch'un-ch'iu* treats as much of ministers and high officers as of princes, and the records of other writers embrace the doings of princes as well.

<sup>2</sup> One of the Three Heroes at the beginning of the *Han* dynasty, who died in 178 B. C. Called upon to distribute the sacrificial meats at the altar to the spirits of the land, he did it with such impartiality, that the elders wished he might manage the empire, which, later on, he really did.

<sup>3</sup> The text writes *Shu Sun Ao* which must be corrected. *Shu Sun Ao* was a minister of *Ch'u* in the 6th cent. B. C. We read in *Huai Nan Tse* that, when he diverted the waters of the *Ch'i-sse* river, to water the wilds of *Yün-lou*, King *Chuang* knew that he would be a good prime minister. See also Vol. I, p. 160, Note 2.



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Without strong feet one cannot walk long, and without a sharp edge one cannot make a deep cut. Thus the composition of paragraphs and chapters requires great talent and a *savant* of exceptional genius.

Some contend that authors, provided they possess a vast experience, and a thorough erudition, learning and practice, may proceed by analogies and thus write their books, that literary productions are something external and do not necessitate a combination of genuine talent and learning. Moreover, poor thoughts, they say, are hidden in flowers of speech, there is no depth, no roots, and no kernels. The writers lose sight of the great principles and the main points. Therefore it is very seldom that they achieve success. In times of danger men of learning are not there <sub>p2.300</sub> to help, thus showing that they cannot accomplish remarkable deeds, and merely know how to ply their pen.

I reply that this is not true. In the *Chou* time all the writers were practical politicians, and under the *régime* of the *Han* all the outspoken scholars have been officials of great learning. Why then say that literary productions are not like leaves and flowers evolved from roots and kernels? Thoughts engender devices, and several tablets joined together form an essay. Feelings appear in expressions, and ideas manifest themselves in words.

*Shang Yang* <sup>1</sup> as minister of *Ch'in* brought about its supremacy and wrote a book on agriculture and war. *Yü Ch'ing* <sup>2</sup> formed plans for *Chao* and determined its moving forward and backward. He resolved to write a *Ch'un-ch'iu* <sup>3</sup> and offered his advice for the city <sup>4</sup>. The work on agriculture and warfare was a scheme kept in the archives of *Ch'in*. *Lu Chia* <sup>5</sup> superseded the devices of *Lü Pu Wei* <sup>6</sup>, whose work <sup>7</sup> had the same purport as his 'New Words', and *Huan Chün Shan* <sup>8</sup> abrogated the scheme of *Ch'ao Ts'o* <sup>9</sup>, which

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 463, Note 5.

<sup>2</sup> A politician of the 3rd cent. B. C. at the court of Prince *Hsiao Ch'êng* of *Chao*.

<sup>3</sup> The *Yü-shih-ch'un-ch'iu* in 15 books.

<sup>4</sup> We are ignorant of all further circumstances.

<sup>5</sup> See Vol. I, p. 388, Note 3.

<sup>6</sup> Vol. I, p. 463, Note 1.

<sup>7</sup> The well-known *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*.

<sup>8</sup> See above p. 298.

<sup>9</sup> A scholar of the 2nd cent. B. C. who gained the sobriquet the Wisdom-Bag. He advised the emperor to get rid of the feudal princes. A work of his in 31 books is

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was agreeing with his own 'New Reflections'. In the case of *Ku Yung's* 'Reports' and *T'ang Lin's* <sup>1</sup> 'Words that must be said' or of *Liu Hsiang's* 'Earnest Propositions', we see how the notes originally taken were sent up to the Throne. How can they be held to be elegant writings and beautiful sayings or flowers of speech without a *raison d'être* ?

When deep feeling issues from the heart, it touches people to the core. Thus in consequence of the flying letter of *Lu Lien* <sup>2</sup> a general p2.301 of *Yen* laid violent hands upon himself, and on receiving the memorial from *Tsou Yang King Hsiao* of *Liang* opened his prison <sup>3</sup>. The letter and the memorial had taken the heart out of them. To compose such writings it does not suffice to possess great learning or much practice in writing.

Eminent scholars are scarce, but men of letters a great many. Are governors, ministers, and high functionaries not to appreciate them, and should they merely use their intellectual faculties for scribbling on boards and tablets ? Provinces or prefectures having troubles, these scholars can take all necessary measures, report to the emperor, and arrange all complications. Provided that a province or a prefecture be in difficulties and possess officers like *T'ang Tse Kao* and *Ku Tse Yün* <sup>4</sup>, who would set to work, strain their minds, and exert their literary abilities, would all disturbances not easily be removed ?

Since it is difficult to find records of men of letters in ancient days, which are too distant, or in out-of-the-way places at the outskirts of the empire, we shall confine ourselves to *Kuei-chi* in recent times. There lived a student of the very first order, *Chou Ch'ang Shêng* <sup>1</sup>. In a province he was engaged in writing memorials for the governor *Jên An*, and in a prefecture he made the reports for the prefect, *Mêng Kuan*. Matters were settled and all troubles

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mentioned in the *Han-shu* chap. 30, among the treatises on law.

<sup>1</sup> On *Ku Yung* and *T'ang Lin* see Vol. I, p. 469, Note 8.

<sup>2</sup> His full name is *Lu Chung Lien*, a wandering philosopher of the *Ch'i* State. When about 238 B. C. a general of *Yen* was beleaguered in *Liao-ch'êng*, a city in *Shantung* originally belonging to *Ch'i*, by an army of this State, *Lu Chung Lien* shot a letter bound to an arrow and addressed to the general into the surrounded city. This letter pointing out to the general his helpless condition induced him to commit suicide.

<sup>3</sup> See Vol. I, p. 67, Note 1.

<sup>4</sup> The afore-mentioned *T'ang Lin* and *Ku Yung*.

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removed. The province and the prefecture were delivered of all difficulties, and the two governors well off. *Chou Ch'ang Shêng* was not honoured, not because his knowledge was inferior, or his deserts too insignificant, but his two chiefs liked the common type of men and could not appreciate him. Had he lived in a former age under Prince *Chao* of *Yen*, he would have met with the same favour as *Tsou Yen*<sup>2</sup>. After the death of *Chou Ch'ang Shêng*, the province and the prefecture were thrown into disorder, for want of officials to draw up reports, so that the complications could not be adjusted. Officers were commissioned and paid their respects to those in authority, but the literate were neglected and their productions ceased. Officialdom gave much annoyance to the emperor indeed.

p2.302 But the jottings of *Chou Ch'ang Shêng* were not all, and his ability did not solely assert itself in his official documents, he also wrote the *Tung-li* in ten chapters, recording all the smallest details and minutiae from *Huang Ti* down to the *Han* dynasty, as the Grand Annalist did in his Tables. *Chou Ch'ang Shêng* went up to remote antiquity and down to recent times, whence the title of his work : *Tung-li* (*i. e.* Connexions). He was not only a man of letters, but an eminent scholar.

In former times there was *Yen Fu Tse*<sup>3</sup>, later on *Wu Chün Shang*<sup>4</sup>, and finally *Chou Ch'ang Shêng*. White pheasants were brought as a tribute from *Annam*, and odoriferous plants were offered from *Ferghana*<sup>5</sup>. In *Yung-chou* jewels are found, and *Ching* and *Yang-chou*<sup>6</sup> are productive of gold. As precious things grow in unknown, far distant countries of the four quarters, so it cannot be said that there are no extraordinary men.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 469, Note 3.

<sup>2</sup> A famous writer of the 4th cent. B. C. often mentioned by *Wang Ch'ung*. The prince of *Yen* treated him with great consideration and had a special palace built for him.

<sup>3</sup> *I. e.*, *Yen Chi*, a scholar who wrote poetry in irregular verse, 2nd cent. B. C. His original name was *Chuang*, which he changed because the character, being the name of an emperor, had become taboo.

<sup>4</sup> This man seems to be identical with the *Wu Chün Kao* mentioned in connexion with *Chou Ch'ang Shêng* as an elegant writer in Vol. I, p. 469, Note 3.

<sup>5</sup> In Vol. I, p. 505, Notes 2 and 3 we find the statement that white pheasants were offered by the *Yüeh-chang* people and odoriferous plants by the *Japanese*.

<sup>6</sup> *Yung-chou*, *Ching-chou*, and *Yang-chou* are three of the Nine Provinces of *Yü*. *Yung-chou* corresponds to modern *Shensi* and *Kansu*, *Ching-chou* comprised *Hunan*, *Hupei*,

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[— *Wên Wang* is no more, said *Confucius*, but have we not here his writings ?] <sup>1</sup>

The works of *Wên Wang* were in the hands of *Confucius*, and the works of *Confucius* in the hands of *Tung Chung Shu*. Would after the death of *Tung Chung Shu* his works not be in the hands of men like *Chou Ch'ang Shêng* ?

What does extraordinary mean ? It denotes the excellence and superiority of writings. *T'ang Lo* <sup>2</sup> and *Sung Yü* <sup>3</sup> were also men of letters of *Ch'u*, but their names have not been transmitted on p.2.303 bamboo or silk. *Ch'ü Yuan* has outshone them. Should *Chou Chang Shêng* have been the only literary talent of *Kuei-chi* ? He takes precedence among those who are not mentioned.

In the Nine Provinces <sup>4</sup> there are many mountains, but Mount *Hua* and *T'ai* <sup>5</sup> are the highest. There are many rivers in all directions, but the *Yangtse* and the *Yellow River* are the main streams. Mount *Hua* and *T'ai* are the most elevated, and the *Yangtse* and the *Yellow River* the largest of their kind, and so was *Chou Ch'ang Shêng* the greatest man of his prefecture and his province.

If a chief of the clan be a clever man, it is not right that his clan's-people slight him, to confer their praise upon a chief of another family. *Chou Ch'ang Shêng* was such a chief of the spoken word, whom all men of learning revered. That his name alone is mentioned is for the same reason that in the *Ch'un-ch'iu* the first years are designated after the chronology of *Lu*. <sup>6</sup>

Common people are prone to exalt antiquity and belaud what they have

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*Kuangsi*, and parts of *Ssechuan*, *Kuei-chou* and *Kuang-tung*, and *Yang-chou* is the modern *Chekiang*, *Fukien*, and *Kiangsi*.

<sup>1</sup> [Analects IX, 5](#) [[Couvreur](#)]. *Legge* and others here translate [] by 'truth', whereas *Wang Ch'ung* takes it in the sense given in the translation.

<sup>2</sup> A contemporary of *Sung Yü*. The *Han-shu* chap. 30 mentions his poems in 4 books.

<sup>3</sup> Another poet of *Ch'u*, nephew of the famous *Ch'ü Yuan*. According to the *Han-shu loc. cit.* he wrote 16 books of poetry, now incorporated into the 'Elegies of *Ch'u*'.

<sup>4</sup> According to the ancient division of *Yü*.

<sup>5</sup> Two of the Five Sacred Mountains, situated in *Shensi* and *Shantung*.

<sup>6</sup> In the *Ch'un-ch'iu* the chronology is based on the reigns of the dukes of *Lu* *i. e.*, on their first years, which are specially noted. This is not done because these dukes were much superior to the sovereigns of the other States, but because this work is the chronicle of *Lu*. Thus *Chou Ch'ang Shêng* is mentioned as a *primus inter pares*.

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heard about it. If the question be about the deeds of the ancients, even cabbage tastes sweet to them, and as to the recent achievements of their successors, even sweet honey and cream have a sour taste. *Chou Ch'ang Shêng's* home was in *Kuei-chi* and he lived in the present era. In spite of the excellence of his writings, he is looked upon as an epigone by many critics.

Heaven is filled with the primogenial fluid, and man endowed with the original essence. How could there be such an enormous difference between old and new ? The good rank highest, and the enlightened come first. Those who understand the true nature of things and see the difference between right and wrong, take them whom they find unworthy from their first place and push them into the background, and conversely they promote the worthy from the present time and rank them with the ancients. The brightness of their mind and their clear intellect act as a safeguard against common prejudices.

p2.304 *Pan Shu P'i* <sup>1</sup> continued the work of the Grand Annalist in more than a hundred chapters, recording everything with the greatest care. His style was easy, but his principles all right. The readers were of opinion that he was even superior to the Grand Annalist.

When his son *Pan Mêng Chien* <sup>2</sup> was secretary of a board, his style bore a great resemblance to that of *Pan Shu P'i* and not only a remote one. They were as similar as the Dukes of *Chou* and *Shao*, or *Lu* and *Wei* <sup>3</sup>, so to say. Provided that antiquity must be upheld, then *Pan Shu P'i*, father and son, are not worth mentioning.

The *Chou* had a brilliant literature, although they came after a hundred generations. The *Han* likewise are preceded by a hundred generations : why should their literary productions not be conspicuous ? Great things may be illustrated by small ones, and from the family affairs of a citizen we may obtain a glimpse upon the imperial court :

When a cottage has been built, there are usually mulberry trees and hemp

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<sup>1</sup> See Vol. I, p. 86, Note 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Mêng Chien* is the designation of the historian *Pan Ku*.

<sup>3</sup> Between there two model princes and the two States of *Lu* and *Wei* there was no great difference.

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first. After many years' residence, the children having been succeeded by grand-children, there are peach trees, pear, plum, and apricot trees covering the hills and overshadowing the plain. Roots and stems being so many, leaves and flowers grow in abundance.

It is long since the house of *Han* has been established. Vast is their territory and numerous their people. Rectitude flourishes, and everything prospers. Why then should there be no exuberance of exquisite literary compositions ? Blossoms usually grow together with fruit, and plants which bear fruit, but have no blossoms, are very rare. How should a barren mountain become densely wooded, or a dry field grow fertile ? The *Han* era is peculiarly fertile in literary talents, an eloquent testimony to its brilliant growth. When the sky is clear, the stars twinkle ; when it is covered and rainy, the sun and the moon are obscured. That in our age so many able writers have appeared simultaneously, sheds a lustre on the *Han* dynasty <sup>1</sup>.

*Kao Tsu* reading a book of *Lu Chia* exclaimed with a sigh, 'Ten thousand years for such a man !' *Hsü Yüeh* and *Chu Fu Yen* <sup>2</sup> p2.305 were appointed secretaries in consequence of their memorials. I have not heard that at present it never happens that a dish proves bitter or sour, but, if the mouth dislikes the taste, the hand does not lift the food to feed the mouth. Very often an imperial rescript is issued concerning a man belonging to one of the Four Branches, conspicuous in composition, thought, classical or historical literature. Such an edict is couched in most graceful terms, highly appreciative of literary merit. Had the afore-mentioned memorials had no purport and the book no sense, what would have been the cause of the exclamation 'Ten thousand years' or the appointment by imperial grace ?

They who adorn their faces all desire to become beautiful, but very few persons deign to look at them. Good musicians would like to touch their hearers, but those whose ear they win are not many. Before *Lu Chia* edited his book, and the schemes of *Hsü Yüeh* and *Chu Fu Yen* obtained a hearing, the great majority used to speak like blind people, using coarse expressions.

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<sup>1</sup> The *Han* dynasty is like a fertile land with many trees full of blossoms and fruit, its able scholars, and like a clear sky on which twinkle its stars, many famous writers.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 147.

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Their style was unpolished and unrefined, and what they said had no sense. They could congratulate themselves that for their licentious and dissolute talk they were not banished to sandy shores in distant parts ; as the saying is, how could they have deserved any appointment by imperial favour ?

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## CHAPTER XXVIII

### Thoughts on Omens

51. XVII, I. *Chih-jui*

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p2.306 The Literati hold that the phoenix and the unicorn appear for the sake of a holy emperor <sup>1</sup>. They consider the phoenix and the unicorn as being kind-hearted and sage animals, which have deep thoughts and keep aloof from all danger. When virtue reigns in China, they appear, when there is no virtue, they abscond. Extolling the goodness and intelligence of the two animals, they at the same time wish to compliment the sages, there being nothing but their virtue to attract the phoenix and the unicorn. This statement is untenable :

If the phoenix and the unicorn are sage, sages are no less so. Sages toil and trouble for the world's sake, and phoenixes and unicorns ought likewise to teach and admonish <sup>2</sup>. Sages wander about in the world, and phoenixes and unicorns should also join birds and beasts. Why must they leave China behind, to sojourn beyond the frontier ? Are the sages defiled, and the phoenix and the unicorn pure ? Why is their sagehood the same, and their practice so different ?

Provided that sages must hide, then the Twelve Sages <sup>3</sup> ought to have hidden, but if sages must show themselves, the phoenix and the unicorn ought to do so as well. If these kind-hearted sage animals are cautious, and keep away from dangers, the arrest of *Wên Wang* in *Yu-li* <sup>4</sup>, and the straits of *Confucius* in *Ch'ên* and *T'sai* <sup>5</sup> are wrong. *Wên Wang* and *Confucius* were benevolent sages, who in their efforts for the world, and their compassion of

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<sup>1</sup> See Vol. I, chap. XXX.

<sup>2</sup> Here again our author falls into his old error of exaggerating analogies. Two things may well be similar without agreeing in every feature. A sage animal must not necessarily adopt human ways, but might practise its sagehood in its own manner.

<sup>3</sup> Their names are given in Vol. I, p. 304.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 142, Note 2.

<sup>5</sup> See Vol. I, p. 155, Note 2.



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the people paid no heed to dangers ; so in spite of possessing the wisdom of benevolent sages they could not avoid imprisonment and troubles.

p2.307 Everybody, in his conduct, may cultivate his character and rectify his principles, but he cannot prevent others from doing him wrong. The dealings of sages are unequalled, still sages cannot eschew vexations. If the phœnix and the unicorn alone are apt to remain unscathed in the turmoil, the doings of brutes must be better than those of sages.

Besides, between birds, beasts, and man there cannot be any intellectual intercourse ; how can the former know then whether a State is well ordered or not ? <sup>1</sup> Men are similarly organized, and their moral qualities are the same, yet they do not know each other. How should birds and beasts endowed with a nature quite different from the human, know man ? Man does not understand birds and beasts, and the latter do not know man either. Both are aliens to one another. Birds and beasts are less intelligent than man ; how can they know him all the same ?

The scholars all make much of the excellence of phœnixes, with a view to illustrating the government of an enlightened monarch, but incidentally they proclaim the inferiority of man to beasts and birds. Their arguments strain the point and deviate from truth.

Furthermore, do phœnixes appear for sage emperors only ? Under the reign of *Hsiao Hsüan Ti*, phœnixes appeared five times and a unicorn once. Spiritual birds, yellow dragons, sweet dew, and wine springs all became visible <sup>2</sup>, whence we have the year titles : *Five Phœnixes*, *Spiritual Bird*, *Sweet Dew*, and *Yellow Dragon* <sup>3</sup>. If the phœnix and the unicorn really appear for a sage emperor, *Hsiao Hsüan Ti* must have been a sage, in the case, however, that he was not a sage, then both appear for a worthy <sup>4</sup> too. Should

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<sup>1</sup> As has been said above, the phœnix and the unicorn are supposed to make their appearance in China, when there is a wise ruler, and the State is well governed. But then they must have intercourse with men, to learn what is going on among them.

<sup>2</sup> See Vol. I, p. 366.

<sup>3</sup> All titles of the reign of the *Han* emperor *Hsüan Ti*, 73-49 B. C. Perhaps just these names have given rise to all the fables about the appearance of these omens under the said emperor's reign.

<sup>4</sup> A degree less than a sage, cf. chap. XIV.

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they come for worthies, then the dicta of the literati respecting phœnixes and unicorns are mistaken. The phœnix and the unicorn came for *Yao* and *Shun*, and they also came for *Hsüan Ti*, consequently they came for sages and worthies as well. As what the scholars say of p2.308 sages is exaggerated, so their arguments on phœnixes overshoot the mark.

The *Ch'un-ch'iu* relates that hunters in the west captured a dead unicorn <sup>1</sup>. Some one informed *Confucius*, who exclaimed,

[— Why has it come, why has it come ?,

and with the back of his sleeve wiped his face, while his tears were wetting the lapel of his coat.] <sup>2</sup>

The scholars recording this, opine that Heaven invested *Confucius* through a unicorn, for *Confucius* was a sage without the imperial dignity. Now, a unicorn makes its appearance for a sage emperor. *Confucius* did not take himself for an emperor, and neither the then reigning monarch, nor the prince of *Lu* <sup>3</sup> possessed sufficient virtue to move the unicorn. Whence *Confucius'* amazement at its arrival, of which he did not know the purpose. Therefore he asked, 'Why has it come ? Why has it come ?' He was aware that it had not come in view of the peaceful government, but because the prospects of his doctrine were on the wane. His hopes having failed, he was disheartened, and his tears dropped down on the lapel of his coat.

From the question of *Confucius* 'Wherefore has it come' the inference is drawn that the unicorn comes for a wise emperor. I say that this view was already current among the *literati* of the time of *Confucius*, who, also, had heard of it, but was not well acquainted with the animal. Seeing the unicorn, he wondered why it had come. As a matter of fact, the arrival of a unicorn has no special reason. It is a common animal, which chanced to enter the marshes of *Lu*. There it was discovered by the people of *Lu*, who happened to capture it. *Confucius* beholding the captured unicorn, which was not only

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<sup>1</sup> Duke *Ai*, 14th year, the last paragraph of the *Ch'un-ch'iu* [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> Quotation from the [ ] '*Family Sayings of Confucius*' chap. 4, p. 8v., perhaps from the original work which existed prior to the Christian era, but the quotation agrees with the later work written in the 3rd century A. D. and generally regarded as spurious.

<sup>3</sup> Duke *Ai*, mentioned above in Note 5.

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captured, but dead, compared himself with this unicorn, thinking that his doctrine was lost and would not be revived, and that unworthy persons would do away with it. If, therefore, *Confucius*, on perceiving the unicorn, shed tears, it was with reference to its capture and death, and not owing to the cause of its appearance <sup>1</sup>.

p2.309 However, when the unicorn arrives, it is accompanied by multitudes of animals, and it dies killed by man. Supposing it to be intelligent, and to arrive for a wise emperor, why does it come, when there is no such ruler? The unicorn is supposed to be very cautious and to avoid injuries, but why was it caught and slain in *Lu*? Since it arrived at a time when there was no wise emperor, we know that it does not come for the sake of a holy ruler, and from the fact that it was captured and killed in *Lu*, we surmise that its endeavours to shun hostile attacks are unsuccessful. As holy animals are unfit to escape from all troubles, so sages are also unable to eschew misfortune. Misfortune and troubles being unavoidable things for sages, the affirmation that the phoenix and the unicorn, by their cautiousness, can keep free from perils, is unfounded.

Besides, phoenixes and unicorns do not live in foreign lands, nor come to China when there is a holy emperor. They live in China and are born in mountain forests. Their nature being very pure, they are seldom seen, and men have no occasion to destroy them. Therefore, they are spoken of as exceedingly cautious and keeping aloof from all perils. If they live simultaneously with a holy emperor, and their rambles just fall in a time of peaceful government, the public looks upon them as omens of a sage emperor, which appear for the sake of a sage.

Although its nest be destroyed and its eggs be broken, the phoenix does not fly away, and though people burn the woods for hunting, or drain the ponds for fishing, the tortoise and the dragon do not emigrate <sup>2</sup>. The phoenix

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<sup>1</sup> In the '*Family Sayings*' *Confucius*, upon being asked why he wept, says, 'The *lin* comes only when there is an intelligent king. Now it has appeared when it is not the time for it to do so, and it has been injured. This is why I was so much affected'. (*Legge, Classics Vol. V, Part II, p. 834.*) This reply seems to intimate that the times were so bad, that a unicorn arriving by mistake lost its life. The badness of the time and the consequent death of the sage animal elicited the tears of the Sage.

<sup>2</sup> This passage is cited in the *Pei-wên-yün-fu*.

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is related to the tortoise and the dragon. They all live in China, and near to man. Their nests being destroyed, and their eggs broken, they seek shelter, but do not fly away, and after the burning of the wood, and the drying up of the pond they abscond, but do not roam about ; nor is anything mentioned about their going far away.

How do we know that they live in foreign countries ? The tortoise, the dragon, and the phœnix belong to the same species. If, because it is seldom seen and not killed, the phœnix be supposed to be a foreign bird, the tortoise and the dragon, which, too, but seldom appear, would, likewise, be of foreign origin <sup>1</sup>.

p2.310 In the time of the emperor *Hsiao Hsüan Ti*, the phœnix, the unicorn, the yellow dragon, and the spiritual bird all made their appearance. Since they all came forth at the same time, their nature must be alike, consequently their birth-place must also be in the same region <sup>2</sup>.

The dragon is not born abroad, but foreign countries, also, have their dragons, nor are the phœnix and the unicorn exotic, but foreign countries have phœnixes and unicorns too. Thus China possesses phœnixes and unicorns as well, and they need not come from abroad. Noticing the rarity of these animals, people believe them to be exotic, and beholding them just in times of universal peace, they suppose them to appear for a sage emperor.

The appearance of phœnixes and unicorns is like the coming forth of wine springs, and the growth of vermilion grass. If the phœnix is said to come to China from abroad, upon hearing that virtue reigns there, how do wine springs and vermilion grass learn this, that they just come forth in times of universal peace ?

Wine springs and vermilion grass are produced by the harmonious fluid <sup>3</sup>, and so are the phœnix and the unicorn. The harmonious fluid, likewise, procreates the sage. When he is born in times of decay, ominous things are produced. So it is with all men that become sages : grown up, they fall in with

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<sup>1</sup> Again a wrong analogy.

<sup>2</sup> That this conclusion is likewise wrong needs no proof.

<sup>3</sup> The original fluid, the source of every life in the world. See Vol. I, p. 471.

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these omens. Times of decay, also, have their harmonious fluid, which always engenders sages. As sages are born in times of decay, such times may produce phœnixes as well.

*Confucius* was born towards the end of the *Chou* dynasty, and a unicorn appeared in the western marshes of *Lu*. The emperor *Kuang Wu Ti* saw the light <sup>1</sup> in the time intervening between the reigns of *Ch'êng Ti* and *Ai Ti* <sup>2</sup>, and a phœnix alighted in *Chi-yang* <sup>3</sup>. Sages and sage animals are produced in periods of prosperity as well as in such of decline. A holy emperor meets with a sage animal just as a man blessed with happiness meets with auspicious auguries. As a matter of fact, he falls in with them, but they do not come out for his sake.

p2.311 The appearance of a unicorn does not differ from that of the white fish, and the red crow <sup>4</sup>. The fish happened to jump of its own accord, when the emperor's boat met it, and the fire by accident took the shape of a crow, which was perceived by the emperor who happened to be looking up. The fish had not heard of the virtue of *Wu Wang*, and therefore jumped into his boat, nor was the crow cognisant of the future rise of the house of *Chou*, and for that reason alighted on the emperor's house. To say that the phœnix and the unicorn arrive for a holy emperor, is like asserting that the fish and the crow came for *Wu Wang's* sake.

An emperor is predetermined for wealth and honour, consequently he sees propitious miracles, when setting out on a journey. These things, when seen, are called omens. There are large and small omens, and by the appearance of each the amount of virtue of the monarch may be ascertained. The white fish and the red crow are small animals and presages of some tranquillity, whereas the phœnix and the unicorn are large ones and signs of universal peace. Therefore *Confucius* said,

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 180.

<sup>2</sup> That must be in the year 6 B. C., for *Ch'êng Ti* reigned from B. C. 32-6 and *Ai Ti* from B. C. 6 to A. D. 1.

<sup>3</sup> See Vol. I, p. 323 and 365.

<sup>4</sup> Propitious animals said to have appeared to *Wên Wang* and *Wu Wang*. Cf. Vol. I, p. 130.

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— The phoenix does not come ; the River sends forth no Plan : it is all over with me <sup>1</sup>.

Not seeing these marks of universal peace, he knew that he did not live in such a period.

Why are the phoenix and the unicorn indicative of universal peace ? Because both are kind and sage animals. When such kind and sage animals arrive, the world is going to show benevolence and wisdom in its transactions.

In the 'Great Record' of the *Shuking* <sup>2</sup> we read that, when *Kao Tsung* was sacrificing in the temple of *Ch'êng T'ang*, a pheasant perched upon the handle of the tripod and crowed. *Kao Tsung* asked *Tou Yi*, who replied that probably a superior man from afar was about to arrive <sup>3</sup>. Observing that, in its movements, the pheasant bore some resemblance to a superior man just arriving from abroad, he rejoined that a superior man from abroad was about to come. The phoenix and the unicorn are like the pheasant, and their arrival must be a presage similar to that of the pheasant.

p2.312 When the emperor *Hsiao Wu Ti* was making a tour of inspection in the west, he found a white unicorn with one horn and five feet <sup>4</sup>, and there was, moreover, a tree whose boughs, after sprouting, again grew together with the root. *Wu Ti* consulted all his officers ; the (gentleman usher) *Chung Chün* <sup>5</sup> replied,

— A wild animal with joined horns shows that there is the same root, and all the branches turning inside mean that there is no outside. According to these omens, some outside people are likely to submit. If the presages prove true, they are probably going to

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<sup>1</sup> See Vol. I, p. 405.

<sup>2</sup> A work of *Fu Shêng*, 3rd cent. B. C., who preserved the *Shuking*. Cf. Vol. I, p. 447.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Shuking*, Preface, 29 (*Legge, Classics* Vol. III, Part I, p. 7) and *Shi-chi* chap. 3, p. 9r. (*Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 196*) where *Tsu Yi* is called *Tsu Chi*. Both texts differ in that *Tsu Chi* gives another explanation of the arrival of the pheasant.

<sup>4</sup> See Vol. I, p. 370. [] has been translated by 'five feet', but it might also mean 'five toes' in one hoof, as the commentator of the *Han-shu* explains the expression [] in that work.

<sup>5</sup> In Vol. I, p. 371 I have translated [] by 'censor'. It is better to render it by 'gentleman usher'. (Cf. *Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. II, p. 516*) In the *Han-shu*, *Chung Chün* is also called a [], which means a censor.

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open their plaited hair, to cut off the left lapel of their coats <sup>1</sup>, to wear caps and girdles <sup>2</sup>, and to accept civilisation.

Some months later, the country of the *Yüeh* <sup>3</sup> offered its allegiance, and a celebrated king of the *Hsiung-nu* appeared with several thousand men to make his submission, just as *Chung Chün* had predicted <sup>4</sup>. His explanation was correct, since the omens turned out true.

Reasoning by analogy we find that the white fish and the red crow belong to the same class of portents. The essence of the fish is wood <sup>5</sup>, and its whiteness is the colour of the *Yin* dynasty. The crow is a filial bird, and its red colour corresponds to the fluid of the *Chou* dynasty <sup>6</sup>. First, the white fish was caught, afterwards the red crow, that meant to say that the sway of the *Yin* was broken, and their glory transferred upon the *Chou*. Prognosticating *Wu Wang's* fate from the appearance of the fish and the crow, we see that the *Chou* were destined to obtain the control of the empire.

People noticing that when *Wu Wang* punished *Chou* he met with a fish and a crow, surmised that by means of these animals Heaven enjoined upon *Wu Wang* to chastise *Chou*. The thing may seem so, p2.313 but it is not a fact : In the 'Spring and Autumn' period a *mainah* arrived and built its nest. The diviners considered it an ill omen, for a wild bird coming and building its nest indicated that the capital of *Lu* was going to be treated like a mountain and waste land, and Duke *Chao* himself would have to leave his country. Subsequently, the duke was attacked by the *Chi* family and fled to *Ch'i*, where he died, without having returned to *Lu* <sup>7</sup>.

When *Chia Yi* <sup>8</sup> was privy councillor in *Chang-sha* <sup>1</sup>, a screeching-owl

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<sup>1</sup> The Chinese button their coats on the right side.

<sup>2</sup> As the Chinese do.

<sup>3</sup> Aborigines in *Chekiang*.

<sup>4</sup> All the above is quoted almost literally from the biography of *Chung Chün* in the *Han-shu* chap. 64 b, p. 4v. seq.

<sup>5</sup> According to ancient symbolism.

<sup>6</sup> The old dynasties had each their own element with a corresponding colour by which they were believed to reign. All these ideas have sprung from the mystic theory about the elements. See p. 218 Note 3 and [Appendix](#).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. p. 162.

<sup>8</sup> A famous author of the 2nd cent. B. C. See Vol. I, p. 148, Note 1.

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perched in his house. He opened his books and divined as follows :

« When a screeching-owl enters the house, the landlord must quit it.

Afterwards *Chia Yi*, in fact, went away <sup>2</sup>.

Notwithstanding the discrepancy between the various wild birds, the interpretation remains the same. The arrival of the phoenix and the unicorn does not differ from the wild bird's roosting or the perching of the screeching-owl. The mainah happened to build its nest, and it was by chance that the owl alighted in the house. Because they were animals from the wilds and the marshes which took their abode in a city and a palace, the diviners foresaw the catastrophe of the *Lu* State and declared the omen to be unlucky for the owner of the house. The mainah and the owl did not know the impending disaster of the two States nor roost or perch on purpose.

Emperors regard the whole world as their house. When happiness or misfortune is in store for house-owners, lucky or unlucky signs are seen among men beforehand. Experts can explain them and know whether good or evil is impending. Not that <sup>p2.314</sup> ominous creatures possess knowledge, and therefore arrive for the sake of these fortunate or unlucky people.

There are the signs of the tortoises and also the lots of milfoil. These signs and lots always portend some good or bad luck. A lucky man consulting the tortoise or milfoil, meets with an auspicious augury, whereas the ill-fated find unpropitious signs. The milfoil and the tortoise do not possess supernatural powers, that they could know human fate and accordingly might put forward

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<sup>1</sup> In *Hunan*, already a circuit under the *Ch'in* dynasty.

<sup>2</sup> This incident has been described by *Chia Yi* himself in his celebrated poem in irregular verse [] of which we have a partial translation by W. A. P. *Martin*, *Chinese Legends and other Poems*, 1894, p. 32. The translator points out the remarkable parallels of this poem with the *Raven* of *Edgar Allan Poe*. The words of our text are culled from *Chia Yi's* poem, notably the oracle... He tells us in the preface that he was living in exile as tutor to the Prince of *Chang-sha*. The ill omen had troubled him, for the place was low and damp, and he thought that he would not have long to live. In order to soothe his feelings, he composed the poem. The *Hsi-ching tsa-chi*, quoted in the *P'ien-tse-lei-pien* chap. 209, informs us that it was the popular belief in *Chang-sha* that the chief of the house visited by a screeching-owl was going to die. We have a similar superstition in Europe. In Germany the screeching-owl is a bird of ill omen likewise, whence its name 'Toteneule'.



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their signs or lots, to tell the persons in question.

Should somebody divine by the tortoise or milfoil only for fun, and no other person appear, he would obtain good or bad omens all the same <sup>1</sup>. Between Heaven and Earth there is always good and bad fortune, and ominous things arriving must fall in with lucky and unlucky people.

Some hold that these presages are caused by Heaven's command, but if immense Heaven were to give its orders to those tiny things, they would not understand its language nor comprehend its meaning ; how could it employ them ? These things would not do Heaven's behests either, but their arrival appearing strange, it is, as if they were sent by Heaven, whence the idea that they are heavenly messengers.

When the *Hsia* emperor *K'ung Chia* was hunting on Mount *Shou* <sup>2</sup>, it began to rain, the sky turned dark, and he entered the house of a citizen, where the mistress was just nursing a baby. Some said that a child to which an emperor came must needs rise to high honours, but others were of opinion that a child unfit for such an honour would become ill-fated <sup>3</sup>. *K'ung Chia* entered the house, because he was caught in a rain-shower and sought shelter. He did not know that a subject would have a son who was doomed to misfortune, nor did he come for his sake. But, when he arrived, people explained his arrival either as lucky or unlucky.

Propitious and adverse portents appear in the court of the emperor, and when the latter enters the house of a citizen, it is like *K'ung Chia* entering the cottage during the rain. He was unaware of the birth of a child and did not come for its sake. Consequently it is an error to pretend that the phoenix and other ominous creatures are endowed with intelligence and arrive in response to an auspicious destiny.

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<sup>1</sup> Divination would give certain results, but they would not come to pass, there being no person fit to be affected by the omens thus playfully obtained.

<sup>2</sup> A mountain in *Shansi*.

<sup>3</sup> The child became unlucky. For further details vid. p. 258, Note 3.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### Auguries Verified 52. XVII, II. *Shih-ying*

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p2.315 The learned say in regard to the auguries of times of universal peace that they are things formed of a strange fluid, such as vermilion grass, wine springs, the flying phoenix, sweet dew <sup>1</sup>, the brilliant star, auspicious grain, the 'meat fan', the monthly plant, the 'indicator', and the like. Moreover they add that in these times mountains produce chariots and lakes, boats ; that men and women each have their own way, and that in the markets there are not two different prices. Peasants yield their fieldmark and travellers, the road. Hoary heads have not to carry burdens in their hands <sup>2</sup>, gates and bridges are never closed, no robberies committed on the roads. The wind does not howl in the boughs <sup>3</sup>, the rain does not wash away the clods, every five days it is windy but one day, and every ten days there is one rainy day. This prosperity attracts the yellow dragon, the unicorn, and the phoenix.

These assertions of the *literati* are highly coloured and overdrawn. The ominous things partly exist and partly do not exist. The phoenix and the unicorn, &c. referred to are great auguries, and their description is more or less correct, but there should be no exaggeration. As for the smaller auguries and the less important correspondences, however, there is much wrong about them, I am afraid.

p2.316 Wind, air, rain, and dew must be sympathetic <sup>4</sup>, the statement about the flying phoenix and the sweet dew, the wind not howling in the

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<sup>1</sup> On these omens see Vol. I, p. 366.

<sup>2</sup> Quotation from *Liki* III, 31r. ([Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 244](#)) [[Couvreur](#)]. We further learn from the *Liki* that in ancient times men took the right side, and women the left side of the roads.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from a passage in *Tung Chung Shu* referring to the time of universal peace, mentioned in the *Pei-wên-yün-fu*.

<sup>4</sup> There must be some harmony, some sympathy between these phenomena and certain events.

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boughs, and the rain not washing the clods of earth away, is admissible therefore, but what has been said about the wind every five days, and the rain every ten, is nothing but a rodomontade. Though wind and rain must be in proper time, there can be no question of five and ten days or exactly fixed periods.

That men and women have no intercourse, and that one is not cheated with the market-price may be, but to speak of different roads, and that there are not two prices, is an exaggeration. How could in times of universal peace extra roads be constructed for the male and female sexes ? No special roads are built, they walk on the same road ; how could there be different ones <sup>1</sup>.

Provided that in times of universal peace there are no merchants, very well, but if there are, they will see their principal aim in seeking their advantage. How should they not affect cheapness in purchasing goods, or how should they not attempt to obtain high prices in selling ? There being this instinct for low and high prices according to circumstances, we cannot avoid speaking of two prices.

All these things exist, but are magnified and puffed up. As to the 'meat fans', the 'monthly plants', and the 'indicators', however, there are no such things, most likely for the following reasons : To tell the truth, there never were such things, not even in times of perfect peace.

Scholars pretend that 'meat fans' grow in cook-houses. In kitchens, they say, collops grow of their own accord, as thin as fans. Moved they make wind <sup>2</sup>, and fanning eatables, they cause them not to spoil.

However genial the breeze of the time of universal peace may be, it cannot make 'meat fans' grow in kitchens, to be used for cooling purposes. If it could do this, it could cause the Five Grains to grow without any human help as well. In case it could make these 'meat fans' grow in kitchens spontaneously, why does it not <sub>p2.317</sub> cause rice to boil in the pot of itself, or

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<sup>1</sup> The *Liki* does not speak of different roads, but of different sides of the roads.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from the *Ti-wang-shi-chi (Pei-wên-yün-fu)*. The chief authority of the *T'ai p'ing-yü-lan* chap. 873 informs us that these 'meat fans' grow like lotus, have many leaves and very thin stalks. Not only do they cool food and drinks, but also drive away or kill flies and other insects. They appeared in the times of *Yao* and *Shun*.

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fire to burn in the oven of its own accord ? The purport of producing fans being to blow wind upon eatables, why are these eatables not caused not to spoil spontaneously, and why must special fans be produced to fan them ? Provided that fans can grow in kitchens of themselves, what is the use of ice-houses <sup>1</sup>, and of cutting ice for the purpose of refrigerating things ?

In the summer months people use their fans, but, in order to cause wind, they must move them with their hands. Grasped by the hand, fans act like strong wind, but do not stir of themselves. If 'meat fans' possessed a spontaneous motion, it would be different, but they require wind to be moved, and without wind they remain motionless. Only after the hand has furnished the wind, they are fit to refrigerate the things in the kitchen. How are 'meat fans' required for this ?

There is a tradition that *Tan*, heir-presumptive of *Yen*, caused the sun to revert to the meridian, Heaven to rain grain, crows to get white heads, horses to grow horns, and the wooden elephants on the kitchen door to get legs of flesh <sup>2</sup>. Since this is a fiction, the statement about the 'meat fans' being like the fulfilment of the five vows <sup>3</sup>, is an untruth too, I dare say.

The Literati, moreover, narrate that, of yore, a 'monthly plant' grew among the steps leading up to the side-buildings of the palace. On the first day of the month one capsule came out, and up to the fifteenth fifteen capsules had grown. From the sixteenth onward one capsule fell down every day <sup>4</sup>, until on the thirteenth all the seeds had dropped. On the first day of the following month, one capsule grew again. The emperor, facing the south, could learn the number of days from observing the growing and dropping capsules, and needed not take the trouble of consulting the almanac <sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The use of ice and of ice-houses is very old in China. The *Liki* alludes to it several times. (Cf. [Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 261](#) [[Couvreur](#), § 15] and [308](#) [[Couvreur](#), § 50], [Vol. XXVIII, p. 423](#) [[Couvreur](#), § 38].)

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 115, Note 4.

<sup>3</sup> The five vows of the king of *Ch'in* who promised to liberate Prince *Tan* in case the afore-mentioned miracles took place.

<sup>4</sup> The same description is given by the historian *Pan Ku* in his 'Po-hu-t'ung (*Pei-wên-yün-fu*). Another writer relates that this plant had round leaves and was multicoloured. He makes these leaves grow and drop instead of the capsules. In a short month of 29 days one leaf shrinks, but does not fall. (*T'ai p'ing-yü-lan* chap. 873.)

<sup>5</sup> [], expression used by *Pan Ku* who seems to have believed in the monthly plant.

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for that.

Now, if Heaven could produce these capsules to represent the number of days, wherefore did it not make them show the name of the day <sup>1</sup>, so that the emperor, on seeing the character on the capsule, might know it? Knowing merely the number of the day, but not its name, he would still have to consult the almanac for information. Thus his beholding the number of days would not spare him any trouble, on the contrary. How then could the growth of the monthly plant be deemed a great luck?

The grains of the monthly plant are like the pods of peas. They do not yet grow in spring and summer, and do not ripen before the end of autumn. When November is bitter cold, and frost and snow come drizzling down, all plants wither. Would the scholars dare to contend that the monthly plant, on reaching winter, alone does not die? Provided that it lives and dies like all other plants, its capsules must grow about the end of autumn. Then they might be examined in autumn, but during the other three seasons, spring, summer, and winter it would be impossible.

Moreover, if, on fifteen days of a month, fifteen capsules are produced, and, on the sixteenth, one capsule falls down, on the twenty-first day, six must have dropped. These dropped capsules would be lost and could no more be counted. Therefore it would become necessary to count the remaining ones, in order to find out the number of days. That would be most irksome and annoying and by no means a blessing <sup>2</sup>.

Supposing that the capsules grew upon the reception hall, and that the monarch, seated between the door and the window, by a look on their growth could know the number of days, this could not be considered a great advantage. Now, they say that the plant grows on the steps of the side-buildings *i. e.*, below the outer hall. As regards the imperial hall, *Mê Tse* says of that of *Yao* and *Shun* that it was raised three feet above the ground, p2.319 whereas the houses of the Literati are quite low. Should this be the case, and

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<sup>1</sup> The name expressed by the sexagenary cycle, the usual way of counting days.

<sup>2</sup> It would require a simple calculation, of which Chinese scholars are not fond. To find out the date, the difference of the remaining capsules with fifteen must be added to fifteen.

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the monthly plant grow below the steps of a hall three feet high, the emperor desirous of seeing the capsules, could not do so from his seat between the door and the window, but in order to know their number, he would be compelled to enter the outer hall, and look at them from there. Rather than to rise for the purpose of viewing the capsules below the hall, the emperor might have hung up the calendar day on the screen near his seat, whence one glance would have been sufficient <sup>1</sup>.

Heaven, by engendering omens, wishes to please the emperor, yet, if the latter be obliged to rise and examine the seeds to learn the number of days, it would have produced a most awkward thing, which proved a source of mortification to the emperor.

Besides, the monthly plant is a herb : the imperial hall being inhabited day and night, even the ancients, in spite of their simplicity, would have weeded out any plants growing in the rooms of the palace. How could capsules grow there, and people count them month after month ?

Whenever days are counted one by one, it is with a view to recording events. Of old, there were the astrologers who regulated the calendar and fixed the days. Wherefore, then, should the emperor himself have counted the seeds ? In *Yao's* time *Hsi* and *Ho* were charged with examining the Four Stars <sup>2</sup> during the four seasons, in order to foretell the weather <sup>3</sup>. These stars were very important, yet the emperor did not observe them personally, and he examined the capsules himself to number the days ?

The learned further relate that in times of perfect peace the 'indicator' grows in a corner of the palace, shaped like a plant, which points out cunning persons <sup>4</sup>. When such a one enters the palace, the indicator in its corner points at him, so that the monarch <sup>p2.320</sup> knows where the cunning person is. Accordingly, Heaven created this plant on purpose, with the object of indicating cunning people, and it did not make the nature of the holy

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<sup>1</sup> See the plan of the imperial palace in *Couvreur's* dictionary p. 173.

<sup>2</sup> The sun, the moon, the stars, and the zodiacal signs, cf. *Shuking* as quoted below.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Shuking* Part I, chap. II, 3 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 18](#)) [*Couvreur*].

<sup>4</sup> The *Po-wu-chih* (*Kanghi's* Dict.) says : 'In the time of *Yao* there grew a plant in the court, which when a cunning person approached curbed itself and pointed at him'. *Couvreur* omits to translate the pointing.

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emperors such that they could know it themselves. Perhaps no cunning people came forth originally. If Heaven created the plant, nevertheless, to point them out, did it not fear the trouble ?

No sage emperor ever had a better government than *Yao* and *Shun*, which was most peaceful, so that the 'indicator' grew in a corner of their palace of its own accord. When cunning persons arrived it made them known, and *Shun* had no difficulty in finding them out. Albeit yet he employed *Kao Yao* to exhibit his knowledge of men.

The Classic <sup>1</sup> says,

« To know a man one must be wise, but it is difficult for an emperor <sup>2</sup>.

Though men are imbued with the Five Virtues and communicate together through their voices, yet they do not know each other. How could the 'indicator', being a plant, know the cunning ? According to the view of the Literati, plants and trees of the time of universal peace would outshine worthies and sages.

In law-suits there is right and wrong, and human character may be straight or crooked. Why not, at the same time, cause the 'indicator' to point out injustice and crookedness too ? Why must one take the trouble to hear the cases, three men being required to give judgment ?

Perhaps this 'indicator' plant never existed, and is nothing but an invention, or it really existed, but its indicating power is fictitious. Provided that it really could point, then perhaps the plant's nature was affected by the aspect of men. The ancients, observing the movements of the plant, in their simplicity then imagined that it could point, and from this pointing the ability of indicating cunning people was evolved in their minds <sup>3</sup>. When a ladle which

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<sup>1</sup> The *Shuking*.

<sup>2</sup> *Shuking* (*Kao-Yao mo*) Part II, Book III, 2 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 70](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>3</sup> Supposing this plant to be more than a mere freak of fancy I should suggest that the *Mimosa pudica* has been the archetype. The Chinese name as well as the nature of this peculiar plant seem to countenance such a supposition. [] may be used as a synonym for [] 'repeatedly', the compound [][] therefore might denote a plant repeatedly bending down and contracting itself. That is what the *Mimosa* does when

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turns southwards is thrown on the ground, its handle p2.321 points to the south. Worms from fish and meat, placed on the ground, creep northward <sup>1</sup>. This is the nature of these worms. The indicating power of the plants would, also, be its original nature.

Because this plant could point, the Sage <sup>2</sup> propagated the statement that the 'indicator' grew in a corner of the palace and could point out cunning people. All officers and functionaries cherishing wicked designs, thereupon, changed their minds, and reformed their conduct, adopting loyal and honest proceedings.

At present, in the court-yards of public buildings, *Kao Yao* and the *monoceros* <sup>3</sup> are painted, and scholars declare that the monoceros is a goat with one horn which, by instinct, knows the guilty. When *Kao Yao*, administering justice, was doubtful about the guilt of a culprit, he ordered this goat to butt it. It would butt the guilty, but spare the innocent. Accordingly, it was a sage animal born with one horn, a most efficient assistant in judicial proceedings. Therefore did *Kao Yao* hold it in high respect, using it on all occasions. Consequently, it belonged to the class of supernatural ominous creatures.

I say, the remarks concerning the 'indicator' apply to the monoceros as well : A goat must have two horns, the monoceros had one. When compared with its kindred, it had a bodily defect, and did not come up with its species ; why, then, must it be looked upon as a miracle ? A turtle with three legs is called a *nêng*, and a tortoise with three legs, a *fên*. Since neither a *nêng* nor a

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touched. The feathered, digitated leaves first close, then bend down. After a while, they rise and open again. That may have been the pointing.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. *Yao Pao Ming*, Chinese teacher at the *Orientalische Seminar*, Berlin, has assured me that some worms have this peculiarity that, though turned round, they will always creep in one direction. When he was first told he did not believe it, but found by experience that it was an undeniable fact. I could not convince him of his error.

<sup>2</sup> *Yao*.

<sup>3</sup> *Hsieh-chai*. *Kanghi* quotes this passage. The figure of this fabulous animal is used as official embroidery of censors and Taotais. The name seems to be first mentioned in the *Tso-chuan* in connexion with a cap worn by southerners. *Sse-Ma Hsiang-Ju*, 2nd cent. B. C. alludes to the animal in a poem. We learn from the *Hou Han-shu* that it was hunted in the kingdom of *Ch'u*, where the aforesaid caps were first worn. The *Shuo-wên* says it was like an ox, the *Kuang-po-wu-chih* that it existed in the time of *Yao* and that its hair was woven into a curtain or a tent for the emperor (*P'ien-tse lei-pien* chap. 211).



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*fên* p2.322 are considered more wonderful than turtles and tortoises with four legs, wherefore should a goat with one horn be wiser than others with two horns ?

The *rhinopithecus* knows the past, the magpie, the future, and parrots can talk <sup>1</sup>. Their original nature enables them to do one thing, but not two. Perhaps the monoceros was so organised that it merely could gore a man, but there is no necessity why it should have known whether he was guilty. *Kao Yao*, from a desire to give more weight to his administration by the supernatural, lest those suffering punishment should be recalcitrant, availed himself of the monoceros, and when it gored somebody he punished him, in order that people might be afraid of doing wrong, and that culprits, up to their old age, should never complain of injustice.

All animals are endowed with some special knowledge ; if the monoceros, in view of its faculty of butting be held to be supernatural, the rhinopithecus and the like would all be supernatural,

Wizards know good and ill luck, and predetermine happiness and adversity. There is no doubt about that ; however, if the monoceros be said to possess similar faculties, wizards can no more be regarded as exceptional or remarkable men.

There is a general tendency to make use of the supernatural as an incentive. When *Shih Shang Fu* <sup>2</sup> was minister of war to the *Chou* sovereign and leading an army to defeat *Chou*, they arrived at *Mêng* Ford. There leaning on his halberd and grasping a standard, he shouted to his men the word ' *T'sang-kuang* ' <sup>3</sup>. A *t'sang-kuang* is a water animal which is in the habit of subverting boats. Therefore he used this monster to impress his men, inducing them promptly to cross the water, since otherwise the *t'sang-kuang* would injure them. Consequently it bears some resemblance to the

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 358.

<sup>2</sup> A surname of *Lü Shang* (Vol. I, p. 238). Cf. [Chavannes, \*Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 225, Note 3.\*](#)

<sup>3</sup> In a corresponding passage of the *Shi-chi* chap. 32, p. 3r. ([Chavannes, \*Mém. Hist. Vol. IV, p. 37\*](#)) these two words are replaced by [] 'green rhinoceros' which *Sse-Ma Chêng* explains as the title of boat-officers and not the name of any monster. Cf. *Chavannes* as quoted in Note 3.

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monoceros.

p2.323 This strange creature lives in the river, and at times comes swimming to the surface. It has one body with nine heads. People dread and loathe it, but it does not follow that it must subvert ships. Since there was such a strange animal in the river, *Fu* used it to overawe his warriors. The monoceros goring culprits is like the *t'sang-kuang* subverting boats. All these are empty stories without any foundation. Man is afraid of the marvellous, therefore he magnifies and embellishes it.

It has, also, been said that in times of universal peace the 'brilliant star' appears. We learn from the 'Middle Period of the *Shuking*'<sup>1</sup> that in the time of *Yao* the brilliant star became visible in *Corvus*<sup>2</sup>. Now the brilliant star may have been one of the Five Planets of which the biggest are *Jupiter* and *Venus*. At that time, *Jupiter* or *Venus* may have come into the latitude of *Corvus*. The ancients in their simplicity could not follow up the courses of the Five Planets, and did not know the exact shape of *Jupiter* and *Venus*. On perceiving a big star, they styled it 'brilliant star'<sup>3</sup>.

The *Shiking*, moreover, states<sup>4</sup> that in the east there was *Lucifer* and in the west *Hesperus*. These, again, were perhaps no p2.324 other stars than *Jupiter* and *Venus*<sup>5</sup>. It may be that they appeared at dusk in the west, and at

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<sup>1</sup> A work on the *Shuking*, in 5 chapters, still existing and mentioned by *Chang Chih Tung* in his bibliography.

<sup>2</sup> The *T'ai p'ing-yü-lan* quoting the same passage from the *Shang-shu-chung-hou* says in *Crater*.

<sup>3</sup> [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. III](#), p. 675 takes it for a meteor. The *Po-hu-t'ung* (*Pei-wên-yün-fu*) declares it to be a big star shining even, when there is no moonshine, and enabling people to work at night. The *Shi-chi* chap. 27, p. 32r. ([Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. III, p. 392](#)) says that it appears when the sky is clear. It is the star of virtue, has no constant form, and becomes visible in a State endowed with wisdom. Elsewhere it is stated by the same writer that the 'brilliant star' appeared in the time of *Huang Ti* shaped like a crescent, shining so vividly that one could work at night. The last fact is corroborated by another author, who adds that this star shines during new moon to assist the moon, and it comes for a wise ruler. It is formed of the clear essence of heaven. *Wên Tse* concurs with this mystic view, saying that when sincere feelings fill the heart, the fluid affects heaven, so that the 'brilliant star' appears. (*T'ai p'ing-yü-lan* chap. 7.).

It is doubtful whether we have to do with a real star of great brilliancy or with some meteorological phenomenon.

<sup>4</sup> *Shiking* Part II, Book V, Ode IX, 6 ([Legge, Classics Vol. IV, Part II, p. 356](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>5</sup> Of course they are both the planet *Venus*.

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dawn in the east. The poets of the *Shiking* did not know them, and thus gave them the names of *Lucifer* and *Hesperus*. *Hesperus* as well as the brilliant star belongs to the Five Planets.

In times of universal peace, the lustre of the sun and the moon are peculiarly brilliant. The Five Planets are akin to the sun and the moon. If in such blessed times there appears a 'brilliant star' extra, would there be a new sun and another moon likewise? The authors of the *Shiking* are common people, and the middle period is an age of simplicity, when nobody was well versed in astronomy.

Under the *régime* of *Wang Mang*, *Venus* traversed the sky as effulgent as a crescent. If persons ignorant of stars had seen it, they would again have called it a 'brilliant star'.

The *Erh-ya* <sup>1</sup> in its chapter on the four seasons says that in spring plants begin growing, in summer they develop and ripen, in autumn they are harvested, and in winter there is complete stillness <sup>2</sup>. The four fluids combined produce the 'brilliant star' <sup>3</sup>. According to this explanation of the *Erh-ya*, 'brilliant star' would be but another name of the blending of the fluids of the four seasons, and I am afraid that it cannot be a big star attached to the sky. The *Erh-ya* is a book commenting upon the antiquities of the Five Classics; all students have recourse to it, but they do not follow it, insomuch as they hold the 'brilliant star' to be a big star in the skies. Why is the assertion of the *Erh-ya* about the 'brilliant star' so divergent from the view of the scholars?

The *Erh-ya* further says that when 'sweet dew' descends the whole vegetation is blessed <sup>4</sup>, and that it is called 'wine spring' <sup>5</sup>. p2.325

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<sup>1</sup> The well known dictionary of classical terms ascribed to the disciple of *Confucius*, *Tse Hsia*, 5th cent. B. C.

<sup>2</sup> So far quoted from the *Erh-ya* chap. 9.

<sup>3</sup> This passage is not to be found in our text of the *Erh-ya*. Something like the words cited by *Wang Ch'ung* may originally have stood in this place, for the '*Wên-hsüan*' about A. D. 530 likewise quotes from the *Erh-ya*: [...].

<sup>4</sup> Our text of the *Erh-ya* writes 'Sweet rain' instead of 'sweet dew'.

<sup>5</sup> This clause is wanting in the modern text of the *Erh-ya*, but incorporated in the old commentary. The *Liki (Li-yün)* [Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 392](#) [[Couvreur](#)] does not support *Wang Ch'ung's* view. There we read: 'Heaven sent down its

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Consequently wine springs mean sweet dew. But the *savants* of today urge that these springs flow from within the earth, and that their taste is as sweet as wine, whence the name 'wine spring' is derived. There is a considerable discrepancy between these two statements, and it is difficult to know the truth.

In the chapter of the *Erh-ya* treating of water and springs <sup>1</sup> we read that a spring which at times is visible, at others not, is called intermittent. A fountain comes straight out ; to come straight out means welling up. A cascade falls down ; to fall down means flowing downward <sup>2</sup>. Consequently, springs are given different names according to their different modes of flowing forth. Provided that in times of general peace there be still wine springs issuing from the earth, they ought to be mentioned in this chapter, wherefore are they inserted into the chapter on the four seasons, where it is laid that 'sweet dew' is equivalent to 'wine spring' ? Therefore the affirmation of the Literati to the effect that wine springs rise from earth, and their contention that the taste of sweet dew is very sweet cannot be accepted as correct.

Scholars maintain that when the highest principles prevail the radiance of the sun and the moon is most brilliant, the stars do not deviate from their courses, a whirl-wind arises, sweet dew falls down, the rain is well apportioned, and the *Yin* uniform. Respecting this sweet dew they do not contend that the taste of the rain water is sweet. Accordingly they mean to say that this sweet dew descending moistens and nourishes the whole vegetation, but it must not taste sweet.

However, there is also a sort of dew as luscious as lollypops and honey, and always a presage of universal peace, but it is not the sweet dew nourishing all plants. How so ? This dew as sweet as lollypops and honey cleaves to trees, and not to the Five Grains. When the other dew without a sweet taste falls down, it saturates p2.326 the soil and irrigates the vegetation,

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fattening dews ; Earth sent forth its 'wine springs'.' *Legge, loc. cit.* gives a very reasonable explanation, that the phrase means nothing but that the dews were abundant and the springs delicious.

<sup>1</sup> *Erh-ya* chap. 13.

<sup>2</sup> This clause now forms part of the old commentary, but not of the text of the *Erh-ya*.

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infiltrating and soaking everything.

Thus the *Erh-ya* comes near the truth, for its statement may be verified by experience. When the sweet tasting dew falls down and adheres to a tree, the tree to which it sticks does not become more luxuriant than others to which it does not stick. Yet the sweet dew of our time is different from that described by the *Erh-ya*, I should say. The sweet dew of the *Erh-ya* has the peculiarity that all plants touched by it will flourish and come to maturity, no natural calamity intervening. This is a characteristic of a fall of sweet dew. Sweet dew, therefore, is nothing else than wine springs.

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## CHAPTER XXX

### On the Rain Sacrifice

45. XV, III. *Ming-yü*

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p2.327 Phenomenalists hold that long rain causes floods, and that long heat produces droughts. Droughts correspond to intense *Yang*, and floods to heavy downpours.

It may be argued that, in the course of a year, about every ten days it rains once, and every five days there is wind <sup>1</sup>. Long lasting rain forebodes a flood, and a long period of heat gradually conduces to a drought. However, during the time of a flood, the ruler of men must not, necessarily, be dripping, or during a drought, be burning hot. In his administration he remains the same before and after, and that at one time there is an inundation, at another dryness, is owing to the fluid of the season.

*Fan Li* <sup>2</sup> in his work 'Calculations' said,

« The planet *Jupiter* being in the constellation *tse* <sup>3</sup>, water means destruction, metal a good harvest, wood a famine, and fire a drought.

Accordingly water, a drought, a famine, and a good harvest would follow the revolutions of *Jupiter*. *Jupiter* agrees with their terms, and the fluid of the season accords with their periods, yet the phenomenalists give their own explanations, and the sovereign, trusting their words, endeavours to find out his guilt and reform <sup>4</sup>. After a long time of heat, it rains of itself, and after much rain, sunshine reappears of itself. Then the phenomenalists point to the

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<sup>1</sup> The *T'ai p'ing-yü-lan* chap. 11, p. 2v. quotes this passage but in a different form. The rule, here expressed, refers only to the time of general peace.

<sup>2</sup> A minister of *Yüeh*, cf. Vol. I, p. 310.

<sup>3</sup> = *Aries*, right north. Cf. the passage *Shi-chi* chap. 129, p. 3v.

<sup>4</sup> According to *Fan Li*, floods and droughts depend on the position of the planet *Jupiter*, whereas the phenomenalists believe these phenomena to be caused by the conduct of the sovereign. The passage of the *Shi-chi* seems defective.

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success achieved by the prince, who agrees with them and henceforth believes in their theories.

Had, for example, the sovereign kept quiet and not taken any trouble, nor searched for his own imaginary faults, Heaven would likewise have rained spontaneously, and rain would have been succeeded by sunshine as a matter of course. Even though, when p2.328 the heat or the rain cease, the prince may have been inactive, phenomenalists still propound their devices, so that the fluids of the *Yang* and *Yin* would be regulated by man, and not depend upon Heaven. However, man cannot affect Heaven by his dealings, and Heaven does not pay heed to human actions and respond to them.

During the 'Spring and Autumn' period, the great Rain Sacrifice in *Lu* was an offering together with a prayer for rain in a time of dryness. When, after a long drought, it had not rained, they prayed and sacrificed to obtain happiness, as, in a case of serious illness, the spirits are sacrificed to, that they may dispel the calamity. All this aims at a return to the normal state.

The *Shiking* says that,

« The moon approaches the Hyades, which will bring heavy showers of rain,

and in the *Shuking* we find the remark that

« When the moon follows the stars, there is wind and rain <sup>1</sup>.

Accordingly, wind and rain would be dependent on this movement of the moon.

There are three ways parting from the 'House' constellation in different directions <sup>2</sup>. The sun and the moon in their courses pass on these ways, departing northward, they cause a flood, departing southward, a drought. Yet there are some who contend that their departure northward is followed by a drought, and the departure southward, by a flood. The moon is a sign for the whole world, whereas the 'House' constellation is a mark for the Nine

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 277, Notes 3 and 4.

<sup>2</sup> Three ways for the sun and the moon passing this constellation. They either continue their course, without deviating from the original direction, or they turn to the left or the right. Revert they cannot, else there might be four ways.

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Provinces <sup>1</sup>. The northerly and the southerly directions of the moon, therefore, do not concern *Lu* alone.

*Confucius*, on the point of going out, bade *Tse Lu* prepare his rain apparel, and, after a few minutes, in fact a great shower came down. *Tse Lu* asked for an explanation, and *Confucius* replied,

— Yesterday evening the moon approached the Hyades.

Later on, the moon had again approached the Hyades. *Confucius* going out, *Tse Lu* wished to prepare his rain apparel, but *Confucius* would not have it, and really it did not rain, after he had left. *Tse Lu* asked the reason.

— Formerly, said *Confucius*, the moon drew near <sup>p2.329</sup> the northern part, hence it rained. Yesterday evening the moon came near the southern part, therefore it did not rain <sup>2</sup>.

Consequently in *Lu* the rain depended on the approximation of the moon, and by no means on government. If it was really influenced by administrative measures, and if the moon approaching the Hyades was but a presage of rain, it was common to the whole world, and, when it rained in *Lu*, it should have done so everywhere on earth.

During the period of the Six States government was not everywhere the same, and rewards and punishments were meted out at different times by the various princes. Provided that rain is to respond to these administrative acts, then at least six or seven Hyades are necessary for the moon to approach.

Under the *régime* of Duke *Mu* of *Lu* <sup>3</sup> there was a year of drought. The duke addressed *Hsien Tse* saying,

— Heaven has sent dryness, and it does not rain. I would like to burn a sorcerer <sup>4</sup>. What do you think ?

*Hsien Tse* did not approve of this measure. The duke then proposed to shift

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<sup>1</sup> Certain regions of the sky are supposed to correspond to certain countries on the earth. The moon, wandering through the sky, is not connected with any places of our planet, and a sign for the whole world.

<sup>2</sup> The *Pei-wên-yün-fu* quotes this passage, chap. 66a.

<sup>3</sup> 407-377 B. C.

<sup>4</sup> Sorcerers are believed to be filled with the *Yang* fluid. Cf. Vol. I, p. 247, Note 2.



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the market to some other place.

— At the death of the son of Heaven, said *Hsien Tse*, it is the habit to hold the market in side-alleys for seven days, and, when a ruler of a State expires, this is done for five days. Wherefore should the market not be shifted ? <sup>1</sup>

According to these words of *Hsien Tse*, by shifting the market-place rain is obtained, whereas it appears from the text of the *Shiking* and the *Shuking* that the vicinity of the moon to a constellation has this result. The courses of the sun and the moon have their regular periods, would they approach the south of the Hyades on account of a market-place having been moved ? The moon and the Hyades are prognostics for the whole world, how could the shifting of a market-place in *Lu* cause the moon to alter its course ? The moon completes one circumvolution round the sky in thirty days, and within one month's time it once passes the Hyades. When it comes near its southern part, there is heat. Provided that the shifting of the market could have such an influence on the moon, that it approached the southern part of the <sup>p2.330</sup> Hyades, would rain be obtained, if at that time the market-place were moved ? The dictum of *Hsien Tse* cannot be accepted.

*Tung Chung Shu*, with a view to attracting rain, used the scheme of the *Ch'un-ch'iu* <sup>2</sup>, raising a hill and setting up a sacrifice. A father does not accept oblations from collateral branches of his descendants <sup>3</sup>, nor Heaven on low earth <sup>4</sup>. As to the rites of the rain-sacrifice of the princes, we ignore to which spirit it was offered. If it was to the Spirit of Heaven, Heaven would not receive an oblation but from the emperor, and would refuse those from the feudal lords or our present high officers. But unless a spirit accepted the sacrifice, how could its succour be obtained ? If the clouds and the rain were the recipients of the sacrifice, they are air. In what manner should the air of

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<sup>1</sup> Culled from the *Liki* (*T'an-kung* p. 80), [Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 202 \[Couvreur\]](#), where three days instead of five is written.

<sup>2</sup> In the *Ch'un-ch'iu* the great rain sacrifice is frequently mentioned.

<sup>3</sup> Only a son or a grandson may sacrifice to his ancestors.

<sup>4</sup> Therefore *Tung Chung Shu* raised a hill for his sacrifice. A sacrifice from the low earth would be as unacceptable to Heaven as an offering from collateral descendants to a deceased.

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clouds and rain smell and enjoy offerings ?

[It breaks through the atones one or two inches thick, and gathers. That in one day's time it spreads over the whole Empire is only the case with the *T'ai-shan*.] <sup>1</sup> From the *T'ai-shan* it rains over the whole Empire, from small mountains over States and cities. Such being the case, is the great Rain Sacrifice an offering to the mountains perhaps ? Were it really so, it would be ineffectual for the following reason : Water in different rivers and differing in height by some inches or lines, does not run together, unless led through artificial channels, nor mix, unless, by digging, a common water-level be produced. Suppose that a ruler of men were to pray and sacrifice on the banks of a river, would it be in his power to cause water of a higher level to mix with other water below ?

Even in the case of visible water of but slightly different level the prayers of a sovereign would be of no avail at all, and how about rain, which has no apparent form, hidden as it is in the depths of high mountains ? How could the rain sacrifice of a ruler elicit it ?

Rainy moisture is amidst heaven and earth, as tears are in the human body. If some one were to place wine and food before a kind-hearted person imploring him to shed tears, which he had not yet done, that kind-hearted gentleman would on no account <sup>p2.331</sup> comply with this request, because tears do not issue forth on being commanded. How then could rain be procured by supplication ?

The laments of *Yung Mên Tse* moved the prince of *Mêng Ch'ang* to tears <sup>2</sup>, and in consequence of the sorrowful speech of *Su Ch'in* and *Chang Yi* in the cavern, the tears of *Kuei Ku Tse* dropped down on his coat <sup>3</sup>. Is it possible then to affect Heaven by laments like those of *Yung Mên Tse*, or by words like those of *Su Ch'in* and *Chang Yi* ? The ears and the eyes of Heaven are very far away, and the fluid of sound does not reach it.

The wife of *Ch'i Liang* also cried pitifully, but, instead of raining, the city

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 277.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 178, Note 2.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 52.

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wall crumbled down. Then how can rain be produced, and which method do those performing the rain sacrifice employ to impress Heaven ?

When the moon proceeds on the northern way, and approaches the northern part of the Hyades, it nearly always rains. Accordingly, the Hyades must be situated on the northern way. But would this constellation of the northern way be willing to send down rain, in response to a rain sacrifice ?

When *Confucius* was going out, and calling upon *Tse Lu* to get his rain apparel ready, there certainly was no rain sacrifice offered in *Lu* simultaneously, and, notwithstanding, torrents of rain came down spontaneously, and without any prayer there was bright sunshine again of itself. Thus fine weather and rain have their times. In the course of a year, sunshine and rain alternate. When there is to be rain, who must pray for it, and, when there is to be sunshine, who can stop it ?

A ruler who listens to supplications and, to please his people, shows clemency, is not virtuous. Heaven possesses the highest degree of virtue. If, before the proper time for rain has come, somebody unreasonably prayed for it, and if then Heaven recklessly sent it down, it would be on a level with a prince yielding to solicitations.

Phenomenalists do not argue or investigate the question by analogies, and setting forth their preposterous theories, they deceive the sovereigns. Either the time of rain has not yet come, and a virtuous prince prays for it in vain, or it just must rain of its own accord, and a wicked prince praying for rain just hits upon the right moment. Then the virtuous ruler receives unjust reproof, and the bad one gains undeserved praise.

p2.332 The world considers sages to be perfect, whereas worthies have their imperfections. The dealings of perfect men are irreproachable, and being irreproachable, their government is faultless. Among the sage rulers of all the ages none can vie with *Yao* and *T'ang*. Yet *Yao* was visited with the Great Flood, and *T'ang* with the Great Drought. If this be regarded as the outcome of their government, then *Yao* and *T'ang* must have been two iniquitous rulers, if, however, their government be not answerable, then it was mere luck. Luck has its time, and cannot be prayed for.

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People reasoning on these subjects, pretend, in regard to the Flood and the Drought of *Yao* and *T'ang*, that they were the result of the season, but that small droughts and floods are due to government. Provided that this view be correct, what is to be done to procure a rainfall ? If it is really caused by government, a recourse to prayer instead of mending the defects of the administration could not bring about a change. If, on the other hand, the Flood and the Drought of *Yao* and *T'ang* were the effect of the revolution of the celestial fluid, and not the upshot of government, as they say, then the time of this revolution cannot but be spontaneous, and any sacrifices or prayers would be of no advantage whatever.

There is another report that *T'ang*, having prayed in a mulberry grove, acknowledging five faults, forthwith obtained rain <sup>1</sup>. Believing in the revolution of the fluid, one cannot uphold the story of the mulberry grove, and maintaining the truth of this story, one must discard the notion of a revolution of luck. How can those holding either of these views escape from this *impasse*, and which means should be taken to avert water or dryness ?

Of these calamitous changes there are two kinds, I should say : calamities in consequence of bad government and disasters without any guilt. In case of calamities of the first kind, one must search for the cause and try to remove it, and though these endeavours prove ineffectual, they at least show the compassion of the sovereign, his kind solicitude for his people, and his inability to help. Such is the conduct of a loving father towards his son and of a dutiful son towards his parent. Though knowing that in case of a sickness it is useless to immolate to the spirits, and that against great pains medicines are in vain, and though aware that a disease is incurable, and all treatment of no avail, yet they do not let things go and await the end ; they still consult the <sup>p2.333</sup> tortoise and milfoil, inquire after evil influences, and call persons qualified to prepare medicines. Their compassionateness and affectionate devotion makes them still hope for a result.

When death has come, and life is extinguished, so that there remains nothing to be done, they climb upon the ridge of their house, and with a

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 16, Note 4.

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garment beckon to the departed to revert <sup>1</sup>. In their sorrow and deep love, they will not give up the hope that the dead may become aware of it. The feelings of those who make oblations for rain are like the sentiments of a loving father or a dutiful son.

Of calamities without any guilt people know nothing, and lay them to the charge of the ruler. Those governing, in order to comply with the wishes of the people, in this case offer sacrifice likewise.

A question as to the difference of a calamity caused by government and a disaster without anybody's guilt I should answer thus : When virtue is flourishing <sup>2</sup>, and the government well ordered, and a disaster happens all the same, no one is responsible for it. When virtue is declining, and government disorganised, and some catastrophe takes place, the government is responsible. In the last instance, there is a sacrifice without and reforms within, to make good the damage. In the former instance, the old style of government is continued within, and the sacrificial rites are discharged without, to comfort the people.

Undeserved ill-luck has happened in all ages. When it comes one must remain faithful to one's principles, and not change the government. How do we know ? We learn it from the words, addressed by the Duke of *Chou* to King *Ch'êng*, concerning the establishment of government.

[« Sometimes things will interfere. Then stick to your words and your speech, and let us be thinking of officers of complete virtue, to regulate the people whom we have received.] <sup>3</sup>

The establishment of the government by the Duke of <sup>p2.334</sup> *Chou* must be admitted to be most considerate. He was aware that extraordinary accidents are not to be avoided by liberality. Therefore he admonished the king to stick

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<sup>1</sup> A garment of the deceased is used, that the soul may slip into it and return. This custom is very old. The three Rituals : *Liki*, *I-li*, and *Chou-li* give minute prescriptions about it. They are found in [De Groot, Religious System Vol. I, p. 243 seq.](#) in a special chapter 'Calling back the soul of the dead'.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 222, Note 5.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from the *Shuking* Part V, Book XIX, 16-17 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part II, p. 518](#)) [[Couvreur](#), ! 16]. To the first part of this clause *Legge* gives quite a different interpretation : 'And let us never allow others to come between us and them. Yea, in our every word and speech let us be thinking ...'.

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to his word and, since the administration was unimpeachable, not to introduce any changes. Extraordinary events might interfere, but they were not caused by any recklessness.

The wet fluid interfered with *Yao*, and the dry one, with *T'ang*. King *Hsüan* of *Chou* <sup>1</sup>, generous as he was, met with a long drought, and at the commencement and the end of the *Chien-ch'u* period <sup>2</sup>, all the northern provinces had to suffer from a continued drought. The cattle died, the people were famished and driven from their homes, reduced to poverty. The views of our sage Lord occupying the Imperial Throne, were most liberal and enlightened, and under him the officials all discharged their duties. It was obviously a time of universal peace, and not the slightest deficiency was to be discovered in the government. And yet the dry fluid rushed in. The wise ruler understood the state of affairs, and did not change the mode of government, but he sent about grain, to be distributed among the poor, and he used his affluence, to help the indigent. This displayed his clear insight, and thus those charged with the relief work did all they could.

Duke *Wên* of *Lu* was visited with a great drought one year <sup>3</sup>. *Tsang Wên Chung* <sup>4</sup> suggested that he should repair the inner and outer walls, making economies by reducing his expenses, practising frugality, and calling upon the people to contribute. *Tsang Wên Chung* was alive to the fact that government was not responsible for the drought, hence he confined himself to building the walls, without altering the administration.

The phenomenologists witnessing a sudden change, do not hesitate to ascribe it to government, paying no regard to its innocence, and viewing an extraordinary event, in their alarm and confusion, they change their proceedings, and, by changing what should not be altered, they merely bring down misfortune upon themselves.

On what do they base their affirmation that the rain sacrifice is

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<sup>1</sup> 827-782 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> 76-83 A. D.

<sup>3</sup> According to the *Ch'un-ch'iu* *Lu* had to suffer great dryness in the second and in the tenth year of Duke *Wên* *i. e.*, in 625 [[Couvreur](#), § 5] and 617 B. C. [[Couvreur](#), § 4].

<sup>4</sup> A scholar and officer of *Lu*.

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necessary? They contend that respecting the great rain sacrifice of the *Ch'un-ch'iu* the commentators *Kung Yang* as well as *Ku Liang*, p2.335 in their comments, have no word of criticism, whence it is obvious that the rain sacrifice must be performed.

*Tsêng Hsi* in reply to a question of *Confucius* as to his wishes said,

[— At the eve of spring, when the spring dress is ready, along with five or six young men who have assumed the cap, and six or seven boys, I would dash through the *Yi*, carol among the dancing performers of the rain sacrifice <sup>1</sup>, and with songs make my offering <sup>2</sup>.

*Confucius* replied,

— I agree with *Tien*.] <sup>3</sup>

In *Lu* they used to hold the rain sacrifice on the banks of the *Yi*. The 'eve' is synonymous with late. Spring denotes the fourth moon; that the spring dress is ready means to say that the dress for the fourth moon is ready. Young men with caps and boys are those gamboling at the rain sacrifice. To dash through the *Yi* signifies to wade through its water in imitation of dragons rising from the water <sup>4</sup>. To carol among the dancing performers of the rain sacrifice is the same as to sing. With songs to make offerings means to sing hymns, and make some oblation for the sacrifice *i. e.*, to sing and sacrifice.

Some critics are of opinion that *yü* (to dash) means to bathe in the *Yi* river, and *fêng* (to carol) to dry the body. The fourth month of the *Chou* dynasty corresponds to the second month of the corrected year <sup>5</sup>. Then it is still cold, and no proper time for bathing or drying the body in the wind. Consequently wading through water, but evidently not bathing was a part of the rain sacrifice.

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<sup>1</sup> *Legge* translates : 'enjoy the breeze among the rain altars'. See Note 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Legge* : 'and return home singing'.

<sup>3</sup> [Analects XI, 25 \[Couvreur\]](#), VII. Cf. Vol. I, p. 520. I had to remodel my translation of the first volume, borrowed from *Legge*, in order to agree with *Wang Ch'ung's* comments.

<sup>4</sup> *Legge* has 'to wash', adding in his notes that this word is used with reference to a custom of washing the hands and clothes at some stream, to drive away evil influences.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 114, Note 8.

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In *Tso Ch'iu Ming's* commentary to the *Ch'un-ch'iu* it is said that, when the torpid insects begin to stir, it is time for the rain sacrifice, and also that, when the Dragon appears, the rain sacrifice p2.336 is offered <sup>1</sup>. The insects begin to move, and the Dragon becomes visible in the second month. The second month of spring is the time for the rain sacrifice, and the eighth month of autumn likewise. In spring they sue for grain rain, and in autumn, that the grain may bear fruit. Our present worship of the *Ling* constellation is the autumnal rain sacrifice. The vernal sacrifice has fallen into desuetude, and only the autumnal one remains. Thus the invocation of the *Ling* constellation is the yearly rain sacrifice <sup>2</sup>.

*Confucius* said 'I agree with *Tien*'. He approves of his wish to offer the rain sacrifice and harmonize the *Yin* and *Yang*. In this he concurs with him. If the rain sacrifice had not been proper, and *Tien* wished to have it performed, *Confucius* would have been obliged to reprove him instead of giving his assent.

*Fan Ch'ih* rambling with the master, was impressed by the rain sacrifice and asked the pertinent question why in *Lu* they did not exalt virtue, and merely cared for the rain sacrifice <sup>3</sup>. This sacrifice is of very old origin, for the *Liki* says that the rain sacrifice is an offering made in times of inundation and drought. Consequently it is based on custom. *Confucius* did not criticize it, and it was set forth by *Tung Chung Shu*. The rain sacrifice is an established rite. In the same manner as the rain sacrifice is based on custom, in case of high water drums are beaten, and animals immolated at the altars of the land, also an old custom. There being such a ceremony, it cannot be wrong <sup>4</sup>. This is the first justification of the rain sacrifice.

It is customary to sacrifice. We acknowledge the merits of the spirits of the land which produce all things. But the earth is of great extent, and it becomes difficult to sacrifice everywhere. Therefore the altars of the land

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<sup>1</sup> *Tso-chuan* to Duke *Huan* 5th year [[Couvreur](#)]. See also Vol. I, p. 520.

<sup>2</sup> *Legge* puts quite a different construction upon the words of *Tso Ch'iu Ming loc. cit.* See *Classics* Vol. V, Part I, p. 46, Note 7.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. [Analects XII, 21](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>4</sup> A strange argument.



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have been erected as centres of devout worship. Floods and droughts are the fluids of the *Yin* and *Yang*. Since they spread everywhere, it is difficult to sacrifice to all. Whence altars have been built to represent them, where they are implored with the greatest reverence. The worship is analogous to that of the spirits of the land, and with a view to removing calamitous events.

The dead are worshipped like the living, and ghosts, as though they were men. If the original fluid of the *Yin* and the <sup>p2.337</sup> *Yang* be like living man, can it eat and drink ? Under this supposition they are presented with perfumes, and offered the choicest dishes, all with the greatest care, with the hope that these offerings will be requited. This analogy with the sacrifices to the spirits of the land is the second justification for the rain sacrifice.

While the fluids of the year are in harmony, no calamities ensue ; still they prepare the rain sacrifice. The worship of the 'Ling' constellation is a very ancient custom, moreover the fluid of the year may suddenly change, and freshets and droughts are not subject to time, which accounts for the extreme fear of the ruler of men. Therefore, in addition to the oblations made to the 'Ling' constellation, they still offer the rain sacrifice with the idea that, should the former rites have been insufficient, the deficiency may be supplemented by repeating the sacrifice on a second day, and with a view to making good again the disaster caused by the calamity, and being rewarded with an abundant harvest. This is the third reason.

At a religious ceremony the heart feels distressed, and, when music is made, it is cheerful. The distressed disclose their sentiments by offering jewels and brocade, and the cheerful give expression to their feelings with bells and drums. The prayers at the rain sacrifice testify to the sincerity of the sovereign, but this sincerity resides in the heart, and does not become manifest without. Therefore all the alarm and anxiety is manifested by the rain sacrifice, and the previous sincerity of the heart thus revealed, which is the meaning of jewels and brocade, bells and drums <sup>1</sup>. This is the fourth argument.

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<sup>1</sup> Jewels and brocade are offered in sacrifice, and bells and drums sounded. The *Liki*, *Yüeh-ling*, p. 50v. ([Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 274](#)) [[Couvreur](#)] states that the instruments of music are employed at the great summer sacrifice for rain.

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A subject having offended against his sovereign, and a son having failed against his father, reform, when they are punished, and, moreover, acknowledge their guilt. Provided that droughts, which cause such an alarm, be brought about by government, then it would be like the offence of a subject, or the guilt of a son. If then the administration were quietly changed, and the proceedings stealthily altered, it would not appear without, and Heaven's anger could not be appeased. Therefore the rain sacrifice is necessary to show the anxiety. That is the fifth argument.

p2.338 The *Han* established the office of scholars of great learning who were to teach the youth the art of disputation with the object of probing every question to the bottom, and exposing the right and wrong principles. They were not to raise unnecessary difficulties, nor always to acquiesce, neither were they to be lavish of bitter criticisms, nor to give a sweet reply, whatever they heard. They guide the talents of their disciples, now bending them down, now raising them up, but for their benefit. Grinding a sword, we do not cut the whetstone, our only wish being to make it pointed <sup>1</sup>. By expounding the meaning of the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, we endeavour to elucidate the rain sacrifice, examining the view of *Confucius*, and scrutinising the ideas of *Tung Chung Shu*. Since *Confucius* is no more, and *Tung Chung Shu* is also dead, to whom in the world can we apply for instruction ? None but disciples of *Confucius* and followers of *Tung Chung Shu* <sup>2</sup> are qualified to give a satisfactory answer.

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<sup>1</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* seems to imply that he acts like the scholars of great learning, that his criticisms do not exceed the right measure, but are necessary to bring out the truth.

<sup>2</sup> Our author, obviously, claims to be such a disciple.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### Gentle Drums 46. XV, IV. *Shun-ku*

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p2.339 According to the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, [in time of high water the drums were beaten, and animals immolated at the altars of the spirits of the land] <sup>1</sup>. The expositors of the Classic hold that the drums symbolise an attack or compulsion, which is equivalent to an attack. The *Yang* <sup>2</sup> being paramount, the spirits of the land are attacked, to deliver people from the calamity.

Some one might object that an attack upon the spirits implies victory and defeat, and that such a measure cannot be in accordance with justice. A ruler of men honours Heaven like his father and Earth like his mother. In case the kindred of his mother had done mischief, would he attack his mother, in order to help his subjects ? He whose government is deficient and who throws the *Yin* and the *Yang* into disorder, is the sovereign. If, to restore order, instead of attacking himself, he violated all laws, and offended against august Heaven and Earth, would they bring him relief ?

Provided that an inundation injured Heaven, but that it were not injured by Earth, then the water might be warded off ; but now things have to suffer from the water. All the various things together are much inferior to Earth, and to violate her sacred body would be contrary to all principles <sup>3</sup>. The critics of the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, however, are unable to raise these objections.

Rain issues from mountains and flows into rivers <sup>4</sup>. Mountains and rivers are, therefore, nearly related to inundations. Yet when high water causes

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, Duke *Chuang* 25th year [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> I suppose that *Yin* should be written here, for at times of great floods the *Yin*, and not the *Yang* fluid preponderates. See below p. 345 seq.

<sup>3</sup> It would be improper to hurt the sacred body of Earth, by attacking the spirits of the land, merely for the sake of the various things injured by an inundation. Neither Heaven nor Earth are materially affected by floods.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Vol I, p. 277.

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disaster, they do not attack mountains or rivers.

The altars of the land are earth. As regards the nature of the Five Elements, water and earth are quite dissimilar. When <sup>p2.340</sup> water does evil, earth is attacked. Earth is stronger than water. This is the idea underlying the attack upon the spirits of the land.

Is it not like the workmen of our time using a hammer and a chisel ? With the hammer they beat the chisel, and make it enter the wood. Now, by attacking earth, do they cause it to subdue water ?

Furthermore, the object of attacking the spirits of the land is to assault the kindred of the *Yin* <sup>1</sup>. Suppose that *A* is a robber who has wounded people. *A* is there and has not fled, but the injured let him go and attack *B*. Would they stop *A* from committing more crimes in this way ? Rain is water, and the water is there, but in lieu of assaulting water, they attack the spirits of the land.

When Heaven is going to rain, the mountains first emit clouds, which gather and become rain. The rain flows and becomes water. Thus the mountains are the parents, and water is their progeny. In capital punishment even relatives are implicated, but does the punishment attain ascendants and descendants only, or even the friends of the criminal ? If mountains and water as well as the altars of the land are held to be related to rain, which of them are the nearest relatives <sup>2</sup> ? The altars of the land are earth. The fluids of the Five Elements are different and vary very much <sup>3</sup>.

In the time of *T'ai Mou* of the *Yin* dynasty a mulberry and a paper-mulberry grew together. Some say that *Kao Tsung* terrified began to practise virtue with stooping body. He would ponder over the government of former kings, illustrate the principle of feeding the old, regenerate extinguished States, re-establish the succession of extinct princely houses, and raise obscure scholars. Upon this the two trees died, and he enjoyed his

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<sup>1</sup> Heaven is *Yang* and Earth is *Yin* and so far the kindred of water which is *Yin* also.

<sup>2</sup> Mountains and water of course, the parents and the progeny of rain as *Wang Ch'ung* puts it.

<sup>3</sup> Therefore earth and water should not be interchanged, nor earth be made responsible for inundations.

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government for a long time. This story was universally known in the 'Spring and Autumn' period. Floods are not different from the extraordinary phenomenon of the mulberry trees, yet the king of *Yin* changed his government, whereas in the *Ch'un-ch'iu* era they attacked the spirits of the land. The two methods are conflicting ; which of them must be followed ?

In the time of King *Ch'êng* of *Chou*, a tempest broke loose over the empire, with thunder and rain. The grain lay down, p2.341 trees were uprooted, and the damage was enormous. King *Ch'êng* opened the book from the metal-bound coffer, to inquire what was to be done, and about the merit of the Duke of *Chou*. He held the book in his hands with tears in his eyes, and lo ! the rain ceased, and the wind stopped. The grain rose again, and the big trees were raised up again <sup>1</sup>.

Great rain and continual floods are of the same nature. King *Ch'êng* changed his faults, and in the *Ch'un-ch'iu* period they attacked the spirits of the land. Since the views of the two Classics disagree, what is to be done ?

When insects eat the grain of the crops, those well versed in the calendar, cause the officers, whom they liken to the insects, to be flogged and maltreated, for the purpose of removing the calamity <sup>2</sup>. If we thoroughly go into the question, we find that this is not right, but it is done out of regards to the public feeling.

Now, is it the government which brings about the rain, or the officers ? If neither the government is changed, nor the officers are punished, and merely the spirits of the land attacked, how can this put a stop to the rain ?

Provided that the same kind must be attacked, then the moon is the essence of all the *Yin*. When we hold up a moon-mirror towards the moon, water comes down <sup>3</sup>. The moon approaching the Hyades or leaving the constellation of the 'House' from the north, it nearly always inevitably rains <sup>4</sup>. The animals in the moon are the hare and the toad <sup>5</sup>. Their counterparts on

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 17 seq.

<sup>2</sup> For more details on this peculiar custom see chap. XXXIV.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 351 and *Huai nan Tse* III, 2r.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 328.

<sup>5</sup> See Vol. I, p. 268.

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earth are snails and corn-weevils. When the moon is eclipsed in the sky, snails and corn-weevils decrease on earth, which proves that they are of the same kind <sup>1</sup>. When it rains without ceasing, one attacks all that belongs to the *Yin*. To obtain a result one ought to hunt and kill hares and toads, and smash snails and corn-weevils.

When locusts appear, they either pass flying or they alight, and wherever they alight, all grain and grass wither and die. The officers and underlings direct the people to draw furrows and dig moats, and with rattles to drive the locusts into them. There they p2.342 scrape together heaps of locusts, thousands and thousands of bushels, but, although they attack the locusts themselves, they cannot stop them. Now, what would be the effect of an attack upon the kind of the *Yin* ? How could rain be checked thereby ?

We read in the *Shang-shu ta-chuan* <sup>2</sup> :

« When there are inauspicious vapours, and the sacrifices to Heaven and Earth are neglected, mountains and rivers not prayed to, wind and rain not in season, and frost and snow fail to come down, the minister of Heaven is held answerable. When officers frequently assassinate their prince, and illegitimate sons murder their progenitor, the five relationships being in discord, the minister of Men is made responsible. When the city walls are not refitted, and ditches and moats in bad repair, the springs not flowing, and the people visited with floods, then the minister of Earth bears the responsibility.

The king as well as the three ministers <sup>3</sup> all have their functions, and the

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> It is a work written by *Fu Shêng*, the preserver of the *Shuking* of the 2nd and 3rd cent. B. C. Cf. Vol. I, p. 447, Note 2, and *Giles, Bibl. Dict.* No. 599. According to *Chang Chih Tung's Bibliography* the work is still in existence.

<sup>3</sup> This expression usually denotes the three chief ministers of the *Chou* dynasty : [] Grand Tutor, [] Grand Assistant, and [] Grand Protector, mentioned in the *Shuking* Part V, Book XX, 5 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part II, p. 527](#)) [[Couvreur](#)]. The titles given to them in the *Shang-shu ta-chuan* : minister of Heaven, of Men, and of Earth, seem not to occur elsewhere ; the *Pei-wên-yün-fu* ignores them. They bear some resemblance to the 'officer of Heaven' and the 'officer of Earth' of the *Chou-li*, who have been identified with the 'prime minister' and the 'minister of Instruction' of the *Shuking*. Cf. *Legge, loc. cit.* p. 528, Notes 7 and 8.

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princes, lords, and high officers all have their special duties. Now floods are not laid at the charge of lords and high officers, but drums are beaten, and the spirits of the land attacked. How do we know but that this is wrong and that *Lu* acted contrary to the rites ? *Confucius* writing the Classic mentioned the incident as a warning against malpractices. *Kung Yang Kao* <sup>1</sup> could not fathom it, and *Tung Chung Shu*, not determine its meaning, so that, p2.343 at present, the idea of attacking the spirits of the land is again being put forward.

If *Kung Yang Kao* were still alive, and *Tung Chung Shu* not dead, we might nonplus them with the following argument : When, after a long rain, the waters rise and flow over, who is responsible for it ? If it be the ruler, then he must change his government, and amend his dealings, to stop them. If it be his ministers, they must suffer the penalties of their crimes, to appease Heaven. Should it be neither the sovereign nor his ministers, but the fluids of the *Yin* and *Yang* viz. their fortuitous revolutions, of what use would be the beating of drums and the attacking of the spirits of the land ?

In the 'Remarks on the *Ch'un-ch'iu*' <sup>2</sup> it is said :

« The sovereign boiling over, causes droughts, plunged in dissipation, he causes floods.

Accordingly, in times of drought, one must commit acts of dissipation, and, in case of floods, proceed in a hot-headed way. Why then attack the spirits of the land ? This attack is inexplicable. Besides they draw round red silk, which is likewise unaccountable <sup>3</sup>. They endeavour to explain it by the supposition that the altars correspond to the *Yin*, and red to the *Yang*. Water, being *Yin*, becomes surrounded by the colour of *Yang*, which cooperates with the drums in bringing relief.

If a big mountain catches fire and is sprinkled with water from a pool,

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<sup>1</sup> In his commentary to the above quoted passage of the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, *Kung Yang* says that the ceremony was correct.

<sup>2</sup> Apparently a work on the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, but not enumerated in the Catalogue of the *Hou Han-shu*.

<sup>3</sup> *Kung Yang loc. cit.* refers to this custom and gives a similar explanation as here given.

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every one knows the uselessness of such a measure, because the fire is much too intense, and the water too little to quench the flames. Now, the inundation of a State is like a big mountain on fire. To draw such a silken thread round the altars of the spirits of the land for help, would be like sprinkling a big mountain with water from a pool.

To understand the mind of Heaven, one takes human thoughts as a starting point, and to form an idea of Heaven's government, one considers human actions <sup>1</sup>. At a battle, victory cannot be won, unless the combatants try conclusions man to man, and measure swords. Now, if in a State suffering from floods they really wished to attack the *Yang*, in order to extinguish the fluid, and if they sent forth all their men, armed with spears, and swords in hand, p2.344 to smite it, as at the end of the year, they expel sickness, then perhaps a success might be achieved. When in the struggle between *Ch'u* and *Han* <sup>2</sup> and in the time of the Six States, they flew to arms, the stronger held the field, and the weaker were defeated. If one man alone assaults the spirits, beating the drum, without force of arms, what can he do against the rain ?

Sunshine and rain are like day and night, and met with as *Yao* and *T'ang* encountered the flood and the drought. They are also like summer and winter. Should anybody desire to sacrifice to them, according to human custom, in order to check their changes, trying to turn winter into summer, or night into day, would he be successful ? In case that it rains uninterruptedly, and that the sovereign quietly reclines on his high couch, the rain stops, all the same, of itself, and after having stopped for a long time, so that a great dryness has been the consequence, it also begins to rain afresh, spontaneously, even though the sovereign remains inactive on his pillows. Why ? Because the *Yang* having reached its climax, suddenly turns into the *Yin*, and the *Yin* having gone to extremes, again turns into the *Yang*.

How do we know but that the floods of heaven and earth are like the 'water sickness' of mankind, and whether a drought is not like jaundice among men ? By prayers and supplications for happiness they are not to be

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 287.

<sup>2</sup> The struggle between *Hsiang Yü* who had made himself king of *Ch'u* and *Liu Pang*, the later *Han Kao Tsu*.



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cured, and a change of conduct or reforms are of no avail. By using a physician and taking medicines, they may perhaps still be cured, but, when life is at an end, and one's time is up, no doctor and no medicine can help.

The Great Flood, which *Yao* fell in with, is the high water of the *Ch'un-ch'iu*. The wise ruler understood its nature, and did not invoke the spirits, or change his government, but he employed *Yü*, to regulate the water and make all the rivers run eastward. *Yao's* employment of *Yü* for the regulation of the water is like a dropsical man's recourse to a doctor. The Great Flood of *Yao*, therefore, is the 'water sickness' of heaven and earth, and *Yü*, regulating the water, was the clever doctor of the Great Flood. Wherefore did the critics change all this ? The attack on the spirits of the land is not justified by facts.

In case of incessant rain, they sacrifice to *Nü Wa* <sup>1</sup>. The Rites know nothing of this. *Fu Hsi* and *Nü Wa* were both sages ; that, p2.345 omitting *Fu Hsi*, *Nü Wa* is to be sacrificed to, is not stated in the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, on what then does *Tung Chung Shu* base his suggestion ? <sup>2</sup>

The Classic of the 'Spring and Autumn' speaks of drums only ; why does that mean to attack ? The critics reading the word 'drums', imagine that it means attacking, but drums need not necessarily refer to an attack. This view of the critics is erroneous.

[The head of the *Chi* family was richer than the duke of *Chou* had been, and yet *Ch'iu* collected his imposts for him, and increased his wealth. *Confucius* said,

— He is no disciple of mine. My children, you may beat the drum and scold <sup>3</sup> him.] <sup>4</sup>

Scolding means reproving, and reproving, recriminating. From the mutual armed attacks of the Six States an objection cannot be derived here <sup>5</sup>. But

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<sup>1</sup> See below p. 347.

<sup>2</sup> The suggestion that *Nü Wa* should be sacrificed to.

<sup>3</sup> The same word which in the foregoing discussions is used in the sense of attacking.

<sup>4</sup> [Analects XI, 16](#) [[Couvreur](#)]. Cf. p. 55.

<sup>5</sup> The objection that [a] should be taken in the sense of 'attack' in the passage of the *Analects*, as it must be understood in regard to the struggles of the Six States.

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this course would likewise be improper <sup>1</sup>. For a mean person to reprove an exalted one, is impertinent <sup>2</sup>. But may be that in reprovng he acts under instructions from Heaven. The emperor treats Earth as his mother. A mother having committed some fault, can her son be charged by his father to reprove her? As to explanations of that sort between inferiors and superiors, a subject has solely the right to remonstrate, whereas the ruler may reprove and recriminate. Why then violate all the rules of propriety?

It is a human custom to reinforce cries and intensify shouts by drums. Of old, when a ruler was about to go out, bells were struck and drums beaten, to frighten and warn off low class people <sup>3</sup>. If drums were really beaten for the purpose of assailing the spirits of the land, then the sound of bells and the roll of drums would mean an aggression and an onslaught on the highest powers.

At inundations, drums are most likely used to address the spirits of the land a second time. When the *Yin* is in its apex, the rain pours down unceasingly, *Yin* reigns supreme, and *Yang* is <sup>p2.346</sup> weak. This is not the proper course of things. Since oral supplications are inadequate, drums are employed, to assist the prayers in the same manner as, at an eclipse of the sun, drums are beaten and animals sacrificed at the altars of the land <sup>4</sup>. All this is done, to inform the spirits of the urgent need, and to show the undue preponderance of the *Yin*.

In important and urgent matters bells and drums are used, in small and indifferent ones, jingles and fives <sup>5</sup>. They make known what has happened, announce the urgency, and help the voice of the petitioner. Great principles are difficult to know. Provided that great floods and long inundations be occasioned by government, the urgent need is announced first nevertheless. But this is a government affair. When robberies are rife, the proceeding is the same. Robberies are likewise the upshot of government. As soon as the loss

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<sup>1</sup> The word [a], used concerning the high water sacrifice, cannot be explained by scolding or reprovng.

<sup>2</sup> Men are mean, compared with the spirits of the land, whom they are supposed to attack.

<sup>3</sup> Now gongs are used for the same purpose.

<sup>4</sup> This custom is mentioned in the above quoted passage of the *Ch'un-ch'iu*.

<sup>5</sup> Neither *Kanghi* nor the *Chêng-tse-t'ung* know this character. It is perhaps a misprint for [], a fife or a shrill pipe used to exhort people to work, as the dictionaries say.

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has been ascertained, in this case also an announcement is first made. The beating of drums and immolating of the animals at the altars of the land is the publication. The spirits of the land are the chiefs of all the *Yin*, therefore they are informed by the beating of drums.

Those who maintain that drums imply an attack, attack a mother. Such an impiety is the consequence of this view. Now, if we say that it is an announcement of the preponderance of the *Yin* and the impotence of the *Yang*, the difficulty of assaulting a venerable being does not arise. Moreover, an announcement agrees well with the offering of an animal, but a sacrifice does not tally with an assault. To immolate an animal, while making an announcement, is according to the rites, but is there any rule prescribing the combination of an attack and a sacrifice ?

Red silk in the shape of a cord points to heat. Because the hot fluid is exhausted, one uses such a small thing. By driving in a needle one inch long, and by rubbing a ball of moxa over a vein, a violent disease may be cured. Red silk is like a needle an inch long and a ball of moxa.

*Wu* attacked and defeated *Ch'u* <sup>1</sup>. King *Chao* fled, and *Shên Pao Hsü* <sup>2</sup> took an opportunity to walk afoot to *Ch'in*. With plenty <sub>p2.347</sub> of tears he asked for help, and finally obtained auxiliary troops with which he repulsed *Wu* and saved *Ch'u*. How does a drummer beat the drum ? Provided that he be as upright as *Shên Pao Hsü*, then one single person may eventually suffice to beat the drum. If one man beat the drum, then it might be possible to prevail upon the spirits of the land, that they feel the same pity as the king of *Ch'in*, and with earth overcome the power of water, averting and stopping the clouds and the rain. The fluids of clouds and rain cause fears like that of *Wu*. When they disperse, reverting into the mountains, the harrassed people are blessed with sunshine and repose, enjoying the peace of the kingdom of *Ch'u*.

[‘When a strong wind blows, and the thunderclaps quickly follow each other, a superior man will be deeply moved. Though it be night, he will rise, don his clothes and cap and sit up’,] <sup>3</sup> apprehending an untoward accident.

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<sup>1</sup> In 506 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> A grandson of a ruler of *Ch'u*. See *Giles, Bibl. Dict.* No. 1697.

<sup>3</sup> Quotation from the *Liki*. Cf. Vol. I, p. 296, Note 1.

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Water and drought are like thunder and storm. Though it be natural phenomena, subject to certain laws, it would show a want of sympathy for the troubles of the people, if the sovereign were to recline apathetically on the bulging pillows of his bed-chamber, awaiting a change.

*Yao* did not immolate, which was perhaps owing to the simplicity of primitive times. *T'sang Hsieh* invented writing, and *Hsi Chung* wrought carts. Can the inventions of later generations be condemned, on the plea that in former ages writing and carts were unknown ? When the times are the same, but doings differ, difficulties may arise. Different ages, however, have different customs, which do not exclude each other <sup>1</sup>.

People painting pictures of *Nü Wa*, make a likeness of a lady and give it the appellative *Nü* (woman). In accordance with the view of *Tung Chung Shu*, the name *Nü Wa* was first introduced as designation for a lady and a ruler of ancient times. *Yang* is male, and *Yin* female. Since the *Yin* fluid causes disasters, *Nü Wa* is sacrificed to, to implore her protection.

There is a tradition that *Kung Kung*, fighting with *Chuan Hsü* for the imperial dignity, was vanquished, and, in his wrath, knocked against Mount *Pu Chou*, causing the 'Pillar of Heaven' to break and the confines of the earth to be smashed. *Nü Wa* melted five-coloured stones, and repaired the blue sky, and having cut the legs of a sea-turtle, erected them at the four poles <sup>2</sup>. When p2.348 *Tung Chung Shu* sacrificed to *Nü Wa*, this tradition first became current. Originally, there was a goddess who repaired the blue sky and erected the four poles. Provided that, the fluid of Heaven being in disharmony and the *Yang* principle vanquished, *Nü Wa* with her spiritual force helped a wise emperor, would she be able to check the rain showers ?

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<sup>1</sup> Therefore *Yao's* not immolating does not tell against the later custom.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 250.

## CHAPTER XXXII

### Last Word on Dragons <sup>1</sup>

47. XVI, I. *Luan-lung*

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p2.349 *Tung Chung Shu* explained the rain-sacrifice of the *Ch'un-ch'iu* and set up a clay dragon to attract rain, his idea being that clouds and dragons affect each other. The *Yiking* says that the clouds follow the dragon, and wind, the tiger <sup>2</sup>. With a view to this sympathetic action, he put up the clay dragon. *Yin* and *Yang* follow their species, and clouds and rain arrive as a matter of course.

Scholars might raise the following question : The *Yiking*, speaking of clouds following the dragon, means a real dragon ; how can it be a clay dragon ?

The Duke of *Shê* in *Ch'u* <sup>3</sup> was very partial to dragons. On all his walls, panels, plates, and dishes he had them painted <sup>4</sup>. If these semblances must be looked upon like genuine ones, then there must have been a continual rainfall in the State of the Duke of *Shê*.

The *Yiking* also says that wind follows the tiger, that means that, when the tiger howls, wind blows from the valley <sup>5</sup>. There being likewise a sympathetic fluid between wind and the tiger, would a clay figure of a tiger, set up in a valley, also attract wind ? If a clay tiger cannot attract wind, how could a clay dragon bring down rain ?

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter is not to the credit of our author, who here shows himself as credulous and unjudicious as those of his countrymen whose superstitions he likes to expose.

<sup>2</sup> See Vol. I, p. 356, Note 2.

<sup>3</sup> A contemporary of *Confucius* of the name of *Tse Kao*, mentioned in *Chuang Tse* (*Giles'* translation p. 45). *Shê* was a district of *Ch'u*.

<sup>4</sup> The duke was so fond of dragons, that, in his residence, he had many dragon ornaments carved. The heavenly dragon, hearing of it, once made its appearance, looking through the window and dragging its tail through the hall. By this unexpected aspect the duke was frightened out of his wits. *K'ung Tse chi-yü* I, 2v. quoting *Shên Tse*.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 279, Note 2.

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In ancient times, they used to rear dragons, which they yoked to their carriages. Hence there was a dragon-keeper and a master p2.350 of the dragons. In the palace of the *Hsia* emperors there were always two dragons, but in the last year of this dynasty, when its downfall was impending, they absconded <sup>1</sup>. Even so long as real dragons were on earth, there were no clouds and no rain. What can be expected of fictitious semblances then ?

According to the Book of Rites the shape of thunder was represented on an ornamented thunder-goblet <sup>2</sup>, but we do not hear that this thunder-goblet could attract thunder. How then should a clay dragon occasion a rainfall ? Amber <sup>3</sup> takes up straws, and a load-stone attracts needles, but under condition that they are genuine, for they cannot borrow from other species. Other species, resembling them, cannot take up or attract things. Why ? Because the nature of the fluid being different, no mutual influence is possible.

*Liu Tse Chün* <sup>4</sup> directed the rain sacrifice and took care of the clay dragon. *Huan Chün Shan* also took exception, on the ground that amber and the loadstone could not take up needles or raise straws, unless they were genuine. *Liu Tse Chün* was at a loss for an answer. He was a *Han* scholar of vast erudition and a prolific writer, yet he was embarrassed. That does not prove that the proposed sacrifices were a mistake, but solely that he did not know their real reason. I say :

I. The objection that the dragon was not genuine, is all right, but it is wrong not to insist on relationship. When an east wind blows, wine flows over, and [when a whale dies, a comet appears.] <sup>5</sup> The principle of Heaven is spontaneity, and does not resemble human activity, being essentially like that

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<sup>1</sup> Vol. I, p. 354 seq.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 293, Note 1.

<sup>3</sup> See on amber the learned paper of *B. Laufer, Historical Jottings on Amber in Asia* (Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association Vol. I, Part 3, 1907) who refers to this passage as the first literary mention of amber in China. The words quoted by *Laufer* p. 218, Note 3 : `tun-mou is identical with hu-p'o=amber' does not occur in the *Lun-hêng*, and must be a gloss.

<sup>4</sup> Son of *Liu Hsiang*, more generally known under the name of *Liu Hsin*, a celebrated scholar like his father. He lived in the 1st cent. B. C. and A. D. and was a *protégé* of *Wang Mang*. His studies included the *Yiking* and occult arts.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted from *Huai Nan Tse* III, 2r.

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affinity between clouds and dragons. The sun is fire, and the moon is water. Fire and water are always affected by genuine fluids. Now, physicists <sup>T</sup> cast p2.351 burning-glasses wherewith to catch the flying fire from the sun, and they produce moon-mirrors to draw the water from the moon <sup>1</sup>. That is not spontaneity, yet Heaven agrees to it. A clay dragon is not genuine either, but why should it not be apt to affect Heaven ?

II. With a burning-glass one draws fire from Heaven. In the fifth month, on a *ping-wu* day at noon, they melt five stones, and cast an instrument with which they obtain fire. Now, without further ceremony, they also take the crooked hooks on swords and blades, rub them, hold them up towards the sun, and likewise affect Heaven <sup>2</sup>. If a clay dragon cannot be compared with a burning-glass, it can at least be placed on a level with those crooked hooks on swords and blades.

III. Prince *Mêng Ch'ang* of *Ch'i* wished to pass through the gate of *Ch'in* during the night, but the gate was not yet open. A companion of his imitated the cock-crow, and a veritable cock responded <sup>3</sup>. Since a cock could be roused by a false crow, rain can also be caused by fictitious effigies.

IV. When *Li Tse Chang* was at the head of the government, he wished to see clear in criminal affairs. He, therefore, caused a human figure, resembling a criminal, to be made of *wu-tung* wood. A pit was dug in the earth, a coffin made of rushes, and the wooden criminal placed into it. Whenever the punishment of a criminal was just, the wooden criminal did not move, but, when he had to complain of unjust and cruel treatment, the wooden figure moved and came out. Did the spirit of the criminals enter the wooden figure, or did the spiritual fluid operate upon it ? <sup>4</sup> At all events, the spirit affected the wooden criminal <sup>5</sup> ; why then should a clay dragon not have the same effect ?

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<sup>1</sup> *Vid.* p. 341.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 378.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 132.

<sup>4</sup> The *Pei-wên-yün-fu* quotes this passage but slightly altered.

<sup>5</sup> It is strange that a man as critical as *Wang Ch'ung* should believe such a story.

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V. When *Shun* with his holy virtue went into the wilds of the big mountain forests <sup>1</sup>, tigers and wolves did not hurt, and snakes and serpents did not injure him. *Yü* cast metal tripods, on which he shaped the figures of a hundred objects. These tripods were carried into the mountain woods, where they averted noxious influences <sup>2</sup>. Many critics contend that this is not true, but those times of <sub>p2.352</sub> highest antiquity are long ago, and the spirits of the *Chou* tripods must have existed <sup>3</sup>. Metal and earth both belong to the Five Elements. Provided that the virtue of him who forms the clay dragon equals that of *Yü*, it must also have the power to attract clouds and rain.

VI. Amber takes up straws. The horse-shoe magnet resembles it, but a magnet is not amber. Both can attract small things. A clay dragon is not real either, but it must be compared and be classed with a horse-shoe magnet.

VII. The duke of *Shê* in *Ch'u* had a *penchant* for dragons : on walls, panels, vases, and goblets he had pictures of dragons painted. A genuine dragon heard of it and came down. Dragons, clouds, and rain are of the same fluid, wherefore they can mutually affect each other, following their species. By making pictures, the duke of *Shê* succeeded in bringing down a real dragon. Why should it not be possible, now, to attract clouds and rain ?

VIII. Spirits speak to men by images, and not by realities. While asleep, they perceive these images in their dreams. When things are going to be lucky, lucky images arrive, and, when they are going to be unlucky, inauspicious signs appear. The fluid of spirits is of the same class as that of clouds and rain <sup>4</sup>.

IX. Spirits show the truth by images ; wherefore can clay dragons alone not attract the real by what is unreal ? In remote antiquity, there were two brothers, *Shên Shu* and *Yü Lü*, possessing the power to dominate ghosts. They lived on the *Tu-so* Mountain in the eastern Sea, where, under a peach-

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Shuking* Part II, Book I, 2 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part I, p. 32](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 505 seq.

<sup>3</sup> In Vol. I, p. 506 *Wang Ch'ung* denies that these tripods had any supernatural forces.

<sup>4</sup> The purport of this somewhat misty argument seems to be that a clay image must suffice for clouds and rain, just as images and omens are correlates of spirits.



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tree, they looked after the hundred ghosts. The reckless ones who maliciously caused human misfortune, were bound by *Shên Shu* and *Yü Lü* with cords of reeds, and thrown before tigers, to be devoured. Therefore, the district magistrates of our time are in the habit of having peach-trees cut down and carved into human statues, which they place by the gate, and they paint the shapes of tigers on the door-screens <sup>1</sup>. Peach-wood men are not *Shên Shu* and *Yü Lü*, nor painted tigers, such as devour ghosts. These carvings and paintings of images <sub>p2.353</sub> are intended to ward off evil influences. Now, clay dragons are not real dragons attracting rain either. But people believe only in peach-wood men and painted tigers, and know nothing of clay dragons.

X. True, these are but arguments from ancient books, for which no strict proofs are to be found. However, *Lu Pan* and *Mê Tse* carved wooden kites which could fly three days without alighting, very ingenious inventions indeed <sup>2</sup>. If the formers of clay dragons have the talents of *Lu Pan* and *Mê Tse*, their productions can be similar to these wooden kites, flying without alighting. The fluid of flying kites is the fluid of clouds and rain, an air which causes the wooden kites to fly. Why should it not be able to follow a clay dragon ?

XI. It cannot be said that the fluid of clouds and rain is more intelligent than that of flying kites. Anglers make fishes out of wood, the bodies of which they cover with red varnish. Going to a current, they throw them into the water, where they rise in the stream and move. The fish take them for real ones, and all gather round them. A piece of red wood is not a real fish, for fish have blood and possess knowledge. Still they allow themselves to be duped by a semblance. The knowledge of clouds and rain cannot be greater than that of fish. How could they have misgivings, on beholding a clay dragon ?

XII. However, these are fish whose intelligence falls short of that of mankind. The *Hsiung-nu* were in respectful awe of the power of *Chih Tu* <sup>3</sup>. A

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 244, Note 1.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 498, Notes 2 and 3, and *Huai Nan Tse* XI, 14v.

<sup>3</sup> A general of *Han Ching Ti*, who in 142 B. C. made an attack upon the *Hsiung-nu*. He

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figure of him was carved in wood. The *Hsiung-nu* shot at it, arrow after arrow, but could not hit it once. We ignore the fact whether the spirit of *Chih Tu* was residing in the figure, or whether, since he was dead, the spirits of the *Hsiung-nu*, doing homage to his ghost, were in the wood. If the mind of *Chih Tu* was in the statue, the spirit of the heavenly dragon must likewise be in the clay dragon, and in case the spirits of the *Hsiung-nu* clung to the wood, then the minds of those offering the rain sacrifice must be in the clay dragon as well. p2.354

XIII. *Chin Wêng Shu* was the heir-prince of the King of *Hsiu Ch'u*<sup>1</sup>. Together with his father he went to submit to the *Han*. His father having died on the road, he went with his mother, and received the rank of an imperial prince (*chi-tu-yü*). When his mother had died, *Wu Ti* caused her portrait to be painted in the *Kan-ch'üan* palace with the inscription : Consort of King *Hsiu Ch'u*, née *Yen*<sup>2</sup>. *Chin Wêng Shu*, accompanying the emperor, went up to the *Kan-ch'üan* palace. There he stood paying his respects, and turned towards the pictures, he wept, that his tears moistened his garment. It was a long while before he went away. The portrait was not his mother in person, yet, when he saw her features, his tears burst forth. At the thought of his beloved parent, his feelings were touched, and he did not expect reality. A clay dragon is like the picture of the *Kan-ch'üan* palace. Why should clouds and rain, on perceiving it, not be moved ?

XIV. But this was the story of a savage only. *Yu Jo*<sup>3</sup> resembled *Confucius*. After the decease of *Confucius*, his disciples would sit together, affectionately thinking of their master. *Yu Jo* occupied his seat. The disciples were aware

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was a man of great courage and a stem character, who received the sobriquet 'Grey Eagle'. When he died a figure of wood, resembling him, was carved and placed in view of the *Hsiung-nu* at *Yen-mên*. They shot at it, but, being too much afraid, did not hit it. This is the simple version of the *Shi-chi* (*Pei-wên-yün-fu*), favourably contrasting with *Wang Ch'ung's* mysticism.

<sup>1</sup> *Chin Mi Ti*, styled *Wêng Shu*, the son of *Hsiu Ch'u*, a khan of the *Hsiung-nu*, was first made a government slave and afterwards raised to high honours, when he received a Chinese name. He died B. C. 86. See *Giles, Bibl. Dict.* No. 382.

<sup>2</sup> The words of the text give no sense. In the biography of *Chin Mi Ti*, *Han-shu* chap. 68, p. 21r. the last two words are written [], the family name of the mother of *Chin Mi Ti*, which should be inserted for the spurious [].

<sup>3</sup> A disciple of *Confucius*. Cf. Vol. I, p. 360.

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that *Yu Jo* was not *Confucius*, still they sat together, and did homage to him. In case the intelligence of clouds and rain equals that of the disciples, their thoughts would be touched, although they knew that it was a clay dragon, and not a veritable one, and they would make their appearance.

XV. The disciples of *Confucius* had their doubts about the features of *Yu Jo*, and therefore merely said that he resembled *Confucius*. The emperor *Wu Ti* was very fond of his consort, Lady Li. When she died, he pondered whether he could not see her figure again. The Taoists made an artificial figure of the lady, which passed through the palace-gate. When the emperor beheld her, he did not ignore that she was not real, albeit yet he was <sup>p2.355</sup> so moved, that, full of joy, he went near her <sup>1</sup>. If the fluids of clouds and rain be like the heart of *Wu Ti*, their tender passion is roused, and they appear in spite of their knowledge of the unreality of the clay dragon.

In addition to these fifteen arguments, there are still four analogies :

I. At the beginning of spring, when the ground is tilled in the east, they mould clay figures, a man and a woman, both holding a plough and a hoe in their hands, or they set up a clay ox <sup>2</sup>. These cannot labour the ground, but they correspond to the season, and agree with the time, and are to exhort the common people to be industrious. Now, although it is obvious that a clay dragon cannot attract rain, it likewise accords with the summer time, and by its category favours a change of weather, the same idea which has led to the moulding of clay men and clay oxen.

II. According to the Rites the tablets in the ancestral temple are made of wood, one foot and two inches long, to represent a deceased ancestor <sup>3</sup>. A dutiful son, entering the hall, worships them with all his soul. Although he knows that these wooden tablets are not his parents, he must show them the greatest respect, and they call for his veneration. A clay dragon is like a

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<sup>1</sup> Vol. I, p. 97.

<sup>2</sup> The so called 'spring ox' already mentioned in the *Liki*. It used to be carried in procession during the last month of the year, to see the cold air off. This custom is still practised in many parts of China. See [De Groot, Fêtes à Emoui p. 92 seq.](#)

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 536, Note 1.

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wooden tablet ; even though it is not genuine, it exercises such an influence, that the image must be taken notice of.

III. Sages are cognisant of the uselessness of mud carts and straw figures <sup>1</sup>, but since they symbolise life, they do not dare to dispense with them. Putting up a clay dragon, one knows that it cannot cause rain, but it is symbolical like the mud carts and the straw figures, and has effect.

IV. The son of Heaven shoots at a bear, the princes at an elk, ministers and high officers at a tiger and a leopard, officers at a stag and a wild boar <sup>2</sup>, to illustrate the subjugation of the <sup>p2.356</sup> fierce. A piece of cloth is called target (*hou*) implying that unprincipled princes are to be shot <sup>3</sup>. Pictures of bears and elks are painted on the cloth, which is styled target (*hou*). It is right to appreciate these symbolical images and to choose names full of meaning. A clay dragon is like a cloth target upon which a bear and an elk are painted.

There are fifteen proofs, based on affinity, and four analogies, explaining the meaning by other customs. *Tung Chung Shu's* insight was immense, and his institutions are not inconsiderate. For putting up a clay dragon he had his good reasons. When a dragon suddenly emerges from the water, clouds and rain appear. Of old, as long as there used to be a dragon keeper and a master of the dragons, there were no clouds and no rain. It is like an unexpected meeting of old friends, who have been separated by a great distance. In their joy, they sing and laugh, or they turn sad, shed tears, and, for a while, are down-spirited. Their doings appear to be quite abnormal <sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> They were used at funerals in ancient and modern times. The dead are supposed to make use of them. See *Liki, T'an-kung*, p. 52r. ([Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 173](#)) [[Couvreur](#)] and also p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> This competition of archery was a great ceremony described in the *Liki, I-li*, and *Chou-li*. The latter work also speaks of the various targets, but the wild beasts allotted to the emperor and his officers are different from those here given (Cf. [Biot, Tscheou Li p. 138](#)).

<sup>3</sup> This explanation is mere fancy. Since the emperor took part in the shooting, one might as well say that the ceremony was meant as a warning for the emperor that he would be shot like a bear, in case he proved to be unprincipled.

<sup>4</sup> So it is with dragons. They did not attract clouds and rain, as long as they were domesticated and always there, but their sudden and unexpected arrival has this

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The *Yiking* says that clouds follow the dragon, but not that the dragon follows the clouds. On the cloud goblet, thunder and clouds were carved, but did the dragon deign to come down ? The scholiasts cannot explain this, so that *Huan Chün Shan* could urge his objections, which *Liu Tse Ch'ün* was unfit to meet. Owing to this inability, the remarks of *Tung Chung Shu* on dragons remained fragmentary. The *Lun-hêng* has supplemented them, 'A Last Word on Dragons' denoting a supplement.

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effect. The clouds are touched, so to say, and then drop their tears.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### The Tiger Trouble

48. XVI, II. *Tsao-hu*

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p2.357 The phenomenalists aver that the devouring of men by tigers is a consequence of the misdeeds of the high commissioners, their idea being that as the high commissioners are the chiefs of the officers, so tigers are the fiercest of beasts. The commissioners do mischief by fleecing their subordinates, therefore tigers devour men to accord with this idea.

Tigers eat men, but it likewise happens that men kill tigers. If they contend that, as tigers eat men, the commissioners plunder the officials, do the latter extort money from the commissioners, when men eat the tigers ?

In our age, there is not one unselfish and undefiled officer among a hundred, and all high commissioners have wicked designs <sup>1</sup>. By good connexions and old friendship one succeeds, and bribes of all sorts, big and small, are always welcome. If tigers are considered to correspond to high commissioners, tigers in the country always destroy people. Tigers come out at certain times, as dragons appear at fixed periods. The *Yin* creatures appear in winter, whereas *Yang* animals come out in summer <sup>2</sup>. Their appearance corresponds to their fluid, which prompts its corresponding species.

*Orion* and its sword come forth in winter, the '*Heart*' <sup>3</sup> and the '*Tail*' <sup>4</sup> become visible in summer. *Orion* and its sword are the constellation of tigers, the '*Heart*' and the '*Tail*', the heavenly signs of dragons. When these signs are visible, the creatures make their appearance, and the fluid supervening, the respective species is affected. Such is the nature of Heaven and Earth.

Those who move about in forests and marshes just fall in with tigers,

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<sup>1</sup> A hard judgment indeed.

<sup>2</sup> The tiger represents the masculine principle *Yang*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 127, Note 5.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 118, Note 2.

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which assault them and tear them to pieces. Tigers are endowed with fierceness. When they are greedy and hungry, and encounter a man arriving of his own accord, why should they <sup>p2.358</sup> not eat him ? Human muscles and sinews are weak and powerless, and man lacks agility, therefore meeting a tiger, he is sure to perish. If *Mêng Pên* ascends a mountain, or Mrs. *Fêng* <sup>1</sup> enters a wood, they do not succumb.

When *Confucius* was walking through a forest in *Lu*, a woman cried most mournfully. He sent *Tse Kung* to inquire, wherefore she cried so sadly. The woman replied,

— Last year a tiger devoured my husband, and this year it devoured my son, hence my lamentation.

*Tse Kung* rejoined,

— Why do you not leave the place under these circumstances ?

— Because, said the woman, I like the government which is not oppressive, and the officials who are not tyrannical.

*Tse Kung* went back, and reported what he had heard to his master. *Confucius* said,

— Remember, my disciples, that an oppressive government and tyrannical officials are worse than tigers. <sup>2</sup>

That tigers kill men has ever been the case. Government not being oppressive, and the officers not being tyrannical, the effects of virtue are apt to avert tigers. Nevertheless, those two individuals were eaten in two successive years, ergo the beasts in the forest did not conform to goodness. There being no such correspondence in the case of unselfish officials, it cannot be expected for depraved ones either.

Some say that tigers comport with the perversity of high commissioners, but that the so-called inoppressive government is not equivalent to these commissioners. The woman was under the rule of unselfish officers. but how

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<sup>1</sup> A lady of the seraglio of *Han Yuan Ti*, 1st cent. B. C., who once faced a bear that had escaped from its cage.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 145, Note 3.

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could good government operate upon tigers ? <sup>1</sup>

In *Lu* there were no high commissioners, who are nothing else than ministers of State. The ministers of *Lu* were not *Confucius* or *Mê Ti*, but members of the three families <sup>2</sup>. Their proceedings as ministers cannot have been recommendable. All power and influence being invested in persons devoid of virtue, their doings must have been wicked, and there can be no question of disinterestedness. If the depravity of ministers induces tigers to devour men, then those in the wilds of *Lu* must always have eaten men.

p2.359 The destruction in the water does not reach the hills, and the fluid on the hills does not enter into the water. All creatures fall a prey to their enemies which are near. Thus fish, caught by the fisherman, do not die on the mountains, and animals, chased by the hunter, do not dive into the pond <sup>3</sup>. If people like to rove through the mountain woods, to spy out obscure caverns, and intrude into the tiger's den, it cannot be a matter for surprise that the tiger pounces upon and devours them <sup>4</sup>.

Duke *Niu Ai* of *Lu*, during a sickness, was changed into a tiger, which attacked and devoured his elder brother <sup>5</sup>. People do not wonder at this simultaneous metamorphosis ; why then be surprised that in mountain forests, jungles, and marshes people are killed by tigers ? Snakes and vipers are very fierce, and likewise injurious to mankind. If somebody meets with a snake in a marsh, to which class of officials does it respond ? Wasps and scorpions hurt people, and so do poisonous exhalations, water, and lire. If a person is stung by a wasp or a scorpion, infected by poisonous air, burned in fire, or drowned in water, who has been the cause ?

Provided that there be a sort of relation between wild animals and officers or government, then all those animals living on mountains or in forests, such

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<sup>1</sup> Government as a whole could be bad, even though the local officials were good.

<sup>2</sup> The three noble families, *Mêng*, *Shu*, and *Chi* which in the time of *Confucius* were the real rulers of *Lu*, the reigning duke being more or less dependent upon them.

<sup>3</sup> The catching of fish is what *Wang Ch'ung* denotes by 'destruction in the water', and the hunting of animals what he calls the 'fluid, *i. e.* destructive, on the hills'.

<sup>4</sup> Remaining in their own places, where the destructive fluid of mountain forests *viz.* tigers do not intrude, people would be safe.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 326, Note 2.



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as elks, stags, wild boar, oxen, elephants, brown and spotted bears, wolves, and *rhinopithecus*, kill men. But should a correspondence be assumed only in case they eat men, then fleas, lice, mosquitoes, and gadflies all feed on men, yet the human body being so strong and big, it does not occasion its death. In times of famine, when food is dear, and the people starved, they go even the length of eating one another. Such an atrocity is far worse than tigers, but phenomenologists do not ascribe this to oppressive government.

Moreover, tigers do not only eat men : birds with blood in their veins, and animals with bodies, all afford them food. If a man eaten is believed to testify to the wickedness of the high commissioners, to which functionaries do other birds and animals refer, when devoured ? The tiger is a hairy mammal, and man a <sup>p.2360</sup> naked one. If a hairy mammal in its hunger eats a naked one, why must this be accounted an extraordinary phenomenon ?

Beyond the countries of the four classes of savages <sup>1</sup>, the Giants devour the Pigmies. The nature of tigers is like that of the *Man* and the *Yi*. <sup>2</sup>

Plains and large cities are not resorts for tigers. They thrive in mountain forests, jungles, and marshes. Supposing that a tiger's devouring a man is a correlate of the depravity of high commissioners, then in the districts of the plain with large cities, the commissioners must always be excellent, whereas in territories covered with mountains, woods, and marshes they are always culpable. Accordingly, the tiger's eating a man in the country, has its counterpart in the viciousness of the commissioners. But, when it happens that a tiger enters a city, and walks about among the people, do, at that time, the commissioners saunter about through lanes and alleys ? <sup>3</sup>

As a matter of fact, the killing of a man by a tiger in the country has nothing to do with government, but its appearance in a big city is a prodigy, for the tiger is a wild beast of the mountains and woods, and not domesticated. It lives in jungles, and cannot be tamed, and bears some

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<sup>1</sup> The barbarians living towards the four Quarters of China.

<sup>2</sup> The savages in the south and the west, here meaning savages in general.

<sup>3</sup> Provided that there be always a correspondence between the doings of tigers and high commissioners.

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resemblance to the common rat, which is not always visible, as it usually hides itself, and seldom comes out. As long as people live in happiness and tranquillity, rats do not stir, but scarcely is their felicity destroyed, and are dangers impending, when rats by their agitation indicate an extraordinary calamity <sup>1</sup>. The same holds good for tigers. While cities and districts enjoy peace and happiness, and the high officers have no trouble, tigers do not leave their hiding places, but no sooner are the high officers on the road to ruin, than tigers enter the cities, and wander about among the populace. The glory of the high officers being extinguished, their towns and cities sink to the level of a wilderness <sup>2</sup>.

Proceeding on this line of argument, we arrive at the conclusion that, when a man is eaten by a tiger, fate and time come <sup>p2.361</sup> into play. Fate being exhausted <sup>3</sup>, and time out of gear, the lustre of the body fades away, the flesh appears as a corpse, consequently the tiger eats it. It is a fortuitous coincidence according to the principles of Heaven that a tiger happens to eat a man, and that the high officers are just wicked. Thus, what is looked upon as an extraordinary phenomenon, is in harmony with the laws of Heaven.

In ancient and modern times all kinds of wild animals have served as inauspicious auguries, not tigers alone. Before the upper story of the *Ying* palace of the king of *Ch'u* was completed, a stag walked over its terrace. Some time after, the king expired. — Duke *Chao* of *Lu* going out one morning, a 'mainah' arrived, and began building its nest. Subsequently the *Chi* family expelled the duke, who fled to *Ch'i*, where he afterwards died without returning to his own country <sup>4</sup>.

*Chia Yi* was privy councillor to the king of *Ch'ang-sha*. A screech owl perched on his house <sup>5</sup>. He opened his book and divined that he was going to

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<sup>1</sup> The *Han-shu* relates that, when the kings of *Kuang-ling* and *Yen* were going to stir up an insurrection, rats were observed dancing in their palaces. Even with us rats are credited with some kind of prescience, for we say that rats leave a ship which is going to be wrecked.

<sup>2</sup> For this reason they are visited by tigers.

<sup>3</sup> Fate is looked upon as something material of which there may be greater or smaller quantities.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 162.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. p. 313, Note 4.

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leave his master, and, later on, he was transferred to be councillor to the king of *Liang*. King *Huai*<sup>1</sup> was fond of riding, but was thrown from his horse, and breathed his last. *Chia Yi* took this death so much to heart, that he contracted a disease and died likewise. — In the time of the king of *Ch'ang-yi*<sup>2</sup>, an exotic partridge alighted under a palace hall, and was shot by the king, who questioned the steward of the palace, *Kung Sui*<sup>3</sup>. *Kung Sui* replied that the entering of an exotic partridge, a wild bird, into the palace was an augury of death. Subsequently, the king of *Ch'ang-yi* in fact, lost his life.

The magistrate of *Lu-nu*<sup>4</sup>, *T'ien Kuang* conjointly with *Kung-Sun Hung*<sup>5</sup> and others planned an insurrection. When it was about to be discovered, a wild cat mewed on the roof of his house. *T'ien Kuang* felt disgusted. Afterwards the intrigue was discovered, and he suffered execution. — In the time of *Li Wên Po*, the p2.362 commander of the eastern part of *Kuei-chi*, a sheep lay down in his reception hall. Subsequently he was promoted and appointed prefect of *Tung-lai*<sup>6</sup>. When *Wang Tse Fêng* was commander, a deer entered his residence, and afterwards he rose to the rank of a prefect of *Tan-yang*<sup>7</sup>.

Good and bad luck can both be ascertained, promotion and dismissal both have their prognostics. When they all point to desolation and death, the vital force disperses and vanishes. Thus, when a man is about to die, wild birds intrude into his home, and when a town is to be deserted, animals from the prairies enter its precincts. These affinities are very numerous, and similar events, constantly met with. I have selected some conspicuous ones, to prove the truth of such prognostics.

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<sup>1</sup> King *Huai* of *Liang* in *Honan* was a son of the emperor *Wên Ti*. He died in 169 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> A place in *Shantung*.

<sup>3</sup> A celebrated official of the 2nd and 1st cent. B. C.

<sup>4</sup> The modern *Ting-chou* in *Chili*.

<sup>5</sup> Originally a poor scholar, later on a privy councillor of the emperor *Han Wu Ti*, who died in 121 B. C.

<sup>6</sup> The present *Lai-chou-fu* in the province of *Shantung*.

<sup>7</sup> A circuit in *Kiangsu* and *Anhui*.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### Remarks on Insects 49. XVI, III. *Shang-ch'ung*

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p2.363 The phenomenalists maintain that the eating of grain by insects is caused by the officials of the various departments. Out of covetousness they make encroachments, which results in the insects eating the grain. Those with black bodies and red heads are called military officers, those with black heads and red bodies, civil officers. If these officers related to insects be punished, the insects desist from their ravages, and are seen no more.

If those red heads are supposed to be produced by military officers, and the black heads, by civilians, sometimes insects have red heads and white bodies, or black heads and yellow bodies, or their heads as well as their bodies are yellow, or both are green, or both white, as is the case with worms in fish or meat. To which officials do these correspond ?

Sometimes influential citizens disturb officials, interceding for those who are to be tortured. Their ascendancy is greater than that of office-bearers, and their usurpations are more varied than those of officers. How are their corresponding insects shaped ?

Insects are usually destroyed by wind and rain, but at that time the officials are not necessarily subjected to punishment.

On dry land there are always mice, and in paddy fields, fish and crabs, which all injure the grain. Either they seldom come out and suddenly cause damage, or they are always there, doing mischief. Their kinds are very numerous. To which officers are they related ?

Duke *Hsüan* of *Lu* levied the land tax on each acre, when simultaneously larvae of locusts were born <sup>1</sup>. Some say that they resemble winged ones.

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<sup>1</sup> In 594 B. C. Duke *Hsüan* introduced a new tithing system. Cf. *Ch'un-ch'iu*, Duke *Hsüan* 15th year [[Couvreur](#)]. *Tso Ch'iu Ming* condemns this measure as contrary to rule. The locusts are regarded by *Wang Ch'ung* as a retribution for this unjust mode of

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When locusts appear, they obscure the sky, falling down on the earth like a shower of rain. They eat everything, making no difference between grain and other plants. Judging by their heads and bodies, which class of officials do they represent? With which do they tally in the opinion of the phenomenologists?

p2.364 In the thirty-first year of *Chien-wu*<sup>1</sup>, locusts rose in the T'ai-shan circuit<sup>2</sup>. They went to the south-west, passing *Ch'ên-Liu*<sup>3</sup> and *Ho-nan*<sup>4</sup>, and then entered the country of the *I* and *Ti*. In hundreds and thousands of districts and villages they alighted, but the officers of these places had not all measured the fields for taxation<sup>5</sup>. Locusts eat grain and grass, and, in a few days, reach the end of their life. Either they proceed on their journey, or they stop, dry up, and die. But at that time the local authorities are not all liable to punishment.

The insects' eating of grain has its term, as the silkworms' feeding on mulberry leaves has a limit. Their breeding takes a number of days, and they die after a number of months. Having completed their span, they are transformed, and do not always remain grubs. If the sovereign does not punish his officers<sup>6</sup>, the insects die nevertheless, of their own accord.

Insects are produced by the fluid of wind. *Ts'ang Hsieh* knew it, and therefore formed the character *fêng* (wind) of *fan* (all) and *ch'ung* (insects). Having received their fluid from wind, they are bred in eight days<sup>7</sup>.

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taxation.

<sup>1</sup> 55 A. D.

<sup>2</sup> The present *T'ai-an-chou* in *Shantung*.

<sup>3</sup> A circuit comprising the modern *K'ai-fêng-fu* in *Honan*.

<sup>4</sup> *Ho-nan-fu*.

<sup>5</sup> Therefore the locusts could not be considered a punishment for unjust taxation.

<sup>6</sup> For those offences for which the insects are supposed to have made their appearance.

<sup>7</sup> This explanation is forced and certainly erroneous. It would be to the point, if the character 風 designated some insects, and not wind, for to whom would the two components 'all' and 'insects' suggest the idea of wind? The explanation given by *Wieger, Rudiments 12, Leçons étymologiques* p. 77 is not satisfactory either. He submits that the ancient character was composed of 日 sun, 丿 movement, and 凡 expansion, and that this combination suggests the atmospheric currents produced by the action of the sunbeams. I suppose that in the character 凡 is the phonetic, and 虫

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p2.365 The insects of spring and summer either live on the Five Grains, or on other herbs. As they eat the Five Grains, officers collect money and grain, but what manner of things do they exact, when the insects feed on other herbs ?

Among the three hundred naked animals man takes precedence, consequently he is an animal also. Man eats the food of insects, and insects likewise eat what man lives on. Both being animals, what wonder that they eat each other's food.

Were insects endowed with intelligence, they would scold man. saying,  
— You eat the produce of Heaven, and we eat it as well. You regard us as a plague, and are not aware that you are yourself a calamity to us. Inasmuch as all animated beings like the taste of something, their mouths and bellies are not different. Man likes the Five Grains, and detests the insects for eating them, he is himself born between Heaven and Earth, and detests the coming forth of insects.

Thus the insects would censure man, if they could speak, and he would be unable to refute their charges. The existence of insects amongst other creatures is nothing wonderful for the knowing, and that they eat so many things, the latter do not consider an exceptional calamity.

In fragrant and succulent plants there are always insects in great numbers. Therefore of all kinds of grain millet has most insects, rice has them at times, wheat and beans never. If the officials be always made responsible for the existence of insects, the departmental officers of villages growing millet would invariably be culpable.

The system of *Shên Nung* and *Hou Chi* of sowing grain consisted in boiling horse dung and soaking the seeds in liquid manure, lest they should be

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the radical. 虫 is a crawling animal, a reptile, and describes the crawling, the undulating of the currents of air. Some ancient forms of 風 are formed of 𩇛, a current, instead of 虫, a reptile, and from the antique form 𩇛 we infer that 日 and 丿, occurring in other characters, were originally connected : 𩇛, and are nothing else than a viper with a big head, a synonym for 虫 a reptile= 𩇛.

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damaged by insects <sup>1</sup>. Thus, by soaking the seeds in horse dung, the village officers would become *Pao Chiao* <sup>2</sup> and *Ch'ên Chung Tse* <sup>3</sup>. How could these officers get rid of all viciousness by merely employing the method of *Hou Chi* and *Shên Nung*, since, in case no insects were produced with the crop, the emperor could not discover their guilt ?

p2.366 As long as insects content themselves with other plants, it is not the custom to see anything extraordinary in them, but no sooner do they feed on the Five Grains, than it is called a calamity. Cassia trees have wood-worms, and mulberry trees, wood-fretters. Cassia furnishes medicine, and mulberry trees serve as food for silkworms. Their usefulness is very great, no less than that of grain. To see nothing wonderful in these wood-worms and wood-fretters, and to decry insects as a disaster, shows ignorance of the real character of the various classes of animals, and a misconception of the nature of calamitous phenomena.

By insects we usually understand those which feed on grain, grubs are like moths. When millet and rice turn mouldy, the fermentation produces grubs. Now these grubs eating millet and rice are not considered disastrous, whereas, when insects eat the leaves of corn, it is laid to the charge of the government.

If in the course of discussion they urge that millet is of much less consequence than corn in general, we reply that there is the greatest variety of insects, and not only one species. When fish and meat rot, worms are produced, and so they are, when minced-meat and gravy are not covered, or when cooked rice gets warm and damp, or when the scrolls of books are never unrolled, or when garments are folded together and not hung up. Diseased snails <sup>4</sup>, flies, mole-crickets <sup>5</sup>, and crabs all have parasites : some

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<sup>1</sup> A method still followed to the present day.

<sup>2</sup> A recluse of the *Chou* epoch, celebrated for his purity. *Tse Kung* is said to have blamed him for living in a country the government of which he condemned, and under a prince whom he despised. *Pao Chiao* took these words so much to heart, that he withered up into dead wood.

<sup>3</sup> Another hermit. Cf. Vol. I, p. 427, Note 4.

<sup>4</sup> My translation is a conjecture. Perhaps the latter character 'an ulcer' is spurious.

<sup>5</sup> I have omitted translating [], some insect or reptile not mentioned in the dictionaries.

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are white, some black, some long, some short. They are greatly diverse in size, and they are by no means all similar. All are the upshot of the fluid of wind, which they keep up to their end. They cannot choose their days of life, and when their life-time is very short, they perish almost as soon as they appear. Struck with the rarity of their appearance and with the fact that when they come out, they eat something, the phenomenologists call them a calamity, but a calamity presupposes some guilt. Therefore they put forward such officials as bear some resemblance to them.

Man has three worms in his intestines. The worms living in low marshes are called leeches. They eat man's feet <sup>1</sup>, as the three worms eat his bowels. To whom will these critics, so fond of similarities, compare the three worms ?

p2.367 All creatures that are born between Heaven and Earth from the *Yin* and the *Yang*, such as ant-dragons and entozoa, reptiles and vermin <sup>2</sup>, are imbued with the fluid, while alive ; they open their mouths to eat, and what they eat, they either like or do not like. Their instincts are the same, and their propensities similar : the strong and big ones devour the weak and small ones, the shrewd and clever hurt the blunt-minded. If other creatures, big or small, lacerate one another, it is not regarded as a calamity. Therefore only to consider this an echo of the actions of government if insects eat grain, is to misunderstand the true principles and to ignore the real nature of the animal fluid.

The birth of insects depends upon warm and damp weather. As a rule, the air is warm and damp in spring and summer, and it is cold and dry in autumn and winter, when insects are not yet produced. If the village officers are made responsible for the growth of insects, then these officers must be covetous in spring and summer, and disinterested in autumn and winter. Even though they be functionaries like robber *Chê*, they would in their offices imitate the conduct of *Po Yi* in autumn and winter.

Spring and summer are not always the same ; when insects grow, it must

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<sup>1</sup> When a man passes through marshes, leeches may stick to his feet, and suck his blood.

<sup>2</sup> [] for which the dictionaries only give the meaning 'to wriggle'. Here it must be a substantive.



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be exceedingly warm and damp. Exceedingly means that the *Yin* and the *Yang* are not in harmony. For a disharmony of the *Yin* and the *Yang* the government has to account, to which alone it can be ascribed. Consequently it is preposterous to point to the depravity of the officials of the various departments.

Whence do we know that insects grow from warmth and dampness ? From noxious insects. Grain being dry, insects do not grow, but when it becomes warm and damp, it moulds and putrefies, and the growth of insects can no further be precluded. If the grains of stored up old wheat are dried in the hot sun, and then put in a dry vessel, insects do not generate, but should the seeds not be dry, voracious grubs would grow like clouds and mist. The analogy of voracious grubs makes it evident that all insects owe their birth to warmth and dampness.

The *Shiking* says :

[« They buzz about, the blue flies, lighting on the fences. O happy and courteous sovereign, do not believe slanderous speeches. ] <sup>1</sup>

Slanderous reports injure honest men, just as the blue flies pollute white things. The damage is the same, and the *Shiking* therefore used this image.

p2.368 The king of *Ch'ang-yi* dreamt that below the western flight of stairs the dirt of flies was piled up. The next morning, he summoned the officer of the Guards *Kung Sui*, and asked his opinion. *Kung Sui* replied,

— The flies are emblems of slanderers. The fact that their dirt is piled up below the stairs, denotes that Your Highness is going to listen to the insinuations of slanderous officers <sup>2</sup>.

According to this view, flies as insects would tally with the princes lending his ear to defamations ; why not regard them as a calamity then ? If flies may be looked upon as a calamity, they live throughout the year ; but does a ruler always listen to slanderers ?

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<sup>1</sup> *Shiking* Part II, Book VII, Ode 5 ([Legge, Classics Vol IV, Part II, p. 394](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> This story is narrated in the biography of the king of *Ch'ang-yi*, *Ch'ien Han-shu*, chap. 63, p. 18r. The king was a grandson of the emperor *Han Wu Ti*.

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Of insects hurtful to mankind, none are worse than mosquitoes and gad-flies, which are generated the whole year. In case mosquitoes and gad-flies represent some calamity, are there always officers on earth preying upon their fellow-people ?

Provided that the eating of animals be a calamity, then man being the noblest of all creatures, mosquitoes and gad-flies feeding upon him must be the worst of calamities. If to be accounted a calamity, animals must have unexpectedly been produced and have hurt others, which annoyance is greater, that of creatures produced the whole year and feeding on man, or that of others appearing but occasionally and doing mischief ?

Itching is an occasional and not a constant complaint ; wherefore are the insects producing it not held to be calamitous ?

Moreover, when Heaven is about to rain, ants come out, and gnats fly about, thus conforming to the weather. Perhaps the birth of all insects of itself, accords with the temperature, but why then incriminate the officials of the various departments ? The principle of Heaven is spontaneity, good and bad luck happen by chance. Rare insects happen to be produced, when covetous officials happen to be in office. Noticing their transactions and observing the simultaneous growth of noxious insects, people presume that it has been caused by the officials.

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## CHAPTER XXXV

### Simplicity of Funerals

67. XXIII, II. *Po-tsang*

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p2.369 Sages and Worthies all are agreed in advocating simplicity of funerals and economy of expenses, but the world sets high store on expensive funerals, and there are many that do amiss by their extravagance and lavishness. The reason is that the discussions of *Confucianists* on this subject are not clear, and that the arguments put forward by the *Mêhists* are wrong. As to the latter, the *Mêhists* contend that men, after their death become ghosts and spirits, possess knowledge, can assume a shape, and injure people. As instances they adduce Earl *Tu* and others <sup>1</sup>. The *Confucianists* do not agree with them, maintaining that the dead are unconscious, and cannot be changed into ghosts <sup>2</sup>. If they contribute to the sacrifices and prepare the other funeral requisites nevertheless, they desire to intimate that they are not ungrateful to the deceased, and therefore treat them as though they were alive.

*Lu Chia* speaks like the *Confucianists* and, whatever he says, avoids giving a distinct answer. *Liu Tse Chêng* wrote a memorial on the simplicity of funerals, pleading for economy, but he did not exhaust the subject.

Thus ordinary people, on the one side, have these very doubtful arguments, and, on the other, they hear of Earl *Tu* <sup>3</sup> and the like, and note that the dead in their tombs arise and have intercourse with sick people whose end is near. They, then, believe in this, and imagine that the dead are like the living. They commiserate them that in their graves they are so lonely, that their souls are so solitary and without companions, that their tombs and mounds are closed and devoid of grain and other things.

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<sup>1</sup> These arguments of the *Mêhists* are refuted in Vol. I, chap. XV.

<sup>2</sup> This is *Wang Ch'ung's* opinion at least.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 202, Note 2.

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Therefore they make dummies to serve the corpses in their coffins, and fill the latter with eatables, to gratify the spirits. This custom has become so inveterate, and has gone to such lengths, that very often people will ruin their families and use up all their property for the coffins of the dead <sup>1</sup>. They even kill people to <sup>p2.370</sup> follow the deceased into their graves, and all this out of regard for the prejudices of the living. They ignore that in reality it is of no use, but their extravagance is eagerly imitated by others. In their belief, the dead are conscious and do not distinguish themselves from the living.

*Confucius* condemned these practices, but could not establish the truth, and *Lu Chia*, in his essay, does not adopt either alternative. The memorial of *Liu Tse Chêng* does not do much to elucidate the assertion of the *Confucianists* that the dead are unconscious, or the arguments of the *Mêhists* to the effect that they are conscious. The subject not being borne out by proofs, and the question not being settled by evidence, there is nothing but empty words and futile talk, and even the views of the most honest people do not find credence. Therefore, the public remains wavering and ignorant, and those who believe in a lucky and unlucky destiny, dread the dead, but do not fear justice ; make much of the departed, and do not care for the living. They clear their house of everything for the sake of a funeral procession.

Provided that the disputants and men of letters have proofs such as Earl *Tu* adduced by the *Mêhists*, then the truth that the dead are unconscious can be borne out, and the advice to be economical and not to squander too much money on burials, be substantiated. Now the *Mêhists* say that the *Confucianists* are wrong, and the *Confucianists* think the same of the *Mêhists*. Since they both have their different tenets, there is such a discrepancy of opinions, and a consensus so difficult to be attained.

In this dispute of the two schools, the problem of life and death has not yet been solved, nobody having ever been resuscitated by sacrifices. As a matter of fact, the dead are hidden from our view, being dissolved and belonging to another sphere than the living, and it is almost impossible to have a clear conception of them. Unless, however, their state of

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<sup>1</sup> A practice still prevailing in our time.

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consciousness or unconsciousness be ascertained, the true nature of ghosts cannot be determined. Even men of great learning and able scholars may be unfit to discover the truth, though they avail themselves of all the old and modern literature, plunging into the works of the various schools of thought, and perusing them page after page and paragraph after paragraph. To attain this aim there must first be a holy heart and a sage mind, and then experience and analogies are to be resorted to. If anybody in his reasoning does not use the greatest care <sup>p2.371</sup> and discernment, taking his evidence indiscriminately from without, and thus establishing right and wrong, he believes in what he has heard or seen from others, and does not test it in his mind. That would be reasoning with ears and eyes, and not with the heart and intellect. This reasoning with ears and eyes conduces to empty semblances, and if empty semblances be used as proofs, then real things pass for fictions. Ergo, right and wrong are independent of eyes and ears, and require the use of the intellect.

The *Mêhists*, in their investigations, do not inquire into things with their mind, but thoughtlessly believe the reports of others. Consequently, they fail to find the truth in spite of the plainness of their proofs. An opinion incompatible with truth, however, is not apt to be imparted to others, for though they may have the sympathies of illiterate people, they do not find favour with the learned. It is owing to this that the maxim of the *Mêhists* that all expenses for the various things employed at funerals are unprofitable does not gain ground.

A man of *Lu* was going to put cat's-eyes into a coffin. *Confucius*, upon hearing of it, went across the court-yard, passed over the steps (of the hall), and remonstrated ; this was a breach of *etiquette*. The intention of *Confucius* was to avert a calamity <sup>1</sup>. Calamities very often originate from covetousness. Cat's-eyes are precious stones ; when the man of *Lu* put them into the coffin,

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<sup>1</sup> We learn from the 'Family Sayings' that, when a member of the *Chi* family had died, they were going to put cat's-eyes into his coffin, as is customary for princes, and to bestow pearls and jade upon him. *Confucius*, just then governor of *Chung-tu*, hearing of it, ascended the steps and interfered saying, 'To inter a man with precious stones is like exposing a corpse in the open plain, and thus affording people an opportunity of gratifying their wicked designs'. *Chia-yü* IX, 16r.  
On the old custom of filling the mouths of deceased princes with jade and other

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wicked people spied it out, and their greed was roused. The desires of wicked people having been excited, they do not fear laws or penalties, and break tombs open. *Confucius*, from some insignificant indications, foresaw this result, therefore he crossed the court, ascended the steps (of the hall), and, in order to avert this calamity, straightforth made his remonstrance. But since he did not show that the dead are deprived of consciousness, barely limiting himself to a remonstrance, on the ground that the grave might be violated, people would not have listened to him, even though he had possessed the same influence on mankind as *Pi Kan*. Why ? Because the wealth <sup>p2.372</sup> of the feudatory lords was so great, that they were not apprehensive of poverty <sup>1</sup>, and their power so strong, that they did not fear a desecration of their graves.

Thus, the doubts concerning the dead were not solved, and for a dutiful son the best plan was to follow the advice imposing upon him the heaviest obligations. Had it been plainly shown that the dead have no knowledge, and that sumptuous burials are of no advantage, the discussion would have been closed, and the question settled, and after it had been made public, the custom of using cat's-eyes would have been abandoned, and there would have been no occasion for crossing the court-yard and remonstrating. Now, the problem was not solved, and barely a strong protest made. That is the reason why *Confucius* could not carry through his doctrine.

*Confucius* perfectly well understood the true condition of life and death, and his motive in not making a clear distinction is the same which appears from *Lu Chia's* words. If he had said that the dead are unconscious, sons and subjects might perhaps have violated their duties to their father and sovereign. Therefore they say that the ceremony of funeral sacrifices being abolished, the love of sons and subjects would decrease ; if they had decreased, these persons would slight the dead and forget the deceased, and, under these circumstances, the cases of undutiful sons would multiply. Being afraid that he might open such a source of impiety, the Sage was reluctant to speak the truth about the unconsciousness of the dead.

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precious objects see [De Groot, Religious System Vol. I, p. 269 seq.](#)

<sup>1</sup> They could afford to put precious things into the grave.

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However, different spheres must not be confounded. The care taken in abundantly providing for the wants of the living leads to moral perfection, but how does carelessness about the dead interfere with it ? If the dead possess knowledge, then a disregard might have evil consequences, but if they are unconscious, a neglect cannot cause any injury. The conviction of their unconsciousness does not necessarily lead to an ill-treatment of the dead, whereas the ignorance of this fact involves the living in ruinous expense.

A dutiful son nursing a sick parent before his death, calls in the diviners and requests the services of physicians with the hope that the malady may be expelled, and the medicines prove efficacious. But, after the death of his parent, nobody — be he as wise as *Wu Hsien*<sup>1</sup>, or as clever as *Pien Ch'io* — can bring him back to life p2.373 again, well knowing that, when, by death, the vital fluid is destroyed, there is absolutely no help, and no treatment whatever would be of any benefit to the dead. Is there any great difference in an expensive funeral ? By supineness with regard to the deceased, people fear to violate the moral laws, but would it not likewise be an impiety to dismiss the diviners and keep the physicians from the dead ?

As long as a parent is alive, he takes an elevated seat in the hall, but, after death, when buried, stays under the yellow springs<sup>2</sup>. No human being lives under the yellow springs, yet those burying the dead have not the slightest scruples about it, because the dead inhabit quite a different region, and cannot live together with the living. If they were to be taken care of like living people, and supposed to take offence, they ought to be buried in their house and be close to the living. Those ignorant of the unconsciousness of the dead, are afraid that people might offend against their parents. They only know that, having been buried, they live under the yellow springs, but do not think of the separation from their ancestors<sup>3</sup>.

When a parent is in jail, and his case still pending, a dutiful son hurries about, to rescue him from this danger, but after the case has been tried, and

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<sup>1</sup> Or the diviner *Hsien* who lived under the *Yin* dynasty and is mentioned in the Preface of the *Shuking*. Cf. [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. I, p. 191, Note 1.](#)

<sup>2</sup> In *Hades*.

<sup>3</sup> Therefore they treat them, as if they were still alive and together with the living.

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a penalty has been fixed, there is no escape left, and even a *Tsêng Tse* or a *Min Tse Ch'ien* <sup>1</sup> could do nothing but sit down and weep. All schemes would be in vain and lead to useless trouble. Now, the souls of deceased parents decidedly have no consciousness, and are in a similar position to imprisoned parents who cannot be rescued from their punishment. Those who ignore the unconsciousness, apprehend lest people should show a disregard for their ancestors, but do not take exception that, when punishment is settled, parents are abandoned.

When a sage has established a law furthering progress, even if it be of no great consequence, it should not be neglected ; but if something is not beneficial to the administration, it should not be made use of in spite of its grandeur. Now, how does all the care bestowed on the dead benefit mutual good feeling, and how could any disregard or neglect violate any law ?

*Confucius* further said that 'spirit vessels' are not substantial, but merely symbolical and imaginary. Therefore puppets are made to resemble men, and effigies like living persons. In *Lu* they used <sup>p2.374</sup> dummies for burials. *Confucius* sighed, seeing in this custom an indication that living men would be interred together with the dead <sup>2</sup>. This sigh was an expression of grief, and if (at funerals) things had to be used as if for the living, he warned against an overstraining of this principle. Dummies being buried, it was to be feared that later on, living men might be forced to accompany the dead <sup>3</sup>, but why did *Confucius* not consider the possibility that for 'spirit vessels', real vessels might be placed in the graves in future ? <sup>4</sup> He obviated human sacrifices, but did nothing to prohibit the use of funeral gifts. He valued human life so much, that he was afraid of wasting it, and he felt pity for the individual but no sympathy for the State <sup>5</sup>. In this his reasoning was wrong.

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<sup>1</sup> Two prominent disciples of *Confucius*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Liki*, *T'an-kung* p. 52r. ([Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 173](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>3</sup> This was not likely, for, historically speaking, human sacrifices precede, but do not follow the use of dummies buried together with the dead.

<sup>4</sup> Real vessels are, likewise, antecedent to the so called 'spirit vessels', made of straw or clay, and merely symbolical and commemorative of an ancient custom that had fallen into desuetude.

<sup>5</sup> The State became impoverished by extravagant funerals.



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In order to prevent the water from leaking out, one must stop all the holes, then the leakage ceases. Unless all the holes be stopped, the water finds an outlet, and having an outlet, it causes damage. Unless the discussion on death be exhaustive, these extravagant customs are not stopped, and while they are going on, all sorts of things are required for burials. These expenses impoverish the people, who by their lavishness bring themselves into the greatest straits.

When *Su Ch'in* was envoy of *Yen*, the people of *Ch'i* were in the habit of erecting enormous sepulchres, filled with heaps of valuables. *Su Ch'in* personally did nothing to incite them. When all their wealth was gone, and the people greedy for money, the exchequer empty, and the army good for nothing, the troops of *Yen* suddenly arrived. *Ch'i* was unable to stand its ground : the State was ruined, the cities fell, the sovereign left his country, and his subjects dispersed <sup>1</sup>. Now, as long as people are in the dark, regarding the unconsciousness of the dead, they will spend all their money for the sumptuous burial of a parent, and be ruined in the same manner as *Ch'i* was by the cunning of *Su Ch'in*.

The device of the *Mêhists* is self-contradictory : on the one side, they advocate a simple burial, and on the other, they honour <sup>p2.375</sup> ghosts. To justify this veneration, they refer to Earl *Tu*, who was a dead man. If Earl *Tu* be deemed a ghost, then all the dead really possess knowledge, and if they do, they would be incensed at the shabbiness of their burials.

There is a general craving for luxuriance and a strong aversion to paucity. What advantage, therefore, would the veneration of ghosts bring to those guilty of mean burials ? Provided that ghosts be not dead men, then the belief in Earl *Tu* is preposterous, if, however, ghosts be dead men, then a mean burial would not be proper. Thus theory and practice of the *Mêhists* are inconsistent, head and tail do not agree, and it cannot but be wrong. But right and wrong not being understood, cannot be practised. Therefore the public should carefully consider what has been written, and having done so, they

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 47.

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may bury their dead in a simple style <sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *De Groot* in his [\*Religious System Vol. II, p. 659\*](#) speaks at great length of the reaction against expensive funerals, but does not mention *Wang Ch'ung* as an advocate of economy. He calls attention to two chapters of the *Lü-shih-ch'un-ch'iu*, recommending simplicity in burials, and to the disquisitions of *Wang Fu* of the 2nd cent. A. D. Later on, *Chu Hsi* was in favour of plain funerals, but the exaggerated ideas on filial piety have counteracted all reasonable arguments.

## CHAPTER XXXVI

### Four Things to be Avoided

68. XXIII, III. *Sse-hui*

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p2.376 There are four things which, according to public opinion, must be avoided by all means. The first is to build an annex to a building on the west side, for such an annex is held to be inauspicious, and being so, is followed by a case of death. Owing to this apprehension, nobody in the world would dare to build facing the west. This prohibition dates from days of yore.

We have a record that [Duke *Ai* of *Lu* <sup>1</sup> wished to build an annex to the west. The astrologer opposed this scheme as unpropitious. Duke *Ai* flushed up and got angry ; his attendants remonstrated several times, but he would not hear and asked the prime minister *Chih Sui* saying,

— I wish to build an annex on the west side, and the astrologer declares it to be unpropitious. What do you mean ?

— There are three unpropitious things in the world, replied *Chih Sui*, but building an annex on the west side is not among them.

The duke cheered up, and shortly afterwards again asked which were the three unpropitious things. The other said,

— Not to act fairly and justly is the first unpropitious thing. To give way to one's unrestrained desires is the second, and not to listen to a proper remonstrance is the third.

The duke became meditative and, having pondered for awhile, he frankly acknowledged his fault and changed his mind. The annex was not built] <sup>2</sup>, for the astrologer and the prime minister both received the order to stop building.

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<sup>1</sup> 494-468 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from *Huai Nan Tse* XVIII, 18v.

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The annex in the west caused useless trouble, it is true, but we know not whether it was auspicious or inauspicious. Should the astrologer and *Chih Sui* have been of opinion that an annex in the west was inauspicious indeed, then both would be on a par with the common people of the present day <sup>1</sup>. On all the four sides of a house there is earth ; how is it that three sides are not looked upon as of ill omen, and only an annex in the west is said to be unpropitious ? How could such an annex be injurious to the p2.377 body of earth. or hurtful to the spirit of the house ? In case an annex in the west be unpropitious, would a demolition there be a good augury ? Or, if an annex in the west be inauspicious, would it be a lucky omen in the east ? For if there be something inauspicious, there must also be something auspicious, as bad luck has good luck as its correlate.

A house has a form, and a spirit disposes of good and bad luck ; a cultivation of virtue leads to happiness, and an infringement of the laws brings about misfortune. Now, if an annex in the west is believed to be unpropitious, where must it be built to be propitious ? Moreover, who is it that takes exception at people extending their house to the west ? Should earth resent it, what damage does it do to earth, if the west side of an eastern house be enlarged and, at the same time, the east side of a western building be diminished ?

Provided that the spirit of the house dislike an annex to the west, a spirit resembles man, and every man would gladly see his residence enlarged ; for why should he dislike it ? Supposing that the spirit of the house dislikes the trouble caused by the alteration, then all annexes on the four sides ought to be ill-omened.

The experts in the various arts and professions, in explaining omens, specify the different cases. The house builders state that in erecting a house mischievous spirits may be met with, in removing one's residence care should be taken to avoid the spirits of the year and the months, in sacrificing, certain days may be encountered when bloodshed is to be shunned, and in burying one may fail against the odd and even days. In all these instances these prohibitions are given in view of ghosts and spirits, and evil influences. Those

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<sup>1</sup> Common people believe in these superstitions.

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who do not avoid them, fall sick and die, but as for building an annex in the west, what harm is there, that it is held to be inauspicious, and how does the subsequent calamity manifest itself ?

Properly speaking, this prohibition of something inauspicious is based on reason, and not to be observed on account of good or bad luck : The west is the region of elders and the seat of the honoured. The honoured and the elders being in the west, the inferiors and youngsters are in the east. The superiors and elders are the masters, the inferiors and youngsters, their assistants. Masters are few, and assistants many. There can be no two superiors above, but there are a hundred inferiors below. When in the west an addition is made to the master <sup>1</sup>, whereas the assistants are not <sub>p2.378</sub> increased, there are two superiors, but not a hundred inferiors (for each). That is contrary to justice, and therefore called unpropitious <sup>2</sup>. Being unpropitious it should not be done. Yet though being contrary to justice, it is not of ill omen for the following reason :

A tomb is a place where a dead man is interred ; a field one whence man gets his food and drink ; and a house the place where man lives. In respect to auspiciousness these three places are the same for man. Now, an annex to a house in the west is considered inauspicious, whereas nobody pretends the same of an annex made in the west of a tomb or a field. A tomb, being the residence of a dead man, is somewhat neglected and treated with indifference, and in a field which is not inhabited by man, the distinction between superiors and inferiors is not drawn. In a house old and young live together, therefore great care is taken to carry out this idea, and the prohibition is insisted upon. The rule is diligently observed in houses, but great laxity prevails in regard to graves and fields.

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The second thing to be avoided is that a convict having suffered corporeal

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<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, when a new building is erected in the west for the use of a second master. The other possibility that the new building is destined for the one master to enlarge his dwelling, is not taken into account.

<sup>2</sup> The *Fêng-su t'ung*, quoted in the *Pei-wên-yün-fu*, gives a similar reason : The west is the seat of the superiors, and a new building in this direction would be hurtful to them.

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punishment ascends a tumulus. People merely know that this should not be allowed, but do not understand the reason of this interdiction, and if you inquire of those insisting upon this prohibition, they ignore the meaning of this avoidance ; nor do those complying with this advice trouble much about it. One imitates the other ; this goes so far, that when the father and the mother of a culprit die, he does not bury the dead, and being near their tomb, does not venture to approach and inter them. He does not even condole, and looks upon the coffin as if it belonged to a stranger.

A good man, being convicted, after having suffered corporeal punishment is called a convict <sup>1</sup>. Such a one may ascend a tumulus. The two parents after their death are said to be deceased. What difference is there between a house and a tomb, or between living and deceased parents ?

If convicts be reproved by their ascendants for having suffered punishment, then they ought not to enter their home, or see their parents either, and if, on the other hand, convicts be not allowed <sup>p2.379</sup> to have commerce with the dead, then, when their parents have expired in their hall, they should not cry by their coffins. If, in fine, convicts be not permitted to ascend a tumulus, then they should not be allowed to mount hills or mountains either.

Which reasons have those people to give who enforce this prohibition ? As a matter of fact, there are two reasons why convicts do not ascend a tumulus ; the injunction is based on these causes, and there can be no question of any avoidance of unlucky influences :

The convicts are aware that their ancestors have generated them complete, and that the descendants should also return their bodies complete. [Wherefore *Tsêng Tse* being ill called to him the disciples of his school, and said,

— Uncover my feet, uncover my hands. . . . Now and hereafter,  
I know my escape, my young friends.] <sup>2</sup>

*Tsêng Tse* was so considerate, that before his end he wanted to show that

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<sup>1</sup> Even a good man may innocently suffer punishment and thus become a convict.

<sup>2</sup> [Analects VIII, 3](#) [[Couvreur](#)].

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his body was intact, and he was glad that he had escaped all bodily injury. *Confucius* said,

— The body, the hair, and the skin, we received them from our parents, and dare not impair them <sup>1</sup>.

A dutiful son dreads falling into the clutches of the law : the cutting and branding of the body as well as the disfiguring and scathing of the hair and the skin, are the upshot of a lack of virtue, of unworthy dealings, and carelessness. A criminal is ashamed of having suffered the disgrace of a punishment, and most earnestly reproaches himself. It is for this reason that he does not ascend a tumulus.

According to the ancient rites, the sacrifices to ascendants were performed in temples, the modern custom is to offer them at the grave. Consequently, a convict does not ascend a tumulus out of shame lest he should cause displeasure to his ascendant. That is the first reason.

A tomb is the abode of ghosts and spirits. As regards the place of sacrifice and the sacrificial rites, it is of the utmost importance that there should be penance and absolute purity. Now, people that have suffered punishment are disgraced, and not fit to attend at an offering, or to worship their ascendants. Their modesty and reverence demand that they should retire and humiliate themselves, for their ancestors, remarking that their descendants have <sup>p2.380</sup> suffered punishment, would commiserate them, and feel unhappy, and most likely, at the sacrifice, not be able to enjoy the offering. This is the second reason why the former do not ascend a tumulus.

In times of old, *T'ai Po* noticed that *Wang Chi* had a holy son, *Wên Wang*, and he knew that *T'ai Wang* wished to raise him to the throne. Therefore he repaired to *Wu*, where he collected medicinal herbs, cut off his hair, and tattooed his body, to follow the customs of *Wu*. At the decease of *T'ai Wang*, *T'ai Po* returned, and *Wang Chi* intended to yield the supreme power to him. *T'ai Po* again declined, but *Wang Chi* would not hear of it. So he declined three times, saying,

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<sup>1</sup> See *Liki, Chi-yi* ([Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVIII, p. 229](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

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— I went to *Wu* and *Yüeh*, and, in accordance with their customs, cut off my hair, and tattooed my body. I am like a man who has been subjected to torture, and cannot be the chief of the ancestral temple and of the altars of the land and grain.

*Wang Chi* admitted that it was impossible, and, much against his will, accepted his resignation <sup>1</sup>.

A convict not ascending a burial mound is like *T'ai Po* declining the royal dignity, which means that he is unqualified to perform the sacrificial rites, but not, to conduct the funeral, when a coffin is to be buried.

At the burial of a descendant the ancestors are grieved, and the aspect of a convict fills them with sorrow. When such a person, worthy of pity, buries somebody whose death is a cause of grief to his ascendants, the latter, provided that they are conscious, would feel grieved at the death, and commiserate the disgrace of their descendant, wherefore then should he be abashed? Should they be unconscious, then the burial mound is nothing but a piece of uncultivated land, and there is still less any occasion for shame.

These convicts are said to stand abashed before their ascendants, because their body is mutilated by torture and not like that of other people. Anciently, by torture the body was in fact, racked, and did not remain intact, which may have rendered it unfit. But, at present, the penalties are merely symbolical <sup>2</sup>, the gravest consisting in shaving the head and in an iron collar. The lesser delinquents whose punishments are less than forced labour at building a wall, may wear coloured silk dresses and caps and girdles different to those worn by common people, why should they be unfit for a funeral? The public believes them all to be obnoxious, and p<sub>2.381</sub> carries its error to the length of not allowing such persons to condole at the death of a fellow-villager, or to ascend the tumulus of a stranger; a great mistake this.

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The third thing to be shunned is a woman who, having born a child, is believed to bring ill-luck. Those who have some lucky undertaking in hand, go

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 120 and 131, where *Wang Chi* is called 'king *Chi*' or *Chi Li*.

<sup>2</sup> *Vid.* p. 81.



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far away into mountains and forests, traversing streams and lakes, and have no intercourse with such a woman. They even avoid coming near her house, and only, after having passed a month in the huts on burial grounds and on the roads, they return. The unexpected sight of the woman appears to them very unlucky.

If we study the question carefully, on what is this dislike based ? When a woman gives birth to a child, it comes into the world, filled with the original fluid. This fluid is the finest essence of Heaven and Earth, how could it be harmful and detestable ? Man is an organism, and so is a child. What difference is there between the birth of a child and the production of all the other organisms ? If human birth be held to be baleful, is the creation of the myriads of organisms baleful too ?

The new-born issues with the placenta. If the placenta be deemed foreshadowing evil, the human placenta is like the husk <sup>1</sup> of fruits growing on trees ; wrapped round the infant's body, it comes out with it like the egg-shell of a young bird. What harm is there to justify people's aversion ? Should it be due to its supposed inauspiciousness, then all organisms with husks and shells ought to be detestable.

There is such a plethora of organisms, that I am at a loss where to begin with my deductions : Human birth does not distinguish itself from that of the Six Domestic Animals <sup>2</sup>. They are all of them animated beings with blood, that breed and bring forth their young not otherwise than man. Yet the aversion applies to human birth only, and does not include that of animals. Is it perhaps in view of the bigness of the human body and of the quantity of its vital fluid and its blood ? But the size of an ox or a horse is much greater than that of man.

p2.382 If, with reference to distasteful objects, there is no equality, and only one singled out, irrespective of its similarity to all the others, the case becomes rather doubtful. Now, the Six Animals are hardly different from man, and they produce their young in the same way. That, (notwithstanding this

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<sup>1</sup> This meaning is not found in the dictionaries.

<sup>2</sup> The horse, the ox, the goat, the pig, the dog, and the cock.

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similarity between the Six Animals and man), the latter is avoided, and not the former, proves the ignorance of the people.

Supposing they could make a distinction between the birth of a child and the breeding of the Six Animals, I would admit their avoidance, but in case they are unable to draw a line, I must say that this popular avoidance is unreasonable.

There is certainly nothing more loathsome for man than putrescence and fetor ; putrid and fetid smells make one sick. The nose smelling stench, and the mouth eating something rotten, people feel their stomach turn, make a wry face and begin spitting and vomiting. Privies <sup>1</sup> may be said to be fetid, and dried fish to be putrid meat, yet there are persons that put up with privies even, and do not shudder at them <sup>2</sup>, and for many dried fish are a relish from which they do not recoil. That which the mind does not turn to, is thought of as disgusting, and its good or bad qualities are left out of account.

Now, as for detestable things, (such as black varnish bespattering one's body) <sup>3</sup>, after the eyes have seen, and the nose has smelled them, and they have passed, everything is over. Why still abhor them, when they have vanished, and are no more to be seen ?

If going out on the road, we behold a man carrying a pig on his shoulders, or remark some foul stuff in a ditch, we do not take this for evil omens, because the filth is on somebody else's body, and not on our own. Now, a woman bearing a child, carries it with her, why then must people be so scrupulous as to shun her ?

North of the *Yangtse*, they do not leave the house when a child is born, knowing that there is no harm in it, but when a bitch whelps, they place her outside the house, which is likewise an absurdity. North of the *Yangtse*, they are afraid of a dog, but not of a human being, south of the *Yangtse*, they recoil <sup>p2.383</sup> from a human being, but not from a dog. In either case the superstitious attempts to avert evil are not the same, but what difference is

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<sup>1</sup> A term strangely corresponding to the German word 'toilet' = privy.

<sup>2</sup> Most Chinese privies are so horrid, that even Chinese try to avoid them.

<sup>3</sup> Chinese varnish is so poisonous, that its smell alone suffices to produce a cutaneous eruption.

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there between a human being and a dog, or a place within or without the house ? What the one detests, the other does not, and what people of this side stagger at, the other side does not fear. After all, there is no principle in all these popular precautions.

As regards the darkening of the moon, a month is counted from each conjunction of the sun and the moon in a solar mansion. When, on the eighth day of a month, the moon is cut in two halves, it is called a 'crescent', when, on the fifteenth, sun and moon face each other, it is called the 'facing moon', and on the thirtieth, when sun and moon are conjunct in a mansion, it is called the 'dark moon'. The dark moon, the crescent, and the facing moon are in reality the same. On the last day of the month, the moonlight is no other than on the first day of the following month. Why is this light called auspicious after the commencement of the next month ? If it be really ill-boding it cannot be said to be auspicious in the next month, and if it really be so it would make no difference that the new month had not yet begun.

As a matter of fact, the injunction to keep aloof from newborn infants and puppies, is intended as an incentive to self-purification, preventing people from polluting themselves with filth and sordid things. When they are clean in their bodies, their minds are pure, and their minds being pure, their proceedings are undefiled. These irreproachable dealings are the basis of honesty and unselfishness.

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The fourth thing to be shunned is the bringing up of children born in the first or the fifth months, because such children are supposed to kill their father and mother, and therefore on no account can be reared. Father and mother having perhaps died through some calamity, this assertion has found credence and is taken for certain. Now, wherefore should children of the first or the fifth months kill their father and mother ?

The human embryo, filled with the fluid, remains in the womb, where it develops ten months, when it is born. All are imbued p2.384 with the same original fluid ; what difference is there between the first and the second months, and what diversity between the fifth and the sixth, that an ill omen might be found in them ?

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This opinion has long spread in the world, and all those who cling to destiny dare not act against it. If men of vast erudition and great talents carefully go into the question, and minutely examine the difference between good and bad omens, they must arrive at a clear understanding.

Of old, [a humble concubine of *T'ien Ying*, minister of *Ch'i*, had a son, whom she named *Wên*. As *Wên* had been born in the fifth moon, *T'ien Ying* told his mother not to bring him up, but the mother clandestinely reared him. When he had grown up, the mother took her son *Wên* together with his brothers, and introduced him to his father.

*T'ien Ying*, very angry, said to her,

— I ordered you to do away with this son, how did you dare to keep him alive ?

*Wên* bowed his head, and interfering in the discussion, said,

— What is the reason that Your Honour does not want to rear a fifth month child ?

— Because, replied *T'ien Ying*, a fifth month child grows as high as a door, and will do harm to his parents.

*Wên* rejoined,

— Does the fate which man receives at his birth depend on Heaven, or does it depend on a door ?

*T'ien Ying* made no reply.

— No doubt, said *Wên*, it depends on Heaven. Then, why are you dissatisfied ? Should fate be received from a door, and the child become as high as a door, who could attain to that ?

*T'ien Ying* acquiesced and said,

— Leave off, my son.]

[Subsequently, he entrusted him with the superintendence of his household and the reception of guests. Their numbers increased daily, and *T'ien Wên's* name became known to all the princes.] <sup>1</sup> He grew higher than a door, but *T'ien Ying* did not die.

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<sup>1</sup> Quotation from the *Shi-chi* chap. 75, p. 2r. the biography of *T'ien Wên*. Cf. also Vol. I, p. 161, where, in line 10, 'He replied' should be written for 'She replied', and, in line 13, 'He rejoined' for 'She rejoined'.

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According to the reasons put forward by *T'ien Wên* and corroborated by the fact that his father did not die, the common dread is baseless. *T'ien Ying* was an ordinary father, but *T'ien Wên* an exceptional son, the former trusted in the general prejudice, and did not inquire into its reasons, whereas the latter confided in fate, and did not admit the avoidance. As their parts were different, ordinary and exceptional, so were their actions. <sup>p2.385</sup> *T'ien Ying's* name is obscure and unknown, while his son's fame spread far and wide, and never faded.

Still this common avoidance has also its reason : The first month is the beginning of the year, and in the fifth the *Yang* reaches its acme. A child being born in one of these months, its original nature is fiery and impetuous and weighs heavily on its parents. Not being strong enough to offer resistance, they must come to grief <sup>1</sup>.

This idea has gained ground, and no one contradicts it. It is an unfounded assertion, and there is no proof of a real misfortune. The world suffers itself to be imposed upon and to fall into the greatest errors. Things to be avoided are manifold, but always some prodigy is put forth, and if really somebody should happen to die, then the public is convinced of the truth of the assertion, and abides by it.

As to what is to be dreaded and shunned, different views prevail everywhere. I shall give some instances of universal customs, which I trust will be considered. There are innumerable minor rules and observances, all meant to induce to virtue and to exhort to particular carefulness <sup>2</sup>. Nothing is to be feared from ghosts and spirits, and no calamities are due to mischievous influences :

In making bean-sauce people dislike very much to hear thunder <sup>3</sup>. One person did not eat the sauce in order to induce people to hasten its

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<sup>1</sup> This reason may be in accordance with *Wang Ch'ung's* system, to us it appears inane.

<sup>2</sup> This is *Wang Ch'ung's* opinion. The belief of his countrymen is that many actions, apart from their qualities, entail misfortune, and solely for this reason are to be shunned.

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps the electricity caused the sauce to spoil, as milk becomes sour when the air is charged with electricity. *Wang Ch'ung* does not know this.

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preparation, and not to allow the stuff to lie about in their premises up to spring time <sup>1</sup>.

One avoids grinding a knife over a well — lest it fall into the well, or, as some say, because the character *hsing* (capital punishment) 刑 is composed of *ching* (a well) 井 and *tao* (a knife) 刀. Grinding a knife over a well, the knife and the well face each other, and one apprehends suffering capital punishment (*hsing* 刑) <sup>2</sup>.

p2.386 One must not sit under the eaves of a house — a tile might fall down and hit one on the head.

One must not hang up a cap upside down — for it would resemble the garments of a dead man, or, as some say, it should not be turned, lest it be filled with dust.

One must not lie down flat — for one would be like a corpse <sup>3</sup>. One must not receive chopsticks from anybody — because they are not solid. <sup>4</sup>

One must not expect others to sweep the ground for one — for a man building a grave might request one to sweep for him <sup>5</sup>.

All these 'One must not' are to induce people to exert particular cautiousness, and to exhort them to do good. The *Liki* says,

[« One must not roll the rice into a ball, and one must not slobber. ] <sup>6</sup>

These are prohibitions regarding propriety and righteousness, and not spoken in reference to good or bad fortune.

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<sup>1</sup> The first thunder-storms are in spring. This single case, *Wang Ch'ung* seems to intimate, was the reason that, subsequently, people always liked to have their bean-sauce ready before the first peal of thunder was heard *viz.* before the beginning of spring.

<sup>2</sup> Similar 'avoidances' have come down to our own rational times. *E. g.* one must not thank any one for a knife or a pair of scissors, otherwise they would cut the friendship. A young lady avoids cutting a fresh pat of butter, otherwise she is sure not to marry during the year.

<sup>3</sup> This rule goes back to *Confucius*, who in bed, did not lie like a corpse. [Analects X, 16 \[Couvreur\]](#).

<sup>4</sup> This may be an allusion to the frailty of the body or of friendship.

<sup>5</sup> A man making such a request would be like one having somebody to bury. The very sensible reasons given for these various customs are *Wang Ch'ung's*.

<sup>6</sup> *Liki, Ch'ü-li* p. 18r. ([Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 80](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### False Charges against Time

69. XXIII, IV. *Lan-shih*

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p2.387 When people dig up the earth for the foundation of a building, the year-star and the moon will swallow something <sup>1</sup>, and, on the land which they consume, a case of death occurs. If *e. g.* the planet *Jupiter* is in the sign *tse*, <sup>2</sup> the year-star swallows up some land in the sign *yu* <sup>3</sup>, and if the moon in the first month stands in *yin* <sup>4</sup>, it consumes some land in the sign *sse* <sup>5</sup>. Some building being erected on land situated in *tse* and *yu*, people living in *yu* and *sse* are swallowed up, and being about to be thus injured, they have recourse to charms to counteract these influences, using objects made of the Five Elements, and hanging up metal, wood, water, and fire. Should, for example, *Jupiter* and the moon infest a family in the west, they would suspend metal <sup>6</sup>, and should those luminaries be going to devour a family in the east, this family would suspend charcoal <sup>7</sup>. Moreover, they institute sacrifices with a view to averting the evil, or they feign to change their residence, in order thus to eschew the calamity. There is unanimity about this, every one doing like the others. A careful consideration, however, reveals the utter futility of this mistake. How ?

The spirits of Heaven and Earth must have equal minds. People misconducting themselves are liable to punishments and penalties. In this respect the spirits cannot have two minds or different feelings, and their former ideas cannot be opposed to the later ones. When, in moving their

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<sup>1</sup> This must not be taken literally. It seems to mean to cause damage or misfortune.

<sup>2</sup> The North.

<sup>3</sup> The West.

<sup>4</sup> East-north-east.

<sup>5</sup> South-south-east.

<sup>6</sup> The element metal corresponds to the west.

<sup>7</sup> The element of the east is wood, that of the south where the inimical luminaries are placed, while menacing the family, is fire. Charcoal is a combination of wood and fire.

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residence, people do not take heed of the year-star and the moon, both resent this disregard of <sup>p2.388</sup> their opposition, and are irritated with the delinquents <sup>1</sup>. Now, people, doing some building, likewise move the body of the earth, and their misdemeanour is the same as that committed in moving one's residence. Therefore, those builders should be swallowed by the year-star, wherefore then, contrariwise, has the soil of the signs *sse* and *yu* to suffer for their guilt? If the spirits of the year-star and the moon take exception to the moving, and find fault with building, how is it that their judgment is so inconsequent? <sup>2</sup>

Ghosts and spirits call the sinners to account as a district magistrate reprimands and punishes. The ways in which people infringe the laws are many. In small cases the penalty is remitted, and only great viciousness entails capital punishments. But it does not happen that the innocent suffer. If they are subject to punishment, without any guilt, the world calls it injustice.

Now, the people of *sse* and *yu* have not offended against the moon or the year-star, yet while in *tse* they are building houses, they are eaten without any reason. Thus the year-star would be cruel to innocent persons.

Just when *Jupiter* stands in *tse*, the houses in *tse* would be safe, and those in *wu* <sup>3</sup> be injured. One must not commence building, or do any work, but though remaining idle and inactive, one is nevertheless visited with disasters. In the matter of the swallowing by the year-star and the moon, as soon as a *tse* house <sup>4</sup> begins to be stirred, *sse* and *yu* have hard times.

*Jupiter* is the spirit of the year and the moon. If its penalties and ravages are different on various occasions, one cannot expect Heaven to follow the excentricity of the spirit of the year and the moon.

As for the spirit of the year-star and the moon, the year-star in reality is

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<sup>1</sup> On the collision with the year-star = *Jupiter* of people moving their residence see chap. XXXIX.

<sup>2</sup> In one case they punish those who collide with them, in the other, those living in quite a different direction *viz.* a quarter to the right or the left of their stand-point.

<sup>3</sup> We ought to read *yu*, as above, I suppose.

<sup>4</sup> Perhaps we should add 'and a *yin* house'.



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*Jupiter*. When it has its position on the horizon in the sign *tse*, and some edifice is constructed in one of the provinces of China, say in *Yang-chou* <sup>1</sup> in the south-east — according to the view of *Tsou Yen* who takes China for one continent only, it would also p<sub>2.389</sub> be in the south-east : — then the year-star consuming some ground in the sign *yu* <sup>2</sup>, ought to swallow the soil of the western *Ch'iang* <sup>3</sup> ; how could the land in the south-east suffer any damage ? In case *Jupiter* stays amidst men <sup>4</sup>, and a house in the west lies in *yu*, in the house of the family, erecting some building there, there must likewise be a *yu* region, why then does *Jupiter* not swallow this *yu* quarter in the house in question, and injure another family instead ?

Besides, who really is it that swallows ? If it really be *Jupiter* and the moon, these two are attending spirits of Heaven : their eating and drinking, therefore, must resemble that of Heaven. Heaven does not eat men, therefore at the suburban sacrifices <sup>5</sup>, they are not immolated as victims. If the two stars are not celestial spirits, they cannot eat men either.

Respecting the food of the numerous spirits between *Heaven* and *Earth*, the Sage says that they must be treated like men. The dead are to be worshipped after the manner of the living, and ghosts, as if they were men. Consequently, at the offerings made to the various spirits all sorts of things are used, but not men.

Tigers and wolves are man devouring brutes ; do the spirits of *Jupiter* and the moon grow from the essence of tigers and wolves ? In a time of famine, when there is a scarcity of grain and food, men, out of hunger, devour one another. Are the spirits of *Jupiter* and the moon imbued with the fluid of those men-eaters ?

If *Jupiter* and the moon have spirits, the sun must likewise have a spirit. *Jupiter* swallows land, and the moon does ; why should the sun not do the

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<sup>1</sup> A province under the *Han* comprising *Kiangsu*, *Anhui*, *Kiangsi*, *Fukien*, and *Chekiang*.

<sup>2</sup> In the west.

<sup>3</sup> Tibetan tribes.

<sup>4</sup> *Jupiter* was first supposed to stay in the north, outside of China, now it is placed amidst men, in the interior.

<sup>5</sup> The suburban sacrifices were offered to Heaven.

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same ?

A number of days makes up a month, a number of months forms a season, several seasons, a year, 1,539 years are a *t'ung*<sup>1</sup> period, and 4,617 years a *yuan* period<sup>2</sup>. These are multiplied and involved numbers, and the names of fractions and full numbers. How could ghosts and spirits have anything to do with them, p2.390 or felicity and misfortune depend on them ? If the year and the month, as full numbers, must have spirits, then the four seasons would have them, and the *t'ung* and *yuan* periods as well.

Three days of the moon are *po* (the first quarter), eight days are the crescent, and fifteen, full-moon<sup>3</sup>. What difference is there with a full year or a full moon ? If the year and the moon have spirits, the first quarter and the crescent must have spirits too.

One day is divided into twelve hours. When dawn is during the *yin* hour (3-5 a. m.), the sun rises during the *mao* time (5-7 a. m.). The twelve moons rest in *yin* and *mao*, consequently the *yin* and *mao* times are added to the twelve moons<sup>4</sup>. The sun receives the twelve hours and does not swallow land, the moon, however, resting in the twelve signs, does. Has the sun no spirit in spite of this addition, whereas the moon has owing to this relation ? How is it that the moon alone, being thus related, consumes land, and that the sun, although connected with the hours, does not ? If the sun has no

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<sup>1</sup> Three *t'ung* are one *yuan*.

<sup>2</sup> These periods may be of Taoist origin. Some reckon a *yuan* at 129,600, others at 24,192,000 years, something like a geological period. The Taoists like the Indians are fond of big numbers. According to one authority 3,276,000 years have elapsed from the creation of the world to 481 B. C.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. also p. 383, Notes 1 and 2.

<sup>4</sup> The twelve hours of the day are denominated after the twelve cyclical signs *yin*, *mao*, &c., marking that place of the horizon over which the sun stays during each double hour. In the same way, every month of the Chinese calendar is connected with that cyclical sign in which the moon rests during that month. In the course of twelve months the moon has passed through all the twelve constellations or cyclical signs. *Wang Ch'ung* is not correct in saying that the *yin* and *mao* 'times' are added to the twelve months, they are not times in this case, but constellations corresponding to those of our zodiac. The twelve [], to which belong *yin* and *mao*, are those places of the firmament through which the sun passes in twelve double hours, and the moon in twelve months. For this reason they are made use of to designate the twelve hours as well as the twelve months. Moreover, the course of the planet *Jupiter* through these signs of the zodiac, which is completed in 12 years, affords a means of denoting the consecutive years, on which cf. [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. III, p. 655 seq.](#)

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spirit, notwithstanding this connexion, it is not proper to decide the question by a reference to hours, and if the addition of hours gives spirituality, it is not right that one star should not eat.

The mouth and the stomach of a spirit must be like those of man. Being hungry, he eats, and being satiated, he stops. He does not take a meal each time a building is erected. Provided that the spirits of *Jupiter* and the moon eat when there is a building in course of construction, buildings are few ; do the two spirits suffer hunger then ?

p2.391 During a famine, people quit their homes, which remain desolate and abandoned. Every building activity ceases. Do the spirits of the year-star and the moon starve then ?

Moreover, fields no less than houses are put in order by men ; the force displayed in these works and the efforts made are identical. In building a house, the earth is dug up, and wooden beams are erected, on the field, they cut a ditch and raise dykes. Beams and dykes are equally raised, and the digging and cutting the ground are the same. If, in case a house be erected, *Jupiter* and the moon eat the ground, but do not do so, when a field is put under cultivation, are they hungry, when the house is building, and have they no appetite, when the land is cultivated ? How is it possible that under similar circumstances, and the proceedings being the same, eating and drinking are different ?

Those maintaining the encroachments of the two celestial bodies, will measure the bulk of the work done and calculate the distance by steps. If *e. g.* some construction 3 feet high be built, the eating would take place within one step, if the height exceed 100 feet, the eating would extend over more than a Li. According as the work is big or small, the calamity would reach far or near.

*Mêng T'ien* built the *Great Wall* for the *Ch'in* dynasty, the length of which was half that of the empire <sup>1</sup>. The misfortune caused thereby ought to have affected tens of thousands of people, but while the construction of the *Great Wall* was going on, the deaths among the people of *Ch'in* were comparatively

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 167.

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few.

When the Duke of *Chou* was building *Loyang*, great works were carried out. At that time the two stars should have swallowed lots of land, and the Sage foreseeing this, ought to have moved from the place thus menaced to a favourable site, because, unless he avoided a collision, many hardships would have befallen the people. In the Classics and Records, Sages and Worthies should have criticized this proceeding. Now, we hear that the people building *Loyang* flocked together from the four quarters, but we are not told that after the work was completed, and everything finished, many died. Therefore, the statements about the year-star and the moon are probably baseless and untrue.

Besides, if the two stars really eat, a feeling of hunger in their mouths and bellies like that of men, must have been the cause. Now, suppose, in the *sse* and *yu* quarters, they employ charms paralyzing their influences ; would they be afraid of a <sup>p2.392</sup> metal blade, or dread a dead charcoal, and therefore shut their mouths, not daring to eat ? Really, to be afraid there ought to be some equilibrium of the antagonistic quantities. The Five Elements overcome one another, but the forces of things must be equally balanced. If a cupful of water be thrown on the burning mountain of *Ch'in*, or if a handful of earth be employed to stop a breach of the *Yellow River*, a thousand Li in width, would they master those elements ? The relation of the elements remains the same, but the dimensions and quantities are not proportionate.

The nature of Heaven and Earth is such, that, as regards the strength of human beings, a little cannot overpower much, or a small force vanquish a great one. Let a big army be equipped with wooden staves only, and a single warrior, armed with a sword, try conclusions and exert his strength, he is sure to be killed. Metal, by its nature, subdues wood ; if, in this case, wood gets the better, and metal succumbs, it is due to the great amount of wood and the small quantity of metal. If metal be heaped up in mounds, and a charcoal fire approached, to light and burn them, it is obvious that the metal does not melt. The principles of the Five Elements are not violated, but there is too much metal and too little fire, and the disproportion of dimensions and quantities is too great.

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A boy five feet high, fighting with *Mêng Pen*, could not gain the victory, not because of his cowardice, but of his inadequate strength. Wolves, in packs, eat men, and men, crowded together, eat the wolves. In all contests depending on strength and courage, very seldom the small overcome the great, and that, in struggles and competitions, the minority beats the majority is of very rare occurrence. According to the laws of Heaven, among human beings the small cannot vanquish the great, and the few do not subdue the many. How could evil influences be suppressed and averted, or the calamities, caused by the year-star, be removed by means of a blade of metal or a charcoal fire ?

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## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### Slandering of Days

#### 70. XXIV, I. *Chi-jih*

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p2.393 As people trust in the time of the year, so, in their proceedings, they also place reliance on days. If there be some sickness, death, or other calamities, in a serious case, they speak of having offended against the year or a month, in minor ones, of having neglected a forbidden day. Books on forbidden days enjoy no less popularity than tracts on the year and the month. Common people repose implicit confidence in them, and even scholars able to reason cannot solve the problem. Consequently, when taking any steps, people do not examine their hearts, but conform to some days, and unconcerned with their intentions, they expect everything from time.

Works on time and days exist in great numbers, and a short inquiry into their general tenor will disclose what they are worth, and induce those believing in Heaven and time to have some doubt, and repudiate such ideas.

Happiness and misfortune accompany prosperity and decay <sup>1</sup>, alternating and passing away. At all proceedings people will say that the unlucky must be afraid of their bad luck which will come to pass, and, concerning the lucky, they pretend that the luck which they hope for will be realised. When happiness and misfortune have arrived of their own accord, they attribute them to former good or bad luck in order to frighten and caution their hearers. That is the reason why, for many generations, people have not had any misgivings about the calendar, and why for such a long time the truth has not dawned upon them.

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<sup>1</sup> Prosperity and decay are the events and circumstances making people happy or miserable.

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The calendar for burials prescribes that the nine holes and depressions of the earth <sup>1</sup>, as well as odd and even days, and single and paired months are to be avoided. The day being lucky and innocuous, oddness and evenness agreeing, and singleness and parity <sup>p2.394</sup> tallying, there is luck and good fortune. The non-observance of this calendar, on the other hand, conduces to bad luck and disaster.

Now, burying means concealing the coffin, and shrouding, concealing the corpse. Shortly after death, the corpse is concealed in the coffin, and, after a while, the coffin is concealed in a tomb. What difference is there between a tomb and a coffin, or between shrouding and burying ? In placing the body into the coffin, unlucky auguries are not avoided, solely in interring it, good luck is sought.

If the grave be made much of, the grave is earth, and the coffin, wood. In respect to the nature of the Five Elements, wood and earth resemble each other <sup>2</sup>. Wood is worked to receive the corpse, and earth is dug up to inter the coffin. Working and digging are similar proceedings, and a corpse and a coffin are very much the same. Should the digging up of earth injure the body of Earth, then in trenching ditches or tilling a garden, a special day should be chosen as well. If people are able to make a distinction between these two things <sup>3</sup>, I am willing to admit their prohibitions, but unless they can do so, I am not in a position to accept this avoidance.

When the day is not injurious, they still require that it be odd or even, and oddness and evenness being in harmony, they still demand the singleness or parity of the month. When the day is odd or even, and the month single or paired, in accordance with the burial calendar, by combining these dates with lucky auguries, they always find out some correspondence. How can we explain this ?

In the 'Spring and Autumn' period sons of Heaven, princes, and high officers died by hundreds and thousands, but their burial days were not always conformable to the calendar. It is further said that an interment could

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<sup>1</sup> These seem to be geomantic terms.

<sup>2</sup> Both are elements.

<sup>3</sup> Digging a grave, and making ditches or tilling a garden.

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not take place because it rained, and that it was performed at mid-day on a *kêng-yin* day <sup>1</sup>. Provided that the Duchess of *Lu* <sup>2</sup> died on an odd day, then the burial might have been on a *chi-ch'ou* day, when oddness and evenness would have been in harmony, and this being the case, the day would have been propitious <sup>3</sup>. She could not be buried to avoid p2.395 the rain, but if the day was a good one it ought not to have been rejected barely because of the rain, for rain may have been inconvenient, but the disregard of odd and even could result in the most serious calamities and disasters. To seek their convenience and thereby entail calamities could not have been the intention of the people of *Lu* or according to the view of a diligent officer. Now, they paid no attention to odd and even, and waited for the *kêng-yin* day, taking the sunshine on this day for a good presage <sup>4</sup>.

The *Liki* states that the Son of Heaven is interred in the seventh month, the princes of a State in the fifth, the ministers, great officers, and officers in the third month <sup>5</sup>. If *e. g.* the Son of Heaven expires in the first month he is buried in the seventh, if he dies in the second he is buried in the eighth <sup>6</sup>. The same applies to the princes, ministers, great officers, and officers. According to the calendar for burials the month of the interment of the Son of Heaven, and the princes would be either even or uneven throughout <sup>7</sup>.

Degenerate ages have great faith in these sorts of laws, and depraved princes are bent on seeking happiness. The 'Spring and Autumn' time was

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, Duke *Hsüan* 8th year [[Couvreur](#), § 10].

<sup>2</sup> The Duchess of *Lu* was *Ching Ying*.

<sup>3</sup> Originally the duchess was to be buried on a *chi-ch'ou* day, but the rain prevented it. *Chi-ch'ou*, being the 26<sup>th</sup> combination of the cycle of sixty, would have been an even day, and as such in harmony with the uneven day of the death of the duchess. The *kêng-yin* day, the 27<sup>th</sup> combination, was an odd day again and not tallying with the odd day of death.

<sup>4</sup> The *Tso-chuan*, commenting upon the above quoted passage, states that to delay the interment owing to rain was according to rule. The *Liki* ([Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 223](#)) [[Couvreur](#)] informs us that common people did not suspend the interment because of rain, and this rule seems to prevail at present, a rain-fall during a burial being regarded as very propitious. Cf. *De Groot, Religious System Vol. I*, p. 213.

<sup>5</sup> *Liki eod.*

<sup>6</sup> In adding seven, five, or three, the month of death is included.

<sup>7</sup> *I. e.*, it would correspond to the month of death, being even in case the latter was even, and uneven if the latter was.



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very degenerate, and that between Duke *Yin* and Duke *Ai* was the worst, yet they did not take any precautions for the days of interment, because they did not shun bad luck.

Under the reign of King *Wên* of *Chou*, laws and institutions were perfect. The intellect of *Confucius* was very acute, and the arguments of the *Ch'un-ch'iu* were very subtle. If, by neglecting lucky auguries, people were afflicted, or if, by their heedlessness, they had incurred misfortune, some few words and some slight attempts at criticism would not have been out of place. Now we find nothing of the kind, consequently there exist no fixed rules for the time of burials.

p2.396 The calendar of sacrifices has its favourable and inauspicious presages as well. Thus, a day when bloodshed is to be avoided, and when the month is baleful, always bodes evil. If sacrifices are offered with animals slaughtered on such days, some catastrophe will ensue.

Now, sacrificing is feeding the ghosts, and the ghosts are the essence of dead men <sup>1</sup>. If they are not, people cannot have seen them eating and drinking. The service of the dead is analogous to that of the living, and the worship of ghosts, corresponding to that of men. Since we behold the living eating and drinking, they must do the same after they have died and become ghosts. Affection for other beings, and remembrance of dear relatives are the main springs of sacrifices. As for the offerings to other spirits, and the numerous ghosts, although they are not dead men, yet the ritual of their worship is identical with that of the deceased. As we never see their shapes, we only think of them in the form of living men. The living have no fixed days for their eating and drinking, wherefore then must spirits and ghosts have such days ?

In case ghosts and spirits really are conscious and not different from men, it is unnecessary to select days for sacrifices <sup>2</sup>. If, however, they are unconscious, they cannot partake of food and drink, and though days be selected or shunned, of what use would it be ?

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<sup>1</sup> In general belief, here only used as an argument, for *Wang Ch'ung* does not share it. See Vol. I, chap. 15 and below.

<sup>2</sup> Because men do not choose propitious days for eating and drinking.

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In reality, there are no ghosts for the diverse sacrifices, and the departed do not possess any knowledge. The various sacrifices are performed in appreciation of great services, to show that virtue has not been forgotten, and the dead are treated as though they were alive, for the purpose of avoiding the appearance of ingratitude. Sacrifices do not bring happiness, and their omission does not entail calamities. Since sacrifices and the omission thereof neither cause happiness nor misfortune, how can lucky and unlucky days be of advantage or harmful ?

If bloodshed be avoided, and the baleful days of the month shunned, because, when animals are slaughtered, blood is spilled, the living, eating the Six Animals, should likewise take these precautions. In the many slaughterhouses throughout China, several thousand animals are killed daily, no distinction being made between <sup>p2.397</sup> lucky and unlucky ones, but the butchers do not die an untimely death for that reason. As regards capital punishment, those criminals, beheaded every month, also count by thousands. When they are executed in the market-place, no auspicious day is chosen, yet the judges are not visited with misfortune.

When the meat supply is exhausted, animals are slaughtered, and when a case is settled, the culprits are decapitated. The decapitation of convicts, and the slaughter of animals are both bloodshed indeed. Why do victims, immolated at sacrifices, receive a different treatment, and why is a calendar established for sacrifices alone ? Why are butchers and judges left out of account ? The world adopts an opinion, without considering analogous cases. It sacrifices, though there are no ghosts, and believes in things to be avoided, though they do not exist. Attempting to secure happiness, by means of these two non-entities, it does not obtain it.

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In writings on baths we are informed that, if anybody washes his head on a *tse* day, he becomes lovely, whereas if he does so on a *mao* day, his hair turns white.

A man is liked or disliked according as his features are handsome or ugly, whereas the black and white colour of his hair depend upon his age and the

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number of his years. If a woman as plain as *Mu Mu* <sup>1</sup> were to wash her head on a *tse* day, would she excite love thereby ? Or if a girl of fifteen were to do the same on a *mao* day, would her hair turn white ?

Moreover, *mu* (沐) signifies to remove the impurity of the head, *hsi* (洗) to remove that of the feet, *kuan* (盥) to remove that of the hands, and *yü* (浴) to remove that of the body. All these manners of washing aim at cleansing the same body, and resemble each other. For washing the feet, the hands, and the body no days are selected, only for washing the head there are certain days. If the head be deemed the noblest part of the body, in bathing (浴) the face is included and the face belongs to the head also. If the hair be considered the noblest, there ought to be chosen a day for combing the hair as well.

p2.398 For combing one uses wood <sup>2</sup> and for washing, water. Water and wood both belong to the Five Elements. Now, in using wood one does not shun anything, only in using water certain days are appointed. Should water be nobler than wood, then whenever water is used a day should be selected.

Besides, water is less noble than fire <sup>3</sup> ; if different degrees of nobility must be admitted, then, in all cases when fire is used, a day ought to be chosen.

Further, provided that a person, washing his head on a *tse* day, becomes the object of love, and that, by washing it on a *mao* day, his hair turns white, who is the cause of all this ? The nature of *tse* is water, and of *mao*, wood <sup>4</sup>. Water cannot be loved, and the colour of wood is not white. The animal of *tse* is the rat, and that of *mao* is the hare. The rat cannot be loved, and the fur of the hare is not white <sup>5</sup>. Who is it that renders the person, bathing on a *tse*

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 473, Note 3.

<sup>2</sup> The Chinese still use wooden combs to-day, a fact illustrated by the character for comb 櫛.

<sup>3</sup> Fire, the *Yang* fluid, the producing force of nature is nobler than water, the *Yin* fluid, which is regarded as passive or destructive.

<sup>4</sup> According to the theory of the Five Elements, elaborated in the *Han* epoch, of the Twelve Branches *hai* and *tse* are related to water, and *yin* and *mao*, to wood. Cf. [Appendix I](#) p. 467.

<sup>5</sup> The prescription cannot be explained by the fanciful theory on the elements and their correlates.

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day, lovable, and causes the hair of another, bathing on a *mao* day, to take the colour of hoar-frost ?

Consequently <sup>1</sup>, bathing days are not lucky or unlucky, and it is not admissible to establish a special bathing calendar.

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There are books for tailors, giving auspicious and inauspicious times. Dresses, made on an inauspicious day, bring misfortune, made on a lucky day, they attract happiness.

Clothes as well as food serve to support the human body : — food supports it within, and clothes protect it from without. For food and drink no days are chosen, whereas, in tailoring, certain days are tabooed. Are clothes of greater importance because they cover the body ? Of things appreciated by humanity there is none more urgently needed than food. Therefore the first of p2.399 the Eight Objects of Government <sup>2</sup> is food, the second commodities. Clothes fall under commodities. Should they rank higher, for being on the body, then nothing, worn on the body, is more important than the hat <sup>3</sup>. In manufacturing it, no restrictions are to be observed, whereas tailoring is beset with prohibitions. The more valuable object is thus treated with indifference, and much care is bestowed on the meaner.

Besides, washing removes the impurity of the head, and hats are used as head-gear ; baths take away the dirt from the body, and clothes protect it from cold. For washing there are prohibitions, but for hats there are no restrictions ; for baths no good or bad auguries exist, clothes, on the other hand, have good or bad influences. All these things are alike and refer to the same body, but some are held to be good, others to be bad, and the taboo is not the same. Common people, with their shallow knowledge, cannot grasp the truth.

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<sup>1</sup> We have to insert the answer to the preceding rhetorical question : nobody.

<sup>2</sup> The Eight Objects of Government, enumerated in the *Shuking*, viz. food, commodities, sacrifices, works, instruction, jurisdiction, entertainment of guests, and warfare. [[Couvreur](#)]

<sup>3</sup> Its importance lies not so much in its usefulness — in this respect a coat or a cloak are more important — as in its covering the head, the noblest part of the body.

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Moreover, clothes are less valuable than a chariot and horses. The first of the Nine Gifts of Investiture <sup>1</sup> are a chariot and horses, the second, robes of State. Cartwrights do not seek a propitious time, and tailors alone look out for a lucky day. By their prejudices, people lose the true estimate of what is important and not.

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For commencing the building of a dwelling and the construction of a house the selection of a day is requisite.

A house covers the human shape, and a dwelling harbours the human body ; how could they be liable to the evil influences of the year and the moon, that the aforesaid selection becomes necessary ? If the spirits dislike them because they cover and shield the human body, then for building a carriage, and constructing a ship, for making a canopy, and manufacturing a hat, a propitious day ought to be chosen as well. In case the spirits be <sup>p2.400</sup> displeased, because the earth is moved, and the soil dug up, then, for making a trench or tilling a garden, a good day should be appointed also. Provided that the spirit of Earth be molested by the turning up of the soil, it might well forgive man, for he has no bad intentions, and merely desires to shelter his body and find a resting place. The holy mind of a spirit would not be irritated thereby, and, under this condition, even the omission to select a day would not have evil consequences. If, however, the spirits of the soil could not pardon man, and irreasonably hated him, in view of the vexations caused by his disturbing the earth, of what avail would be the selection of a propitious day ? <sup>2</sup>

The imperial law forbids murder and the wounding of man. All murderers and those who have wounded others, are liable to punishment, and, though they should select a day for transgressing the law, they would not escape. In default of such a prohibition, even wilful manslaughter would not be atoned

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<sup>1</sup> These Nine Gifts were symbols of authority, anciently bestowed upon vassals and ministers. They were : a chariot and horses, robes of State, musical instruments, vermilion coloured entrance doors, the right to approach the sovereign by the central path, armed attendants, bows and arrows, battle-axes, and sacrificial wines. *Mayers' Manual* Pt. II No. 284.

<sup>2</sup> The disturbance would be the same, whether the day be auspicious or not.

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for.

The jurisdiction of a district magistrate is like the sway of ghosts and spirits, and the crime of throwing up and piercing the soil, analogous to killing and wounding. For killing and wounding the selection of days is of no use, wherefore then should there be those prohibitive rules concerning the construction and the erection of houses and dwellings ?

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In studying books the *ping* days are eschewed, because they say that *Ts'ang Hsieh* <sup>1</sup> expired on a *ping* day. The rites prescribe that on *tse* and *mao* days no music should be made, for the *Yin* and *Hsia* dynasties perished on a *tse* and a *mao* day <sup>2</sup>. If people study on a *ping* day, or make music on a *tse* and *mao* day, they are not necessarily visited with misfortune. Out of regard for the death day of former emperors, and out of sympathy with their sufferings, people cannot bring themselves to undertake anything. The system of tabooed days is related to these customs connected with the *ping*, *tse*, and *mao* days. Although something be shunned there is no fear of any disaster or calamity <sup>3</sup>.

p2.401 A great variety of spirits are referred to in the calendars embracing Heaven and Earth, but the Sages do not speak of them <sup>4</sup>, the scholars have not mentioned them, and perhaps they are not real. The laws of Heaven are hard to know, but provided that spirits exist, then what benefit could be derived from shunning a day on which they display their activity, or what adversity could accrue from a non-avoidance ? If a king undertakes something on such and such a day, and the people also choose this day, the king, on hearing it, would not mete out punishments, for he would not be angry that his subjects did not shun him. Wherefore then should the spirits of Heaven alone be so cruel ?

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<sup>1</sup> The inventor of writing.

<sup>2</sup> These dynasties were celebrated for their music.

<sup>3</sup> Some days are shunned out of respect for great men that died on these days, but not because they forebode evil.

<sup>4</sup> *Confucius* admits the existence of ghosts and spirits, and that they be sacrificed to, but avoids speaking of them and answering any questions about their nature.

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The State law inquires whether a thing be permissible or not according to human ideas, but does not concern itself with prognostics. *Confucius* said that one puts up a dwelling after having taken its forecast <sup>1</sup>. Regarding the sacrifices of the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, he does not allude to the divination of days. The *Liki* says that domestic affairs are settled on an even day and outside matters, on an odd day. Odd and even are observed with regard to inside and outside matters, but do not refer to good or bad luck, or indicate happiness and misfortune.

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<sup>1</sup> Quotation from the *Hsiao-ching* (*Pei-wên-yün-fu*).

## CHAPTER XXXIX

### Questions about the Year Star

73. XXIV, IV. *Nan-sui*

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p2.402 Common people have a feeling of uneasiness, and are prone to believe in defences and prohibitions. Even the wise become doubtful, and are at a loss how to settle these questions. Consequently, artisans carry the day, and scholars and well informed people submit to them. Books on auguries outshine the Classics and Canons, and the utterances of artisans have more weight than the words of scholars and students. Now, I propose to inquire a little into this question, that others may see for themselves, weighing right and wrong, and that people in general may be roused.

Concerning the moving of one's residence, they say that to encounter *T'ai-sui*<sup>1</sup> is unlucky, and that to turn one's back upon it likewise bodes evil. The encounter of *T'ai-sui* is termed '*Jupiter's* descent', and the moving in opposite direction to it, '*Jupiter's* destruction', wherefore both are attended with misfortune.

In case *T'ai-sui* is in *chia-tse*, people on earth must not move in a northerly or a southerly direction. Building a house and marrying, they should avoid this as well. When they move to the east or the west, or in one of the four intermediate directions, these configurations are all lucky. Why? Because then they do not collide with the *T'ai-sui*, nor meet its shock.

Let us ask what this avoidance of *T'ai-sui* really means. Does it object to people's moving altogether? Then all moving would entail calamities. Or does *T'ai-sui* not prevent people from moving, but resent their collision? Then all people going north or south on the roads would be visited with misfortunes.

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<sup>1</sup> A fictitious point, also called *sui-yin*, 'the opposite of *Jupiter*', used for designating the year by means of the cycle of sixty. (See [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. III, p. 654](#)). The term *chia-tse* would correspond to the north. Then *Jupiter* itself would have its position due south.



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The feelings of *T'ai-sui* would be like those of a high officer. When a high officer is on a road, and somebody runs against <sup>p2.403</sup> the carts and horses of his men, he would fly into a passion. Why should *T'ai-sui* chastise only those who, carrying their furniture and transporting their things, in changing their domicile run against it ?

Of yore, when on a trip, the Emperor *Wên Ti* <sup>1</sup> was crossing the *Pa-ling* bridge, there was an individual on the road who, falling in with the *cortège*, jumped down from the bridge. Trusting that the carriages of the emperor had already passed, he suddenly emerged again, and frightened the carriage-horses. The emperor, very angry, handed him over to the sheriff *Chang Shih Chih* <sup>2</sup> for trial. Provided that the spirit of *T'ai-sui* <sup>3</sup> travel like *Wên Ti*, then those who fall in with it would resemble the man emerging from below the bridge.

At present, many wayfarers are unexpectedly drowned, or fall down dead. How do we know but that they also encountered *T'ai-sui* on its journeys ?

Those moving their residence cannot stay in their former home. Unable to stay there, they ignore whether they will meet with the Year Star or not, and not knowing this, they cannot make up their minds what to do.

Moreover, in case the spirit of *T'ai-sui* really travels about, then perhaps it proceeds along a crooked line, and not necessarily along a straight one, south or northwards <sup>4</sup>, as with high officers, leaving their houses, it happens that they take a crooked road. Should it, as a spirit of Heaven, take the straight road, and not a crooked one <sup>5</sup>, then people moving from east and west and in the four intermediate directions, would also run against it <sup>6</sup>. A high officer proceeding southward and northward, and people moving from east to west,

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<sup>1</sup> 179-157 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Giles, Bibl. Dict.* No. 105 and p. 144, Note 5.

<sup>3</sup> We see from this passage that the personification of '*T'ai-sui*' is not a recent invention as *De Harlez, Le Livre des Esprits et des Immortels*, p. 134 says. This spirit is venerated at the present day, and seems by some to be regarded as a dangerous spirit of the soil.

<sup>4</sup> On the firmament *Jupiter* describes a curve, not a straight line.

<sup>5</sup> The spirits of Heaven dislike crookedness.

<sup>6</sup> While crossing the course of *T'ai-sui* from north to south.

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the configuration of these intermediate directions would be like that leading to a collision. If *T'ai-sui* does not go straight south and north, how could people, moving in these directions, fall in with it ?

p2.404 If *T'ai-sui* did not move at all, then it might perhaps stay in its palace and behind its walls without meeting anybody ; how then were man to encounter it ?

Supposing *T'ai-sui* had no body like high officers and, shaped like vapours, clouds, or a rain-bow, stretched straight across the firmament, reclining at its extremities in the south and the north on *tse* and *wu* <sup>1</sup>, then people, moving east and west as well as those taking an intermediate line, would also run against it, just as men of our time, encountering an extensive fog and malarial exhalations, no matter whether they moved straightways or sideways, backward or forward, would all be affected <sup>2</sup>. If *T'ai-sui* were really like air, people ought to meet it and even, without moving, they would have to suffer from it.

Further *T'ai-sui* is another spirit of Heaven resembling the Green Dragon <sup>3</sup>. The body of the latter does not exceed several thousand *chang* <sup>4</sup>. Let us suppose that the size of our spirit is exceptional, and measures several ten thousand *chang*, and that this body covers the north. Then we ought to say that *T'ai-sui* stands in the north, but not in *tse*. East of *tse* is *ch'ou*, (N.N.E.) and west of it, *hai* (N.N.W.). If it be shown that *T'ai-sui* does not cover the whole north, it is owing to the great distance between the extreme eastern and western limits of the north. But if it be held to be just in *the tse* point, and colliding with people on earth, only those settled in *tse* and *wu* regions should not move south and north ; why should those living eastward as far as *ch'ou* (N.N.E.) and *sse* (S.S.E.), or westward as far as *hai* (N.N.W.) and *wei* (S.S.W.) refrain from doing so ?

Provided that the inhabitants of the *ch'ou* and *hai* regions move up and

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<sup>1</sup> The north and the south points.

<sup>2</sup> The fog would spread sideways as well as from north to south.

<sup>3</sup> The eastern quadrant of heaven.

<sup>4</sup> *Wang Ch'ung* seems to take the Green Dragon for a real dragon of extraordinary dimensions.

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down on the right or the left side of *T'ai-sui* southward and northward, or east and west, they are quite safe. *Ch'ou* being east and *hai* west of *tse*, the people of these quarters moving simply east and west <sup>1</sup>, must come into collision with the position of *T'ai-sui*, and those of the *sse* and *wei* regions moving east and west, be afraid lest they suffer destruction by the planet.

p2.405 The Literati considering the Nine Provinces 'under Heaven' <sup>2</sup> hold that they cover the entire length and breadth of the earth, north, south, east, and west. These Nine Circuits comprise five thousand Li which alone form the country of the Three Rivers <sup>3</sup>, i. e., the centre of the earth. With reference to the Duke of *Chou*, consulting the tortoise, about his new residence the Classic says, [Let the king come here as the vicegerent of God, and labour in the centre of the earth.] <sup>4</sup> Consequently *Lo* is the centre of the earth.

*Tsou Yen*, arguing on the subject, maintains that of the Nine Continents the five thousand Li form only one Continent, situated in the east and called *Ch'ih-hsien* <sup>5</sup>. Of continents, each comprising nine circuits, there are nine. Nine times nine gives eighty-one, consequently there are altogether eighty-one circuits. This view is probably imaginary, but it is difficult to know the shape of the earth. Should it be as described, there would also arise one difficulty.

In case all land under Heaven forms Nine Circuits as the Literati conceive it, then merely the circuits due south from *Lo-yi* and north from the Three Rivers *viz.* *Yü-chou*, *Ching-chou*, and *Chi-chou* could be frequented by *T'ai-sui*. How could it be between *Yung* and *Liang-chou*, in *Ch'ing-chou*, *Yen-chou*, *Hsü-chou*, and *Yang-chou* ? <sup>6</sup>

Should *Tsou Yen's* view be correct, and the Nine Circuits of the empire occupy the south-eastern corner of the earth, and not be lying exactly in *tse* or *wu*, how could *T'ai-sui* be present ?

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<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, not always keeping on one side of *T'ai-sui*.

<sup>2</sup> Equivalent to *China*.

<sup>3</sup> The *Huang-ho*, the *Huai*, and the *Lo*.

<sup>4</sup> *Shuking* Part V, Book XII, 14 ([Legge, Classics Vol. III, Part II, p. 428](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 253.

<sup>6</sup> Names of the Nine Circuits.

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If *T'ai-sui* did not keep its position at the confines of Heaven and Earth, and were wandering about among the people, then the house of every family might harbour it, and although a person did not move south or north, it would come across it all the same. Moving from an eastern to a western village, it would find *T'ai-sui* there, and should it move from an eastern into a western building, *T'ai-sui* would be in the western dwelling too. It would be east or west, north or south of the person in question, just as, walking on a highway, one falls in with other people in the east or the west, the north or the south.

Provided that the space filled by *T'ai-sui* measures several thousand, ten thousand, or hundred thousand *chang*, and that all mankind under heaven by moving entails some adversity, then <sup>p2.406</sup> how can their moving be regulated? If *T'ai-sui* stands in the interstice between Heaven and Earth, it has a similar position to a king in the midst of his country. People in the eastern part of it, bending their bows and shooting westward, would not be supposed to have wounded the king, because their bows do not carry as far as the king's capital; they merely shoot in their own place. Now, how could people moving proceed as far north as where *T'ai-sui* has its resting-place? Moving no farther than perhaps a hundred steps, how could they be charged with having hurt *T'ai-sui*?

Moreover, people moving their residence, are warned to go south or north, because *T'ai-sui* is held to stay in the *tse* point; *tse* breaks *wu*<sup>1</sup>, and those moving north or south, receive the shock, which is called a calamity. Now, in order to smash something, one requires a hammer. If there really be such a tool, then all people, even those not stirring, would be smashed and destroyed with it, but how could they be smitten in default of such a tool?

Thunder is the heavenly fluid. When in mid-summer it strikes, it splits trees and rends mountains, and, at times, suddenly kills a man. If the blow of *T'ai-sui* should be like a thunderbolt, there ought to be a crashing sound also, and death ensue instantaneously, for, otherwise, there could not be destruction either.

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<sup>1</sup> In Chinese natural philosophy the North, or cold, overcomes the South, or heat; there is no real breaking.

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If the knocking together, and the falling foul of each other be said to cause destruction, how can the knocking and striking have this effect ? The meeting of east and west is called knocking together, and the coming into contact of south and north, falling foul. Provided that knocking and running foul be calamitous, then east and west must be always baleful, and south and north always fatal <sup>1</sup>.

In case a collision with *T'ai-sui* proves disastrous only because of its being a spirit, it should be borne in mind that there are no spirits more powerful than Heaven and Earth. If Heaven and Earth meeting, dashed one against the other, no human life would be possible between Heaven and Earth.

Perhaps there are Twelve Spirits above, *Têng-ming*, *Tsung-k'uei* and the like <sup>2</sup>, which the artisans declare to be all celestial spirits. They always occupy *tse*, *ch'ou*, and the other cardinal points, and p2.407 are endowed with a fluid rushing and dashing against whosoever crosses their way. Though in spiritual force not equal to *T'ai-sui*, still they must do some minor damage, and those moving their residence, although they may eschew the perils of *T'ai-sui*, would, nevertheless, fall a prey to the attacks of the Twelve Spirits. Therefore, whenever they are going to move they should be prevented.

The winter air is cold and corresponds to water, which has its position in the northern quarter. The summer air is hot and corresponds to fire, whose place is in the south. Autumn and winter are cold, spring and summer are warm ; that applies to every place throughout the empire, and water and fire are not solely encountered in southern and northern regions. Now, *T'ai-sui* stands in *tse* only, but it is formed all over the world, and it is not merely encountered in *tse* and *wu*. Should really the position alone be decisive, then in *wu* there would be a hot summer and in *tse*, a hard winter. Would those moving south and north, in winter and summer, still meet with disasters ?

In the beginning of spring, *kên* represents the king, and *chên*, the minister, *sun* is the embryo, and *li* means annihilation, *k'un* death, and *tui*

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<sup>1</sup> Theoretically opposite directions as well as opposite qualities of things, in short all opposites, knock together and destroy one another.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 534.

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imprisonment, *ch'ien* disgrace, and *k'an* tranquillity <sup>1</sup>. The king incurring death, and the minister imprisonment, king and minister have knocked against the respective positions <sup>2</sup>, and elicited the fluids of death and imprisonment.

*Ch'ien*, *k'un*, and their six sons <sup>3</sup> embody the true laws of nature which *Fu Hsi* and *Wên Wang* have illustrated to govern the world thereby. These texts are written in the Classics, and the principles are believed by all the sages. They are evidently much more certain than what we know about *T'ai-sui*.

If, at the commencement of spring, people should move to the north-east, they would come under the diagram *kên* <sup>4</sup>, but not suffer any injury. When *T'ai-sui* stands in *tse*, and from the northeast they move to *k'un* <sup>5</sup>, this diagram would be near *wu* <sup>6</sup>, as when *k'un* is changed for *kên*, they would strike against the *tse* point. Why would the latter fact alone entail misfortune ? <sup>7</sup>

p2.408 The first moon resting in *yin* <sup>8</sup> is destructive in *shên* <sup>9</sup>, but the moving between *yin* and *shên* is not attended with disasters in its course. Although *T'ai-sui* does not point to *wu*, they wrongly maintain that the year breaks *wu*. As a matter of fact, there is no adversity to be apprehended, and the prohibition to move south and north is inane and unreasonable.

Twelve months make a year and, when the four seasons are completed, and the fluid of the *yin* and *yang* reaches a certain limit, again a year is formed, which is but another name of days and months joined together. Why should it be taken for a spirit, supposed to stand in the *tse* point ? By dissolving this combination we get days, the addition of days forms a month,

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<sup>1</sup> The eight terms are those of the Eight Diagrams.

<sup>2</sup> Viz. *k'un* and *tui*.

<sup>3</sup> The other six diagrams.

<sup>4</sup> In one plan of the Eight Diagrams (*Mayers' Manual* p. 335) *kên* represents the North-east.

<sup>5</sup> The South-west.

<sup>6</sup> The South.

<sup>7</sup> Why would the approaching of *wu* from *kun* not be disastrous ?

<sup>8</sup> E.N.E.

<sup>9</sup> W.S.W.

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several months become a season, and a number of seasons, a year, which therefore, is something similar to a day, a month, and a season.

If the year possess a spirit, have days, months, and seasons spirits also ? 1,539 years form a *t'ung* period, 4,617 a *yuan* period. A year is like a *t'ung* or a *yuan* period <sup>1</sup>. A year having a spirit, have the *t'ung* and *yuan* periods spirits likewise ? Critics deny it, but should they have them, for what reason would they injure mankind ? No spirits surpass Heaven and Earth, and Heaven and Earth do not hurt mankind. People speak of the Hundred Spirits, but they do not injure them either. Why should the fluid of *T'ai-sui*, being the essence of Heaven and Earth, be so inimical to men as to strike and hurt them ?

Further, the text says that in *chia-tse* one must not move. This may denote that *chia* and *tse* are different directions ; but *T'ai-sui*, having its position in *tse*, cannot stay in *chia* <sup>2</sup>. In case persons moving proceed there (to *tse*), and again settle in *chia*, taking that course, but finally staying in *chia*, those fixing the time for moving ought likewise to hinder them from moving eastward or westward <sup>3</sup>. Provided that *chia* and *tse* are combined, their calamities should be the same too. Not shunning *chia*, but avoiding *tse*, those persons fixing the time talk at random and deserve no confidence.

p2.409 People living somewhere cannot but change their residence, and changing their residence, they cannot but come into collision with the Year Star. Even if they do not, they cannot avoid dying at their time. Artisans noticing people's death at present, ascribe this misfortune to a change of residence in a former time. Common folk are very timid in their minds, there are always people passing away, and the consequence is that the story about *T'ai-sui* is handed down from generation to generation and never dies out.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 389, Note 7.

<sup>2</sup> In the term *chia-tse*, *chia* does not signify any direction. Together with *yi* it may stand for the east.

<sup>3</sup> Because in the east they might collide with *T'ai-sui* in *chia*, provided it could stay there.

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## CHAPTER XL

### Criticisms on Certain Theories

74. XXV, I. *Ch'i-shu*

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p2.410 The theory of drawing plans of houses teaches us that there are eight schemes, and that houses are numbered and classed according to the names of the cycle of the six *chia*<sup>1</sup>. Their position having been fixed, and their names being established, *kung, shang*<sup>2</sup>, and the other sounds manifest their difference. Houses have the *Five Sounds*<sup>3</sup>, as the surnames (of the owners) are provided with the *Five Tones*. When the houses do not accord with the surnames, and the latter disagree with the houses, people contract virulent diseases and expire, or pay the penalty of some crime and meet with adversity<sup>4</sup>.

I beg to offer the following criticism : in this world man is the noblest of all creatures. His houses resemble the nests of birds and the dens of wild beasts. If his houses be held to bear the cyclical signs *chia, yi*, &c., have nests and dens these signs as well ? Why do the spirits of *chia, yi*<sup>5</sup> solely stay in men's houses, but not among birds and brutes ?

Men have their houses as they have their fields. From these fields they derive their food and drink, and their houses serve as dwellings. For people, I should say, food is of paramount importance, therefore do the fields rank first, and the houses come after, the fields being of greater consequence. To the paths crossing the fields from north to south and from east to west, the eight schemes might be applied. By joining together lots of land, fields are formed, which might be numbered *chia, yi*. Why is the *chia, yi* system merely used for houses, and not transferred to fields ?

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<sup>1</sup> This would seem to be the cycle of sixty in which the sign *chia* recurs six times.

<sup>2</sup> The two first of the *Five Tones* or musical notes.

<sup>3</sup> The same as the *Five Tones*.

<sup>4</sup> It is difficult to grasp the full meaning of the aforesaid without a commentary.

<sup>5</sup> These signs are thought of as spiritual beings also.

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In courts and public buildings the residences of officers are connected, and not of a shape different from that of other houses. How do the places inhabited by officers distinguish themselves from <sup>p2.411</sup> those of laymen ? Yet they are not counted by the cycle of ten, which is merely employed for houses. For what reason ?

The dwellings of the people may be contiguous to the office of the head-borough, and conterminous to his land, but this calculation does not apply to his office, being restricted to the houses of the people. Wherefore do the spirits of *chia, yi* merely stay in the houses of the people ?

The system of numbering houses is applied to market inns ; streets and alleys there being marked with *chia, yi*, &c. But having passed through the market gate, and turning round, one again finds streets and alleys <sup>1</sup>. During the day and at night, people stay in their homes, but in the morning and in the evening, they are in the habit of sitting in the market-place, which is the same as sitting at home <sup>2</sup>. Why then are the booths and bazaars in the market not included in this computation with the cycle of ten ? <sup>3</sup>

Provinces and circuits are equally inhabited, and districts and cities are crowded with people ; they do not differ from streets and alleys, or houses. Wherefore then are provinces and circuits, districts and cities not reckoned by *chia, yi* ?

Does this cycle of ten exist since the creation of Heaven and Earth, or did it originate with the subsequent rulers ? If it existed from the time of creation, in remote antiquity people would seek shelter in nests and caverns, and had no dwellings to live in, nor were there regular streets or alleys ; where then were the spirits of *chia, yi* staying at that period ?

If, for expressing the situation of houses, the cycle of ten is made use of, the physicists concerned with the Five Elements must count the days by this

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<sup>1</sup> Streets and alleys not near an inn, which seem not to have been marked like those surrounding an inn.

<sup>2</sup> Therefore these stands and bazaars should be treated like dwelling houses *viz.* be marked with *chia, yi*, &c.

<sup>3</sup> Only market inns, *i. e.*, solid buildings are placed on a level with dwelling houses.

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cycle likewise <sup>1</sup>. *Chia* and *yi* are contained in the Ten Stems and Twelve Branches, and these symbols are added to the hours <sup>2</sup>. There being a special agreement between hours and symbols, there is luck, whereas their antagonism augurs ill. But in the last case only something is to be avoided, and sorrow or shame are not a necessary consequence. All depends on the p2.412 question whether a person be right or wrong, and so the penalties inflicted, are heavy or mild. The high commissioners try the merits of the case with impartiality. There is no evidence of the Stems and Branches causing luck or misfortune, and it is obvious that the persons affected thereby are in the right or in the wrong. What have the champions of the Stems and Branches to say against this ?

*Wu Wang* won a victory on a *chia-tse* day, and *Chou* succumbed on the same day. Both leaders chose the same time : their armies met, and their flags and standards were in view of one another, all on the same day. The one survived, and the other fell. Besides there was a special harmony between *chia* and *tse* <sup>3</sup>. The hour of early dawn bore the sign *yin* <sup>4</sup>, which was not at variance with *chia* and *yi* <sup>5</sup>, yet *Wu Wang* destroyed *Chou* under these signs all the same. Why ?

The sun is fire : in the sky it is the sun, and on earth it is fire. How shall we prove it ? A burning glass being held up towards the sun, fire comes down from heaven. Consequently fire is the solar fluid.

The sun is connected with the cycle of ten <sup>6</sup>, but fire is not. How is it that there are ten suns <sup>7</sup> and twelve constellations <sup>8</sup> ? The suns are combined with

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<sup>1</sup> Days are counted by means of the two cycles of ten and of twelve combined.

<sup>2</sup> Properly speaking, only the Twelve Branches are added to the hours.

<sup>3</sup> *Chia* corresponds to wood, and *tse* to water, two harmonious elements.

<sup>4</sup> 3-5 a. m.

<sup>5</sup> The element of *yin* and *mao* is wood like that of *chia* and *yi*. Consequently there was no antagonism between the signs *chia*, *tse*, and *yin*, and yet *Chou* was unlucky.

<sup>6</sup> In so far as this and the duodenary cycle are used to determine the days = 日, which originally means 'sun'.

<sup>7</sup> There are not ten suns, but the ten cyclical signs are attached to each ten consecutive days.

<sup>8</sup> These twelve constellations, designated by the Twelve Branches, serve to determine the twelve Chinese double-hours, according as the sun, in its daily course, passes through them.

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these constellations, therefore *chia* is joined to *tse* <sup>1</sup>. But what are the so-called ten suns ? Are there ten real suns, or is there only one with ten different names ?

Provided that there be ten real suns, and that *chia*, *yi* be their names, why are they not simply designated by the cycle of ten and must the duodenary cycle be employed too ? <sup>2</sup>

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p2.413 In the drawings of the court of the sun <sup>3</sup> the Ten Stems have their positions, and so have the Twelve Branches assigned their places. All have their own departments, being arranged in the five directions. It is like a king's castle, where he stays, without moving. Now the genuine sun passes through the middle, rising in the east every morning, and setting in the west every evening, always moving on and never stopping. It is widely different from the court of the sun, why then denote this sun with the names *chia*, *yi*, &c. ?

The house experts will retort by saying that the *chia*, *yi*, &c. of the, days, of course, are spirits of Heaven and Earth, displaying their activity by turns, changing every day, that, therefore, they are designated by the cycle of ten, and that their preponderance and defeat <sup>4</sup> determine good and bad fortune. — These names have no connexion with the true sun. Under these circumstances, the physicists treating of the Five Elements, should only make use of the cycle of ten, to find out fate ; why do they still speak of adding hours ? For hours being added, the real sun comes into play <sup>5</sup> ; how could it be potent or weak ?

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The experts of the Five Sounds articulate the surnames, personal names, and styles with their mouths, using the surname to fix the personal name, and the personal name to determine the style. By opening and closing the mouth, they produce outward and inward tones, and thus fix the Five Sounds,

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<sup>1</sup> The first signs of the denary and of the duodenary cycles.

<sup>2</sup> Here we have the same equivocation of days and suns. The notation by the two cycles merely applies to days, not to suns.

<sup>3</sup> Probably a diagram, used for divining purposes, similar to that found in calendars.

<sup>4</sup> Based on the well known symbolism by reference to the elements.

<sup>5</sup> It determines the hours.

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and modulate *kung* and *shang* in the proper way <sup>1</sup>.

Now, men have received their surnames from Heaven. Does Heaven produce these surnames by the fluid of the Five Elements inherent in it, or are they the result of the opening and shutting of the mouth, and of outward and inward tones ? If they are originally obtained from Heaven, they are like the fluid pervading the Five Grains and other productions <sup>2</sup>, what necessity would there be still for opening the mouth, shutting out sounds, and thus producing the right modulations of the voice without and within ?

p2.414 In ancient times, surnames used to be given with reference to the birth of the person in question <sup>3</sup>. According to the manner in which he was born a surname was bestowed upon him. For example, the ancestor of the *Hsia* dynasty was engendered by the swallowing of some pearl-barley, whence he received the surname *Sse*. The *Shang* dynasty owes its origin to a consumed swallows-egg, whence its surname *Tse*, and the house of *Chou* grew from the treading upon the foot-steps of a giant, and thus received the surname *Chi* <sup>4</sup>.

Personal names are given from some pre-intimation, from some auspice, from some appearance, from some other object, or from some similarity. When a child is born with a name on it, that is a pre-intimation. So *Yo*, Prince of *Lu*, had the character *Yo* on his hand, when he was born <sup>5</sup>. When the name is derived from some virtue this is called an auspice. Thus *Wên Wang* was called *Ch'ang* <sup>6</sup>, and *Wu Wang*, *Fa* <sup>7</sup>. A name from some resemblance is a name from appearance. *Confucius e. g.* was called *Ch'iu* <sup>8</sup>. A name taken from some other object is borrowed ; a duke of *Sung*, for example, was

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<sup>1</sup> In the encyclopedias of surnames one of the Five Sounds is attached to each name. I fail to understand how they were determined by the so-called experts. There is another tradition that *Huang Ti* blew the flute to fix the surnames.

<sup>2</sup> They are naturally obtained, and it is superfluous artificially to determine their sounds.

<sup>3</sup> *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Yin* 8th year (*Legge, Classics Vol. V, Part I, p. 25*) [[Couvreur](#), § 9].

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 318.

<sup>5</sup> See Vol. I, p. 95, Note 6.

<sup>6</sup> [], which may mean : prosperous, flourishing, powerful.

<sup>7</sup> [] = to expand, to prosper, to advance, to rise.

<sup>8</sup> The mother of *Confucius* is reported to have ascended the *Ni* hill, before his birth.

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named *Ch'u-chiu* (Pestle and Mortar) <sup>1</sup>, and when the name is taken from the father it is a name from similarity, there being some resemblance to the father <sup>2</sup>.

A style is given by expanding the personal name and finding a similar meaning. The personal name being *T'se*, the style was *Tse Kung*, and the name being *Yü*, the style was *Tse Wo*.

Accordingly, a surname is given with reference to the circumstances of the birth of the person, a personal name is taken from <sup>p2.415</sup> some pre-intimation, some auspice, some appearance, some other object, or from some similarity, and a style determined from the personal name, by expanding it and finding a similar meaning. There is no need for opening and closing the mouth, or for articulating outward and inward tones, and thus producing *kung* and *shang*; on what then do the advocates of the Five Sounds theory base their view?

The ancients had proper surnames and clan surnames. *T'ao* <sup>3</sup> and *T'ien* <sup>4</sup> are clan surnames intimating the occupation of the bearer, *Shang-Kuan* <sup>5</sup> and *Sse-Ma* <sup>6</sup> are clan surnames indicative of some office, and the clan surnames *Mêng* and *Chung* <sup>7</sup> are derived from the style of the deceased grandfather <sup>8</sup>. Thus we have three classes of clan surnames, either describing the occupation, or the office of the bearer, or referring to the style of his deceased grandfather. Proper surnames are connected with a person's birth, whereas clan surnames refer to the occupation, the office, or the style of the deceased grandfather. What room is there still left for articulating these surnames by opening and closing the mouth?

With the *Hsiung-nu* it was customary to have only a personal name and

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<sup>1</sup> This was the personal name of Duke *Chao* of *Sung*, 619-611 B. C. (See [Chavannes, Mém. Hist. Vol. IV, p. 241](#)), and it was borne by some other dukes of other States too.

<sup>2</sup> The gist of this passage, but not the examples, is derived from the *Tso-chuan*, Duke *Huan* 6th year (*Legge, Classics Vol. V, Part I, p. 49*) [[Couvreur](#), § 5].

<sup>3</sup> [ ] meaning a potter.

<sup>4</sup> [ ] meaning a farmer.

<sup>5</sup> [ ], a high officer.

<sup>6</sup> [ ], a military officer.

<sup>7</sup> [ ] and [ ], denoting the eldest and the second son of a family.

<sup>8</sup> The theory of clan-names exposed in *Legge's* translation of the *Tso-chuan* p. 26 differs somewhat.

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no surname or style. Although these names did not harmonise, the *Hsiung-nu* reached an old age. How about good and bad luck then ?

The Rites prescribe that in case the surname of a bought concubine be unknown, it should be ascertained by divination <sup>1</sup>. Those ignoring it do not know the proper surname of the concubine, for, at all events, she bears the family surname of her parents. By this divination the surname of her father and mother must necessarily be changed, and a wrong one be substituted, but since the Rites are very strict, as regards the marriage of a woman of the same surname <sup>2</sup>, this divination of the surname cannot be p2.416 dispensed with. If merely by correct pronunciation the surname and the family name could be set right, why would the Rites still require that the name of a purchased concubine be determined by divination ?

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The theory of drawing plans of houses enjoins that the doors of a house of a family with a *shang* <sup>3</sup> surname should not face the south, and that the doors of a house belonging to a family with a *chih* <sup>4</sup> surname should not be turned to the north. For *shang* corresponds to metal, and the south, to fire ; *chih* is equal to fire, and the north, to water. Water conquers fire, and fire injures metal. The fluids of the Five Elements may be hostile, wherefore, in the dwellings of families with the five classes of surnames, the doors should have their proper bearings. The bearings being correct, wealth and happiness, luck and prosperity are the consequences, whereas improper bearings are fraught with poverty and ignominy, disgrace and ruin.

Now, is there any difference between gates and halls ? To the gates of families with the five kinds of surnames halls must correspond, why are their bearings of no consequence ? Gates closing some place are less important than halls and rooms. During the day, and at night, people stay in their halls, and not at the gates, therefore the experts calculating happiness and misfortune, ought to base their computations on the halls.

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<sup>1</sup> *Liki, Ch'ü-li* ([Legge, Sacred Books Vol. XXVII, p. 78](#)) [[Couvreur](#)].

<sup>2</sup> Which they forbid *loc. cit.* See also p. 253, Note 2.

<sup>3</sup> [], the first tone.

<sup>4</sup> [], the fourth tone.

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Since gates merely serve as entrances and issues, the inner doors should be dealt with in the same manner. *Confucius* said,

[— Who can go out without passing through the door ?] <sup>1</sup>.

He speaks of the inner door, and not of the gate. The Five Sacrifices <sup>2</sup> are equally offered to the gate and the door. If it be necessary to rectify the bearings of the gate, ought not the inner doors to correspond to the gate ?

Moreover, in the dwellings of the officials joined together in public buildings, the doors often face the south or the north, and in the temporary residences of high officers, the gateways may look eastward or westward. Among high officers there are certainly many with a *kung* or a *shang* surname, and many of the <sup>p2.417</sup> houses of officials are marked *chih* or *yü* <sup>3</sup>. Those functionaries who live at peace, or are promoted, need not of necessity bear a *chio* <sup>4</sup> surname, or their gate face the south, and those who lose their office, and are degraded, have not always a *shang* surname, nor is their gate turned northward. Some live at ease, and are promoted, whereas others lose their positions, and are degraded. How is this ?

As the surnames are connected with the Five Sounds, so, in human characters, the Five Elements also play an important part. If, among people related to the Five Sounds, a person with a *shang* surname is not allowed to have a gate facing the south, then can a man imbued with a *metal* nature sit down facing the south, or walk in a southerly direction ?

There is another objection : To the gates combined with the Five Sounds men endowed with one of the Five Elements must correspond. Provided that there be five such living men, all bearing a *shang* surname, then each of them should have his peculiar colour. The one imbued with the element *wood* would be green, the one filled with *fire*, red, the *water* man would be black, the *metal* man, white, and the one endued with the element *earth*, yellow. These men of five colours passing through a gate facing the south, some would

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<sup>1</sup> [Analects VI, 15](#) [Couvreur].

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 510 and 516.

<sup>3</sup> [[]], the fourth and the fifth tones corresponding to the south = fire and the north = water. Fire and water would injure metal and earth, the elements of *kung* and *shang*.

<sup>4</sup> [] corresponding to wood.



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become unhappy, others happy, some would die early, others live long. The miserable and short-lived would not necessarily be white <sup>1</sup>, nor would the happy and longlived be yellow <sup>2</sup>. How do these theorists solve this dilemma with their Five Elements ? What is the real cause of the gate facing the south injuring people bearing a *shang* surname ?

The south is fire. Provided that a calamity resulting from fiery air be like a real fire, burning and spreading, and that it come straight from the south, then even gates facing the north would be involved in the catastrophe. Should, on the other side, this fiery air be like the heat of a summer day, diffused over all the four quarters, then everything between Heaven and Earth would be affected by this air, for wherefore should families with gates facing the south alone have to suffer ?

p2.418 The south is fire, which has its place in the south. To this<sup>1</sup> an objection may be urged : This air spreads over all the four quarters, the south is not alone in possession of fire, nor are the other quarters devoid of it, just as water has its seat in the north, and yet all the four quarters have water. Fire fills the world, and water is dispersed over all the four quarters, it may be south of us, or it may be north of us. To contend that fire can only be in the south, would be like maintaining that the east cannot have any metal, and that in the west there cannot be any wood <sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Metal = white being destroyed by fire = the south.

<sup>2</sup> Earth = yellow not being injured by fire = the south.

<sup>3</sup> According to the theory of the Chinese physicists, metal is connected with the west, and wood with the east.

## QUOTATIONS

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The numbers in brackets refer to the pages of the translation. I denotes Vol. I, II is Vol. II. L. means Legge's translation of the Classics and of the Yiking and the Liki in the Sacred Books viz. Vols. XVI, XXVII, XXVIII.

Latin figures serve to designate the books of a work and Arabic, the page except in the Analects where they denote the number of the chapter.

### Analects

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