



The
Book of
Master
Lie

Lieh Tzu

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The Book of Master Lie

A Taoist Classic

Translated and Annotated
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Translator's Introduction

The Book of Master Lie, (Liezi /Lieh-tzu) is a Taoist classic of uncertain origin and history, named for an obscure individual of unproven identity or existence. Records of its constitution and transmission are controversial.

And yet the book of Master Lie is one of the greatest works of cognitive art and educational science that has ever been produced. If it has been undervalued, that is precisely because of its excellence.

In Taoist terms, all of this is quite understandable. The primary classic of Taoism states, "Great achievement seems to be missing something, but its use is inexhaustible. Great fulfillment seems empty, but its function is endless. Great straightforwardness seems inarticulate, great skillfulness seems clumsy, great surplus is kept out of sight."

The historical existence and identity of Master Lie remain matters of some dispute, but that is also a natural consequence of the way of life this literary figure represents, that of the so-called real human being.

Over time, the term *real human* came to be used for honorific titles assigned by Chinese courts to famous Taoists of the past, and in some contexts for imaginary people on another plane of existence, but it originally meant an uncorrupted person with the full range of natural human potential intact, available, and functional.

According to Taoist lore, real human beings were difficult to find, being hidden by design in the texture of life. They had associations, but no organizations. They were prudent about open display of those dimensions of themselves that extended beyond conventional concepts of human potential. This practice of maintaining low profiles was adopted for self-development as well as self-preservation, and also to protect members of ordinary society from transfer of worldly greed and aggression into the domain of spiritual seeking.

The ways of the real people were obscure in comparison to the dazzling displays of court wizards who exploited the desires of emperors to be immortal, or cult leaders who organized their own

governments and militias and founded their own dynasties.

According to the Taoist classic Chuang-tzu (Zhuangzi),

Real people in ancient times were just and dutiful in their behavior, without being partisan. They seemed to be lacking, but did not accept anything. They were used to being alone, but were not rigid about it. They expounded their openness, without embellishment. They were so mellow they seemed to be joyful. They acted when there was no choice. They were calm and collected to such a depth as to enhance their health, and gracious to such a degree as to stabilize their character. They were upright, appearing to be like society, yet transcendent and impossible to constrain. They were remote, as if they liked isolation; they were so simple they forgot to speak. They made law into a body, made courtesy into wings, made knowledge into timing, made character into an example to follow.

Apart from a few firm historical traces, like traditional descriptions of its namesake the fragmentary legends of the transmission of the book of Master Lie are essentially suggestive. Attributed to a sage of the 4th century BCE., it is alleged to have been in vogue at the imperial court for a time in the early 2nd century BCE, then disappeared into the private sector. Recovered in a scattered state and reconstituted by a famous scholar in the late 1st century BCE, the legend continues, it was edited and reduced from twenty chapters to its current eight chapters.

There is no news of this text in tradition for several hundred years after that, until the last decades of the 4th century CE, when the first known commentator, writing about 370, prefixes an account of his own grandfather's recovery and reconstruction of a scattered text some fifty years earlier, around 320. As this commentary is the earliest firm historical evidence of the work, some scholars have attributed the book of Master Lie itself to this 4th century commentator.

Disappearing from the light of history for hundreds of years again, the book of Master Lie reemerges in the 8th century, when Emperor Xuanzong of the cosmopolitan Tang dynasty (619-906), an admirer of Taoism, calls for submission of Taoist texts to the throne and establishes an academic degree in Taoism for aspirants to civil service. At this point the book of Master Lie appears once again, and is designated a classic in 742, to be one of four Taoist classics for the official curriculum. The other designated classics are the *Tao Te Ching* (*Daodejing*), the *Chuang-tzu* (*Zhuangzi*), and the *Wen-tzu* (*Wenzi*).

The Book of Master Lie has also remained a hidden treasure for reasons of cultural conditioning and political patronage. One such factor surrounds the acknowledged but ill-defined Buddhist

element in this allegedly Taoist text. While borrowed Buddhist terminology abounds in Taoist literature, the *Book of Master Lie* represents Buddhist teachings in purely native Chinese terms.

The reputation of the *Book of Master Lie* was nevertheless affected by its association with Buddhism. Successive waves of xenophobia branded Buddhism as a “foreign” religion in China, more than once resulting in book-burnings. *The Book of Master Lie* was declared mixed with Buddhism in the very first commentary on the text in the 4th century CE, when translation of Buddhist scriptures into Chinese was proceeding apace, and non-Chinese people were taking over part of China.

In the form it is known in today, the text of The Book of Master Lie was allegedly reconstituted after the disintegration of the monumental Han Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE). While the Han order was failing, changes in culture proceeded apace. New Taoist cults emerged, some sectors of the aristocracy retreated into alchemy, immortalism, or antinomianism, and Buddhism flowed into China from South and Central Asia. The rich amalgam of liberated thought that this period produced is abundantly reflected in the Book of Master Lie .

Taoism has perplexed conventional scholars even in the East, not only because of the bewildering variety of its manifestations, but also because of the esoteric, technical nature of its literature. Even those stories that ordinarily pass as folk tales are used in Taoist schools to convey inner content. As in the case of Chan Buddhist stories, this inner content becomes manifest as the mind develops specific perceptions, accessed by means of the mystic exercises of which they are analogs. Thus the stories are also used as testing devices, to gauge mental state by reaction, as well as blueprints for further development.

In a Taoist work, one and the same text may appear to contain different doctrines, which the dogmatist may interpret as confusion or contradiction, the literalist may view as interpolation or corruption, but the Taoist employs as instruments to cultivate depth perception. Meditation practices may be disguised as metaphysical or philosophical discourses, mental postures as social policies, and contemplative procedures as ascetic exercises and aesthetic raptures. The Book of Master Lie uses all of these devices, featuring figures of myth, legend, and history in sayings and stories that both entertain and enlighten.

I. Celestial Signs

1

Master Lie lived in the game preserve of Zheng for forty years without anyone recognizing him. The ruler of the state and the nobles and grandees looked upon him as one of the peasants. During a famine he was going to go to Wei; his disciples said, “If you go with no prospect of returning, how will we call with questions, and how will you teach? Haven’t you heard the word of Lin, Master of Pot Hill?”

Master Lie laughed and said, “What does Pot-Hill have to say? Even so, the master once spoke to the blind man Elder Darkness, and I stood by listening; I’ll try to tell you what he said:

“There is that which is born and that which is unborn; there is that which changes and that which is unchanging. The unborn gives birth to that which is born; the unchanging produces change. What is born cannot but be born; what changes cannot but change; therefore they are always being born, always changing. What is

always being born, always changing, is never not living, never not changing; yin and yang are thus, the four seasons are thus.

“The unborn seems singular; the unchanging is cyclic, with no final limit. No end can be found to the course of the seemingly singular. A book of the Yellow Emperor says, *The valley spirit does not die; this is called the mystic female. The opening of the mystic female is called the root of heaven and earth. Continuous, as if it were there, its application is effortless.*

“So what gives birth to things and beings is not born, what changes things and beings is unchanging. Natural birth, natural change, natural formation, natural coloring, natural intelligence, natural strength, natural waning and waxing—if you refer to these as that which produces and changes, forms and colors, enlightens and empowers, destroys and revives, this is incorrect.”

2

Master Lie said, “In ancient times, sages summed up heaven and earth in terms of yin and yang. If what has form originates in no form, then where do heaven and earth come from?”

“Therefore it is said that there was a cosmic evolution, a cosmic origin, a cosmic beginning, and a cosmic elemental. In the cosmic evolution, energy is not yet manifest. The cosmic origin is the beginning of energy. The cosmic beginning is the beginning of form. The cosmic elemental is the beginning of substance.

“When energy, form, and substance are all present yet not separated, that is called the undifferentiated, meaning that myriad things are mutually undifferentiated and not yet separate from one another. You cannot see it when you look, you cannot hear it when you listen, you cannot find it when you follow, so it is called evolution. Evolution has no formal boundaries; evolution undergoes change constituting a unity; the one changes into seven, seven turns into nine; nine’s change is final, then it reverts to one.

“One is the beginning of form. What is clear and light rises to become heaven, what is opaque and heavy sinks to become earth, while blended energy becomes humanity. Therefore heaven and earth contain vitality from which myriad things and beings are produced.”

Master Lie said, “Heaven and earth do not have complete efficiency, sages do not have complete ability, myriad beings do not have complete vitality. Therefore heaven’s job is to create and to cover, earth’s job is to form and support, sages’ job is to teach and civilize, everyone’s job is what they’re suited for.

“Thus heaven is lacking in some ways, while earth is excellent in some ways. Some things are inaccessible to sages, while some things are accessible to anyone. Why? Because that which creates and covers cannot form and support, that which forms and supports cannot teach and civilize, they who teach and civilize cannot deviate from the appropriate, the appropriately determined does not depart from its position.

“So the course of heaven and earth is either yin or yang; the teaching of sages is either humanity or justice; the proper state of things is either soft or hard. These all conform to the appropriate, and cannot depart from their positions.

“So there is birth, and there is that which gives birth to birth; there is form, and there is that which forms form. There is sound, and there is that which makes sound sound; there is color, and there is that which colors color. There is flavor, and there is that which flavors flavor.

“What birth gives birth to dies, but what gives birth to birth never ends. What form forms is substance, but what forms form has none. The sound made by sound is audible, but what makes sound sound is not emitted. What color colors is visible, but what colors color is not manifest. What flavor flavors can be tasted, but what gives flavor to flavor cannot be tasted.

“These are all functions of the uncreated; it can be yin or yang, soft or hard, short or long, round or square, vital or morbid, hot or cold, floating or sinking, high or low, appearing or disappearing, dark or light, sweet or bitter, foul or fragrant. It has no knowledge and no ability, yet there is nothing it does not know, nothing it cannot do.”

4

When Master Lie traveled to Wei, as they were eating a meal on the way his followers found a hundred-year-old skull. Pulling out the tangle of weeds and pointing to the skull, he looked back at his disciple Bai Feng and said, “Only he and I know we’ve never been born and never die. Is he to grieve, after all? Am I to rejoice?”

“How many species there are! If a frog becomes a quail, in water it becomes water plantain; at water’s edge it becomes moss.

Growing on high ground it becomes plantain; when plantain is on a dung-heap, it becomes crowfoot grass. Crowfoot roots become maggots, the blades become butterflies. Butterflies are evanescent; changing into grubs, they hatch under stoves; shaped like sloughed-off skins, they're called parrot-plucks. In a thousand days parrot-plucks transmute into birds called dry leftover bones. The saliva of dry leftover bones birds becomes a kind of insect, which turns into a vinegar bug. The vinegar-eating bug produces vinegar flies, vinegar flies produce bacon beetles, bacon beetles produce mosquitoes, mosquitoes produce cucumber flies.

“Sheep liver turns to madder, horse blood turns to phosphorus, human blood turns to fox-fire, kites become sparrow-hawks, sparrow-hawks become cuckoos, with cuckoos eventually turning back into sparrow-hawks, swallows become clams, field mice become quails, rotten melons become fish, leeks become amaranth, old ewes become monkeys, fish eggs become insects. Animals on certain mountains reproduce by parthenogenesis, some water birds reproduce by gazing at each other. There's a totally female species called big waist, and a totally male species called immature ants. Sensitive men are aroused without marrying, sensitive women get pregnant without marrying.

"Hou Qi was born from a giant footprint, Yi Yin was born in a hollow mulberry tree. Dragonflies are born in moisture, flies are born in wine lees. Weeds grow by bamboo, old bamboo produces insects, insects produce panthers, panthers produce horses, horses produce humans. People eventually resolve into elements; all things and all beings come from elements and all go back to elements."

5

The Book of the Yellow Emperor says, "When form moves, it doesn't produce form, it produces shadows. When sound travels, it doesn't produce voices, it produces echoes. When nothingness stirs, it doesn't produce nonbeing, it produces being."

Form is something that must have an end. Do heaven and earth end? Along with us, they come to an end. Is the end final? I don't know. The Tao ends in basic beginninglessness, it reaches finality in original impermanence. What is born returns to an unborn state, what has form returns to a formless state.

What is not born is not the fundamental unborn, what has no form is not the fundamental formless. What is born must logically

come to an end, what comes to an end cannot but end; similarly, what is born cannot but come into being, yet to wish to perpetuate its existence and curtail its demise is to be deluded about inevitability.

The vital spirit is an allotment from heaven, the physical body is the allotment of earth. The celestial is clear and diffused, the earthly is opaque and condensed. When the vital spirit leaves the body, each returns to its reality. Hence the term *ghost*. Ghosthood means return, returning to the true home. The Yellow Emperor said, “When the vital spirit goes through its door, and the physical body returns to its roots, how can the self still be there?”

6

From birth until death, there are four major changes in people: childhood, youth, old age, death.

In childhood, your energy is unified and your will is whole; this is the epitome of harmony. Things do not affect it; no virtue is more than this.

In youth, blood energy overflows, you're filled and aroused by desires and thoughts, and influenced by things, so virtue

deteriorates.

In old age, desires and thoughts soften, the body tends toward rest; nothing gets ahead of you, and though not as complete as in childhood, compared to youth you are at ease.

As for death, that is going to rest, returning to the ultimate.

7

When Confucius traveled to Taishan, he saw Rong Qiji on the outskirts of Cheng, clad in deerskin with a rope belt, strumming a lute and singing. Confucius asked, “What are you so happy about?”

He replied, “I have many reasons for happiness. Heaven gives birth to myriad beings, but humans alone are noble; I am human, so I’m happy. In discrimination between males and females, males are ranked higher than females, so the male is respected; since I am a man, this is my second happiness. Some babies are stillborn, some die in infancy; I am already ninety years old, so this is my third happiness. Poverty is normal for scholars, death is the end for people; awaiting death in a normal state, what should I be melancholy about?”

Confucius said, “Good! Here’s someone who can relax himself!”

8

Lin Lei was nearly a hundred years old. In spring he’d put on a leather coat and glean the harvested fields, singing as he went along. When Confucius traveled to Wei, he saw him in the fields; turning to his disciples, he said, “That old man is worth talking to—let’s try to ask him something.” Zigeng requested permission to go. Catching up with him at the edge of a field, he faced him and said in a tone of lament, “Have you no regrets, that you can go along singing and gleaning?” Lin Lei went right on without stopping, singing all the while. Zigeng kept after him, so he looked up and answered, “What have I to regret?”

Zigeng said, “You didn’t work hard when you were young, you didn’t compete with your generation as you matured, you’re growing old with no wife or children, and you are soon going to die—what kind of happiness could you have, that you sing as you glean?”

Lin Lei laughed and said, “The reasons for my happiness are available to everyone, but they take them for misery instead. The fact that I didn’t work hard when young and didn’t compete with

contemporaries as I matured is why I have lived so long. The fact that I'm growing old without wife or children and am soon going to die is why I can be so happy."

Zigeng said, "Long life is a human desire, and people detest death; how can you enjoy the idea of dying?"

Lin Lei said, "Death and birth are a round-trip, so when I die here, how do I know I won't be born elsewhere? So how do I know they're not equivalent? And how do I know it's not delusion to strive for life? And how do I know my death now will not be better than my life in the past?"

Zigeng didn't understand what Lin Lei said, so he went back and told Confucius. Confucius said, "I knew he was worth talking to; and he was. However, his attainment is not consummate."

9

Zigeng got tired of studying. He told Confucius, "I want a rest."

Confucius said, "There is no rest while alive."

Zigeng said, “Then is there nowhere for me to rest?”

Confucius said, “There is. Gaze upon the grave, and you will know your resting place.”

Zigeng said, “How great death is! Cultured people rest therein, petty people are prostrate therein.”

Confucius said, “So you realize this! People all know the pleasure of life but not the pain of life; they know the fatigue of old age, but not the freedom of old age; they know the horror of death but not the peace of death.

“Master Yan said, ‘How excellent was death for the ancients—the benevolent found peace therein, the inhumane were subdued thereby.’ Death is a return of virtue; the ancients referred to the dead as people who have returned.

“To refer to the dead as people who have returned means that the living are travelers. Those who go traveling and don’t know how to return are the lost.

“When one person is lost, the whole society repudiates him, but when all the world is lost, no one knows what’s wrong.

“If someone leaves his homeland and his relatives, gives up his job, and wanders the four quarters never to return, what kind of

person is this? Society will consider him a mad vagabond. Now suppose someone takes care of himself, takes pride in his abilities, cultivates his reputation, and boasts to the world without restraint—what kind of person is this? Society will consider him intelligent and clever.

“These two are both wrong, yet society accepts one but not the other. Only sages know who to deal with and who to avoid.”

10

Someone asked Master Lie, “Why do you esteem emptiness?”

Master Lie said, “Emptiness has no esteem.”

Master Lie said, “It’s not the name; there’s nothing like quietude, nothing like emptiness. By quietude and emptiness you find your abode; by taking and giving you lose your place. When there is fanfare about benevolence and duty only after things have been ruined, there is no possibility of restoration.”

11

Yu Xiong said, “Evolution goes on unending, heaven and earth shift imperceptibly; who is aware of this? That is why things decreasing in one place increase in another, what is complete here is lacking there. Decrease and increase, completeness and lack, go along with life, go along with death. Going and coming are a continuity, with no perceptible gap; who is aware of this? All energy does not evolve at once, all form does not deteriorate at once. A person’s body and mind differ every day, while skin, nails, and hair are shed as they grow. There is ceaseless change from infancy on; one is not aware of it while it’s going on, but only realizes after it’s happened.”

12

In the country of Qi there was someone who worried that the sky would fall and the earth would crumble, and he’d have no place to rest. He worried so much he couldn’t sleep, and he lost his appetite.

Now someone who was worried about his worrying went to enlighten him, saying, “The sky is only a mass of air. The air is everywhere—as we bend, stretch, and breathe, it is circulating in the sky all day long; how can you worry it’ll fall?”

The man said, “If the sky really is a mass of air, won’t the sun, moon, and stars fall?”

The one trying to enlighten him said, “The sun, moon, and stars are luminous bodies in the mass of air; even if they fell, they couldn’t cause any damage.”

The other man said, “What about the earth crumbling?”

The one trying to enlighten him said, “The earth is just a mass of matter, filling everywhere—there is no place without matter. Whenever we walk or take a step we are always on the surface of the earth, so why worry about it crumbling?”

Relieved, the man was very joyful. The one who enlightened him was also relieved and joyful.

Hearing of this, Changluzi laughed and said, “Rainbows, clouds, and fog, wind and rain, the four seasons—these are things that massed energy makes in the sky. Mountains, rivers, oceans, metal and stone, fire and wood—these are things that massed form

makes on earth. If you know sky and earth are masses of air and matter, how can you say they won't disintegrate?

“The universe is a minute object in the midst of space. The largest of existents, it is certainly hard to comprehend, certainly hard to fathom. To worry about its disintegration is indeed too remote, but then to say it won't disintegrate isn't right either.

“The universe cannot but disintegrate, so it must wind up dissolving. At the time of its disintegration, who wouldn't be anxious?”

Master Lie, hearing of this, laughed and said, “It's wrong to say the universe will disintegrate, and it's also wrong to say the universe will not disintegrate. Whether or not it will disintegrate is something one cannot know. Even so, we are one in the former case and we are one in the latter case. So while alive we don't know death, and when dead we don't know life. When we come, we don't know of going; when we go, we don't know of coming. How can I concern myself with whether or not the universe will disintegrate?”

Shun asked an assistant, “Can the Tao be possessed?”

He said, “Even your body is not your possession—how can you possess the Tao?”

Shun said, “If my body is not my possession, who owns it?”

He said, “It is a form entrusted by the universe. Life is not our possession; it is a harmony entrusted by the universe. Nature and destiny are not your possessions; they are order entrusted by the universe. Progeny are not your possessions, they are shells entrusted by the universe.

“Therefore we go without knowing where, abide without knowing what to keep, eat without knowing what to consume. The powerful positivity of the universe is energy—how can it be possessed?”

14

Mr. Guo of Qi was very rich, while Mr. Xiang of Song was very poor. Mr. Xiang went to Qi to ask Mr. Guo for the art of wealth.

Mr. Guo told him, “I am good at stealing. After my first year stealing, I could get by; after two years, I had enough; after three

years, I was very prosperous. After that, I could contribute to the welfare of the community.”

Mr. Xiang was delighted, but though he understood the word *stealing* he didn't understand the right way to steal. Climbing over fences and breaking into houses, he took whatever he could find.

Before long he was arrested for theft, and the goods he had accumulated were confiscated. Thinking Mr. Guo had misled him, Mr. Xiang went to complain to him. Mr. Guo asked, “How did you steal?” Mr. Xiang told him how. Mr. Guo exclaimed, “Ha! Have you strayed this far from the right way to steal? Let me explain it to you.

“I have heard that heaven has seasons, earth has yields. I steal the seasonal yields of heaven and earth, the moisture of clouds and rain, the fertility of mountains and wetlands, to grow my grain, plant my crops, construct my fences, and build my house. On land I steal birds and beasts, from the water I steal fish and turtles. It's all stealing! Crops, earth and wood, birds and beasts, fish and turtles, are all produced by heaven—how could they belong to me? Yet I steal from heaven with impunity.

“As for gold, jade, and jewels, grain and cloth, goods and money, things that people collect, are they given by heaven? If you steal them and get punished, who is to blame?”

Mr. Xiang was very confused. He thought Mr. Guo was fooling him again, so he went to Professor Dongguo to ask him about this.

Professor Dongguo said, “Isn’t your entire being stolen? Your life is composed and your body is sustained by a combination of stolen yin and yang; how then could external things be other than stolen?”

“Truly indeed, heaven, earth, and myriad things and beings are not separate from each other—to consider anything a possession is invariably an illusion.”

“Mr. Guo’s stealing is the public way, so there is no penalty. Your stealing is personal will, so you get punished. Those for whom there are the public and the personal are thieves; those for whom there is neither the public nor the personal are thieves too. Whether public or personal, these are potencies of heaven and earth. For those who know the potencies of heaven and earth, who is to be thought of as stealing, who is to be thought of as not stealing?”

.....

1

II. The Yellow Emperor

For fifteen years after assuming the throne, the Yellow Emperor was delighted that everyone supported him; he nourished his natural life and enjoyed the pleasures of the senses. In the process he became gaunt and dark, confused and emotionally disturbed.

Then for another fifteen years he worried about disorder in the land; using all his intelligence and mental energy, he managed the hundred clans. In the process, he became gaunt and dark, confused and emotionally disturbed.

Finally the Yellow Emperor lamented, "My fault has been excess. Such is the trouble involved in taking care of oneself; such is the trouble of governing everything."

At this point he set aside his administrative activities, stopped sleeping in his seraglio, sent away his servants, suspended musical performances, cut down on cuisine, and retired into solitude to purify his mind and get control over his body, taking no personal role in government for three months.

Taking a nap one day, he dreamed he traveled to Shangri-la, west of the province of Yan, north of the province of Tai, untold thousands of miles from the country of Qi; it could not be reached by boat, carriage, or foot, but only by spiritual travel. In that country

there were no political leaders, just a state of nature. The people had no habits or cravings, they were just natural. They didn't know to like life or to detest death, so there was no premature death. They didn't know to prefer themselves to others, so there was no love or hatred. They didn't know how to rebel or obey, so there was no profit or harm. They had no attachments, so they had no fears. They didn't drown in water, didn't burn in fire. They were not hurt by hitting, were not pained by scratching. They rode the air like walking on the ground, slept in space as if in bed. Clouds and fog did not obstruct their vision, thunder did not distort their hearing, beauty and ugliness did not distort their minds. Mountains and valleys did not trip them up, for they only traveled in spirit.

When the Yellow Emperor woke up, he was happy and content. Summoning his three deputies, he said to them, "I lived alone for three months, purifying my mind and mastering my body, contemplating a way to live and to govern; but I failed to grasp the art. Tired, I took a nap, and this is what I dreamed. Now I know that the supreme Tao cannot be sought subjectively. Now I realize this; now I have grasped this, yet I cannot tell it to you."

For the next twenty-eight years the whole land was at peace, like that mythical country, until the Emperor passed on. The

populace mourned him for over two hundred years.

2

There is a mountain on an island in the ocean current where there are spiritual people who ingest air and dew instead of grain. Their minds are like deep springs, their bodies are like virgin girls. They have no familiars or intimates; immortals and sages are their subjects. They do not intimidate and do not get angry; the eager and honest are their servants. They give no charity, yet everyone has enough; they do not accumulate or save, yet they themselves have no lack. Yin and yang are always in harmony, sun and moon are always clear, the four seasons are always regular, wind and rain are always even, nursing is always timely, crops are always abundant, there is no plague in the land, no early death among the people, no pestilence among the animals, no apparitions of ghosts.

3

Master Lie's teacher was Old Mr. Shang, and he associated with Master Bai Gao. Having made progress on the Way of the two masters, he returned riding the wind. Hearing of this, Scholar Yin went to stay with Master Lie, not going home for several months.

Whenever there was a chance, he'd ask about his art, but Master Lie never answered. Resentful, Scholar Yin asked leave to go, but Master Lie gave no directions. So Scholar Yin withdrew. After a few months he went back again to follow Master Lie, unable to get it out of his mind.

Master Lie said, "Why do you come and go so often?"

Scholar Yin said, "Before, when I sought guidance from you, you didn't speak to me, so I was angry at you. Now I've gotten over it, so I've come back."

Master Lie said, "I thought you'd understood then—are you so shallow now? Stay a while, and I'll tell you what I learned from my teachers.

"After three years of working for my teacher and associating with another, my mind dare not think of right and wrong, my mouth dare not speak of gain and loss; that was the first time my teacher even glanced at me. After five years, my mind again thought of right and wrong, my mouth again spoke of gain and loss; that was the first time my teacher smiled at me. After seven years, whatever I thought contained no right or wrong anymore, whatever I said contained no gain or loss anymore; that was the first time my teacher let me sit with him. After nine years, I thought freely and spoke freely, and

didn't know whether I was right or wrong, adding or detracting, or whether others were right or wrong, adding or detracting. Nor did I know the master to be my teacher, or the other to be my companion. There was no more inside or outside.

“After that, my eyes were like ears, my ears like my nose, my nose like my mouth—all the same. My mind stilled, my body relaxed, my bones and muscles all became flexible. I was unaware of what my body rested on, or what my feet tread on. Going along with the wind east and west, like a dry leaf, I didn't know, after all, whether the wind was riding me or I was riding the wind.

“Now you've hardly been at a teacher's house for any time at all, and already you're complaining over and over. Your individual body may not be taken by the air, your individual physical structure may not be supported by the earth—how could you hope to walk in the sky and ride the wind?”

Scholar Yin was very much ashamed. He bated his breath, not daring to say any more.

Master Lie asked the Keeper of the Pass, “Complete people can travel underwater without obstruction, walk on fire without

getting burnt, can go beyond all things without fear. How do they get to be this way?”

The Keeper of the Pass said, “This is the protection of pure energy, not of a kind with cunning and cleverness, resolution and daring. Stay a while and I’ll tell you.

“Whatever has appearance, form, sound, or color is a thing. How can things be so disparate? And which of them can take precedence, when they are only forms?

“Things are created in the formless and end in the unalterable. How can any who plumb this stop here? They live by measures without excess, take refuge in a beginningless order, roam where things end and begin. They unify their essence, nurture their energy, and store their power, to commune with the creation of things.

“When they are like this, their nature is kept whole, their spirit has no gaps—how can anything get access to them?

“When a drunken man falls from a cart, he may get hurt, but does not die. His bones and joints are the same as other people’s, but his injury is different from others because his spirit is whole. He doesn’t know when he’s riding, and he doesn’t know when he’s

falling either. Neither death nor life, surprise nor fear, enter into his chest, so he is not frightened when he encounters things.

“If even one who gains wholeness in wine is like this, how about one who gains wholeness in Nature? Sages take refuge in Nature, so things cannot harm them.”

5

Lie Yukou performed some archery for Elder Stupid Nobody. Drawing the bow fully with a cup of water on his arm, he shot one arrow after another in continuous succession, as still as a statue all the while.

Elder Stupid Nobody said, “This is deliberate shooting, not spontaneous shooting. Suppose we climbed a high mountain and stood on a precipice overlooking an abyss—could you shoot then?”

So they climbed a high mountain, where Nobody went out on a precipice. Standing with his back to the abyss, heels hanging off the ledge, he beckoned to Yukou to join him. Yukou fell prostrate on the ground, running with sweat.

Elder Stupid Nobody said, “Complete people gaze into the blue sky above, plunge into the center of the earth below, and run freely in the eight directions without even a change of mood. Now

you have a fearful expression of aversion—your inner state must be very uneasy!”

6

There was a man of the Fan clan named Zihua who supported so many private mercenaries that the whole country submitted to him. He was a favorite of the ruler of Jin, and his status was higher than the top ministers of state even though he held no office. Anyone he regarded specially would be given a title by the state of Jin; anyone he particularly disdained would be banished by the state of Jin. Those who flocked to his mansion were as numerous as attendees at court.

Zihua had his mercenaries attack each other in battles of wits and strive to overcome each other in contests of strength. Even if they were wounded right before his eyes, he didn't care. They sported like this all day and night, to the point where it had almost become a custom of the country.

Hesheng and Zibo were top henchmen of the Fan clan. Going on a trip, they passed through a remote area where they lodged at the house of a farmer, Shang Qiukai. During the night, Hesheng and Zibo were talking about the prestige and influence of

Zihua, who could cause the thriving to perish and the lost to survive, impoverish the rich and enrich the poor.

Now Shang Qiukai, who had all along suffered hunger and cold, overhead this. Inspired, he borrowed some provisions, loaded them in a basket, and went to the estate of Zihua.

Zihua's hangers-on were all hereditary aristocrats; they dressed in silk, rode in fancy chariots, swaggered around gazing into the distance. When they saw how old and decrepit Shang Qiukai was, his face burnt black and his clothes unkempt, they all looked down on him. They treated him with contempt, playing tricks on him, knocking and shoving him around, doing as they pleased.

Through all this, Shang Qiukai never showed any sign of anger. Eventually the hangers-on ran out of tricks and got tired of making fun of him. Finally they took him up in a high tower, where someone claimed that anyone who jumped off would get a reward of a hundred pieces of gold. They all scrambled as if to respond, so Shang Qiukai thought it was true and jumped before anyone else could. Like a bird in flight, he floated to the ground, with no injury to skin and bones.

The Fan clan's gang thought this was accidental, and didn't make much of it. In the same vein, they pointed out a wild river bend

and said, "There's a valuable pearl down there; if you can swim, you can get it." Going along once again, Shang Qiukai plunged into the rapids. When he emerged, he actually had found a pearl down there. Now the gang began to wonder. For the first time Zihua admitted him to the ranks of those who ate meat and wore silk.

Before long, a fire broke out in the Fan family storehouse. Zihua declared, "Anyone who can go into the fire and get the silks out will be rewarded according to how much he retrieves." Shang Qiukai went in calmly, going back and forth in and out of the fire without getting sooty or being burned. The Fan clan gang thought he must be a master of the Tao, so they made a collective apology: "We played tricks on you, not knowing you were a master of the Tao; we abused you, not knowing you were a spiritual person. You must think us fools! You must think us deaf and blind! May we ask, what is your Way?"

Shang Qiukai said, "I have no Way. I don't even know my own mind. Even so, there is something to this. I'll try to tell you what it is.

"Earlier two of your men lodged at my house, and I heard them praising the influence of the Fan clan, which could cause the thriving to perish or the lost to survive, impoverish the rich or enrich

the poor. I took this to be true without a second thought, so I came regardless of the distance. Then when I got here, I thought everything your gang said was true, and my only fear was not to be able to take it seriously enough to carry it out successfully—I didn't know what my physical body was doing, or where profit or harm were—I was completely single-minded. Things did not prove otherwise, as you can see; but now that I know your gang was fooling me, I'm suspicious within and on guard without; it's a lucky thing, in retrospect, I wasn't burned or drowned. I'm feverish with shock, shivering with fear! How could I get close to water or fire again?"

After this, whenever members of the Fan clan's gang encountered beggars or horse doctors on the road, they didn't dare abuse them; they'd always get down out of their chariots and salute them.

Zaiwo heard about this and told Confucius. Confucius said, "Didn't you know? When people are completely sincere, that can affect things. It can move heaven and earth, influence ghosts and spirits, grant freedom in all ways, with no opposition, not just walking on dangerous precipices or plunging into water and fire. Shang

Qiukai believed in falsehoods, and even then things did not betray him—how about if other and self are both truthful! Take note of this!”

7

Under the rule of King Xuan of the Zhou dynasty, there was a worker in the ministry of husbandry, Liang Weng, who could tame wild animals. When he fed them in the courtyard, even tigers, wolves, and birds of prey were gentle and tame. They mated and reproduced, and different species lived together without seizing or biting each other.

The king was concerned that this art would die out with him, so he sent Mao Qiuyuan to learn it.

Liang Weng said, “I am just a minor worker—what do I have to teach you? For fear the king might suppose I’m concealing it from you, however, I’ll tell you something about my method of taming tigers.

“Generally speaking, they are happy when indulged and mad when opposed—this is the nature of creatures with animal instincts. So are their moods capricious? It’s all a matter of whether they’re upset. Those who feed tigers don’t dare give them live animals to eat, because of the fury of the killing; they don’t dare give them

whole carcasses to eat, because of the fury of the rending. They time their hunger and satiety, to master their rage.

“Tigers are a different species from humans, yet they fawn on someone who takes care of them; this is indulgence. So if they kill someone, that means they’re upset. So how dare I upset them and make them angry? I don’t even indulge them to please them. That’s because when delight subsides there will be anger, and when anger subsides there is joy—both are unbalanced.

“Now there is no thought in my mind to upset or indulge, so birds and beasts look upon me as one of their own kind. Therefore those who roam in my garden do not long for tall forests or wide wetlands; those who sleep in my yard do not wish for deep mountains or recondite valleys—the principle makes them this way.”

8

Yan Hui asked Confucius, “I once crossed deep waters and the ferryman handled the boat like a genius. I asked him if it is possible to learn to handle a boat. He said, ‘Yes. Someone who can swim can teach it, while someone with skill for swimming can soon do it. Someone who can dive, however, can handle a boat right

away without ever having seen one before.’ I asked him about that, but he didn’t answer. May I ask what it means?”

Confucius said, “Alas, you and I have long been studying the letter without arriving at the substance. Is this really the Way? The reason someone who can swim can teach it is that he thinks little of the water; the reason someone with talent for swimming can soon do it is that he forgets the water. As for the diver who can handle a boat without ever having seen one before, he looks upon an abyss as like dry land, regards a boat capsizing as like a cart overturning. If everything were overturned right in front of you and yet that couldn’t get to you, where would you not be at ease? When you gamble for a chip, you’re clever: when you gamble for your belt buckle, you get nervous; if you gamble for gold, you feel faint. You may have the same skill, but when you’ve got something to lose then you care about externals. Usually those who care about externals are inept in regard to the inward.”

Confucius saw a waterfall over two hundred feet high, foaming for ten miles. Even sea-turtles, crocodiles, fish, and turtles couldn’t swim there. He saw a man go in swimming there, and

thought it was someone in misery who wanted to die. He sent a disciple to go downstream and fish him out. The man emerged several hundred yards away, walking off below the levee, singing as he went, his hair hanging loose.

Confucius caught up with the man and said, “That waterfall is over two hundred feet high, and churns foam for ten miles. Even sea turtles, crocodiles, fish, and turtles can’t swim there. When I saw you plunge in, I thought you were troubled and wanted to die, so I sent a disciple to follow downstream and fish you out. When I saw you come out with your hair hanging down, singing as you went along, I thought you were a ghost. Now that I’ve gotten a good look at you, I find you’re a man. May I ask, do you have a Way to walk on water?”

He said, “No, I have no Way. I began with what was already there, developed naturally, and succeeded by destiny. I go in with the whirlpools and come out with the torrents. I follow the way of the water, without imposing my self on it. This is how I go through it.”

Confucius asked, “What does it mean to begin with what’s already there, develop naturally, and succeed by destiny?”

He said, “I was born on land and am at ease on land—that is what is already there. I grew up in water and am comfortable in

water—that is nature. I don't know why I am the way I am—this is the order of life.”

10

When Confucius went to Chu, he passed through a woods where he saw a hunchback catching cicadas with a gummed stick as easily as picking them up with his hands.

Confucius asked, “Your skill! Do you have a Way?”

He said, “I have a way. For five or six months I'd stack clay balls—two without them falling, and I'd miss but little; when I could stack three without them falling, I'd miss but one out of ten. When I could stack five without them falling, then I could catch cicadas like picking them up. When I get set, I'm like a stump, while the arm I use to catch with is like the limb of a dead tree. However vast the universe, however manifold myriad things, I am only aware of the cicada's wings. I don't fidget, I don't take my attention off the cicada's wings for anything—how could I fail to catch it?”

Confucius turned to his disciples and said, “When concentration is undivided, it's like genius.’ This saying seems to apply to the hunchback.”

The man said, “You are a scholar—how can you even ask about this? Take care of your own business, then we can talk about something higher.”

11

There was a man living by the sea who liked seagulls. Every morning on the sea he’d sport with the seagulls, and they’d come by the hundreds, without fail. His father said to him, “I’ve heard the seagulls all play with you. Catch one and bring it here so I can enjoy it.”

The next day when he went to the sea, the gulls danced around but didn’t land.

Therefore it is said that perfect words make no claim, perfect action has no contrivance. What common knowledge knows is shallow.

12

Zhao Xiangzi led a party of a hundred thousand hunting in Zhongshan, trampling the growth, burning the woods, fanning the flames for miles. A man emerged from a rock wall and bobbed up and down with the smoke. Everyone thought it was an apparition.

Then when the fire had passed, he ambled out as if he hadn't been through anything at all.

Xiangzi thought this strange, and kept him for observation. His form and features were those of a human, his breathing and his voice were those of a human. "How did you stay inside the rock?" he asked; "How did you go into the fire?"

That man said, "What is it you are calling 'rock'? What is it you are calling 'fire'?"

Xiangzi said, "What you just came out of is rock; what you just walked on was fire."

The man said, "I didn't know."

When the Marquis Wen of Wei heard about this, he asked Zixia, "What kind of man is that?"

Zixia said, "According to what I heard from Confucius, harmony means universal assimilation to things; then things cannot cause injury or obstruction, and it is possible even to go through metal and stone, and walk on water and fire."

Marquis Wen said, "Why don't *you* do it?"

Zixia said, "I am as yet unable to clear my mind of intellection. Even so, I have time to try to talk about it."

Marquis Wen asked, "Why didn't Confucius do it?"

Zixia said, “Confucius was one of those who was able to do it yet was able to not do it.”

Marquis Wen was delighted.

13

A shaman named Ji Xian came from Qi to Cheng. He knew about people’s death and birth, their survival and destruction, their calamity and fortune, and whether people would live long or die young, predicting to the year, month, and day, like a spirit.

When the people of Cheng saw this shaman, they all ran away. Master Lie’s mind was intoxicated on seeing him; he went back and told mister Pot Hill, “I used to think your Way supreme, but there is one even more perfect.”

Mister Pot said, “I have only taught you the superficials; we haven’t gotten to the substance yet. And you insist you’ve attained the Way? How can you get eggs from a bunch of hens with no rooster? When you pit the Way against the world, that must yield information, thereby enabling someone to read you. Bring that shaman here, and I’ll show you.

The next day Master Lie took the shaman to see the mister Pot. When he came out, the shaman said to Master Lie, “Alas, your

teacher is dying; he will not survive. He can't last a fortnight! I see something strange in him; I see wet ashes in him."

Master Lie went in to tell mister Pot, weeping profusely. The master said, "I showed him the sign of earth, sprouting where there is no stirring and no stopping; so he only saw me shutting off the dynamic of vital force. Bring him again!"

The next day Master Lie brought the shaman to see mister Pot again. When he came out, he said to Master Lie, "It's lucky your teacher met me—he may recover. There is life intact; I saw the shut-off power."

Master Lie went in and told mister Pot. The master said, "That time I showed him sky and earth, unconcerned with fame and property, potential emerging from the heels—this is called shut-off power. Thus he only saw my capacity for viability. Bring him again."

The next day, Master Lie brought the shaman to see mister Pot again. When he came out, he said to Master Lie, "Your teacher is sitting unsteadily—I have no way to read him. Let him stabilize, and then I'll read him."

Master Lie went in and told mister Pot. The master said, "That time I showed him absolute emptiness, without a trace. He only saw my faculty of leveling energy. Try bringing him again!"

The next day Master Lie again went with the shaman to see mister Pot. Before he even came to a standstill, the shaman lost control of himself and ran away. Mister Pot said, “Go after him!” Master Lie chased him, but couldn’t catch up. He went back and told Mister Pot, “He’s gone without a trace—I couldn’t catch up with him.”

Mr. Pot said, “That time I showed him never leaving my source. I harmonized with him by being empty; he didn’t know who or what I was, and took me for reeds bending in the wind, waves going with the flow—therefore he fled.”

After that Master Lie thought of himself as not yet having begun to learn, so he went home and didn’t go out for three years, cooking for his wife and feeding the pigs like he was feeding people, working without partiality, returning from artifice to simplicity. Solidly independent all his life, sealing out conflict in the midst of confusion, he was consistent in this to the end of his days.

14

When Master Lie went to Qi, he turned around midway and came back. Then he ran into Elder Stupid Blind Man, who said, “Why did you come back?”

“I got scared.”

“Why were you scared?”

“I ate at ten taverns, and at five taverns they let me eat for free.”

Elder Stupid Blind Man said, “So why did you let it scare you?”

“When inner feelings are not detached, it is revealed physically, creating an emanation that occupies other people’s minds, causing them to disregard respect for elders, bringing on trouble. Those tavern keepers are only selling food and drink, gaining only what’s left after many expenses. They make but slight profit, and have little influence, and yet they treat me like this—what about a ruler with ten thousand chariots, who toils for the nation, his mind fully occupied with affairs? He might entrust me with some job and pressure me to do it. That’s why I got scared.”

Elder Stupid Blind Man said, “You’re very insightful. Once you have a place of your own, people will surround you.”

Before long Master Lie left, and outside his door was filled with the shoes of those who came to see him. Elder Stupid Blind Man just stood there facing north, his staff under his chin; after a while, he left without speaking.

Visitors reported this to Master Lie. Master Lie ran barefoot, shoes in hand. When he got to the door, he said, “Since you came, Teacher, why didn’t you leave any remedy?”

He said, “Enough is enough. I told you that people would surround you, and in fact they are surrounding you. But you can’t get people not to surround you; how do you move them? Trying to induce good feelings produces difference; if you insist on making an impression so much that it destabilizes you yourself, then it is meaningless.

“None of those hanging around you will tell you this. Their trivial talk is all poison to people. No one alerts, no one enlightens—why associate together?”

15

When Yang Zhu traveled south to Pei, Lao Dan journeyed West to Qin. Trying to intercept him in the countryside, he finally met the Old Master in Liang.

The Old Master stopped in his tracks, looked up to the sky, and sighed, “At first I thought you could be taught, but now you’re unteachable.”

Master Yang did not reply. When they reached an inn, he presented water, cloth, and comb, took off his shoes outside the door, and went before the Old Master on his knees, saying, “Earlier you looked at the sky and sighed, ‘At first I thought you could be taught, but now you’re unteachable.’ I wanted to ask you to say something, but you kept on going, and I didn’t dare. Now that you’re taking a break, may I ask what my fault is?”

The Old Master said, “You’re arrogant and overbearing—who could put up with you? Great purity seems ignominious, mature virtue seems insufficient.”

Yang Zhu became uneasy and a change came over his face. “I have respectfully heard your direction.”

Before, when Yang Zhu had left, the innkeeper had greeted him and seen him off; the landlords had waited on him; the landladies had held his towel and comb; the lodgers had vacated their seats for him, and those warming themselves had made room for him at the fireplace. When he came back, however, lodgers fought him for a seat.

Yang Zhu passed through Song; going east, he came to an inn. The innkeeper had two concubines; one was beautiful and the other one ugly, yet the ugly one was more honored than the beautiful one. Master Yang asked why. The innkeeper replied, “The beautiful one is beautiful on her own account; I am not cognizant of her beauty. The ugly one is ugly on her own account; I am not cognizant of her ugliness.”

Master Yang said to his disciples, “Make a note of this! When conduct is noble while eliminating self-important behavior, where would one not be loved?”

17

There is a way of always winning in the world, and a way of not always winning. The way of always winning is called gentility, the way of not always winning is called force. Both are easy to know, yet no one knows them. Hence the ancient saying that force outdoes inferiors while gentility outdoes superiors.

If you outdo inferiors, when you meet equals you're in danger. If you outdo superiors, there's no danger. To master yourself this way, to take responsibility for the world this way, is

called spontaneous victory without conquest, inherent responsibility without appointment.

Master Yu said, “If you would be forceful, you must protect it by yielding. Develop flexibility and you will be firm; cultivate yielding and you will be strong. By observing what is developed, the trends of trouble and fortune can be known. Force overcomes its inferior—meeting an equal, it’s destroyed. Gentility overcomes superiors—its power cannot be measured.”

Lao Dan said, “When an army is forceful it perishes; when wood is inflexible, it breaks. Gentility and yielding are cohorts of life, inflexibility and force are cohorts of death.”

18

Appearances don’t necessarily have to be the same for intelligence to be the same; intelligence is not necessarily the same when appearances are the same. Sages take sameness of intelligence and leave sameness of appearance; ordinary people take to sameness in appearance and avoid sameness in intelligence—they take to and admire those who are like themselves in appearance, while avoiding those who differ from themselves in appearance.

What has a tall body, with difference in functions of hands and feet, has hair and teeth, and walks upright, is called a human; but a human is not necessarily without an animal mind. Though one may have an animal mind, one seems akin on account of appearances.

What has wings or horns, fangs or talons, flies or runs on all fours, is called a bird or a beast; but a bird or a beast is not necessarily void of a human mind. Though one may have a human mind, it seems alien on account of appearances.

Fu Xi, Nu Wa, Shen Nong, and Yu had serpentine bodies and human faces, ox necks and tiger noses; they had nonhuman appearances, but they had the virtues of great sages. Jie of Xia, Zhou of Yin, Huan of Lu, and Mu of Chu were all human-like in appearance and faculties, but they had bestial hearts.

So if people stick to one form to seek supreme intelligence, they cannot get near it.

When the Yellow Emperor fought the Red Emperor in the fields of Hill Spring, he led bears, wolves, leopards, cougars, and tigers as the vanguard, with eagles, fighting pheasants, hawks, and kites for signals. This is an example of commanding birds and beasts by power.

When Yao made Kui his music director, at the tinkling of stone chimes the animals danced together, at a tune from the pipes phoenixes came ceremoniously. This is an example of attracting birds and beasts by sound.

So how do the minds of birds and beasts differ from humans? Their forms and sounds are different from humans, so people don't know the way to communicate with them. Sages know all beings and comprehend all beings, so they are able to attract and command them.

In the intelligence of birds and beasts there is that which is naturally the same as humans; in their equal desire to sustain life they don't need to depend on knowledge from humans. Male and female mate, mother and child are close, they avoid flatlands and take to fastnesses, they shun cold and take to warmth, they gather in groups and walk in lines. With the young on the inside and the mature on the outside, they lead each other to drink, and call the group to eat.

In high antiquity, the birds and beasts lived together with people, walked side by side with humans; in the time of the emperors and kings, they began to take fright and run away. Coming to latter days, they hide and flee to avoid harm.

At present, in the country of the Jie people of the East, the people of that country can often understand the speech of domestic animals; this is an attainment of partial knowledge. The spiritual sages of high antiquity knew the mental conditions of all beings, and understood the utterances of different species. They assembled them, trained them, and took them in, just like the human population. So first they assembled ghosts, spirits, and supernatural beings, then they reached the human population of the eight directions, finally they gathered birds, beasts, and bugs.

This means that species of living creatures are not too different in terms of intelligence. The spiritual sages knew this, and that is why none were left out from their instruction and training.

In the state of Song there was a monkey trainer who liked monkeys and raised a troop of them. He was able to understand the monkeys' thoughts, and the monkeys also understood his mind. He reduced his own family's food to satisfy the monkeys' wishes, but soon ran short and had to limit their food. Fearing the monkeys might not agree with him, he first lied to them, saying, "I'll give you chestnuts—three in the morning and four in the evening. Will that be

enough?” The monkeys all rose up in fury. Then he said, “How about if I give you four chestnuts in the morning and three in the evening?” The monkeys all quieted down, pleased.

When people entrap each other through the differences in their abilities, it's always like this. Sages use intelligence to encompass ignorant people the way the monkey trainer used his wits to trap the monkeys. The terms and realities may be equivalent, yet they cause them to be glad or mad!

20

Master Ji Sheng raised a fighting cock for King Xuan of the Zhou dynasty. After a period of ten days, the king asked, “Can it fight yet?”

He said, “Not yet. Now it's just strutting around proudly.”

Ten days later the king asked again.

He said, “Not yet. It still responds to shadows and echoes.”

Ten days later the king asked again.

He said, “Not yet. It's still glaring and mettlesome.”

Ten days later the king asked again.

He said, “Almost. It no longer shows any change when another cock cries. It faces others like a wooden rooster; its powers

are complete. No other cocks could face up to it—they would just run the other way.”

21

Hui Ang met King Kang of Song. King Kang stamped his foot, harrumphed, and said, “What I like is boldness and strength; I don’t like those who act benevolent and dutiful. What have you got to teach me?”

Hui Ang said, “I have a way to make people unable to stab you even if they’re bold, unable to strike you even if they’re strong. Yet even if they don’t dare, that doesn’t mean they don’t want to; I have a way beyond this to make people have no such intent to begin with.

“But even if they have no such intent, that doesn’t mean they’re caring. I have a way beyond this, to cause all the men and women on earth to gladly and willingly care for someone. In terms of sagacity, this is four levels above courage and strength—have you no interest at all, Majesty?”

The king of Song said, “This is something I’d like to learn.”

Hui Ang said, “Confucius and Mo Di—that’s all. Confucius and Mo Di had no territory, yet they were leaders; they had no

offices, yet they were chiefs. Everyone in the world, men and women, wanted to contribute to their safety and welfare. Now you, Majesty, are ruler of a country of ten thousand chariots—if you really had the will, everyone in the realm would benefit in their way. That would be far more sagacious than Confucius or Mo Di.”

The king of Song had no response. Hui Ang hurried out. The king said to those by him, “How eloquent, the way that visitor overcame me with his speech!”

III. King Mu of Zhou

1

In the time of King Mu of Zhou (r. 1001-946 BCE), a magician came from a country of the Far West. He could go into water and fire, penetrate metal and stone, overturn mountains and rivers, move cities and towns. He could travel through the sky without falling, he was not obstructed by contact with solid objects. His manifold transformations and apparitions were inexhaustible. Not only could he alter the appearance of objects, he could also change people’s thoughts.

King Mu of Zhou revered this magician like a god, and waited on him like a lord. He let him live in a royal palace, presented him

with sacrifices of cattle, sheep, and swine, and selected choice singing and dancing women to entertain him.

The magician considered the king's palace too shabby to live in, his food too foul to eat, and the king's courtesans too smelly and ugly to approach.

So the king remodeled for him. No pains were spared in the construction and embellishment; the treasury was exhausted by the time the tower was complete. Seven thousand feet high, it looked over the Zhongnan Mountain Range, and was called Tower in the Sky.

Then the king selected beautiful virgins with soft skin, had makeup put on them, straightened their eyebrows, outfitted them with hairpins and earrings, and dressed them in gauze draped with silk. With faces powdered and eyebrows penciled, sashes hung with jade rings, fragrant herbs filling the place, they played classical music for his pleasure.

Every month the magician was presented with rich robes, and every day he was provided with delicacies. He was still not comfortable, but he forced himself to put up with it. He had not been staying there long when he asked the king to go on a trip together.

The king took hold of the magician's sleeves, and they flew up into the sky. After a while they came to the magician's mansion.

The magician's mansion was made of gold and silver pointed with pearl and jade; it rose above the clouds and rain, but it was not clear what its foundation was set on—it looked like a mass of clouds.

Every sight and sound there, every aroma and flavor, was not of the human world. The king really thought it was some sort of celestial realm. When the king looked down at his own palace, it seemed like a pile of dirt or a stack of hay.

It seemed to the king that he had stayed there for several decades, without thinking of his own country, when the magician again asked the king to go on a trip together. Where they went, sun and moon could not be seen above, rivers and seas could not be seen below. The radiance of light dazzled the king's eyes so he could not see, ambient sound befuddled the king's ears so he could not hear. Confused and dispirited, he begged the magician to take him back.

The magician pushed him, and he seemed to fall into a void.

When he woke up, the king was still sitting where he had been before, in the same company as before. When he looked in

front of him, his wine had not yet settled, the hors d'oeuvres were still fresh.

The king asked where he'd been. Courtiers said, "Your majesty was thinking silently, that's all."

King Mu was beside himself for three months after that.

When he recovered, he questioned the magician. The magician told him, "We journeyed spiritually, not physically. Is that dwelling any different from your Majesty's palace? Are the places we traveled any different from your Majesty's gardens? You're used to what's always there, and you wonder at what soon disappears. Can the limits of transformation, and the speed of time's passing, be grasped in full?"

The king was delighted. With no concern for affairs of state, and no interest in his ministers or consorts, he indulged in thoughts of distant journeys. He had two chariots outfitted with teams of four chargers, with a driver and assistant. The king rode in one of them as they galloped a thousand miles, coming to the land of the Big Hunting Party tribes.

The Big Hunting Party tribals presented blood from white cranes for the king to drink, and provided milk from cows and mares to wash his feet. They also provided for the other riders as well.

After drinking, they went on, eventually spending the night at the foot of the Kunlun mountains, north of the Red River. The next day he climbed a Kunlun peak, from where he sighted the palace of the Yellow Emperor. He marked it for future generations with a pile of earth.

Subsequently he visited the Matriarch of the West, and quaffed wine on the Jade Pond. The Matriarch of the West sang for the king, and the king sang back, with melancholy lyrics. Then he gazed into the West where the sun sets. In one day he'd traveled thousands of miles. The king then lamented, "Alas, I am not full of virtue, but addicted to pleasure—later generations will probably count up my errors!"

King Mu was hardly a spiritual man. He got all the pleasure he could in life, but he still died when his time was up—and the world thought he'd gone to heaven.

2

Laochengzi studied magic from master Yin Wen, who told him nothing for three years. Laochengzi asked what his fault was, and requested permission to withdraw.

Master Yin Wen saluted him and showed him inside.

Dismissing everyone else, he said to him, “When Lao Dan went West long ago, he looked back and told me, ‘Whatever has created energy and specific form is illusory. What Creation initiates and what yin and yang transmute is said to be born and said to die. What is altered in terms of form by finding out processes and understanding change is said to be a transformation and said to be illusory.

“The agency of Creation is subtle in its skill, profound in its effect, certainly hard to fathom, hard to comprehend. Working on form is obvious in its skill, shallow in its effect, so it readily appears and disappears. When you know that illusion and transformation are no different from birth and death, then you may learn magic. I and you are both illusions—why do you need to learn?”

Laochengzi went home and contemplated master Yin Wen’s words deeply for three months. Eventually he could be present or absent at will, and cause the four seasons to interchange, producing thunder in winter and ice in summer, making birds run and beasts fly. For the rest of his life he never revealed his art, so no one in the world passed it on.

Master Lie said, “Those who are skilled in effecting transformation use their science secretly; their apparent merit is the

same as others. The virtues of the Five Emperors and achievements of the Three Kings were not necessarily due to the power of intelligence and courage—some were magically accomplished. Who can fathom this?”

3

Consciousness has eight manifestations, dreaming has six symptoms. What are the eight manifestations of consciousness? Purpose, action, gain, loss, sadness, happiness, birth, and death. These are experienced by the physical body. What are the six symptoms of dreaming? Normal dreaming, dreaming due to fright, dreaming due to thinking, waking dreaming, joyful dreaming, fearful dreaming. These come from psychic interaction.

When things occur through unconscious sense and change, one is confused about their source when they happen. When things occur through conscious sense and change, one knows their source when they happen. When one knows their source, one has no fear.

The cyclic fluctuations of the body are all related to heaven and earth and correspond to types of things. So when yin energy is strong one dreams of crossing large bodies of water and becoming afraid; when yang energy is strong, one dreams of going through fire

and burning. When yin and yang are both strong, one dreams of life and death. When very full, one dreams of giving; when very hungry, one dreams of getting. So those whose affliction is flighty insubstantiality dream of floating, while those whose affliction is depressive gravity dream of sinking. When you sleep with a belt on, you dream of snakes. If a bird in flight pecks at your hair, you dream of flying. On the verge of a chill you dream of fire; on the verge of sickness you dream of food. One who drinks wine will be sad, one who sings and dances will lament.

Master Lie said, “Psychic encounters make dreams, physical interactions create phenomena. Therefore thoughts during the day and dreams during the night are encounters of mind and body. Therefore thoughts and dreams naturally disappear in one whose mind is stable. True awareness is not spoken, true dreams are not interpreted; they are processes of assimilation of things. ‘The real people of antiquity spontaneously forgot their awareness and didn’t dream when they slept’—is this at all nonsensical?”

In the southern corner of the extreme West there is a country of unknown borders call the Pristine Wasteland, where yin and yang

energies do not mix and so cold and heat are not differentiated, where sun and moon do not shine and so day and night are not differentiated. The people thus do not eat or wear clothes, but mostly sleep. Waking up once every fifty days, they think what they do in dreams is real and what they see while awake is illusory.

In the middle of the four seas is called the Central Country; it straddles the Yellow River south to north, and crosses Mt. Tai east to west, extending thousands of miles. There yin and yang are precisely regular, so cold and heat alternate; dark and light are clearly divided, so day and night alternate. Some of the people there are intelligent, some are foolish. All creatures reproduce abundantly, and people have many talents and skills. There are rulers and ministers over them, with rites and laws governing them. Their utterances and actions are countless. Alternatively waking and sleeping, they consider their doings while awake to be real and their perceptions while dreaming to be illusion.

In the northern corner of the extreme East there's a land called Country of Crumbling Mounds. There the weather is always hot, and the soil doesn't produce good crops on account of excessive sun and moon light. The people there eat roots and nuts, and don't know how to cook food. They are hard-hearted and

violent, and the strong oppress the weak; they value conquest without caring for justice. They mostly run and seldom rest; they are always awake and don't sleep.

5

Mr. Yin of Zhou was a big businessman; his workers had no rest from dawn to dusk. Among them was an old laborer whose physical strength was exhausted, yet he was worked harder and harder. By day he did his tasks groaning and grunting, while at night he slept soundly, completely worn out. As his consciousness dissolved, every night he'd dream he was ruler of a nation, reigning over the people, in charge of the affairs of the nation. Partying in palaces, indulging in his heart's desires, he was incomparably happy. When he woke up, he'd return to his job.

When someone tried to console him for his hard work, the laborer said, "A human lifetime is half day and half night. In the daytime I'm a laborer, which is indeed miserable; but at night I'm a king, with pleasures beyond compare. Why should I complain?"

As for Mr. Yin, he managed his worldly affairs conscientiously and ran his family business thoughtfully; mind and body both tired, at night he too slept with exhaustion. Every night he dreamed he was a

servant, running all sorts of errands and doing all sorts of chores, repeatedly hollered at and beaten with a stick. In his sleep he muttered, groaned, and grunted all night long.

Troubled by this, Mr. Yin consulted a friend. His friend said, “Your status amply affords you prosperity; you have plenty of property and assets, far more than most people. At night, when you dream, you’re a servant. This is the predictable norm of alternation of hardship and ease. If you want to have it your way both waking and dreaming, how could you attain that?”

Mr. Yin listened to his friend’s advice, relaxing his workers’ schedule and reducing his own concerns; then his illness abated a bit.

6

A man of Zheng was gathering firewood in the fields when he spooked a deer; overtaking it, he struck it down and killed it. Fearing someone might see it, for the time being he hid it in a dry ditch and covered it with brush. He was unable to contain his joy.

Later, however, he couldn’t locate the place where he’d hidden the deer. So in the end he thought he’d dreamed it. As he

went along the road, he kept muttering about it; someone overheard him, and managed to find the deer.

When this man got home, he told his wife, “Earlier a woodcutter dreamed he’d caught a deer but didn’t know where it was; now I’ve found it, so that must have been a true dream!”

His wife said, “Could it be that you dreamed you saw a woodcutter catching the deer? Was there even a woodcutter? Now you’ve actually found a deer—does this mean your dream was true?”

Her husband said, “If that’s how I found the deer, what does it matter if it was the dream of another or my own dream?”

After the woodcutter returned home, he was uneasy about having lost the deer. That night he actually dreamed of the place he had hidden it, and also dreamed of the man who had discovered it. Come morning, he went looking based on his dream, and found it. Subsequently he laid claim to the deer, filing suit with the magistrate.

The magistrate said, “When you first bagged the deer, you mistakenly thought it a dream. Then when you located the deer through a true dream, you mistakenly thought it real. He took your deer in actuality, and you dispute with him over the deer. His wife also thinks he dreamed he found someone else’s deer. No one

owns the deer, but now that there is this deer here, please divide it in two.”

This came to the attention of the ruler of Zheng. He said, “Ha! Isn’t the magistrate dividing someone’s deer in a dream?” He consulted the prime minister about it. The prime minister said, “I can’t tell whether he’s dreaming or not. To distinguish waking from dreaming takes a Yellow Emperor or a Confucius. Now that there are no more Yellow Emperor or Confucius, who is to distinguish them? But it will do to follow the dictate of the magistrate.”

7

Huazi of Yangli in Song suffered from forgetfulness in middle age. What he’d take in the morning he’d forget at night, what he’d give at night he’d forget in the morning. On the street he’d forget to walk, in his house he’d forget to sit. At any given moment he was not conscious of what went before, and later he’d be unconscious of what was going on presently.

His whole family was troubled by this. They consulted a diviner to diagnose it, without results. They consulted a shaman for prayer over it, but that didn’t stop it. They consulted a physician to treat it, but that didn’t relieve it.

There was a Confucian of Lu who introduced himself as able to cure this. Huazi's wife and children offered him half their estate for the prescription. The Confucian said, "This cannot be figured out by divination, cannot be exorcised by prayer, cannot be relieved by medicine. I will try to alter his mind, change his thinking, so that he may recover."

Now the Confucius tested Huazi by exposing him to the elements, and found he asked for clothing. He starved him, and he asked for food. He shut him in the dark, and he asked for light. The Confucian joyfully told the son, "His ailment can be eliminated, but my prescription is a secret passed down through the generations without being revealed to outsiders. Send everyone away, and leave me alone with him in the house for seven days."

They followed directions, and nobody knew what the Confucian did, but Huazi's chronic ailment cleared up in a day.

Once Huazi woke up, he became furious. Ejecting his wife and punishing his son, he went after the Confucian with a spear. Restraining him, the local people asked him why he was acting that way.

Huazi said, "Before, when I was forgetful, I was serenely unaware of whether heaven and earth existed or not. Now that I am

suddenly conscious of the past, I'm upset by the survival and passing, the gain and loss, the sorrow and joy, the liking and disliking, of several decades past; I'm afraid that future survival and passing, gain and loss, sorrow and joy, liking and disliking, will disturb my mind like this—can I even have a moment of forgetfulness?

Zigeng heard of this and wondered; he told Confucius about it. Confucius said, "This is not within your reach!" Then he turned to Yan Hui and told him to record this.

8

Mr. Pang of Qin had a son who was intelligent in youth but suffered from confusion and disorientation when he grew up. He heard songs as dirges, saw white as black, smelt fragrance as putrid, tasted sweets as bitter, did wrong thinking it right. In his mind, everything was reversed—sky and earth, the four directions, water and fire, cold and heat.

Mr. Yang said to the father, "The gentlemen of Lu have many skills—perhaps they can cure him. Why don't you go there and find out?"

The father went to Lu, but as he was passing through Chen he met Lao Dan, and told him about his son's symptoms.

Lao Dan said, "How do you know your son is confused? Nowadays everyone in the world is confused about right and wrong, blind about what is beneficial and what is harmful. There are so many with the same affliction that no one realizes it.

"However, confusion in one person is not enough to ruin the whole family. Confusion in one family is not enough to destroy a whole community. Confusion in one community is not enough to destroy a whole country. Confusion in one country is not enough to destroy the whole world. But if the whole world is confused, who is destroying it?

"If everyone in the world had a mind like your son, then you would be the one who's confused. Who can correct sorrow and happiness, sound and form, scent and flavor, right and wrong?

"Furthermore, these words of mine are not necessarily not confused; how much more so the gentlemen of Lu, who are the most confused of all—how could they resolve others' confusion? You'd best pack your bag and go straight home!"

A man of Yan was born in Yan but grew up in Chu. Then when he got old, he returned to his native country.

As they were passing through Jin, fellow travelers teased him. Pointing to a walled city, they said, “This is the citadel of the nation of Yan.” The man blanched, visibly moved. Then they pointed to a shrine and said, “This is your village shrine.” The old man sighed. Then they pointed to a house and said, “This was your ancestors’ abode.” Now he wept profusely. They pointed out a mausoleum and said, “There are your ancestors’ tombs.” The man wailed uncontrollably.

His fellow travelers laughed and said, “We were fooling you—this is still only the country of Jin.”

The man was very embarrassed. Then when he finally reached Yan and really beheld the citadel and shrine of Yan, and actually saw his ancestors’ home and tombs, he wasn’t so sad.

1

IV. Confucius

When Confucius was living in retirement, Zigeng went to wait on him, and found him looking sad. Zigeng didn't dare question him; he went out and told Yan Hui. Yan Hui picked a harp and sang; Confucius heard it and called him in, asking, "Why are you so happy?"

Yan Hui said, "Why are you so sad?"

Confucius said, "First tell me what you mean."

Yan Hui said, "In the past I heard you say that if one is content with Creation and acknowledges destiny, one will thus not be sad. That is why I'm happy."

Confucius remained silent for a while, looking offended. Then he said, "Did I say that? Your conception is mistaken. This is something I said in the past, that's all. Please consider what I say now to be correct.

"You only know the carefree condition of accepting Creation and acknowledging destiny; you don't know the magnitude of the grief of accepting Creation and acknowledging destiny. Now I will inform you of the reality of it.

"Cultivating your individual self, not caring whether you're struggling or successful, knowing that things that come and go are not your self, unconcerned by change and chaos—this is what you

call the freedom from sorrow that comes from accepting Creation and acknowledging destiny. In the past I edited the classics of poetry and history and reformed rituals and music, to govern the land and bequeath to coming generations. I didn't just cultivate myself as an individual, I brought order to the state of Lu. But the rulers and ministers of Lu are losing their proper relationship day by day; humanity and justice are declining while feeling and character are weakening. If the Way is not practiced in one state as it was in past years, what will become of the world in the future? That's how I came to realize that poetry and history, ritual and music, are no help in bringing order to chaos; yet I don't know how to change them. This is what those who accept Creation and acknowledge destiny lament.

“Even so, I have realized this. Acceptance and acknowledgment are not what the ancients called acceptance and acknowledgment. Accepting nothing and acknowledging nothing are true acceptance and true acknowledgment; thus there is nothing one cannot accept, nothing one cannot acknowledge, nothing one is not concerned about, nothing one will not do. Why abandon poetry and history, ritual and music? Why change them?”

Yan Hui paid respects to Confucius and said, "I get it too."

Then he went out and told Zigeng.

Zigeng was stunned. He went home and thought intensely for seven days, neither sleeping nor eating, to the point where his bones stood out. Yan Hui went again to explain it to him, and then he returned to Confucius' school, where he played music, sang poetry, and read books for the rest of his life.

2

When grandee Chen made an ambassadorial visit to Lu, he met privately with Mr. Shusun. Mr. Shusun said, "There is a sage in our state."

Chen said, "Isn't it Confucius?"

Shusun said, "Yes."

Chen asked, "How do you know he's a sage?"

Mr. Shusun said, "I've often heard Yan Hui say that Confucius can use his body without his mind."

Grandee Chen said, "There's a sage in my state too. Don't you know?"

Shusun asked, "What sage are you referring to?"

Chen replied, “There is a disciple of Lao Dan called the Master of the Hidden Storehouse. Having attained Dan’s Way, he can see with his ears and hear with his eyes.”

When the Lord of Lu heard of this, he was amazed; he had a top noble invite that master with all courtesy. The Master of the Hidden Storehouse came in response to the invitation. The Lord of Lu humbly asked about this ability.

The Master of the Hidden Storehouse said, “This has been reported mistakenly. I am able to see and hear without using my eyes and ears; I can’t interchange the function of eye and ear.”

The Lord of Lu said, “This is even more extraordinary; how is it done? Pray tell me.”

The Master of the Hidden Storehouse said, “My body merges with mind, mind merges with energy, energy merges with spirit, spirit merges with nothingness. Whatever comes to me, the slightest existent, the faintest sound, be it far beyond the eight infinities, or as close as between eyebrow and eyelash, I invariably cognize it. But I don’t know if this is the awareness of my seven apertures and four limbs, or the cognition of my heart, gut, and internal organs; it’s just spontaneous knowing, that’s all.”

The Lord of Lu was delighted. Another day he told Confucius. Confucius smiled and did not reply.

3

The prime minister of Shang met Confucius and asked, “Are you a sage?”

Confucius said, “I don’t dare presume to be a sage, but I’m learned and knowledgeable.”

The prime minister of Shang asked, “Were the Three Kings sages?”

Confucius replied, “The Three Kings skillfully appointed the wise and the courageous, but I don’t know if they were sages.”

The prime minister asked, “Were the Five Emperors sages?”

Confucius replied, “The Five Emperors skillfully appointed the benevolent and the just, but I don’t know if they were sages.”

The prime minister asked, “Where the Three August Ones sages?”

Confucius replied, “The Three August Ones skillfully appointed those in accord with the times, but I don’t know if they were sages.”

The prime minister of Shang was shocked. “Then whom do you consider a sage?”

Confucius made a face, and then after a while said, “There is a sage among the people of the West. He does not govern, yet there is no disorder; he is spontaneously trusted without saying anything, he is naturally effective without exerting influence. He is so great that the people cannot label him. I suspect he is a sage, but I don’t know if he’s really a sage or not.”

The prime minister of Shang remained silent, thinking to himself, “Confucius is fooling me!”

4

Zixia asked Confucius, “What is Yan Hui’s character like?”

Confucius said, “Hui’s humaneness is greater than mine.”

“How about Zigeng’s character?”

Confucius said, “His eloquence is greater than mine.”

“How about Zilu’s character?”

Confucius said, “His bravery is greater than mine.”

“How about Zishang’s character?”

Confucius said, “His dignity is greater than mine.”

Zixia got off his seat and asked, “Then why do these four attend you, master?”

Confucius said, “Sit down, and I’ll tell you. Yan Hui is capable of being humane, but not capable of change. Zigeng is capable of being eloquent but not capable of keeping silent. Zilu is capable of bravery but not capable of reticence. Zizhang is capable of being dignified, but not capable of conforming. If one who had what all four have were to slight me, I wouldn’t accept it. That is why they attend me devotedly.”

5

Having been apprenticed to Lin the Master of Pot Hill, and associated with the Old Ignorant Blind Man, Master Lie took up residence in the south suburbs. Those who settled there to follow him were so numerous day by day they could not be counted. Even so, Master Lie still thought little of it; he debated with them every day, listening to all of them. Thus he never visited the Master of the South Suburbs, even though they were next-door neighbors for twenty years. One day they crossed paths on the road, and seemed not to regard each other. Their followers thought there must be bad

blood between Master Lie and the Master of the South Suburbs.

Someone from Chu asked Master Lie, “What have you and the Master of the South Suburbs got against each other?”

Master Lie said, “The Master of the South Suburbs is full in appearance but empty at heart; his ears hear nothing, his eyes see nothing, his mouth says nothing, his mind knows nothing, his body is unchanging. What’s the point of visiting each other? Even so, as an experiment I’ll go with you.”

He selected forty of his disciples to go along. When they saw the Master of South Suburbs, they found him like a statue, and couldn’t communicate with him. Then they looked at Master Lie: his body and spirit were not together, and it was impossible to socialize with him.

Suddenly the Master of the South Suburbs pointed to someone in the last row of Master Lie’s disciples and spoke to him forcefully, like someone intent on winning an argument.

Master Lie’s disciples were surprised at this. When they got home, they all had looks of doubt on their faces.

Master Lie said, “Those who get the idea have nothing to say, and neither do those who know everything. Speaking by saying

nothing is still speech; taking knowing nothing to be knowledge is still knowing. Saying nothing and not speaking, knowing nothing and not knowing—these are still speech, still knowledge. And there is nothing unsaid, nothing unknown, yet nothing said, nothing known. That’s simply the way it is—why are you randomly surprised?”

6

When Master Lie was an apprentice, after three years he no longer presumed to think of right and wrong, did not dare to speak of gain and loss; only then did Old Shang take a look at him. After five years he again thought of right and wrong and spoke of gain and loss; only then did Old Shang smile. After seven years, there was no right or wrong in whatever he thought, no gain or loss in whatever he said. Then the master let him sit next to him for the first time. After nine years, he gave free rein to thought and speech without being conscious of his own right or wrong or gain or loss, or others’ right or wrong or gain or loss. Inside and outside were ended. After that his eyes were like ears, his ears like his nose, his nose like his mouth, all the same. His mind was still, his body relaxed, his bones and muscles merged. He was not aware of what his body rested on,

what his feet walked on, what his mind thought of, what his words contained.

This is how he was, that's all; so logically he had nothing to hide.

7

At first Master Lie liked traveling, but the Master of Pot Hill asked him, "You like traveling. What do you like about traveling?"

Lie said, "The pleasure of traveling is that the scenery never gets familiar. Other people travel to see the sights; I travel to see the changes. There's no one who can distinguish travel of one kind from another."

The Master of Pot Hill said, "Your traveling is certainly the same as others, yet you insist it's different? Whatever the sights, their changes are always seen. You enjoy the inconsistency of things without being aware of your own inconsistency; you travel outward without knowing how to gaze inward. Those who travel outward seek completeness in things; those who gaze inward find sufficiency in themselves. Finding sufficiency in oneself is the goal of travel; seeking completeness in things is travel without success."

Master Lie never went out again for the rest of his life, thinking he didn't know how to travel.

The Master of Pot Hill said, "Isn't this the goal of travel? Supreme travel doesn't know where it goes; supreme gazing does not know what it observes. Everything is travel, everything is observation—this is what I call travel, this is what I call gazing. That is why I suggest this is the goal of travel."

8

Long Shu said to [the physician] Wen Zhi, "Your art is subtle. I have an illness; can you cure it?"

Wen Zhi said, "I'm at your service. But first tell me your symptoms."

Long Shu said, "I do not consider it glorious to be praised by everyone in my hometown, and I do not consider it a disgrace to be vilified by everyone in the state. I do not delight in gain or sorrow over loss. I look upon life as I do death, I look upon wealth as I do poverty. I look upon humans as I do swine, I look upon myself as I do others. When I am at home, it is like being at an inn on a journey; I look upon my hometown like a foreign country. With all these ailments, rank and reward cannot encourage me, punishments and

penalties cannot intimidate me. Prosperity and decline, gain and loss, cannot change me; sorrow and joy cannot move me. So of course I can't work for the government, socialize with relatives and friends, control my wife and children, or govern my servants and slaves. What disease is this? What prescription can relieve it?"

Wen Zhi had Long Shu stand with his back to the light. Wen Zhi focused on the light from behind and observed him. Having done this, he said, "Aha! I see your heart! Your heart is empty—you are almost a sage! Six of the openings in your heart are free-flowing, but one opening is not functional. Could this be why you currently consider sagehood a sickness? This cannot be eliminated by my low-level art."

9

What is always alive without coming from anywhere is the Way; what is alive due to life and therefore doesn't perish in spite of ending is Eternity.

To perish because of living is unfortunate; to die normally for a reason is also the Way. To die because of death, therefore perishing spontaneously though not finished, is also normal.

To come to life on account of death is fortunate. Therefore living without servile compulsion is called the Way, while attaining an end by means of the Way is called eternity. To die for a practical purpose is also referred to as the Way; to die by the Way is also called eternity.

When Ji Liang died, Yang Zhu sang in front of his house. When Sui Wu died, Yang Zhu patted the corpse and cried. When common people are born and common people die, the commoners sing, the commoners cry.

10

One who's about to go blind can see a strand of hair before; one who's about to go deaf can hear a gnat flying before. One who's about to lose the sense of taste can distinguish water from different rivers before; one who's about to lose the sense of smell can detect scorching and decay before. One who is getting stiff is agile and limber before; one who is getting confused discerns right and wrong before. Thus it is that things do not revert until they've reached their peak.

There were many wise people in the wilds of Zheng, many intellectuals in East Village. Among the followers in the wilds was a certain Uncle Rich Man; passing through East Village on a journey, he met the legalist and logician Deng Xi.

Deng Xi turned around and looked at his disciples; smiling, he said, "I'll tease this visitor for you—how would you like that?"

His disciples said, "That's something we'd like to witness."

Deng Xi said to Uncle Rich Man, "Do you now the meaning of feeding off and feeding? Those who feed off others and can't feed themselves are comparable to dogs and pigs. To raise animals or feed people so that the animals or the people work for you is human power. To enable your followers to eat their fill, dress well, and have leisure to rest is an accomplishment of government. If old and young gather in crowds only to be penned in cages to be slaughtered for the kitchens, how are they different from dogs and pigs?"

Uncle Rich Man didn't answer. A follower of Uncle Rich Man came forward out of turn and said, "Haven't you heard of the many skills of the states of Ji and Lu, sir? There are those skilled in construction and carpentry, those skilled in metallurgy and leatherworking, those skilled in song and music, those skilled in

literature and mathematics, those skilled in military operations, those skilled in religion—a plurality of abilities is available. And yet there is no leadership, no one able to put them to work. Instead, the leaders are ignorant, the employers are incompetent, and yet those who know this and are capable still work for them. Rulers are my errand-boys—what are you so proud of?”

Deng Xi had no reply. With a look at his followers, he retreated.

12

Gongyi Bai was famed among the lords for strength. The Duke of Tangxi spoke of this to King Xuan of Zhou, and the king sent him an official invitation to court.

When Gongyi Bai arrived, they looked at his physique and saw it was that of a weakling. Perplexed, King Xuan asked, “How strong are you?”

Gongyi Bai said, “I’m strong enough to break a grasshopper’s leg and lift a cicada’s wing.”

The king flushed and said, “I’m strong enough to rip apart rhinoceros hide and drag nine bulls by the tail, yet still reproach myself for weakness. Why are you famous all over the land for

strength when you can only break grasshopper legs and lift cicada wings?”

Gongyi Bai sighed and shrank back from his seat, saying, “Good question, Majesty! I will be so presumptuous as to tell the truth.

“I had a certain master Shang Qiu as my teacher; his strength was unmatched in all the land, yet unknown even to his family and relatives, because he never used his strength.

“I worked for him faithfully, and he finally told me, ‘If people want to see the unseen, let them look at what others don’t observe; if they want to attain the unattainable, let them practice what others do not do.

“So those who would learn to see first look at cartloads of kindling; those who would learn to hear first listen to giant bells. For those who have ease within, there is nothing difficult outside; because there is nothing difficult for them outside, their reputation doesn’t get out of their houses.’

“Now my reputation among the lords is because I’ve disobeyed my teacher’s instruction and revealed my ability. Nevertheless, my reputation isn’t due to my pride in my strength, but my ability to use

my strength. Isn't that better than those who take pride in their strength?"

13

Prince Mou of Zhongshan was a sagacious duke of the state of Wei. He liked to associate with intellectuals, not worrying about affairs of state. He enjoyed the company of the logician Gongsun Long. The disciples of the conventionalist Yuezheng Ziyu laughed at this, and Prince Mou asked him, "Why do you laugh at my fondness for the company of Gongsun Long?"

Ziyu said, "It's Gongsun Long's character—his conduct has no guidance, his learning has no associates. He is glib but misses the point; he is uncommitted and unaffiliated; he has a penchant for oddities and tells tall tales. He wants to confuse people and silence them; he exercises this with the likes of Han Tan."

Prince Mou's expression changed; he said, "How do you characterize Gongsun Long's faults? I'd like to hear the truth."

Ziyu said, "I laugh at Long's preposterous statements to Kong Quan, that a good archer can hit the back of one arrow with the point of the next arrow shot, shot after shot striking the last, so that the

first arrow is still sticking out in a straight line without falling while the last arrow is still on the bowstring.

“Kong Quan was astonished at this, but Long sad, ‘This is not yet marvelous. Once the disciple of an expert archer got mad at his wife, and in order to scare her he took a powerful bow and a well-crafted arrow and shot at her eye. The arrow came right at the pupil of her eye, but she didn’t even blink. The arrow fell to the ground without raising dust. Are these indeed the words of a man of wisdom?’”

Prince Mou said, “The words of a man of wisdom are not understood by the ignorant, to be sure. When each following arrow strikes the one before it, that’s a matter of aligning the following with the foregoing. When an arrow is aimed at someone’s eye and yet she doesn’t blink, that means the momentum of the arrow is used up. How can you wonder?”

Yuezheng Ziyu said, “You’re a follower of Long—how could you but cover up his flaws? I’ll tell you one even worse: Long buffaloed the King of Wei, saying, ‘Having intention negates mind, having a goal negates arrival. There is something that does not come to an end, there is a shadow that does not move. Hair can pull a ton, a white horse is not a horse. An orphan calf never had a

mother.’ His contradictions and perversions are too numerous to tell.”

Prince Mou said, “You think excellent words preposterous because you don’t understand them. You are the one who’s preposterous.

“You see, when there are no intentions, then minds are the same; when there is no goal, everyone’s arrived. That which causes things to come to an end always exists. The reason a shadow doesn’t move is that each shift is a new shadow. Hair can pull a thousand pounds because the stress is distributed equally. A white horse is not a horse in terms of the disparity between appearance and name. An orphan calf never had a mother because if it has a mother it isn’t an orphan calf.”

Yuezheng Ziyu said, “You rationalize everything Gongsun Long crows; you’d take him seriously even if he talked through his ass, saying ‘Yes, sir!’ if he farted.”

Yao governed the land for fifty years, but didn’t know if the land was orderly or not, or if the masses supported him or not. He

asked his closest advisers, but they didn't know. He asked the outer circle at court, but they didn't know. He asked the educated who held no office, and they didn't know.

Yao then dressed in humble clothing and roamed the streets. He heard a child singing, "The establishment of our people is all your achievement, unconsciously and unknowingly following the laws of God."

Delighted, Yao asked, "Who taught you this?"

The child said, "I heard it from a grandee."

So he asked the grandee. The grandee said "It's an ancient song."

Yao returned to his palace, summoned Shun, and ceded the land to him. Shun accepted without refusing.

15

The Keeper of the Pass said, "Don't dwell on yourself, and things will be clear. Like water in movement, like a mirror in stillness, like an echo in response, the Way is thus in harmony with people.

"People deviate from the Way on their own; the Way does not deviate from people. Those who harmonize well with the Way don't even need their ears or eyes, don't use their strength or their mind.

If you want to harmonize with the Way but seek it by means of looking and listening and formal knowledge, you'll never attain it.

“When you look it lies ahead, but suddenly it's behind; try to use it and it fills the universe, try to dismiss it and no one knows where it is. The mindful cannot alienate it, the mindless cannot approach it; the only ones who attain it realize it silently and actualize it naturally. Knowledge without subjectivity, capability without artifice—these are true knowledge and true ability.

“If you try to arouse the insensate, how can it feel? If you try to arouse the inert, how can it act? It is a mass of matter, a conglomeration of particles—even if it does nothing, that is not the principle.”

1

V. Questions of Tang

1

Tang of Yin asked Ji of Xia, “Did anything exist at the beginning of time?”

Ji of Xia replied, “If there were nothing at the beginning of time, how could there be anything now? If people in the future say nothing existed at this time, would that be right?”

Tang of Yin said, “Then have things no order?”

Ji of Xia said, “The endings and beginnings of things have always been infinite. A beginning may be an end, an end may be a beginning—how can that start be known? So what is outside of things, prior to events, is unknown to me.”

Tang of Yin asked, “So are there limits or ends to the zenith, the nadir, the eight directions?”

Ji said, “I don’t know.” Tang pressed the question. Ji said, “There is no limit to nothing, there is an end to the existent. How should I know?”

“But there is no infinity outside the infinite, no endlessness inside the endless. The infinite has no infinity, and the endless has no endlessness. This is how I know there to be the infinite and endless, and don’t know them to have finite limits.”

Tang also asked, “Is there anything beyond the four seas?”

Ji said, “It’s still the central regions.”

Tang asked, “How do you verify this?”

Ji said, “I traveled east to Ying, and the people were like here. When I asked about east of Ying, it was also like Ying. I traveled west to Bing, and the people were like here. When I asked about west of Bing, it was also like Bing. This is how I know the four

seas, the four deserts, and the four horizons are not different from here.

“Thus great and small contain each other, endlessly, ad infinitum. Containing all beings is like containing heaven and earth; containing all beings implies endlessness, containing heaven and earth implies infinitude. How can I know there is not a bigger heaven and earth outside this heaven and earth? I don’t know!

“But heaven and earth are still things, and things have flaws. That is why Nu Wa smelted stones of five hues to patch the sky, and cut the legs off a giant tortoise to set up the four corners of the earth. Later on Gonggong fought Zhuanxu for rulership; in their rage they collided with the Incomplete Mountains, broke the pillars of the sky, and snapped the ties of the earth. Because of that the sky tilted northwest, and the sun, moon, planets and stars went with it, while the earth did not fill the southeast, so the rivers all flowed in that direction.”

Tang also asked, “Do things have great and small, long or short, sameness and difference?”

Ji said, “Untold thousands of miles east of the Po Sea, there is an immense abyss, actually a bottomless gorge called the ultimate

pool. All the rivers in the world, and all the rain from the sky, flow into it, and yet it never swells or subsides.

“There are five mountains in it: the first is called Daiyu, the second is called Yuanjiao, the third is called Fanghu, the fourth is called Yingzhou, and the fifth is called Penglai. These mountains are thirty thousand miles in height and circumference; the plateaus on their summits extend nine thousand miles. The mountains are seventy thousand miles apart at their closest. The buildings on them are all gold and jade, the birds and beasts on them are all pure white. Trees of pearl and crystal grow in forests on all of them; the flowers and fruits are very flavorful, and those who eat them neither age nor die. The people there are all of races of immortals and sages, with countless numbers of them coming and going by flight in a day and a night.

“But the bases of these five mountains were not attached anywhere; they rose and fell repeatedly with the tides, and couldn’t be stabilized. The immortals and saints, distressed by this, complained to God. God feared they’d drift to the extreme West, causing the abodes of the immortals and sages to be lost, and therefore commanded the spirit of the north to have fifteen giant turtles raise their heads to hold them up; they did it in three shifts,

alternating every sixty thousand years. Only then did the five mountains stand tall and not move.

“However, a giant from the country of Dragon Elders reached the five mountains in a few giant strides, and caught six of the turtles on one hook. Hauling them home on his back, he burnt their shells to practice divination. As a result, two of the mountains, Daiyu and Yuanjiao, drifted to the north pole and sank into the ocean, and countless immortals and saints moved away.

“God was angered, and reduced the territory of the Dragon Elders and shrank the people. In the eras of Fu Xi and Shennong, the people of that land were still several dozen feet tall.

“Four thousand miles east of the central continent is found the country of Jiao Yao, where the people are one foot five inches tall. In the extreme northeast are people called Zheng who are nine inches tall.

“In the south of Xing there is a tree with a spring of five hundred years and an autumn of five hundred years. In high antiquity there was a tree with a spring of eight thousand years and an autumn of eight thousand years. There is a fungus that grows on rot that sprouts in the morning and dies at night. In the spring and

summer months there are insects that are born when it rains and die when exposed to sunlight.

“North of the extreme north there is a vast ocean, which is the Lake of Heaven. There is a fish there thousand of miles wide and correspondingly long, called the *kun*. There is a bird there called the *peng* with wings like clouds covering the sky, and a body to match.

“How do people know these things exist? Great Yu saw them in his travels, Bo Yi recognized and named them, Yi Jian listened and recorded them.

“There is a minute insect called *jiaoming* that lives on the river banks. These can swarm onto the eyelash of a mosquito without bothering it. They remain residing there, coming and going, without the mosquito noticing. Even those with the keenest eyesight could not see their form in the daylight; those with the keenest hearing could not hear their sound at night. Only the Yellow Emperor and the Master of Expanded Development, after fasting together for three months on a mountain, their minds dead and bodies forgotten, eventually saw them, by spiritual vision, as massive as a mountain; they eventually heard them, listening by energy, as loud as thunder.

“In the countries of Wu and Chu there is an evergreen tree called pomelo with a sour red fruit. Consuming its skin and juice will cure illnesses caused by overexcitement. It was prized in the province of Qi, but when it was brought north across the Huai River it turned into thick-skinned orange there. Mynah birds don’t cross the Ji River, badgers die if they cross the Wen River. The climate makes it so. Even so, though their forms and energies differ, they are equal in respect to nature, and not interchangeable. Their lives are complete in themselves, their lots are sufficient unto themselves. How do I know if they’re great or small? How do I know if their lives are long or short? How do I know if they’re the same or different?”

2

The two mountains Great Form and Royal Residence were hundreds of miles on each side, and one hundred thousand feet tall. Originally they were situated south of Qi province, north of Hoyang. A certain foolish old man of North Mountain, already ninety years old, lived facing the mountains. He was vexed by the mountains blocking the way north, necessitating a long detour to come and go. He gathered his family to come up with a plan. He said, “Why don’t

we put all our energy into leveling the route through the south of Yu to the region south of the Han River?”

They agreed as a group, but his wife presented a doubt: “With your strength, you couldn’t make a dent in a dirt hill—what can you do about those two immense mountains? And where are you going to put all that earth and rock?”

Everyone said, “Throw it into the Po Sea, north of the Hidden Land.”

So he took along three men from among his sons and grandsons to haul loads, and they broke rock, dug earth, and hauled it to the seashore in baskets. The widow of the neighbor family had a young son who eagerly joined them.

It took from winter to summer just to make one round trip. A wise old man at the river bend laughed at them and tried to stop them, saying, “Your lack of intelligence is extreme! With the years and energy you’ve got left, you’ll never be able to break off the stalk of a single plant on the mountain—what can you do about the earth and stone?”

The foolish old man of North Mountain sighed and said, “Your mind is too inflexible to understand, not even as well as the widow’s boy. Though I die, my children will survive me; and my children will

produce grandchildren, and my grandchildren will have children, and their children will have children, and those grandchildren will have children too. Children and grandchildren will continue to be born generation after generation, while the mountains will never grow larger—so why worry about not leveling the mountains?”

The wise old man of the river bend had no reply.

The spirit in charge of snakes heard this, and fearing the task would never be done, reported it to God. God was moved by their sincerity, and sent two sons of the titan Kua E to transport the two mountains. One was placed in the northeast, the other south of Ying. From then on there was no natural barrier between the south of Ji and the south of the Han River.

3

Father Kua, not assessing his own strength, wanted to chase the sunlight, and pursued it to the horizon. He got so thirsty he drank up the Yellow River and the Wei River. The Yellow River and Wei River weren't sufficient, so he headed north to drink the great lake. Before he arrived, however, he died of thirst on the way. The staff he left behind, infused with the fat and flesh of his body,

sprouted the Deng Forest. The Deng Forest is thousands of miles in size.

4

Yu the Great said, “The earth is illumined by the sun and moon, regulated by the stars and planets, ordered by the four seasons, and corresponds to the planet Jupiter. The beings born of spirit differ in form; some are short-lived, some are long-lived. Only a sage can comprehend the reason.”

Qi of Xia said, “But there are also those who are born independent of spirit, formed independent of yin and yang, illumined independent of sun and moon, short-lived without being killed, long-lived without being fostered, eat without needing grain, dress without needing cloth, travel without needing vehicles. Their path is naturally so, not comprehended by sages.”

5

While Yu was in the process of quelling the Flood, he lost his way and went to a certain country by mistake. It was on the north edge of the Northern Ocean, untold thousands of miles from China.

That country was called the Ultimate North, and there's no telling where its boundaries were. It had no wind or rain, frost or dew; no birds or beasts lived there, no insects or fish, no plants or trees. It was completely flat in all four directions, and ringed by huge mountain ranges.

There was a mountain in the middle of that country called Bottle Neck, shaped like a bottle, with a round mouth on top, called Opening of Nourishment, from which there flowed a kind of water called miraculous spring water, most fragrant and delicious.

This one spring divided into four streams flowing down the mountain, circulating throughout the whole country, reaching everywhere. The climate was mild, and there was no pestilence.

The people were by nature genial and agreeable, not competitive or contentious. They had soft hearts and weak bones; they were not arrogant, not envious. Older and younger lived as equals, neither ruling nor subjected; males and females associated freely, without matchmaking or betrothal. They lived by the water, without plowing or planting; the climate was mild and agreeable, so they didn't spin and didn't wear clothes. They died when they were a hundred years old, never dying young or falling ill.

The people multiplied prolifically and the population was huge, beyond counting; they had joy and pleasure, without the sorrow and pain of deterioration with age.

Their custom was to enjoy singing, and groups of them would take turns singing all day long. When they got hungry or tired, they'd drink some of the miraculous spring water, and they'd be refreshed in body and mind. If they drank too much they'd get intoxicated, and it would take ten days to sober up. When they bathed in the miraculous spring water, their skin would become lustrous and fragrant for ten days.

When King Mu of Zhou journeyed north he passed through that country, and forgot to return for three years. When he did get back to the House of Zhou, he longed for that country so much that he became distracted and absent-minded. He didn't partake of wine or meat, and didn't call for his concubines. It was months before he came back to himself.

When Guan Zhong urged Duke Huan of Qi to make the distant journey with him to that country, when they were about to get underway Xi Peng objected, "Your lordship is leaving the immensity of the state of Qi, the enormity of its population, the beauty of its mountains and rivers, the abundance of its flora, the maturity of its

rites and principles, the aesthetics of its formal attire, the beautiful women filling the palace, the loyal men filling the court. You can muster a million troops with a shout, you can order the lords about just by giving them a look. So what can you possibly find so attractive about that place that you'd abandon your homeland for a foreign country? This fellow Guan Zhong is senile—how can you go along with him?”

So Duke Huan gave up the idea, and told Guan Zhong what Xi Peng had said. Guan Zhong said, “This is definitely beyond Peng. I'm afraid it's the uncertainty about that country. Why be attached to the wealth of Qi? Why pay attention to the words of Xi Peng?”

6

People in southern countries cut their hair and go naked; people in northern countries wear turbans and leather garments; people in temperate countries wear hats and clothing of fabric.

As for what the nine lands provide, some are agricultural, some commercial; some are hunters and some are fishers. Like wearing leather in winter and silk in summer, traveling by boat on

water and by car on land, it goes without saying, turning out that way naturally.

East of Yue there is the country Zhemu, where they dismember and eat their first born, thinking that will enable them to have many sons. When their grandfathers die, they carry their grandmothers off and abandon them, saying, “The wife of a ghost can’t live with us.”

South of Chu there is the country of Yanran. When their parents die, they strip off the flesh and bury the bones; only then can they be considered filial sons.

West of Qin there is the country of Yiqu. When their parents die, they pile up firewood and cremate them. As the smoke rises, they call this going to heaven. Then they qualify as filial sons.

Made into policies by rulers, these are made into customs by subjects, and so nothing to wonder at.

7

When Confucius was traveling in the East, he saw two children arguing and asked what it was about.

One child said, “I think the sun is closer to us when it rises, and further away at noon.”

The other child thought the sun further away when it rises and closer at noon.

The first child said, “When the sun first rises, it’s big as a parasol, but at noon it’s the size of a disk—isn’t this because things far away seem smaller, and things nearby seem bigger?”

The other child said, “It’s cool at sunrise, but hot at midday—isn’t this because it’s hotter when the sun is nearer and cooler when it’s further away?”

Confucius couldn’t decide. The children laughed at him, “Who says you know a lot?”

8

Equilibrium is the ultimate principle on earth; everything in the domain of form is thus. Hairs of equal length will bear weight hung equally on them; if the weight on them is different and they snap, it means that the hairs are not equal in length. If they are equal, even those that would otherwise snap do not break.

People think it is not so, but there have naturally been those who realized it is so. Zhan He made a fishing line out of a single strand of silk, used a prickle from a beard of grain for a hook, took a cane of dwarf bamboo for a rod, and split a grain of rice for bait.

With this he caught a cartload of fish from a depth of a hundred fathoms, casting into the current without the line snapping, the hook straightening, or the rod bending.

The King of Chu heard of this and considered it a marvel. He summoned the man and asked him how he did it. Zhan He said, “I heard my late father speak of the archery of an ancient bird hunter, using arrows with strings attached. He used a weak bow and a delicate string, but he shot with the wind, bagging a pair of orioles at the edge of the blue clouds. His focused his attention undivided, and he moved his hands in balance.

“I learned fishing by imitating that example. It took me five years to master the method. When I am at the riverside holding my fishing pole, there are no random thoughts in my mind, only thought of fish; when I cast my line and sink my hook, there’s no resistance in my hands, so nothing can cause any disturbance. Fish see the bait on my hook like sinking dust or a bunch of froth, and swallow it without hesitation. Thus I can control strength by weakness, bring in the heavy by means of the light. If Your Majesty could really govern the country like this, then the empire could be operated with one hand. What else would you have to do?”

The King of Chu said, “Good!”

When Gong Hu of Lu and Qi Ying of Zhao fell ill, they both sought a cure from Pian Qiao.

Pian Qiao cured them. Once they had recovered, he said to Gong Hu and Qi Ying, “The sickness you suffered was something from outside that affected your internal organs, so it could be eliminated by medicine. Now you have a disease that you were born with and has grown along with your bodies. How about if I treat you for it now?”

The two men said, “Let us first hear the symptoms.”

Pian Qiao said, to Gong Hu, “Your will is strong, while your energy is weak, so you can plan adequately but are lacking in resolution. Qi Ying has a weak will but his energy is strong, so he’s lacking in thought while excessive in persistence. If you exchange hearts, that will balance your qualities.”

Pian Qiao then had the two men drink a toxic liquor that put them into a coma for three days. He cut open their chests, took out their hearts, and exchanged them. Then he administered a miraculous drug, and they woke up.

Taking their leave, the two went home. But now Gong Hu went to Qi Ying's house and tried to assert authority over his wife and children. The wife and children didn't acknowledge him. Qi Ying, for his part, went to Gong Hu's house and asserted authority over his wife and children. The wife and children didn't acknowledge him either.

The two families sued each other, and demanded an explanation from Pian Qiao. Pian Qiao explained the reason, so the lawsuits were dropped.

10

When Pao Ba played the lute, birds danced and fish frolicked. When Music Master Wen of Zheng heard of this, he left home to follow Music Master Xiang. Tuning his instrument, he didn't play a piece for three years. Master Xiang said, "You can go home."

Master Wen set aside his lute and lamented, "It's not that I can't tune it, and not that I can't play a piece. What I have in mind is not in the strings, my intent is not in the sound. Inwardly I can't find it in my mind, outwardly it doesn't resonate in the instrument; so I don't dare try to play. Give me a little more time, to see what's next."

In no time at all he came back to see Master Xiang. Master Xiang said, “How is your lute?”

Master Wen said, “I’ve got it. Here’s a sample for you.” At that time it was spring, but he plucked the metallic notes to evoke the key of autumn, whereupon a cool breeze suddenly came, and the fruits of the plants and trees were fully developed. Come autumn, he plucked the wooden notes to produce the key of spring, and a warm breeze slowly swirled, and the plants and trees burst into bloom. In summer, he plucked the water notes to produce the key of winter, whereupon frost and snow fell, the rivers and lakes suddenly froze. When winter came, he plucked the fire notes to produce the key of summer, whereupon the sunlight burned fiercely and solid ice melted instantly. As he was concluding, he played all four strings in the designated keys, and an auspicious breeze swirled, felicitous clouds floated, sweet dew descended, and delicious springs bubbled up.

Impressed, Master Xiang said with enthusiasm, “Your playing is refined indeed! Even the pure notes of Master Guang and the pitch of Zou Yan have nothing to add to this. They would simply have to pack up their lute and pipes and follow after you.”

Tan of Xue studied singing with Qing of Qin. Thinking he'd mastered Qing's art before he really had, Tan took leave to go back home. Qing didn't try to stop him, but as a parting gift at the highway outside the city he sang a sad song. His voice made the trees in the forest vibrate; the resonance halted passing clouds.

Now Tan of Xue apologized and sought to return, never presuming to speak of going back home for the rest of his life.

Qing of Qin turned and said to his companions, "Long ago when E of Han went east to Qi, she ran out of supplies, so when she passed the Gate of Harmony into Qi she sold songs for food. After she'd gone, lingering notes wound around the roof beams for three whole days, so the people around thought she hadn't left.

"She went by an inn, but the people at the inn insulted her. So E of Han cried mournfully, in long, drawn-out tones. Everyone in the neighborhood, old and young, was saddened; looking at each other with tears in their eyes, they couldn't eat for three days. Finally they went after her. E came back and sang again, drawing out the notes, a long song. Everyone in the neighborhood, old and young, jumped for joy, clapping and dancing, unable to restrain themselves, forgetting their earlier sadness. Then they saw her off with plenty of gifts.

“For this reason, the people of the Gate of Harmony are good at singing and keening to this day, emulating the tradition of voicing left by E.”

12

Bo Ya was good at playing the lute. Zhong Ziqi was good at listening. When Bo Ya played the lute with his mind on climbing high mountains, Zhong Ziqi said, “Wow! High on Mount Tai!” When Bo Ya’s mind was on flowing water, Zhong Ziqi said, “Wow! Vast as the Yangzi and Yellow Rivers!” Whatever Bo Ya thought of, Zhong Ziqi would always get it.

When Bo Ya journeyed to the north peak of Mount Tai, he suddenly got caught in a storm and stayed under a cliff. Feeling melancholy, he played his lute. First he composed a lament on continuous rain, then he recreated the sound of an avalanche.

When he performed each of these pieces, Zhong Ziqi comprehended their sense at once. Bo Ya then put his lute down and said with a sigh, “Your listening is very skillful indeed! The intent, conception, and image are like my mind—where can I conceal my voice?”

When King Mu of Zhou went West touring, he crossed the Kunlun Mountains to Mount Yan [where the sun was thought to set]. On his way back, before reaching China, by the roadside there was an artisan named Yan, to whom King Mu granted an audience.

“What skills do you have?” inquired the King.

“I’ll try whatever the King commands,” replied Maestro Yan, “but I’ve already made something, which I hope the King will look at first.”

King Mu said, “Bring it tomorrow, and I’ll look at it with you.”

The next day Maestro Yan visited the King. Granting him an audience, the King asked, “Who is this accompanying you?”

Maestro Yan replied, “It’s a performer I’ve created.”

King Mu looked at it with astonishment. Its movements and gestures were those of a real human being. When the artisan pressed its cheek, it sang in tune; when he raised its hand, it danced in rhythm. It did all sorts of things, whatever one wished. The King thought it was a real human being, and watched it with his Queen and concubines.

When the performance was over, the performer winked seductively at the concubines surrounding the King. The King was

enraged; he wanted to execute Maestro Yan at once. Terrified, Maestro Yan immediately cut the performer into pieces to show the King it was made of a conglomeration of leather, wood, glue, lacquer, and colors.

The King examined it carefully. Inside were liver and gall bladder, heart and lungs, spleen and kidneys, intestines and stomach. Outside were tendons and bones, limbs and joints, skin and down, teeth and hair. They were all artificial, but all there.

Reassembled, it was restored to the way it was when he first saw it. As an experiment, the King removed the heart, whereupon the mouth could not speak. He removed the liver, whereupon the eyes could not see. He removed the kidneys, whereupon the legs could not walk.

Now King Mu was pleased. He said admiringly, "Can human skill achieve the same effects as the Creator?" Calling for his second car, he had the thing loaded onto it to carry it back to China.

Well, Pan Yu's ladder to the clouds and Mo Di's hang glider they themselves considered the epitome of skill, but when their disciples heard tell of Master Yan's skill, they reported this to the two masters. The two masters never presumed to speak of art again for

the rest of their lives, though they took up the compass and square at times.

14

Gan Ying was an expert archer of old. When he drew his bow, animals lay prostrate and birds came down. His disciple, named Fei Wei, studied archery with Gan Ying, and his skill surpassed his teacher.

A certain Ji Chang then studied archery with Fei Wei. Fei Wei told him, "First learn not to blink; then we can talk about archery."

Ji Chang went home and lay face up under his wife's loom, such that his eyes were in line with the treadle. After two years, he wouldn't blink even with an awl poking at his wide-open eye. He went and told Fei Wei.

Fei Wei said, "Not yet. Now you'll have to learn looking. Tell me when you see the small as if it were large, and see the minute as if it were distinct."

Chang hung a louse by a hair in his window, and looked at it facing south. In ten days it gradually grew larger; after three years it seemed as big as a cartwheel. Now when he looked at other things this way, they were all mountainous. Then, using a horn bow and a

cane arrow, he shot the louse through the head without snapping the thread on which it hung.

He told Fei Wei about this. Fei Wei enthusiastically declared, "You've got it!"

Now that Ji Chang had mastered Fei Wei's art, he reckoned he was the only one in the world who could rival him. So he plotted to kill Fei Wei.

Meeting in an open field, the two men shot at each other: their arrow points met in mid-air and the arrows fell to the ground, yet the dust didn't stir.

Fei Wei ran out of arrows first. Ji Cheng had one arrow left; he shot, but Fei Wei stopped it with the tip of a thorn, with perfect accuracy.

Now the two masters threw down their bows weeping and bowed to each other on the road. Adopting each other as father and son, they made a solemn oath never to teach the art to anyone.

The charioteer Zaofu's teacher was Mr. Taitou. When Zaofu began to learn chariot driving from him, he was strictly courteous and very humble, but Taitou didn't tell him anything for three years.

Zaofu became even more punctilious in his manners, until Taitou finally told him, “An ancient poem says, ‘The son of a good bow maker must first make baskets; the son of a good smith must first make bellows.’ First watch me run. When you can run like me, then you can hold six bridles and control six horses.”

Taitou then set up a line of wooden posts, each just big enough for a foot, placed a pace apart. Stepping on these, he ran back and forth without stumbling or slipping.

Zaofu practiced this, and mastered the skill in three days. Taitou praised him, “How adroit you are! You got it so quickly! Charioteering is also like this—as you were running just now, you found it in your feet, responding to it in your mind. Applying this to charioteering, you equalize the team at the border of bridle and bit, adjust speed where the lips join, regulate measure at the center of the chest, and keep pace in your grip.

“By mastering it inwardly in the innermost mind, while outwardly according with the will of the horses, it is thus possible to go back and forth on a straight line, turn around with precision, and go long distances with energy to spare, having truly attained the art.

“What you feel in the bit, respond to with the bridle; what you feel in the bridle, respond to with your hands; what you feel in your

hands, respond to in your mind. Then you don't use your eyes to look, don't use your whip to drive; your mind is at ease, your body's upright, the six bridles don't tangle, and twenty-four hooves don't miss a step. Wheeling around, going back and forth, all are perfectly orderly.

“After that, even if the track is no wider than your wheels, and there's no ground beyond your horses' hooves, you never sense the steepness of the mountains and valleys, or the flatness of the plains and marshes, seeing them as one. This is the consummation of my art. Take note of it!”

16

Hei Luan of Wei killed Qiu Pingzhang out of personal enmity. Qiu Pingzhang's son Laidan planned to avenge his father's murder.

Laidan's temper was very fierce, but physically he was very slight; he ate rice by the grain and went along with the wind when he ran. Even in anger he couldn't handle a weapon to strike back. He was ashamed to rely on another's power, and vowed to wield the sword himself to slay Hei Luan.

Hei Luan was extraordinarily cruel and ruthless, and he had the strength of a hundred men. His sinews and bones, skin and muscles, were not like those of a human: he could take a sword to the neck and an arrow to the chest, and the blade would bend and the point would break, while his body remained unscathed. Proud of his physical strength, he looked upon Laidan as like a chick.

Laidan's friend Shen Ta said, "Your hatred for Laiduan is total, while his contempt for you is extreme. What is your strategy for handling him?"

Weeping, Laiduan said, "Please devise a strategy for me."

Shen Ta said, "I've heard of Kong Zhou of Wei that his ancestor obtained the jade swords of the Emperor of Yin. A single boy armed with them can repulse the troops of three armies—why don't you ask him for them?"

So Laiduan went to Wei and met Kong Zhou. In a humble manner, he first asked him to take his wife and children, then said what he wanted.

Kong Zhou said, "I have three swords from which you may choose. None of them can kill a man, but let me first describe them.

"One is called 'imbued with light.' You cannot see it when you look at it, and you don't sense it's there when you wield it. It leaves

no cut where it strikes, passing through someone without their even noticing.

“The second is called ‘shadowed.’ If you look at it facing north in the dawn or dusk twilight there vaguely seems to be something there, but no one can discern its appearance. There is a faint sound when it strikes, but it goes through people without their feeling pain.

“The third is called ‘tempered by night.’ In the daytime you can see its shadow but not its shine; at night you can see its shine but not its shadow. Where it strikes, it slices through, but the wound closes right up as the blade passes, so it feels painful but doesn’t bloody the blade.

“These three treasures have been passed on for thirteen generations, but have never actually been used. I’ve kept them sheathed and stored, never once breaking the seals.”

Laidan said, “Even so, I must ask for the least of them.”

Kong Zhong then returned his wife and children and fasted with him for seven days, then at twilight he knelt down and presented him with the least of the swords. Laidan prostrated himself twice, accepted it, and went back home with it.

Laidan then went after Hei Luan sword in hand. At the time Hei Luan was lying drunk under a window. Laidan slashed him

thrice from his neck to his waist. Hei Luan didn't wake up.

Thinking Hei Luan was dead, Laidan beat a hasty retreat. Running into Hei Luan's son at the gate, he struck at him thrice, but it was like hitting empty space.

Hei Luan's son laughed and said, "Why are you fooling with me this way, beckoning me thrice?"

Laidan realized the sword couldn't kill people, so he went home lamenting.

When Hei Luan woke up, he got angry at his wife. He said, "Leaving me uncovered while I was drunk, you've caused me to come down with a sore throat and pain in the waist."

His son said, "When Laidan came a while ago, he met me at the gate and beckoned me three times; it's made my body ache and my limbs stiff too. He must have put a curse on us!"

When King Mu of Zhou made a major expedition against peoples of the West, the peoples of the West presented him with a special dagger and asbestos cloth. The dagger was eighteen inches long, made of tempered steel, with a red edge. It could cut through jade like cutting through mud. As for the asbestos cloth, it had to be

put in fire to be laundered; the cloth would turn the color of fire, while the grime would turn the color of cloth. When taken out of the fire and shaken, the cloth would be white as snow.

The crown prince thought there were no such things, and that those who told of them were mistaken. Xiao Shu said, “The prince is ultimately fixated on his own belief, consequently repudiating truth.”

1

VI. Effort and Destiny

1

Effort said to Destiny, “How can your effect compare to mine?”

Destiny said, “What effect do you have on beings that can compare to mine?”

Effort said, “Long life or premature death, failure or success, nobility or abasement, poverty or prosperity—this is what I, effort, am capable of.”

Destiny said, “The wisdom of Grandfather Peng was not superior to Yao or Shun, yet he lived to be eight hundred years old. The talent of Yan Yuan was not inferior to common people, yet he only lived to be eighteen. The virtue of Confucius was not less than the lords, yet he was blockaded between Chen and Cai. The

conduct of King Zhou of Yin was not better than the Three Humanitarians, yet he occupied the position of ruler.

“Ji Cha, [though known for intelligence], never had any rank in Wu, whereas Tian Huang [a briber and assassin] monopolized the state of Qi. [Loyalists] Yi and Qi starved to death on Shouyang, while the Ji clan grew richer than [the moralist] Liu Xiahui.

“If this is your doing, Effort, why lengthen one’s life while shortening another’s? Why cast sages in desperate straits while granting perverts success? Why debase the intelligent and ennoble the foolish? Why impoverish the good and enrich the evil?”

Effort said, “If things are as you say, then I certainly have no effect on people. So if people are like this, is this under your control?”

Destiny said, “Once you call it destiny, how can there be anyone controlling it? I push it along when it is straight, let it go when it twists and turns. One naturally lives long or naturally dies young, naturally becomes desperate or naturally attains success, is naturally ennobled or naturally abased, naturally prospers or is naturally impoverished. How can I know why? How can I know why?”

Beigongzi said to Ximenzi, “We are peers, but you are the one people have helped to succeed; we are of the same clan, yet you are the one people respect; we are of similar appearance, yet you are the one people admire; we are equally eloquent, yet you are the one people employ; our conduct is the same, yet you are the one people trust; our offices are equal, yet you are the one people honor; our farms are equal, yet you are the one people enrich; our commerce is equal, yet you are the one people profit. I wear poor clothes, eat simple food, live in a reed cottage, and travel on foot; you wear brocade, eat polished rice and filleted meat, live in a big house, and travel with a team of four horses. At home you gladly ignore me, at court you plainly show contempt for me. It’s been years since we visited one another or went out together. Do you think your virtue superior to mine?”

Ximenzi said, “I have no way to know whether that’s true, but you fail at things while I succeed—isn’t this evidence of disparity in our endowments? Yet you consider yourself equal to me in every way—you’re certainly brazen!”

Beigongzi had no reply; he went home dejected. On the way he met Master Dongguo. The master asked, “Where have you been,

that you are returning walking alone with a look of profound shame?”

Beigongzi told him what had happened.

Master Dongguo said, “I will relieve your shame; I’ll go back to Ximenzi with you and question him.”

He said, “Tell me, why did you humiliate Beigongzi so deeply?”

Ximenzi said, “Beigongzi said he was equal to me in family status, age and appearance, speech and conduct, yet different from me in rank and riches. I told him that I had no way of knowing the truth of the matter, but he fails at things where I succeed, and perhaps this is evidence of difference in endowment; so for him to say he’s my equal in everything is impudence on his part.”

Master Dongguo said, “When you speak of difference in endowment, you’re only talking about differences in talent and virtue. The difference in endowment of which I speak is otherwise. Beigongzi is rich in virtue, poor in fate; you are rich in fate, poor in virtue. Your success is not obtained by wisdom, while Beigongzi’s failures are not by way of mistakes due to folly. Both are from Nature, not humankind; so your pride in richness of fate and Beigongzi’s shame at richness of virtue both fail to recognize a pattern of necessity.”

Ximenzi said, "Master, stop! I dare say no more."

After Beigongzi returned home, when he wore his cotton and wool clothing it was as warm as leather and fur; when he ate his beans, they were as tasty as polished rice; when he sheltered in his reed hut, it protected him like a mansion; when he rode his wicker cart, it was as fancy as a decorated carriage. At ease for the rest of his life, he was not aware of glory or disgrace in himself or in others.

Hearing of this, Master Dongguo said, "Beigongzi had been asleep for a long time, but he was able to wake up at a single statement. He was easily enlightened!"

3

Guan Yiwu and Bao Shuya were very close friends. They both lived in Qi. Guan Yiwu attended the duke's son Jiu, while Bao Shuya attended the duke's son Xiaobo.

There was a lot of favoritism in the clan of the duke of Qi, and his sons by his wife and concubines had equal standing. The citizens feared a civil war. Guan Yiwu and Shao Hu fled to Lu in the service of the duke's son Jiu, while Bao Shuya fled to Ju in the service of the duke's son Xiaobo.

Subsequently Gongsun Wuzhi attempted a coup; Qi had no legitimate ruler, and the two sons of the Duke fought to take over. Guan Yiwu battled Xiaobo in Ju, during the course of which he shot an arrow that hit Xiaobo's belt buckle.

After Xiaobo had been established as Duke Huan, he intimidated Lu into killing his brother Jiu; Shao Hu committed suicide on that account, and Guan Yiwu was imprisoned.

Bao Shuya said to Duke Huan, "Guan Yiwu is capable; he can govern the state."

Duke Huan said, "He is my enemy; I want to kill him."

Bao Shuya said, "I have heard that an intelligent ruler has no private grudges. If someone can work for his employer, he can certainly work for his ruler. If you want hegemony or kingship, you cannot succeed without Yiwu. You must release him!"

In the end the Duke called for Guan Zhong (Yiwu), and the state of Lu returned him to the state of Qi. Bao Shuya greeted him outside the city and removed his fetters. Duke Huan treated him with courtesy and put him in a position higher than the leading Gao and Guo families. Bao Shuya subordinated himself to him. Entrusted with the administration of the state, he was dubbed Father Zhong. Duke Huan subsequently became Overlord.

Guan Zhong once said in praise, “When I was in straits in my youth, Bao Shu and I were once business partners. When it came to dividing the money I gave more to myself, but Bao Shu didn’t consider me greedy because he knew I was poor. When I used to plan enterprises for Bao Shu I went bankrupt, but Bao Shu didn’t consider me stupid, because he knows that times may be opportune or inopportune. I served in office three times and was discharged all three times by the ruler, yet Bao Shu didn’t consider me unworthy, because he knew my time hadn’t come. I went to war three times and fled all three times, yet Bao Shu didn’t consider me cowardly, because he knew I had an elderly mother. When the duke’s son Jiu was destroyed and Shao Hu committed suicide on his account, I accepted imprisonment and disgrace, but Bao Shu didn’t consider me shameless, because he knew that instead of being ashamed over a minor sense of duty I was ashamed of not being distinguished throughout the land. The ones who gave me life were my parents, but the one who knows me is Bao Shu.”

With this it is customary to cite Guan and Bao as examples of skill in association, and Xiaobo as an example of skill in employing the capable. But there was really no skill in association, really no skill in employing the capable; yet it is not that there is greater skill in

association, not that there is greater skill in employing the capable. Shao Hu did not commit suicide by virtue of his capability; he had no choice but to die. Bao Shu did not recommend a savant by virtue of his own competence; he had no choice but to recommend a savant. Xiaobo did not employ an enemy because he was skillful; he had no choice but to employ an enemy.

When Guan Zhong became ill, Xiaobo inquired of him, “Your illness is serious, Father Zhong, and may be fatal. If you become critically ill, who should I entrust with the state?”

Guan Zhong said, “Who do you want?”

Xiaobo said, “Bao Shuya will do.”

“No, he won’t. He is so puritanical that he won’t associate with anyone unlike himself, and once he’s heard of a fault in a person he never forgets it all his life. If you let him administer the state, he’ll be investigating the ruler above and imposing on the people below. It wouldn’t be long before he’d be punished by the ruler.”

Xiaobo said, “Then who will do?”

“If there’s no alternative, then Xi Peng will do. He is the sort of man whom superiors forget about and inferiors do not disobey.

He is ashamed of not being comparable to the Yellow Emperor, and feels compassion for those who are not comparable to him.

“Those who distribute virtue to others are called sages; those who distribute wealth to others are called savants. Those who use sagacity to lord over others have never won people, while those who use sagacity to humble themselves to others have never failed to win people—regarding the state, there is that which they don’t hear; and regarding the home, there is that which they don’t see. If there is no other choice, then Xi Peng will do.”

But Guan Yiwu was not slighting Bao Shu—he could not but slight him. He was not favoring Xi Peng—he could not but favor him. When you favor someone at first, you may wind up slighting them; when you slight someone at first, you may wind up favoring them. The going and coming of favoring and slighting do not derive from oneself.

Deng Xi manipulated ambiguous propositions to set forth inexhaustible rhetoric. He wrote the criminal code applied by the state of Zheng when Zichan was in charge of government; he repeatedly criticized Zichan’s administration, and Zichan yielded to

him. Then Zichan had him arrested and disgraced, and summarily executed.

So Zichan applied the criminal code, not because he could, but because he had to. Deng Xi restrained Zichan, not because he could, but because he had to. Zichan executed Deng Xi, not because he could, but because he had to.

5

To live when you can live is a blessing from Nature. To die when you should die is a blessing from Nature. Not living when you can live is a penalty from Nature. Not dying when you should die is a penalty from Nature. To be able to live and ready to die, then to live and to die, sometimes happens; to die when it's right to live and live when it's right to die sometimes happens. But what gives life to the living and death to the dying is not a thing and not self; it is all destiny, about which intelligence can do nothing.

So it is said,

Mysterious and boundless, the course of Nature organizes itself;

Silent and undivided, the course of Creation operates itself.

*Sky and earth cannot impinge upon it; sages' knowledge
cannot affect it,*

Ghosts and spirits cannot deceive it.

That which is naturally so silently accomplishes it,

Balances it and stabilizes it, sends it off and welcomes it.

6

Yang Zhu's friend Ji Liang got sick, and worsened for seven days. His sons surrounded him and wept over him, calling for physicians.

Ji Liang said to Yang Zhu, "This is how disgraceful my sons are! Why don't you compose a song for me to enlighten them?"

Yang Zhu sang,

Even God does not know—

How can humanity realize?

It's not that blessings come from God,

Nor do curses come from Man.

Me? You? We don't know!

Doctors? Shamans? How would they know?

But the sons didn't understand, and wound up consulting three physicians, one named Jiao, one named Yu, and one named Lu,

who tried to diagnose the illness.

Mr. Jiao told Ji Liang, “Your cold and warmth are unregulated, emptiness and fullness are out of order. Your sickness comes from overeating and lustfulness, such that your vitality and thought are troubled and scattered. It is neither divine nor demonic. Although it’s progressing, it can be cured.”

Ji Liang said, “This is a common doctor—dismiss him at once!”

Mr. Yu said, “You were lacking in energy from the first, even in the womb, and had too much breast milk. This illness didn’t happen overnight, but came about gradually. It can’t be cured.”

Ji Liang said, “This is a good doctor—feed him, at least.”

Mr. Lu said, “Your illness doesn’t come from Heaven or from humans, nor indeed from ghosts. As we are endowed with life and embodied, since there is that which regulates them, there must be that which governs them. What can herbs and needles do for you?”

Ji Liang said, “This is a spiritual doctor—send him home with a rich reward.”

In no time at all Ji Liang’s illness spontaneously healed.

Life cannot be preserved by valuing it, the body cannot be taken care of by cherishing it. Life cannot be shortened by despising it either, nor can the body be neglected by disregarding it.

So you may not survive even if you value life, and may not die even if you despise it. Cherishing the body may not take care of it, while disregarding it may not be neglect.

This seems contradictory, but it is not; it's a matter of living naturally and dying naturally, caring naturally and neglecting naturally.

Then again, you may live by valuing it, or die by despising it; you may take care by cherishing, or fall into neglect by disregard. This seems logical, but it is not; this too is living naturally and dying naturally, caring naturally and neglecting naturally.

Yu Xiong said to King Wen, "Natural longevity is not an addition; natural brevity is not a diminution. What is lost by calculating?"

Lao Ran said to the Keeper of the Pass, "Who knows the reasons for Creation's disapproval?"

So it's better not to look to the divine will and try to figure out gain and loss.

Yang Bu asked, “Here are people quite similar in age, property, talent, and appearance, yet quite different in longevity, status, reputation, and inclination. I’m confused by this.”

Master Yang Zhu said, “People of ancient times had a saying; I have memorized it, and I’ll tell you— *What is so without anyone knowing why it is so is destiny.*

“In the present obscurity and confusion, whatever is done or undone, the days come and go, but who can know the reason? It’s all destiny.

“Those who trust destiny are oblivious of long life or early death; those who trust intrinsic order are oblivious of affirmation and negation; those who trust mind are oblivious of opposition and accord; those who trust nature are oblivious of safety and danger. This is called being entirely oblivious of objects of belief, entirely oblivious of objects of disbelief. This is true, this is genuine; why reject; why embrace? Why lament, why rejoice? Why act, why refrain?

“A book of the Yellow Emperor says, ‘Perfected people are as if dead when at rest, like a machine in action. They don’t even know why they’re at rest, and don’t even know why they’re not at rest; they

don't even know why they act, and don't even know why they don't act. They don't change their inner states or outward appearances because people are watching, and they don't change their inner states or outward appearances when they think no one is watching. They come and go on their own, they appear and disappear on their own. Who can block their way?"

9

Ink Piss, Fanatic, Lazy, and Hasty traveled the world together, each doing as he liked. To the end of their years they never knew each others' state of mind, as each one thought his own wisdom most profound.

Tricky, Simple, Artless, and Fawning traveled the world together, each doing as he liked. To the end of their years they never spoke to each other, as each one thought his own skill most subtle.

Withdrawn, Candid, Stammerer, and Scold traveled the world together, each doing as he liked. To the end of their years they never understood each other, as each one thought his own talent adequate.

Con-Man, Buck-Passer, Bold, and Timid traveled the world together, each doing as he liked. To the end of their years they never criticized each other, because each one thought his own conduct unobjectionable.

Conformist, Individualist, Opportunist, and Independent traveled the world together, each doing as he liked. To the end of their years they never paid attention to each other, each one thinking himself in harmony with the times.

These are a multiplicity of attitudes. They are not the same in appearance, but all are alike in saying it was their destiny.

10

Fortuitous success seems like success but is not success at all. Fortuitous failure seems like failure, but is not failure at all.

So confusion produces semblance, and the boundaries of semblance are obscure. If you are not muddled in the midst of the seeming, then you will not be alarmed by external calamities and will not rejoice over internal blessings; acting according to the time, inactive according to the time, you are inscrutable even to savants.

Those who trust destiny do not have different attitudes towards others and self. Those with different attitudes toward other

and self would be better off covering their eyes and blocking their ears so they won't totter and fall even if there's a cliff behind them and an empty moat in front of them.

So it is said that death and life come from destiny, poverty and riches depend on the times. Those who resent early death are those who do not know destiny; those who resent poverty are those who do not know the times. To be unafraid in face of death and undisturbed in straits is a matter of knowing destiny and resting content with the times.

Suppose people with a lot of intelligence calculate gain and loss, weigh falsehood and truth, and assess people's states of mind; they'll succeed half the time and fail half the time. People with little intelligence don't calculate gain and loss, don't weigh falsehood and truth, and don't assess people's states of mind, yet they too succeed half the time and fail half the time. Calculating or not calculating, weighing or not weighing, assessing or not assessing—what's the difference? Only when there is nothing calculated and nothing not calculated is there completeness, without loss. Yet it is not a matter of completeness through knowledge, nor loss through knowledge. It is inherent completeness, spontaneous oblivion, and natural loss.

When Duke Jing of Qi traveled to Ox Mountain, he gazed northward on his capital city and wept. “What a beautiful country,” he said, “green and growing so richly! How is it that I must leave this land with the flow of time and die? If there were no death, where would I go from here?”

Shi Kong and Liang Qiuju both wept along with him. “We are dependent upon your grace—we can only get coarse grain and poor meat to eat, and can only have ordinary horses and simple carts to ride, and yet even at that we don’t want to die—how much less our lord!”

Yanzi alone stood aside, laughing. The Duke wiped away his tears, looked at Yanzi, and said, “Kong and Ju are both weeping along with me in this sadness of journeying I feel today. Why are you laughing by yourself?”

Yanzi replied, “If savants could keep this forever, then Taigong and Duke Huan would have kept it forever. If stalwarts could keep this forever, then Duke Zhuang and Duke Ling would have kept it forever. With several lords to look after this, you then, my lord, would be standing in the fields in reed raingear, worried only about work—how would you have time to worry about death?”

“And how did you get your position anyway? Because of successive occupation and departure. Now that it’s come to you, for you to be the only one to weep over it is inhumane. When we see an inhumane ruler, we see flattering ministers. When I saw these two, that’s why I was laughing to myself.”

Duke Jing was ashamed. Raising his goblet, he penalized himself. He penalized the two ministers two goblets each.

12

Among the population of Wei there was a certain Dongmen Wu. His son died, but he wasn’t sad. His wife said, “No one in the world loved a son as you did; now he’s dead, so why aren’t you sad?”

Dongmen Wu said, “I had no son before. When I had no son I wasn’t sad; now that my son is dead, it’s the same as before when I had no son. Why should I grieve?”

13

Farmers follow the seasons, merchants head for profit, artisans pursue skills, officials go after power. Conditions dictate this. However, farmers experience flood and drought, merchants

may gain or lose, artisans may succeed or fail, officials may or may not get opportunities. Destiny dictates this.

1

VII. Yang Zhu

1

Yang Zhu traveled to Lu, where he lodged with the Meng family.

Mr. Meng asked, “People are just what they are—what’s the use of reputation?”

“Those who can make use of reputation get rich.”

“Once they’ve gotten rich, why don’t they stop?”

“They use it for status.”

“Once they’re respectable, why don’t they stop?”

“On account of death.”

“Once they’re dead, what’s the use?”

“For their descendants.”

“How can reputation benefit descendants?”

“People undergo stress and strain for fame, but if they can take advantage of it the benefits extend to the clan, the advantages

extend to neighbors and friends—how much the more their direct descendants!”

“Whoever strives for good results must be honest, but honesty means poverty. Whoever strives for good repute must be deferential, but deference means lowliness.”

“When Guan Zhong was prime minister of Qi, he partied when the lord partied, and lived in luxury when the lord lived in luxury. United in mind and concurring in speech, his policies were effective and the state became dominant. But after he died, the Guan family faded out. When Mr. Tian was prime minister of Qi, he humbled himself when the lord was inflated, and he was generous when the lord was stingy. The people were all loyal to him, and because of this he owned the state of Qi and his descendants have enjoyed this all the way up to the present day.”

“It seems that real fame leads to poverty, whereas artificial fame leads to wealth.

“Reality has no fame, fame has no reality. Fame is entirely artificial. In ancient times Yao and Shun pretended to abdicate to Xu You and Shan Juan, but they didn’t lose the realm, and reigned for a hundred years. Bo Yi and Shou Qi really did abdicate the throne of Guzhu and wound up losing the state and dying of starvation on Mt.

Shouyang. This is how clear the distinction between reality and falsehood is.”

2

Yang Zhu said, “The general limit of life span is a hundred years, but hardly one in a thousand actually lives a hundred years. Even if there is one who does, nearly half of that is taken up by infancy and senility. What is spent in sleep at night or overlooked while awake by day also takes nearly half of what’s left. Pain and sickness, sorrow and suffering, loss, worry, and fear also take up nearly half of what’s left. Out of the ten or so years left over, figure how much is unburdened and content, with no preoccupying worries—not even an hour!

“So what are people to do with their lives? What is there to enjoy? They strive for fine food and clothing, for music and beauties, but they cannot always be sated with fine food and clothing, and they cannot always be dallying with music and beauties. They are also inhibited and encouraged by penalties and rewards, controlled by conventions and laws. They compete restlessly for empty fame in their time, counting on continuing glory after death. They go along minding what their eyes and ears see and hear, caring only about

what their bodies and minds approve or disapprove. Missing out on the supreme happiness of the present, they cannot be free for even an hour. How is that different from being imprisoned and shackled?

“In high antiquity people knew life is a temporary visit, and they knew death is a temporary journey; so they acted as they wished, not avoiding natural inclinations. They didn’t reject personal pleasures, so they weren’t motivated by reputation. Going along naturally, they did not oppose the predilections of myriad beings, and they did not grasp for fame after death, so they weren’t affected by punishments. They did not calculate precedence of name and fame, or length or brevity of life.”

3

Yang Zhu said, “Myriad beings differ in life but are the same in death. In life there are the wise and the foolish, the noble and the base; they differ in these. In death there are stench and rotting, decomposition and disintegration—they are the same in these.

“However, wisdom and folly, nobility and baseness, are not under our control; stench and rotting, decomposition and disintegration are not under our control either. So life is not something we produce, death is not something we make fatal,

wisdom is not something we make wise, folly is not something we make foolish, nobility is not something we make noble, baseness is not something we make base.

“Thus myriad beings equally live and equally die, are equally wise and equally foolish, equally noble and equally base. Some die in ten years, some die in a hundred years. The humane and sagacious also die, and the cruel and ignorant also die. In life they may be [sage kings like] Yao or Shun, but in death they are rotting bones; in life they may be [corrupt kings like] Jie or Zhou, but in death they are rotting bones. The rotten bones are the same—who can tell they were different? So go for the present life—where is the leisure to consider what happens after death?”

4

Yang Zhu said, “Bo Yi was not without desire, he was extreme in purism, which left him to starve to death. Liu Xiahui was not without emotion, he was extreme in chastity, which left him with few descendants. Such are the mistaken virtues of purism and chastity.”

Yang Zhu said, “Yuan Xian was impoverished in Lu, while Zigeng grew rich in Wei. Yuan Xian’s poverty shortened his life, while Zigeng’s wealth compromised his health.”

“Then neither poverty nor wealth is good. So wherein lies the good?”

“Good is in enjoying life, good is in avoiding stress. So those who are good at enjoying life don’t go broke, while those who are good at avoiding stress don’t get rich.”

5

Yang Zhu said, “There is an ancient saying, *Compassion in life, abandonment in death*. This saying is perfect. The way of compassion is not merely emotion; those who toil can be put at ease, the starving can be fed, those suffering from the cold can be kept warm, those in straits can be fulfilled.

“The way of abandonment does not mean not mourning; it means not interring the dead with jewelry, not dressing in ornate brocade, not providing sacrificial animals, not setting out funerary implements.

“Yan Pingzhong asked Guan Yiwu about keeping healthy. Guan Yiwu said, ‘Just do as you like, without inhibition or restraint.’

“Yan Pingzhong asked, ‘What are the particulars?’ Guan Yiwu said, ‘Go ahead and listen to what your ears want to hear, look at what your eyes want to see, smell what your nose wants to smell,

say what you want to say, make your body comfortable, and do as you will.

“Now then, what the ears want to hear is music; if they can’t get to listen to it, that is called inhibiting hearing. What the eyes want to see is beauty; if they can’t get to see it, that is called inhibiting vision. What the nose wants to smell is fragrance; if it can’t get to smell it, that is called inhibiting the sense of smell. What the mouth wants to express is judgment; if it can’t, that is called inhibiting the intellect. What the body wants for comfort is good food and clothing; if it can’t get them, that is called inhibiting ease. What the will wants to do is be free; if it cannot, that is called inhibiting nature.

“These inhibitions are causes of destruction. Getting rid of causes of destruction and happily awaiting death is what I call keeping healthy, even if for a day, a month, a year, or a decade. Mired in these causes of destruction, bound up in them without relief, even if you live a long time sorrowfully, be it a century, a millennium, even ten thousand years, that’s not what I would call keeping healthy.’

“Guan Yiwu said, ‘Now I’ve told you about keeping healthy; what about sending off the dead?’

“Yan Pingzhong said, ‘Sending off the dead is simple—what is there to tell?’

“Guan Yiwu said, ‘I’d sure like to hear about it.’

“Pingzhong said, ‘Once a body’s dead, how could it retain a self? You may burn it, or sink it, or bury it. You can cover it with brushwood and leave it in a ditch, or you can dress it in formal wear and inter it in a crypt. It’s all a matter of circumstance.’

“Guan Yiwu turned to Bao Shu and Huangzi and said, ‘We two have presented the paths of life and death.’”

6

When Zichan was prime minister of Zheng, he administered the state single-handedly. In three years the good submitted to his influence while the bad feared his prohibitions. The state of Zheng was thus orderly, and other feudal lords dreaded it.

Zichan had an elder brother named Gongsun Chao, and a younger brother named Gongsun Mu. Chao was fond of wine, while Mu was fond of women. Chao had a thousand bottles of wine in his house, and a mountain of yeast; one could smell the lees a hundred paces away. When he was drunk, he didn’t know the state of the world, the regrets of human reason, the existence of his house, the

affinities of his relatives, or the joy and sorrow of life and death.

Even if there were flood and fire and armed combat going on right in front of him he wouldn't know it.

As for Mu, in his back yard were several dozen rooms in a row, all filled with pretty girls of his choosing. When he was indulging in sex, he'd shut out his family and friends, cut off social relations, and escape to his back yard, where he'd spend night and day, unsatisfied if he had to emerge even once in three months. If there were pretty virgins in the neighborhood, he'd always try to bribe them to come, or seek them through go-betweens, not giving up till he got them.

Zichan worried about his brothers day and night. He went privately to Deng Xi to come up with a plan, saying, "I have heard that one governs oneself to influence the family, and governs the family to influence the state. This saying goes from the near to the remote. I have made the state orderly, but my family is disorderly—is this backwards? How can I help my brothers? Please tell me!"

Deng Xi said, "I've been wondering for a long time but didn't dare be the first to speak. Why don't you discipline them in a timely fashion, teach them the importance of nature and life, and induce them to respect courtesy and duty."

Zichan took Deng Xi's advice and visited his brothers in his free time, telling them, "What makes humans superior to animals is reason, and what reason calls for is courtesy and duty. When courtesy and duty are fulfilled, then honor and status arrive. If you are stirred by what touches your feelings and become addicted to indulging desires, then nation and life are in peril. If you take my advice, you'll repent in the morning and then be drawing salaries the same night."

Chao and Mu said, "We've known this for a long time, and made our choice long ago. Do you suppose we need you to tell us? Life is hard to come by, while death occurs easily. Who would think of waiting for death that occurs easily with a life that was hard to come by? You want to revere manners and duty to impress people, and overcome feelings and nature to acquire a reputation. We'd prefer death to that! We want to enjoy life to the full, so we only worry about being too full to eat or being too tired for sex; we have no time to worry about getting a bad reputation or the precariousness of nature and life.

"Now because your administration of the state can impress people, you want to disturb our minds with rhetoric and excite our ambitions with prosperity and pay. Is that not pitifully ignoble?"

“We’d like to analyze this for you. Those who skillfully govern the external do not necessarily succeed in governing others, but they personally suffer along with them. Those who skillfully govern the internal do not necessarily let others run wild, but are naturally at ease with them. The way you govern the external, your laws may be effective for a while in one state, but they still don’t suit people’s minds; the way we govern the internal could be extended through the world, and government would cease. We’ve always wanted to teach you this art; now instead you would teach us the other method.”

Zichan was at a loss for a reply. The next day he related this to Deng Xi. Deng Xi said, “You’ve been living with real people without even knowing it! Who says you’re wise? The peace reigning in the state of Zheng is a coincidence; it is not your achievement!”

7

Duanmu Shu of Wei was a descendant of Zigeng. He lived off the wealth of his ancestors and had a huge hoard of gold at home. Because he didn’t have to work for a living, he did as he pleased. He did everything people want to do, enjoyed everything people wish to enjoy. His estate, with its pavilions and gazebos, gardens and

ponds, his diet, transportation, and apparel, his singers, musicians, and concubines, were comparable to those of the lords of Qi and Chu. When it came to what his senses wished to enjoy, what his ears wanted to listen to, what his eyes wanted to look at, what his palate wanted to taste, he would have it delivered, even if it were from abroad and not a native product, just as if it were a local item. When he went traveling, he'd go anywhere, even over difficult terrain of mountains and rivers, however far the distance, just as someone else might take a short walk. The guests at his house would number in the hundreds on any given day; the fires in his kitchen were always going, song and music never ceased in his parlor. What was left after providing for them, he first distributed among his clan; what the clan had left over he'd then distribute in the town and local villages; and what the town and local villages had left over he'd distribute throughout the state.

When he reached the age of sixty and his vigor was on the decline, he forsook his household affairs and gave away all his chattels, his valuables, vehicles and wardrobe, and his maids. Everything was gone in a year, with nothing left for his heirs. When he fell ill, he had no savings for medicine; then when he died, there was no money to bury him. People throughout the state who had

been beneficiaries of his generosity got together and raised funds to bury him, and restored his heirs' property.

When Qin Guli heard of this, he said, "Duanwu Shu was a madman; he disgraced his ancestry." When Duangan Sheng heard this, he said, "Duanmu Shu was an accomplished man; his virtue surpasses his ancestry. His conduct and his deeds were startling to the common mind, but acceptable to true reason. Most of the gentlemen of Wei pride themselves on ritualistic doctrine, which is certainly not sufficient for understanding this man's mind."

8

Meng Sunyang asked Yang Zhu, "Suppose someone values life and takes care of his body; can he hope to avoid death that way?"

"In principle, there is no one who does not die."

"Can one hope for long life?"

"In principle no one lives forever. Life cannot be preserved by valuing it, the body cannot be enhanced by caring for it. And what's the point of prolonging life anyway? The likes and dislikes of the five senses are the same past and present; physical safety and danger are the same past and present; the pains and pleasures of worldly

affairs are the same past and present; change, order, and disorder are the same past and present. You've already heard this, you've already seen this, you've already been through this—even a hundred years is too long, to say nothing of the misery of perpetual life!”

Meng Sunyang said, “If so, then an early death is better than long life; so you'd get your wish by treading on spears and swords, plunging into boiling water and fire.”

Master Yang said, “That is not so. Since you're alive, let go and let it be; fulfill your desires until you die. When you're going to die, let go and let it be; go with it all the way, to release in extinction. Letting go of everything, letting it all be, in the meantime why be anxious about what happens sooner or later?”

9

Yang Zhu said, “Bocheng Zigao would not help anyone even if it only took a hair; he abandoned his state and retired to farm in obscurity. The great Yu wouldn't use his whole body for his own benefit; he became palsied on one side. People of old wouldn't give away a single hair to benefit the world, and wouldn't take the whole world even if it was offered; if no one sacrificed a single hair, and no one tried to profit the world, the world would be at peace.”

Mr. Qiu asked Yang Zhu, “If you could save the world by sacrificing a single hair of your body, would you do it?”

Mr. Yang said, “The world can certainly not be saved by one hair.”

Mr. Qiu said, “If it could be saved, would you do it?”

Mr. Yang did not answer.

Mr. Qiu went out and talked to Meng Sunyang. Meng Sunyang said, “You didn’t understand the master’s intention. Let me try to tell you. If you could obtain ten thousand pieces of gold at the cost of injuring your skin, would you do it?”

“I would.”

Meng Sunyang said, “If you could get a whole county by cutting off one of your limbs, would you do it?”

Mr. Qiu remained silent. There was a pause. Meng Sunyang said, “A hair is slighter than skin, skin is slighter than a limb; that much is clear. However, individual hairs mount up to skin, while the skin mounts up to a limb. Since a hair is a ten-thousandth of the whole body, how can you treat it lightly?”

Mr. Qiu said, “I can’t answer you. But if we question Lao Dan and Guan Yi with your words, then what you say is right; if we

question Great Yu and Mo Di with my words, then what I say is right.”

Meng Sunyang then turned to his disciples and talked about something else.

10

Yang Zhu said, “Everyone admires Shun, Yu, the Duke of Zhou, and Confucius, while everyone detests Jie and Zhou. Yet Shun plowed fields north of the river, and made pottery at Thunder Marsh. He never got a moment’s rest, and never had rich food. He was not loved by his parents, and he was not treated by his siblings as one of the family. When he was thirty years old he got married without telling his parents. When Yao abdicated the throne to him, he was already old and his intellect was already deteriorating. His own son was incompetent, so he abdicated the throne to Yu. He had worries all his life. He was one of the most miserable people on earth.

“Yu’s father worked on flood control, but his project was not completed, and he was executed at Feather Mountain. Yu took up the project after him, in the employ of his enemy, thoroughly absorbed in the earthworks. When his children were born, he didn’t

even name them; when he passed by his house, he didn't even go in. His body became palsied on one side, and his hands and feet were calloused. When Shun abdicated the throne to him, he kept his residence humble but beautified his ritual hat. He had worries all his life; he was one of the most troubled people in the world.

“When King Wu died, King Cheng was still young, so the Duke of Zhou took charge of administration of the land. The Duke of Shao was dissatisfied, and sowed criticism throughout the states. The Duke of Zhou lived in the east for three years; he executed his older brother and exiled his younger brother, barely surviving himself. He had worries all his life; he was one of the most imperiled and threatened people in the world.

“Confucius explained the path of emperors and kings, and responded to the invitations of lords of his time. Yet a tree was felled in an attempt to crush him in Song, he had to disappear from Wei, he was arrested in Shangzhou and surrounded between Chen and Cai, he was constrained by the Li clan, and insulted by Yang Hu. He had worries all his life; he was one of the most harried people on earth.

“In sum, those four sages never had a day's enjoyment all their lives, but after they died they've been famous for myriad generations. So reputation is not obtained by reality. Even if you

praised them they wouldn't know, and even if you rewarded them they wouldn't know, no different from tree stumps.

“Jie lived on wealth accumulated over generations and occupied the throne with cunning capable of keeping off subordinates and threat enough to make the land tremble. He indulged in pleasures of the senses and did whatever he willed. Merry all his life, he was one of the most indulgent men on earth.

“Zhou also lived on wealth accumulated over generations and occupied the throne. His authority was exerted everywhere, none did not follow his will. He indulged his passions in an enormous palace, giving free rein to his lusts all night long, not troubling himself with courtesy and justice. He lived merrily until his execution; he was one of the greatest libertines in the world.

“These two villains had the pleasure of indulging their desires while alive, but after death they were saddled with reputations for ignorance and brutality. So the reality is not given by the reputation. Even if you criticized them they wouldn't know; even if you censured them they wouldn't know; how are they any different from tree stumps?

“Though the four sages are objects of admiration, they suffered to the end, and all finally died, just the same. While the two

villains are objects of contempt, they had fun to the end, and they finally died too, just the same.”

11

Yang Zhu saw the King of Liang and talked about governing the land like operating it in the palm of his hand. The King of Liang said, “You have one wife and one concubine, and still you can’t keep order; you’ve barely half an acre of garden and still you can’t keep it weeded. So how can you speak of governing the land like operating it in the palm of one’s hand!”

Yang Zhu said, “Have you ever seen a shepherd? Let a boy follow a flock of a hundred sheep with a cane; when he wants to go east they go east, when he wants to go west they go west. Now suppose Yao was leading a single sheep, with Shun following up carrying a cane—they wouldn’t be able to move forward.

“Furthermore, I have heard that a fish that could swallow a boat does not swim in a rivulet; wild swans fly on high and do not gather on mud puddles. Why? Because their aim is in the distance. Classical music cannot follow complicated dance, because its melody is too slow. This is what is meant by the saying that one who

is going to govern the great does not govern the small, and one who accomplishes great works does not do little things.”

12

Yang Zhu said, “The events of high antiquity have passed away—who remembers them? The affairs of the Three August Ones are as much lost as extant, the affairs of the Five Emperors are as much dream as memory, the affairs of the Three Kings are as obscure as they are evident; not one of a million is known. The affairs of a lifetime may sometimes be seen or heard, but not one of ten thousand is known.

“There is no telling how many years have passed from high antiquity to the present day, but in the three hundred thousand years since Fu Xi, wisdom and folly, good and bad, success and failure, right and wrong, have all passed away, sooner or later. To be so concerned with the blame and praise of one time as to torment mind and body, this in the interest of a reputation centuries after your death, can hardly benefit dry bones. What fun is life then?”

13

Yang Zhu said, “Humans resemble the pairing of sky and earth, and have the nature of the five constants in their hearts; they are the most conscious of living creatures.

“Humans’ nails and teeth are not sufficient to provide protection and defense, their skin does not provide adequate resistance by itself, their mobility does not sufficiently enable them to pursue advantage and escape harm. They have no fur or feathers to fend off cold and heat, and they need to rely on material things for their subsistence. They rely on intelligence rather than strength.

“For what is valuable about intelligence is its value in preserving ourselves; what is mean about strength is the meanness of interfering with things. Nevertheless, this body is not our possession. So long as we’re alive, we cannot but complete it. Things are not our own possessions either, but since they exist we can’t get away from them. The body is certainly the basis of life, and things are the basis of subsistence, but though we complete ourselves we cannot possess our bodies, and though we cannot do without things we cannot possess those things.

“To be possessive about your body, to be possessive about your things, is to arbitrarily be selfish about a body that belongs to the world, to arbitrarily privatize things that belong to the world. Yet it

seems only sages can refrain from arbitrarily privatizing bodies belonging to the world and things belonging to the world. Only perfect people can be impartial toward bodies belonging to the world and things belonging to the world. This is what is called reaching the ultimate.”

14

Yang Zhu said, “The reasons people cannot rest are four: striving for longevity, striving for fame, striving for status, and striving for money. With these four concerns, they fear ghosts, fear people, fear authority, and fear punishment. They are called unnatural people. They can be killed, or they can be granted life, because control of their fate is external.

“If you don’t defy destiny, why wish for long life? If you don’t care about respect, why wish for fame? If you don’t want power, why wish for status? If you don’t crave wealth, why wish for money? Those like this are called natural people; they have no adversaries in the world, as control of their destiny is within.

“So there is a saying that if people didn’t marry or serve in office, their sensual desires would be half gone; if people didn’t eat or wear clothes, government would cease. A proverb of Zhou says

that a farmer can be killed by inactivity. Going out early in the morning and coming in late at night, he considers it natural and normal; eating beans and greens, he thinks they're the finest dining. His skin and flesh are rough and thick, his sinews and joints are tight. Now put him in soft blankets and silk curtains, feed him premium rice and meat and fragrant citrus fruits, and he would be depressed and uncomfortable, with his inner irritation producing sickness. On the other hand, if the lords of Shang and Lu had the same amount of tillage as a farmer, they'd be worn out within an hour. So what country folk consider comfortable, what country folk consider fine, they think is unsurpassed in all the world.

“In olden times there was a farmer in the state of Song who always wore hemp clothes. He barely made it through the winters, but when spring came and he went to work he warmed himself in the sun. He had no idea there were big houses with warm rooms in the world, or quilted clothing or furs. He turned to his wife and said, ‘No one knows the warmth of the sun on our backs! If we present it to our lord, we'll get a valuable reward.’

“A wealthy man of the locale said to him, ‘In ancient times there was a man who liked broad beans, sesame stalk, and mugwort. He praised them to the local gentry, who then obtained

them and tried them, hurting their mouths and upsetting their stomachs. They all scorned him and despised him, so that man was very regretful. You are like this.’”

15

Yang Zhu said, “A big house, fine clothing, rich food, and a beautiful woman—if one has these four, what else is there to seek? Those who have these yet still seek something else are insatiable. The insatiable are parasites of yin and yang: their loyalty is inadequate to give security to their sovereigns, it is only enough to endanger themselves; their justice is inadequate to benefit people, it is only enough to injure life.

“If security is given to rulers without loyalty, the name of loyalty disappears. If people are profited without justice, the name of justice disappears. When sovereign and subjects are all secure, and others and self are both benefited, this is the ancient Way.

“Master Yu said, ‘Those who are detached from reputation have no worries.’ Master Lao said, ‘Reputation is a guest of reality.’ Yet lots of people seek reputations ceaselessly; so is it actually impossible to detach from reputation, is reputation not to be considered a guest? Nowadays you are respected and prosperous if

you have a reputation, lowly and despised if you have no reputation. When you're respected and prosperous you're comfortable and happy; when you're lowly and despised, you're troubled and miserable. Trouble and misery offend nature, whereas comfort and happiness suit nature. These are what reality depends on, so how can you detach from reputation or consider reputation adventitious? Only bad men guard reputation to the detriment of reality. If you guard reputation to the detriment of reality, you will worry about being unable to avoid danger and destruction. Do you think that lies somewhere within the range of mere ease or misery?"

1

VIII. The Tally of the Teaching

1

Master Lie studied with Lin, Master of Pot Hill. Lin said, "If you know how to hold back, we can talk about self-preservation."

Lie said, "Let's hear about holding back."

Lin said, "Look at your shadow and you'll know it."

Lie looked at this shadow and watched it. When he bent over, his shadow bent; and when he straightened up, his shadow was straight. So crookedness and straightness go along with the body,

and are not in the shadow; constriction and expansion are up to others and not in oneself. This is called being in the forefront by holding back.

2

The Keeper of the Pass said to Master Lie, “When a sound is beautiful, the echo is beautiful; when a sound is ugly, the echo is ugly. When the body is tall, the shadow is tall; when the body is short, the shadow is short. Reputation is an echo, stature is a shadow. Therefore it is said, ‘Be careful of your speech, and there will be those who agree with you; be careful of your behavior, and there will be those who accord with you.’ This is why sages observe exits to know entries, observe goings to know comings; this is the principle enabling their foreknowledge.

“Measure is up to oneself, evaluation is up to others. If others love us, we will love them; if others despise us, we will despise them. Tang and Wu loved everyone, so they reigned as kings; Jie and Zhou despised everyone, so they perished. This is how they were evaluated. If evaluation and measure are both clear and yet you do not follow, that is like not using the door to exit, not following the road to travel. If you try to seek to benefit this way, won’t it be

hard? I've examined the virtues of Shennong and You Yan, evaluated the books of Yu, Xia, Shang, and Zhou, and weighed the words of the doctors of law and the savants; the reasons for their rise and fall were invariably related to this Way."

3

Yan Hui said, "The purpose of inquiring after the Way is for prosperity. Now if I acquire pearls, that's prosperity too—why do I need the Way?"

Master Lie said, "Jie and Zhou perished because they only valued profit and disregarded the Way. This is a good opportunity, as I haven't told you this yet. People with no sense of duty only consume, that's all—they are chickens and dogs. Those who consume by force and contend arrogantly, with the victors exerting control, are raptors and beasts. And yet they want people to honor them—that's impossible. If people do not respect you, danger and disgrace will come upon you."

4

Master Lie practiced archery until he could hit the bull's-eye. He told the Keeper of the Pass. The Keeper said, "Do you know

how it is you hit the mark?”

He answered, “I don’t know.”

The Keeper of the Pass said, “That won’t do.”

So Lie withdrew to practice. After three years he again reported to the Keeper of the Pass. The Keeper of the Pass said, “Do you know how it is that you hit the mark?”

“Now I know,” he replied.

“That will do,” said the Keeper of the Pass. “Keep it and don’t lose it. Not only archery, but everything you do for the nation and yourself is also like this. Therefore sages do not examine survival and destruction, they examine the reasons for them.”

5

Master Lie said, “The robust are haughty, the strong are assertive. You can’t talk to them about the Way. If you talk of the Way to people whose hair is not yet graying, they don’t get it, much less put it into practice. So if you assert yourself, no one will advise you, and if no one advises you, you’ll be alone, without assistance.

“The wise delegate responsibilities to others, so they don’t degenerate even in old age, and they’re not confused even when at

the end of their wits. So the difficulty of governing a country is in recognizing the wise, not in considering oneself wise.”

6

A man of Song once replicated a mulberry leaf in jade for his lord. It took three years to complete. The sharpness and thinness, the stem and stalk, the fuzz and the luster, were such that if it were mixed with real mulberry leaves it could not be distinguished. As a result, this man was patronized by the state of Song for his skill.

When Master Lie heard of this, he said, “If it took the sky and earth three years to make a single leaf, there wouldn’t be much foliage! So sages rely on natural evolution, not cunning artifice.”

7

Master Lie was impoverished, and had the look of hunger on his face. A visitor told of this to [the prime minister of] Zheng, Ziyang, saying, “Lie Yukou is a man who has mastered the Way. If he has fallen into poverty living in your state, doesn’t that mean you consider him unworthy?”

So Zheng’s Ziyang had an officer send Lie some grain. When Master Lie came out and saw the emissary, he bowed twice and

refused. The emissary left.

Master Lie went back inside. His wife looked at him and said indignantly, "I've heard that the wives and children of masters of the Way all have it easy. Now we're starving, yet when the lord sends you food you refuse it. Surely this isn't fate, is it?"

Master Lie laughed and told her, "The lord doesn't know me personally. If he sent me grain because of what someone else said, then he could also condemn me because of what someone else said. Therefore I don't accept."

As it turned out, people actually opposed Ziyang and assassinated him.

8

Mr. Shi of Lu had two sons, one of whom was fond of study, the other fond of arms. The studious one offered his arts to the lord of Qi. The lord of Qi hired him to tutor his princes. The militarist went to Chu and offered his science to the lord of Chu. The lord of Chu was pleased with him, and made him a military director. Their salaries enriched their family, their ranks brought glory for their parents.

Mr. Shi's neighbor Mr. Meng also had two sons, who also pursued the same professions, but were impoverished. Envyng what the Shi's had, they inquired how to get ahead. The two sons of Mr. Shi told them the facts.

One of Mr. Meng's son's went to Qin to put his arts at the service of the king of Qin. The king of Qin said, "At present the lords are fighting each other, so their only concerns are armaments and food. If I used humaneness and justice to rule my state, this would be a way to destruction." So he had him castrated and banished.

The other son went to Wei, where he sought to put his science at the service of the lord of Wei. The lord of Wei said, "Mine is a weak state, and it is hemmed in between large states. I render service to larger states, while aiding smaller states—this is the way to security. If I rely on military strategy, I can expect to be annihilated. Now if I send you back in one piece, you may go to another state and cause me some serious trouble." So he had his feet cut off and sent him back to Lu.

Once they were back, Mr. Meng's sons went with him to Mr. Shi, beating their breasts and complaining. Mr. Shi said, "Those whose timing is right flourish, while those whose timing is off perish. Your pursuits are the same as ours, but your results were different

from ours. This was because your timing was off, not because your practices were mistaken.

“No principle in the world is always right, and no thing is always wrong. What was used yesterday may be rejected today, what is rejected now may be used later on. This use or disuse has no fixed right or wrong. To avail yourself of opportunities at just the right time, responding to events without being set in your ways, is in the domain of wisdom. If your wisdom is insufficient, even if you are as learned as Confucius and as skilled as Lu Shang, you’ll come to an impasse wherever you go.”

Mr. Meng and his sons, losing their angry looks, said, “We get it—say no more!”

9

Duke Wen of Jin rallied the feudal lords to attack Wei. Gongzi Chu looked up at the sky and laughed. The Duke asked him why he laughed. He said, “I’m laughing at how a neighbor was accompanying his wife to his in-laws’ house when he saw a woman tending mulberries on the way. He was pleased and spoke to her. But then when he looked back at his wife, someone else was flirting with her too! I’m laughing to myself over this.”

The Duke understood what he was saying and gave up, withdrawing his army to return. Before they got back, there were attackers on his own northern border.

10

The state of Jin was plagued by thievery. There was someone named Xi Yong who could read thieves' faces, apprehending their reality by examining the space between their eyebrows and eyelashes. The lord of Jin had him look for thieves, and he never missed even one in a hundred or a thousand. Delighted, the Duke of Jin told Zhao Wenzhi, "I've found one man through whom all the thievery in the state is being eliminated. What's the need of many?"

Wenzhi said, "My lord, you're relying on surveillance to catch thieves. But thievery is not ended, and Xi Yong will surely not die a natural death."

Before long a bunch of thieves plotted to kill Xi Yong as the one thwarting them. And they did in fact gang up to murder him.

When the Duke of Jin heard of this he was shocked. He called Wenzhi and told him, "It turned out just as you said—Xi Yong is dead! So how should I catch thieves?"

Wenzi said, “A proverb of Zhou says that one perceptive enough to sight fish in a deep pond is unlucky, and one clever enough to figure out secrets is doomed. Now if you want to eliminate thievery, nothing compares to promotion and appointment of the virtuous. Let education be clear above, so its influence is effective below, and the people will have a sense of shame. Then what thievery would there be?”

So he employed Sui Hui to manage the government, and all the thieves fled to Qin.

11

As Confucius was returning from Wei to Lu, he stopped his vehicle on a bridge over a river and gazed into it. There was a waterfall two hundred and fifty feet high, and a whirlpool of thirty miles. Fish and turtles couldn't swim it, sea-turtles and crocodiles couldn't live in it. There was a man who was going to ford it; Confucius sent someone along the shore to stop him, saying, “This waterfall is two hundred and fifty feet high, and the whirlpool is thirty miles. Don't you think it will be hard to cross?”

But the man paid no attention. He actually crossed and came out on the other side. Confucius asked him, “Is this skill? Do you

have Taoist art? How were you able to go in and get out?”

The man said, “First I go in with dedication and trust; then I also get out by dedication and trust. Dedication and trust put my body on the current, and I don’t presume to act on my own, so in this way I am able to go in and also get out.”

Confucius said to his disciples, “Make a note of this, lads! Even water can be befriended by dedication, faith, and personal sincerity—how much more so people!”

12

The Duke of Bai asked Confucius, “Can one speak discreetly to another?”

Confucius did not reply.

The Duke of Bai asked, “What if one tossed a stone in water?”

Confucius said, “A good swimmer could retrieve it.”

“What if water is poured into water?”

Confucius said, “Where rivers join, someone with a sensitive palate could still distinguish their water by taste.”

The Duke of Bai said, “So it’s impossible to speak discreetly to another?”

Confucius said, “How is it impossible? But only one who knows what words mean can do so. One who knows what words mean does not speak with words. Those who are after fish get wet, those in pursuit of beasts run, but not because they like to. Therefore the supreme speech is unspoken, the supreme act is uncontrived. What shallow knowledge contends over is trivia.”

The Duke of Bai didn’t get it, and wound up dead in his bath house.

13

Zhao Xiangzi had Xinzhi Muzi attack the Di people. He overcame them and took two cities. He sent a messenger back to report this. Xiangzi, who was just then dining, looked worried. Those around him said, “Two cities conquered in one day is something people would celebrate, but now you look worried—why?”

Xiangzi said, “A flood tide lasts no more than three days, a storm doesn’t last all day, high noon doesn’t last a moment. Now the Zhao clan has no history of benevolent conduct, so if two cities fall to us in one day, destruction may overcome us too!”

When Confucius heard of this he said, “The Zhao clan will flourish!” That is, anxiety is a means of creating success, while

celebration is a means of bringing about destruction. Victory is not the difficult thing—what is hard is to keep it. This is the way a wise ruler maintains supremacy, so that fortune extends to future generations. Qi, Chu, Wu, and Yue all were victorious at some point, but eventually got destroyed; they never succeeded in maintaining supremacy.

Only rulers who have the Way can maintain supremacy. Confucius was strong enough to lift the bolt on a state border gate, yet he was unwilling to be famed for strength. Mozi contrived defenses and offenses that outdid [the archetypical engineer] Gongshu Ban, but he was unwilling to be famed for military science. So those who are good at maintaining superiority consider strength to be weakness.

14

In Song there were people who had avidly practiced humanity and justice for three generations. For no reason a black cow belonging to the family gave birth to a white calf, and they asked Confucius about it. Confucius said, “This is an auspicious omen. Offer it to God.”

In a year, the father of the house had gone blind for no reason, and that cow had produced another white calf. The father had his son query Confucius again. His son said, “You asked about this before and lost your eyesight; why ask again?”

The father said, “The words of sages are illogical at first but later make sense. The matter is not yet resolved, so ask him again.”

His son then questioned Confucius again. Confucius said, “It’s an auspicious omen,” and again advised him to sacrifice it. The son went home and conveyed these directions. In a year, the son too had gone blind for no reason.

Subsequently Chu attacked Song and besieged the capital city. The inhabitants sold their children to eat, split bones of corpses and cooked them. All the able-bodied climbed the walls to fight, and more than half of them died. This father and son, however, having a disability, were both exempted. Then when the siege was lifted, they both recovered from their affliction.

There was an itinerant from Song who sought employment with Song Yuan as an entertainer. Song Yuan invited him and had him show his skills. Fixing stilts to his legs twice again as tall as he,

he gamboled about on them, juggling seven swords all the while, keeping five of the swords in the air at all times.

Lord Yuan was amazed, and immediately rewarded him with gold and silk.

Another itinerant who could do acrobatics too heard about this and also went to offer to perform for Lord Yuan. Enraged, Lord Yuan said, “There was someone with unusual skills who performed for me before. His skills were useless, but it so happened I was entertained, and therefore I gave him gold and silk. Now this fellow must have heard about this and come forward hoping to get a reward from me too.” He had him arrested and was going to have him executed, but then let him go after a month.

16

Duke Mu of Qin said to [his horse expert] Bolo, “You’re getting old—is there anyone in your family who can be sent to look for horses?”

Bolo replied, “You can tell a good horse by its appearance and physique, but a world-class horse seems to vanish, to disappear—one like this stirs no dust and leaves no tracks. My children are all

of lesser ability—they can tell a good horse, but they can't tell a world-class horse.

“There's someone I've hauled loads and collected firewood with, a certain Jiufeng Gao, who is in no way inferior to me when it comes to horses. Please see him.”

Duke Mu met him and sent him on a mission to search for a horse. He came back after three months and reported, “I've found one. It's at Sand Hill.”

Duke Mu asked, “What kind of horse is it?”

“A tawny mare,” he replied.

When people were sent to fetch it, the horse turned out to be a black stallion. Duke Mu was displeased. He summoned Bolo and said, “What a failure, this fellow you had me send searching for a horse! He can't even tell what color it is, or what gender—how can he be knowledgeable about horses?”

Bolo sighed and said, “So it has come to this? This is why he is countless millions of times better than I. What Gao observes is natural potential—he gets the fine and forgets the coarse; he focuses on the inside and forgets the outside. He sees what he has to see, and doesn't see what he doesn't have to see. He looks at what he has to look at, and ignores what he doesn't have to look at.

The way Gao judges horses has something more important than horses.”

When the horse arrived, it did turn out to be a world-class horse.

17

King Zhuang of Chu asked Zhan He, “How is a state to be governed?”

Zhan He said, “I understand how to govern oneself, but I don’t understand how to govern a state.”

The King said, “I am in charge of the ancestral temple and the earth and grain shrines, and wish to learn how to preserve them.”

Zhan He said, “I’ve never heard of anyone who was personally orderly but whose state was in chaos. And I’ve never heard of anyone who was personally disorderly yet whose state was orderly. So the root is in the individual; I dare not reply about the branches.”

The King of Chu said, “Good.”

18

The Elder of Fox Hill said to Sunshu Ao, “People have three resentments—do you know them?”

Sunshu Ao said, “What do you mean?”

He replied, “Those of high status, people envy. Those in powerful offices, rulers dislike. Those with rich salaries, resentment overtakes.”

Sunshu Ao said, “The higher my rank, the humbler my aspirations; the more powerful my office, the more careful my attention; the richer my salary, the more extensive my charities—can I escape the three resentments this way?”

19

When Sunshu Ao fell ill and was about to die, he admonished his son, “The king repeatedly tried to enfeoff me, but I wouldn’t accept. When I die, the king will enfeoff you. Don’t accept land with rich soil! There is a place between Chu and Yue called Dwarf Hill; its soil is not as good and its reputation is bad. The people of Chu believe in ghosts, while the people of Yue believe in curses. This is the only place you can keep forever.”

When Sunshu Ao died, the king did in fact enfeoff his son with fine land. His son refused and asked for Dwarf Hill. This was

granted, and since then it has never been lost.

20

Niu Que was a great scholar from Shangdi. Traveling to Handan, he was beset by robbers at Odd Sands River. They took all his clothes, his luggage, and his carriage, so Niu went his way on foot. Seeing him so nonchalant, the robbers went after him and asked him the reason. He said, "A noble man does not let material needs harm what they support." The robbers exclaimed what a wise man he was, but then they said among themselves, "With wisdom like that, if he meets the lord of Zhao, he'll get him to do something about us. That surely means trouble for us. We'd better kill him." So they chased him down and murdered him.

A man of Yan heard of this and gathered his family to warn them, "If you run into robbers, don't be like Niu Que of Shangdi!" Everyone took a lesson.

Before long the man's younger brother set off on a trip to Qin. As it turned out, he encountered robbers along the way. Remembering his older brother's warning, he resisted the robbers stoutly. He was no match for them, but yet he followed them meekly asking for his things. The robbers said angrily, "We were generous

just to let you go, and yet you keep following us! You're going to leave an obvious trail! Since we're robbers, why would we be humane?" So they killed him, and murdered four or five of his companions as well.

21

Mr. Yu was a wealthy man of Liang. His family business was flourishing, and he had cash and silk beyond measure, money and goods beyond reckoning. He had a party in an upper room overlooking the main road, with music, wine, and gambling. Just as some mercenaries were passing below, a gambler upstairs won twice in a row and laughed. At that moment a kite in flight dropped its prey, a dead rat, and it landed on the mercenaries. They said among themselves, "Mr. Yu has enjoyed prosperity for a long time now, and he always has an attitude of contempt for others. We have done nothing to offend him, yet here he insults us with a dead rat! If we don't respond, we'll have no way to show the world we're serious! Let's join forces, bring along our gangs, and we'll wipe out his family and associates." Everyone agreed. The night of the appointed date, they gathered their bands, massed their soldiers, and exterminated the whole family.

There was a man of the East named Yuan Wingmu. He was going somewhere when hunger overtook him on the road. A thief from Gufu named Qin saw him and gave him something to eat.

After three mouthfuls, Yuan Xingmu was able to see. He asked, "Who are you?"

"I am Qin, from Gufu."

"Oh! Aren't you a thief? How could you feed me? I'm duty-bound not to eat your food!" Bracing himself with both hands on the ground, he tried to vomit it up, but it wouldn't come out, and he finally collapsed and died, gacking.

The man from Gufu was a thief, but feeding is not theft. Just because the man is a thief, to call feeding thievery and refuse to eat is to confuse name and reality.

Zhu Lishu worked for Duke Ao of Ju, but he quit and went to live by the sea because he thought he wasn't being recognized. In summer he fed on water chestnuts, in winter he ate tree chestnuts.

When Duke Ao of Ju had trouble, Zhu Lishu left his friends to go sacrifice his life for him. His friends said, “You left because you thought you weren’t being given due recognition, yet now you’re going to sacrifice your life for him. This is making no distinction between being recognized and not being recognized.”

Zhu Lishu said, “Not so. I left because I thought I wasn’t getting recognition. Now if I die, that means he does not in fact acknowledge me. I’m going to sacrifice my life for him to shame future rulers who don’t acknowledge their ministers.”

Generally speaking, to sacrifice your life for someone who acknowledges you but not for someone who doesn’t is the straightforward way to go. Zhu Lishu may be said to be one who forgot himself on account of resentment.

24

Yang Zhu said, “Those who make their output beneficial are rewarded in return; harm comes to those from whom resentment proceeds. What emerges from here and reverberates on the outside is simple sense, so savants are careful about what they put out.”

25

A neighbor of Master Yang lost a sheep. Having mustered his people, he also asked Master Yang for his servants to go after it.

Master Yang said, “Hey, you’ve only lost one sheep—why do you need so many to go after it?”

The neighbor replied, “There are a lot of forks in the road.”

When they returned, Master Yang asked his neighbor, “Did you find the sheep?”

“No, we lost it.”

“How could you lose it?”

“Because the forks in the road also had forks in them—we didn’t know where to go, so we came back.”

A look of distress came over Master Yang’s face. He didn’t speak for some time, and didn’t smile the rest of the day. His students wondered about this and asked, “A sheep is an inexpensive animal, and it didn’t belong to you anyway. So why have you stopped speaking and smiling?”

Master Yang didn’t answer, and his students didn’t get what he intended. The disciple Meng Sunyang went off and told the Master of the Mind Capital. Another day the Master of the Mind Capital and Meng Sunyang went to Master Yang together and posed the following question: “Once there were three brothers who

traveled around Qi and Lu, studied with the same teachers, and returned thoroughly versed in the principles of humaneness and justice. Their father asked, 'What is the path of humaneness and justice?' The eldest son said, 'Humaneness and justice would have us care for our selves more than our honor.' The middle son said, 'Humaneness and justice would have us sacrifice our selves to be honorable.' The youngest one said, 'Humaneness and justice would have us be complete in both our selves and our honor.' These three policies are mutually contradictory, yet all of them come from Confucianism; who is right, who is wrong?"

Master Yang said, "There was a man who lived by a river; used to the water, he was a strong swimmer. He made his living running a ferry boat, which yielded enough profit to feed a hundred people. Many people came from afar to learn from him, but nearly half of them drowned. They had come to learn to swim, not to learn to sink, but the gain and loss turned out this way. Who do you think was right, and who was wrong?"

The Master of the Mind Capital left in silence. Meng Sunyang pressed him, saying, "Why was your question so indirect, and the master's reply so odd? My perplexity is even worse."

The Master of the Mind Capital said, “The sheep got lost on the main road because of a multitude of byways; scholars waste their lives because of a multitude of formulas. Studies may not be different or disparate at the outset, but this is how different the outcomes can be. Only returning to sameness and restoring unity can eliminate gain and loss. You’ve been in the teacher’s school and studied the teacher’s way for a long time, yet you don’t understand the teacher’s examples. What a pity!”

26

Yang Zhu’s younger brother Bu went out wearing white clothes. It rained, so he removed his white clothing and changed into black clothing. When he got home, his dog barked at him, failing to recognize him. Yang Bu got angry and was going to beat the dog, but Yang Zhu said, “Don’t beat it! You’re just the same. If your dog went out white and came back black, wouldn’t you wonder?”

27

Yang Zhu said, “Doing good is not for honor, yet honor follows it. Honor is not for profit, but profit takes to it. Profit is not for

conflict, yet conflict overtakes it. Therefore a noble man must be careful about doing good.”

28

Once there was a man who claimed to know the way to immortality, and the lord of Yan sent an emissary to learn it. He did not succeed, and the man who'd made the claim died.

The lord of Yan was furious, and was going to have that emissary executed. A favored minister admonished him, “People worry about nothing so much as death, and one values nothing so much as life. If he lost his own life, how could he have enabled you not to die?” So the lord didn't execute the emissary.

A certain Qizi also wanted to learn the method; when he heard that the man claiming it had died, he beat his breast in bitter lament. Hearing of this, Fuzi laughed and said, “What you want to study is immortality, yet you're still bitter now that the man has died. You don't know how to learn.”

Huzi said, “Fuzi's statement is wrong. There are those who know arts they cannot practice, and there are also those who can practice but have no art. There was a man of Wei who was good at calculation and taught his secret to his son on his deathbed. His son

memorized his instructions but couldn't carry them out. Someone else asked him, and he told him what his father had said. The inquirer made use of those instructions and practiced that art, no different from the other man's father. So why couldn't someone who died tell of the art of living?"

29

The people of Handan presented pigeons to Jianzi on New Year's Day. Jianzi was delighted and rewarded them richly. A guest asked him why. Jianzi said, "Releasing living creatures on New Year's Day demonstrates benevolence."

The guest said, "The people know you want to release them, so they vie to catch them, and a lot of them die. If you want to let them live, it would be better to prohibit the people from trapping them. If they're caught to be released, the benevolence does not compensate for the transgression."

Jianzi said, "You're right."

30

Mr. Tian of Qi was performing a ceremony in his courtyard, entertaining a thousand guests. In the course of the proceedings

there were those who offered up fish and geese. Observing this, Mr. Tian sighed and said, “How generous Nature is to the people growing the five grains and producing fish and fowl for their use!” The whole crowd of guests echoed their agreement.

A twelve-year-old lad of the Bao family who was attending came forward and said, “It is not as you say. Heaven and earth, myriad beings and ourselves, are born together, of a kind. There are not higher or lower species, it’s just that they dominate and devour each other depending on the differences in magnitude of intelligence and strength. It is not that they are born for each other’s purposes. If people take what they can eat and consume it, does that mean Nature originally produced it for humans? If so, mosquitoes bite skin, tigers and wolves eat flesh—wouldn’t that mean Nature created humans for mosquitoes and created flesh for wolves and tigers?”

31

There was a pauper of Qi who used to beg in the city market. At the city market they were bothered by his frequency, and no one would give him anything. Finally he went to the stables of the Tian clan and did chores for the horse doctor to get something to eat.

Townspeople teased him, saying, “Isn’t it embarrassing to live off a horse doctor?”

The beggar said, “There’s nothing in the world more embarrassing than begging. If I’m not embarrassed to beg, why should I be embarrassed about a horse doctor?”

32

A man of Song was walking along the road when he found a tally someone had lost. He returned home and hid it away. Privately counting its notches, he told his neighbor, “I’m going to be rich!”

33

A man had a dead phoenix tree. His neighbor’s father said a dead phoenix tree is unlucky, so the neighbor was scared into cutting it down. Then the neighbor’s father asked for it, to use for firewood. The man was displeased. He said, “My neighbor’s father got me to cut it down just because he wanted firewood. He’s my neighbor, yet such a crooked deceiver—how can that be alright?”

34

A man who lost his axe suspected his neighbor's son—"Look at the way he walks—he's stolen the axe! The expression on his face—he's stolen the axe! The way he talks—he's stolen the axe!" Every act, every attitude, indicated that he'd stolen the axe.

One day the man found the axe as he was digging in the valley. The next time he saw his neighbor's son, he wasn't acting like he'd stolen the axe.

35

The Duke of Bai was contemplating rebellion. After court one day he stood there with his riding crop upside down; the metal tip pierced his chin, and blood flowed to the ground, yet he didn't even notice.

A man of Zheng heard of this and said, "If he'll forget his chin, what won't he forget?"

When your attention is fixated, you may stumble on a stump or a pothole, or bump your head on a tree, without even being aware of it yourself.

36

In ancient times there was a man of Qi who wanted gold. One morning he put on his coat and hat and went to town. Coming to a gold-seller's booth, he snatched the gold and left.

When the police arrested him, they asked, "With everybody there, how could you take someone's gold?"

He replied, "When I took the gold, I didn't see the people, I only saw the gold."

Notes

I. Celestial Signs

1. *Master Lie lived in the game preserve of Zheng for forty years without anyone recognizing him.*

Zhang Zhan [ca. 370 C.E.] commented: It's not that he didn't interact with others, or didn't converse with others. They didn't know the extent of his virtue, so it was the same as if they didn't know him.

Jiang Yu [ca. mid-11th century C.E.] commented: Master Lie was a good man of ancient times. With mystic penetration of minute subtleties, his inner attainment was profound. Because he was unfathomable, he lived in the game preserve of Zheng for forty years without anyone recognizing him. There were a lot of savants there, so residence for forty years without being recognized shows how

deeply he concealed his capabilities. This is what the *Book of Change* calls retreating into privacy.

The ruler, aristocrats, and grandees of the state looked upon him as one of the peasants.

Zhang Zhan: It's not that he secluded himself from people. This just means there was no judging him, no trace of fixation in his behavior, so no one could know him.

Jiang Yu: Those with qualities sufficient to rule a state and policies adequate to take care of the people ought to strive to seek savants. Those with sufficient intelligence to lead communities ought to be wise enough to know people. If the ruler, aristocrats, and grandees looked upon him as one of the ordinary folk, the reason for this is that he was too deep for them to know.

During a famine, he was going to remove to Wei.

Zhang Zhan: Leaving your own house is called removing.

Jiang Yu: People who study Master Lie these days mistakenly think that since he could ride the wind he didn't eat the five grains but lived on a diet of air and dew. They do not realize that once in the human world the problems of human life are inevitable for all alike.

Therefore the books mentions this first to get students of later times to strive to seek the Way rather than using abnormal practices to

amaze ordinary folk. The chapter *The Tally of the Teaching* also says Master Lie was emaciated, with the look of starvation on his face.

His disciples said, "If you go with no prospect of returning, how will we call with questions, and how will you teach? Haven't you heard the word of Lin, Master of Pot Hill?"

Zhang Zhang [hereafter ZZ]: Lin, Master of Pot Hill, was Master Lie's teacher.

Jiang Yu [hereafter JY]: Embodying openness and accommodation, following a course of centered balance, inclusively covering myriad beings—such was Lin, Master of Pot Hill. This is why he was Master Lie's teacher.

What does Pot-Hill have to say?

ZZ: As the four seasons proceed, a hundred things are born; what need have they of words?

Elder Darkness

ZZ: Elder Darkness was an associate of Master Lie, who also studied with Master Pot. Not saying he himself had been taught by Master Pot is Master Lie's humility.

JY: Master Lie's teacher, Master Pot, looked at him and smiled; their minds were in accord. As for the blind man Elder Darkness, he was

older and intellectually brilliant; it was out of pity that Master Pot couldn't help talking to him. Master Lie got to hear it standing by. Zhuangzi said, "To know but not say is the way to go to heaven." This was how Master Lie related to Master Pot. Zhuangzi also said, "To know and say it is the way to go to people." This is why Master Pot spoke to the blind man Elder Darkness.

There is that which is born and that which is unborn; there is that which changes and that which does not change. The unborn gives birth to what is born, the unchanging produces change. What produces birth cannot but produce, what evolves change cannot but change.

ZZ: What is born is not born by ability to produce, what changes is not changed by ability to change. This just refers to what cannot but produce and evolve.

JY: The deities in heaven, the riches of the earth, the reason sages are sages, the reason beings are beings—this is all summed up in the expression birth and production. Therefore the chapter on celestial signs first clarifies this.

Physical bodies as distinct entities never stop changing and deteriorating; this is what it means to have birth and production.

True eternity unchanging, before cosmic evolution has begun, is considered unborn and unproduced.

Fenced in by having been born, then changing day by day, how is it possible to renew life? Belabored by changes, ultimately to end up in annihilation, how is it possible to keep evolving?

What is born undergoes changes; how can the unborn have any change? What changes ultimately passes away, but what does not change never originates or passes away.

Life in all its profusion is a manifestation of the true mind; this is the capacity to renew life. Change in all its complexity is produced by the ineffable mind; this is the capacity to keep evolving.

Once there is birth, it is impossible not to be born; once there is change, it is impossible not to change. Even heaven and earth in their immensity, and the sun and moon in their brilliance are wholly contained within the boundaries of birth and change. So there may be processes they can't stop themselves, or operations they can't halt themselves; the changes in the seasons and passing of the years have never ceased since time immemorial, to say nothing of myriad things. If what produces cannot but produce, then what produces birth cannot but produce birth; if what changes cannot but change, then what evolves change cannot but evolve change too.

No one can find the beginning of the production of birth or the process of change; producing and changing without any sense of limitation is how heaven and earth contain myriad things without exhaustion, how the Way contains heaven and earth without end.

Even so, what is unborn and unchanging cannot be named; the terms mean there is manifestation but not limitation. Therefore there cannot be something unborn and unchanging outside the born and the changing; the subtlety of the unborn and unchanging is right within the born and changing. Therefore it says that there is the born and the unborn, the changing and the unchanging, in order to say that what is born is in reality never produced, and what changes has really never changed, while the reason for birth and change is not outside and not in the self; it is just natural birth and natural change.

When you look at the first statement that there is the born and the unborn, there is the changing and the unchanging, it has already exhausted the principle, but as it is still necessary to clarify the logic of producing birth and evolving change, in the end it is imperative to resolve this into natural birth and natural change. If you harmonize with birth and change in the midst of birth and change, then you are not controlled by birth and change even though within them. So the birth of myriad things is all the real substance of our mind, while the

evolution of myriad things is all the subtle function of our mind. This is what makes a sage a sage, and it is the import of Master Lie's lesson.

Therefore it is always producing, always changing.

ZZ: Whatever comes into existence can no longer be nonexistent.

What is always producing and always changing is never not producing, never not changing.

ZZ: Generation and change are interdependent; existence and nonexistence come and go. They are not separate in principle.

JY: What is being called that which is always producing and changing refers to all things throughout all times; it is the supreme principle of Creation. Observing it is one being, since it is born through a process of change, it also dies through a process of change. The temporary massing of energy is called birth, so it can't live forever. The aging and death of the body is change, so it can't be a permanent change. That is because the relation of Creation to all beings is that while they're alive they never stop changing, and when they die the change still goes on. Since there is ongoing change, there is also unbroken regeneration. If there were the slightest discontinuity between generation and change in a single thing in Creation, then the principle of generation and change might

come to an end. It's been said that beings' birth and death are like the sun's day and night—when the sun comes out it's day, when the sun sets it's night—how can the day be said to be born, or the night extinguished? This is what is meant by always producing, always changing. The Old Master's scripture on the Way speaks of the eternal Way, the eternal name, eternal nonbeing, and eternal being—if you speak of the Way without reaching the eternal, that is not sufficient to merit the name of the gateway to all wonders.

yin and yang are thus, the four seasons are thus

ZZ: Yin and yang and the four seasons are things that change, and everything in the realm of life follows this operation. The four seasons go on without stopping, myriad things evolve unceasing.

JY: The distribution of yin and yang makes the four seasons.

Whatever belongs to the realm of life follows this operation, unable to be thus of itself. But the Way dissolves into yin and yang; their production and change are only in that which has form. The subtlety of the eternally living and eternally evolving is not seen in this. The saying that yin and yang and the four seasons are thus is minimalism.

A book of the Yellow Emperor says , “ The valley spirit does not die

ZZ: This book existed in ancient times, but is no longer extant. A valley is empty yet lodges existence. This is also like Zhuangzi's reference to the center of a ring. As it is completely empty, nothing is there, so it is called the valley spirit.

this is called the mystic female.

ZZ: Laozi has this passage: Wang Bi notes, "Formless, shadowless, never refusing or opposing, staying humble, keeping calm without deterioration, a valley is made this way without manifesting a form. This supreme being remains humble and unnameable, so it is called the mysterious female."

The opening of the mystic female is called the root of heaven and earth. Continuous, as if it were there, its application is effortless."

ZZ: Wang Bi says, "The opening is where the mysterious female comes from; because its original source is the same as the absolute, it is called the root of heaven and earth. Do you suppose it's there? You don't see its form. Do you suppose it's not? Myriad things are born through it. That is why it is said to be continuous, as if there. Because it creates everything without labor, it is called effortless."

JY: A valley is empty but can echo, responding without reserve. As people produce a mild energy, circulating throughout the body, in its going out and in through the nose and mouth there is the image of a

valley. The valley spirit means the spirit of the valley; this is used to express attaining unity, which cannot be fathomed because of its uncanny subtlety.

The valley spirit not dying is the way to long life and eternal vision. The reason it is called undying is as follows. All living beings are commanded by Creation and compelled by yin and yang: when they're born they cannot but be born, and when they die they cannot but die. Only humans, as the most intelligent of all creatures, though having life at the command of Creation like all beings, once alive have something Creation cannot cause to die. That is to say, we share a single energy with heaven and earth, which governs; if we preserve the basic root in ourselves, thus our life is up to us, not subject to heaven and earth. If you can always preserve the valley spirit, then you breathe from your heels and mellow energy pervades your body. When the teacher of the Yellow Emperor cultivated his body for twelve centuries without physical deterioration, though he was mortal he entered into immortality; unborn, he is as eternal as the Way. Therefore the valley spirit is not referred to as living, but as not dying.

“Mysterious” represents heaven, “female” corresponds to earth. The female is totally yin, but is the one that can reproduce

life. In metaphysics, yin precedes yang, so when reference is made to this thing's regeneration it is called "female," the endless regeneration of the valley spirit is the mysterious female. That is because when the subtlety of the valley spirit is used in yourself it enlivens you, and when it is applied to others it enlivens others. If you can keep that spirit present, how could there be any end to its making life? Since its essential wonder is such, what else but the mysterious female can constitute the gate of life? Speaking in terms of exit and entry, going and coming, the valley spirit in us exits and enters, going and coming without any interruption at all; if you can keep it alive and undying, then the whole body's processes of filling and emptying are not controlled by Creation, and Creation is within us.

The reason heaven and earth can last forever is rooted in this Way, so "the opening of the mysterious female is called the root of heaven of earth; continuous, it seems to be there." This is the substance of the valley spirit; its application without effort is the Way of the valley spirit. "Continuous" is used to express being slight yet not breaking. Being gossamer, it "seems to be there," yet is neither existent nor nonexistent. Applying it without effort is what Mencius refers to as simply nurturing without harm; the constituent energy

cannot be left unused, and yet its use should not be stressed. Not to use it would be like a fool who didn't plant seedlings; to use it with strain is like the fool who uprooted his sprouts by tugging at them to hasten their growth. Only by using it effortlessly is it possible to fill the space between heaven and earth.

“The unborn seems singular;

ZZ: How can what is unborn actually be experienced? It seems to mean indefinite oneness, with no beginning or end.

the unchanging is cyclic, with no final limit.

ZZ: Continuously in transition, matter and energy go on evolving, their course never-ending.

No end can be found to the course of the seemingly singular.

ZZ: Yet how can we know if it has any end or not? It just subjectively seems it is independent and unalterable, active everywhere without limit.

JY: Simply singular, it can therefore match and respond and be associated with all that moves. This is what all things depend on, what the totality of evolution relates to.

However, the Way does not match beings, being match themselves. What the Old Master refers to as seeming to be the source of all things is what is here referred to as seeming singular.

Coming and going is what is referred to as the beginningless cycle. Because its extent is endless and its course is inexhaustible, it is eternally alive and always evolving.

2.

“ In ancient times, sages summed up heaven and earth in terms of yin and yang. If what has form originates in no form, then where do heaven and earth come from?

“Therefore it is said that there was a cosmic evolution, a cosmic origin, a cosmic beginning, and a cosmic elemental. In the cosmic evolution, energy is not yet manifest. The cosmic origin is the beginning of energy. The cosmic beginning is the beginning of form. The cosmic elemental is the beginning of substance.

JY: Brightness is born in the dark, the orderly is born in the formless. All things are evolved by the universe, but while the universe produces myriad things it is not separate from what has form. Since it has form, it cannot have come from nothing. If it has an origin, then do we know where it comes from? If no one knows where it came from, then to say that what has form arises from formlessness is not reliable either.

The universe is the biggest of existents, hard to reach the end, hard to fathom. It cannot be said to come from nowhere, but no

one can see where it comes from. If you can find out the principle of producing production in your own individual being, then the universe and oneself are born together. So how can it be unknowable?

Even so, the nonbeing of the cosmic beginning cannot be discussed in words. What can be spoken of is only being as yet unformed. Therefore the order is elucidated from cosmic evolution. But what are the so-called cosmic evolution, cosmic beginning, cosmic origin, and cosmic elemental? These too are based on the Great Way producing being from nonbeing; based on the order of production, names are contrived for figurative description, that's all.

Evolution has no formal boundaries; evolution undergoes change constituting a unity; the one changes into seven, seven turns into nine; nine's change is final, then it reverts to one.

In standard numerical associations, one is the production number of water, seven is the completion number of fire, nine is the end number of sky. In alchemical tradition, in which the evolutionary process is internalized, water stands for vitality, fire for spirit, sky for completion.

4.

This essay raises the question of what we know about the world around us, and whether we see cause-effect relations in stereotypes

that when outmoded thwart our ability to see actual connections.

The emphasis here on the unexpected and the unthinkable stimulates questioning of specifics, while the total scheme conveys the general idea of interrelatedness of all things, their formation from elements and their dissolution into elements.

Hou Qi is alleged to have been the ancestor of the founders of the Zhou dynasty, an expert at grain cultivation. He is supposed to have been minister of agriculture for the ancient sage kings Yao and Shun, when he taught people how to sow seed.

Yi Yin was a minister of the Shang dynasty, a respected savant, reputed author of an early Taoist text.

5.

how can the self still be there?

One of the basic Buddhist meditations consists of analysis of existence into elements, then examining them for self. A somewhat more common version of this exercise, which is designed to overcome fixation on self, is to imagine oneself dead and decomposing.

7.

Here's someone who can relax himself!

ZZ understands “relax yourself” to imply finding solace. Is this a joke on superficial Confucian scholars who say they’d like to reform the world, but will settle for solace in a privileged position?

8.

Some see in this section a reflection of awareness of the Buddhist notion of rebirth. The contentment expressed in having no wife or children, moreover, a horror in conventional Chinese culture, may also reflect an image of Buddhism. Chinese intellectuals were at first appalled by celibate Buddhist renunciants; this passage of Master Lie may reflect a Buddhist response, to refrain from reproducing as an expedient for freeing oneself from social and economic pressures.

9.

Zigeng and Master Yan were distinguished disciples of Confucius. The home-leaver is called wrong, as much as the ambition-seeker. Thus ‘balance in the center’ is the remedy, like the middle way of Buddhism. This section therefore balances the preceding; together they illustrate the progression from attachment to deliberate detachment to spontaneous nonattachment, finally to reach the state of ‘being in the world but not of the world.’

11.

Yu Xiong was a savant of the Zhou dynasty. Erstwhile teacher of King Wen of Zhou, he was enfeoffed in Chu, a region culturally different in some ways from the Zhou heartland, supposedly noted for shamanism. The 'difference' of Chu is a significant theme in Taoist literature.

12.

Changluzi was a Taoist from Chu who lived during the era of Warring States, supposed to be author of a book bearing his name as a title.

Worry about the sky falling, also found in Western lore, is used at one level to illustrate the fallacies of paranoid thinking. Here Master Lie goes on to show how obsession with the unknowable impedes appreciation of the evident.

13.

Shun is one of the three great leaders of ancient times—Yao, Shun, and Yu—who represent transmission and succession of leadership on the basis of merit rather than heredity. This segment illustrates a Taoist admonition to rulers, that they don't own what they have charge of, be it their systems, their selves, or their successors. This acknowledgement of non-possession is believed to enable a leader to make more objective decisions than a narrow sense of self-interest might otherwise suggest.

II. The Yellow Emperor

1.

For material on the Yellow Emperor, see *Ten Questions and Talk on Supreme Guidance for the World in Sex, Health, and Long Life* by Thomas Cleary.

2.

The existence of mountainous isles of immortals in the ocean to the east was taken literally by some people, notably the First Emperor of China and the Martial Emperor of the Han dynasty.

The Tsuchi-no-kumo people of ancient Japan claimed to be descendants of a prince of the proto-Chinese Zhou dynasty. If the journey was possible one way, it could also be possible that people had come back with stories of islands of Korea and Japan, which would have been less populous and more peaceful than the Chinese Warring States.

Esoterically, this passage contains a number of exercises and instructions for Taoist practices.

Ingesting air and dew stands for breathing exercises and swallowing saliva. Swallow saliva is considered beneficial for the

stomach and digestion. It is particularly important when abstaining from grain and dieting on fruits and nuts.

The mind like a deep spring is unruffled deep down even when the surface is agitated.

The body like a virgin girl is not penetrated by external energies, meaning that physical health is not ravaged by contact with the world.

Having no familiars or intimates refers to freedom from bias, and also to nonattachment and objectivity. To have immortals and sages as subjects means to be in command of one's own spiritual and intellectual faculties.

Not intimidating or getting angry is a means of saving energy, and also an art of interaction. To have the eager and honest for servants means to be in control of one's intentions and attitudes.

Giving no charity yet sufficing everyone means acting justly. Not accumulating or saving yet suffering no lack means spending wisely.

Harmony of yin and yang means appropriate proportions of rest and activity, flexibility and firmness. Sun and moon always clear means that intellect and intuition are both operative.

Regularity of the four seasons refers to regularity of rhythm of daily activities and nocturnal rest; timely nursing refers to recuperation after expending energy, before the onset of exhaustion and breakdown. Constant abundance of crops means energy constantly renewed by good rhythm and timely rest. No plague in the land and no early death means that these habits are supposed to minimize illness and lessen causes of premature death.

No pestilence among animals means that the physical appetites and processes remain normal. No apparitions of ghosts means having no mental abnormalities.

3.

These are instructions for meditation. Riding on the wind refers to breathing exercises, walking in the sky refers to mental abstraction or ecstasy. This does not refer to a final state; the merging of the sense mentioned is a transitional experience, not intended to be a normative condition. That is why, after “having made progress” Master Lie is said to have *returned* riding on the wind, using intention to direct the mind, breath, and bodily sense back to the ordinary world after having transcended it mentally in a state of abstraction.

4.

The image of invulnerability to water and fire is fairly common in Buddhist scriptures. In that context, water and fire stand for desire and anger; these are the two emotions most involved in creating complications in life. Being able to go through water and fire unscathed symbolizes being in the world yet at the same time mentally transcendent, *going beyond things without fear*.

Protection of pure energy means keeping mental energy inwardly whole, not scattered, not sticking to things, not impinged upon by things.

Living by measure without excess refers to ordinary life science, taking care of needs but not indulging in the unnecessary.

Taking refuge in a beginningless order means sensing this balance inwardly, not imposing an arbitrary regime outwardly.

5.

This story represents a learning technique also used in Buddhism, known in Sanskrit as *samadhi* or absorption. To become one with an art, the learner becomes so absorbed as to become oblivious of all else while performing.

6.

This story symbolizes an ideal government of a diverse domain, illustrating the principles of adapting to conditions and balancing

natural tendencies.

7.

Like story number 5 preceding, this is an illustration of a learning technique, aloof of the world while absorbed in an art, pure action free of hope and fear, liberating natural capacity to the fullest.

8.

Destiny here, as elsewhere in Master Lie, refers to the sum of forces beyond anyone's dominion or control. *What is already there* refers to capacity, which develops naturally with use. Development of capacity is possible, but presumption of ultimate success is not.

9.

This is a portrait of a concentration technique. The famed Chan Buddhist master Dahui, who had many lay disciples, often quoted ancient Buddhist scripture saying, "If you put your mind on one point, there's nothing that cannot be accomplished." The end of this story in Master Lie, implying that concentration is required before higher things, also suggests a certain order. Buddhist literature likens knowledge without concentration to a candle in the wind. To be useful, higher knowledge requires a corresponding stabilization of mind, it is held; but this can be developed in a humbler context, as the story says, meaning the midst of the world and the tasks therein.

Even minor arts require concentration to perfect them; even more so major arts.

10.

This story depicts mind-to-mind communication, which became a watchword in Chan Buddhism. In martial arts, the ability to sense an opponent's intention while masking one's own is a strategic art based on energetic principles. Intent generates energy that can be sensed, it is alleged, even before it takes shape in physical action. The next stage is that of discerning the minute outward signs of inner movement, such as may be observed in posture, gesture, expression, etc. These are some of the so-called 'tells' of expert card players who use these observations to inform their betting strategies.

The story concludes that *perfect words make no claim* and *perfect action has no contrivance* to distinguish deliberate "perception management" from heart-to-heart communication of true intent.

11.

A Buddhist image for enlightened existence in the ordinary world is that of a lotus blooming in fire. In the story, the man's ignorance, or innocence, represents realization of emptiness. According to the

Buddhist master Nagarjuna, “emptiness is departure from all views.” In Master Lie, the ability of Confucius to *not do* it represents the caveat with which Nagarjuna follows up his definition of emptiness as departure from views: “but those who make emptiness a view are incurable.” In Buddhist terms the miracle man is what is called an *arhat*, someone who has escaped the limitations of the world, so much so that he cannot even understand its problems anymore. In Buddhist terms, Master Lie’s image of Confucius then represent the *bodhisattva* who can enter the ultimate peace of *nirvana* at will but also has the fortitude and will not to do so, instead remaining in the world to work for the sake of others.

12.

Chan Buddhist lore also refers to being inscrutable to others by dint of inner abstraction, yielding no information even on the most subtle level, thus being impossible to “read.”

In political science, inscrutability is considered important for leaders to elicit candor from subordinates by giving them no way to use flattery and no way to anticipate anger.

Projection of various moods and attitudes to test people by their reactions is also part of this aspect of political science. With familiars in particular, superficial show is not necessarily enough to

create the intended impression, so deliberate manipulation of inner moods to project particular impressions is also part of political science.

The Taoist *Master of Demon Valley* expounds these principles and practices of testing people and finding out their real thoughts, including techniques of concentration to develop the required mental skills. This important text is translated in *Thunder in the Sky*.

According to Chan Buddhist tradition, once when a monk from India, a canonical master, gained a reputation for mind-reading in Tang dynasty China, the emperor of China introduced him to one of the National Teachers, a high monk of the Chan sect of Buddhism.

“Tell me, where am I now?” the Chan master asked the Indian canon master.

“You are the teacher of a whole nation,” replied the Indian monk; “how can you go to Sichuan to watch boat races?”

The Chan master asked again, “Tell me, where am I now?”

The Indian monk said, “You are the teacher of a whole nation—how can you watch the monkeys play on Tianjing Bridge?”

The Chan master asked a third time, as before. This time the canonical master remained silent for a long time. In the end he

couldn't tell where the Chan master had gone. The National Teacher scolded him, "You sprite! Where is your mind-reading power?"

A later Chan master explained, "The first two times his mind was on objects; the third time he entered self-experienced absorption, so he was imperceptible."

This inscrutability is typically summed up in the expression, "Angels find no path on which to strew flowers, devils find no door through which to spy."

15.

Lao Dan is the Old Master, reputed author of the *Tao Te Ching*. He declares Yang Zhu impossible to teach because he is inwardly full of himself, while the worldly people react to the air of importance and the mood of deflation he projects when affirmed and denied.

17.

This represents the original principles of *Taijiquan* and *Jujutsu*.

18.

This refutation of racism includes species bias; so it not only addresses the problem of Han-centrism in China, which is still an express concern in the modern Chinese constitution, but also the conceit of human rapacity indulging itself at the expense of other species and the environmental basis of all life.

Fu Xi, Nu Wa, Shen Nong, and Yu were ancient leaders and culture heroes of Chinese myth and legend. Jie of Xia, Zhou of Yin, Huan of Lu, and Mu of Chu, in contrast, were anti-heroes and villains of Chinese tradition. The heroes appeared nonhuman but were humane, while the villains appeared human but were bestial. This illustrates the Taoist practice of considering substance more than form, character rather than class.

The image of pristine harmony between humans and other animals giving way to fear and avoidance can thus be taken as an analogical critique of Chinese relations with other peoples, suggesting that inharmonious relations were at least in part the fault of ethnocentric abuse of others, said to be common during the Han and Jin dynasties, when Chinese of Qiang, Hu, Di, and other minorities were treated by second-class citizens by the Han elites.

19.

This story criticizes rulers who placated people by illusory changes in policy without real effect. It also satirizes people who swallow their illusions whole and don't think about them.

20.

This story illustrates a principle of martial arts and military science classically summarized as *awaiting movement in a state of stillness*.

The idea is to remain unmoved and induce an opponent to take on form first, and then counter that initiative. The one who takes the initiative and thereby takes on form is temporarily defined and limited by that configuration, that commitment, so the strategy of counter-attack takes advantage of that definition and limitation.

21.

Confucius and Mo Di were both revered as founders of influential movements, although orthodox state Confucianism morphed into something quite different from the teachings of Confucius, and the school of Mo Di died out, in part by self-immolation. Confucius emphasized humanity and justice, Mo Di practiced defense of the weak against aggression from the powerful. Their teachings are more complex, but these basic attitudes are what Hui Ang refers to in alluding to methods of self-preservation by winning the goodwill of others through altruism. Hui Ang adds that with the resources of kingship it should be possible to outdo Confucius and Mo Di, providing only that the king actually have the will.

Here the mechanisms of inner sense and response, contextualized in human and inter-species interaction, is set in the context of ruler-populace relations. In that sense Hui Ang shows the king that force and coercion are inefficient compared to charisma, in

view of the relative expenditure of energy; and that real charisma comes from intuitive sense and response, rather than superficial assertion and insistence.

III. King Mu of Zhou

1.

King Mu also appears in *The Golden Broth of Buddhism*, where he is alleged to have had a dream vision of Buddha. The Far West is sometimes said to be India, but here it probably refers to Central Asia.

According to *Lost Stories of Immortals*, a Taoist collection, “King Mu of Zhou was named Man. He was born of Empress Pang, son of King Zhao. When King Zhao failed to return from an inspection tour of the South, King Mu then assumed the throne; he was fifty years old at the time. He reigned for fifty-four years, to the age of one hundred and four.

“The king was attracted to the way of spiritual immortals in his youth, and he always liked to travel around the land, after the manner of the Yellow Emperor. So it was that he rode a wagon drawn by eight horses of the finest quality, with Zao Fu [the archetypal charioteer] as his driver, to the countries of the West. He

caught a white fox and a black badger, which he sacrificed to the source of the Yellow River.

“He directed his carriage across the Weak Water River, and turtles, tortoises, and alligators formed a bridge; finally he went up Mortar Mountain. He also toasted the Matriarch of the West at Jade Pond.

“The Matriarch sang, ‘White clouds are in the sky. The road is very long, punctuated by mountains and rivers; if you don’t die, you can come again.’

“The king replied, ‘I’m going back East to harmonize the Chinese states so that all the people are equal. I hope to see you; I’ll return in three years.’

“He also went to Mt. Laishou and Mt. Taixing before finally entering his ancestral Zhou.

“At that time Yin Xi had already crossed the Gobi Desert and was living in a rustic abode north of Zhongnan. The king followed his old trail and summoned the recluses Yin Yue and Du Zhong to live in the hermitage; then he named it a cloister, and went there with them. Ji Fu came calling from the game reserve of Zheng and cautioned him about the rebellion of Xu Yuan, so the king returned to his country, and the ancestral shrines were restored to safety.

“When the king went to the Kunlun Mountains, he drank stone marrow from Bee Mountain, and ate the fruits of jade trees. He also climbed Jade Cluster Mountain, where the Matriarch of the West lived.

“He had thoroughly mastered the way to make the spirit fly to heaven, but he appeared to live in physical form simply in order to appear to the people to have died.

“Indeed, he had drunk oil of jade, savored the taste of sweet snow, white lotus, and black dates, green lotus-root and white citrus; all of these are dishes of spiritual immortals—how could they not lengthen life?

“It is also said that the Matriarch of the West descended into the palace of King Mu and they left together riding on the clouds.”

The Kunlun Mountains are an ancient source of jade, highly prized in China, and the Kunlun came to be considered one of the abodes of immortals. The Jade Pond is so named because jade was found in water in Central Asia. The Matriarch is commonly said to be a goddess, but Celtic legend and modern archeology confirm the existence of a skilled and artistic people with fair hair, as the Matriarch is said to have had, in that time and place. Ancient Celts called Tuatha De Danann, People of Divine Arts, are said to have

originated in Scythia, which could be understood to abut or even include the oases of the Kunlun, and they are particularly associated with Druidism, which had some demonstrable affinities to Taoism.

When he woke up, the king was still sitting where he had been before, in the same company as before. When he looked in front of him, his wine had not yet settled, the hors d'oeuvres were still fresh. The theme of using a dreamlike state or hypnotic trance to test a prospective student is found in various cultures and traditions. In Taoism, the dream of Lu Dongbin is particularly famous (Cf. *Vitality, Energy, Spirit*, pp. 64-70)

2.

When Lao Dan went West refers to the story of Laozi, reputed author of the *Tao Te Ching*, who is said to have left China because of the deteriorating social and political conditions. He was later said to have gone to India, but here the West most likely means Central Asia, seen as a sort of Shangri-la.

Five Emperors and Three Kings refer to Confucian culture heroes, exemplary leaders of the past. There are several different lists of names for each, as they are not usually elaborated but normally referred to generally in a categorical or symbolic sense.

Some were magically accomplished —according to the Sanskrit *Hitopadesa*, a famous book of practical and political science, “success may take place even by subterfuge.”

3.

Buddhism uses the dream as a metaphor for the process of mistaking mental phenomena for external objects, or cognitive representations of things for things in themselves. The description or representation (*vijnapti*) that the brain constructs of select data is the world as we cognize it. Taking that as purely objective, without considering the role of perceptual and cognitive selection and construction, is likened to being caught in a dream.

4.

What was called the *nature vs. nurture* debate in the West was also treated in the East. Typically, however, while coming down on one side of the argument this text is trying to balance an ambient bias, in this case prejudice against ‘other’ peoples of different cultures. The idea that differences of character come from adaptations to different environments removes the noxious absolutism of racism, implying that people are malleable and adaptable, and not inherently ‘good’ or ‘bad’ apart from any context.

5.

The idea that dream life could provide reflection of suppressed feelings and/or a compensatory mechanism also occurred to psychoanalysts in the West, who likewise thought that this recognition could suggest ways of adjusting waking life to lessen subconscious tension.

6.

This story illustrates the construction of a conceptual reality from fragments of experience grasped at second hand. It demonstrates the buildup of conceptual and descriptive ambiguity and confusion, a commentary on problems of information transmission, especially loss of content and incorporation of interfering signals into the stream of communication and interpretation.

7.

This story contains a satire of the doctrine of inherited debt preached by the Taoist cult of Celestial Masters. Adapted from the Buddhist doctrine of karma and retribution, the doctrine of inherited debt holds that illness results from wrongdoing. This accounts for such procedures as writing confessions and solitary contemplation of one's sins, as well as protective charms against vengeful spirits, used by the healers of the Celestial Masters sect. One point of this

story is that the mental state created by contemplating 'inherited debt' and considering illness a product of sin may itself be morbid.

The characterization of the original 'ailment' of forgetfulness represents a worldly view of unworldliness, while the sobriety of the 'cure' is worldliness as represented by the Confucians, whose profession is associated with ruling and controlling the world. The Celestial Masters movement was as Confucian as Taoist, as secular as sacred, in this sense, that social organization, regulation of members' lives, and hierarchical government were always part of the movement.

From the point of view of healing, this story contrasts the quietistic method with the contemplative method, in terms of predictable side-effects and their potential consequences in stimulating a new cycle of illness. From a cultic point of view, insofar as unsuccessful cures were blamed on the patient, the sense of regret and remorse may make the patient sicker but also more dependent upon the ministrations of the cult.

8.

The gentlemen of Lu refers to Confucians, particularly Han-centric absolutist pedants. *Lao Dan* is supposed to be Laozi, who typically deflates absolutism. Lao Dan cites relativity as a reality, not a

rationalization of subjective self-affirmation; he does not say there is no sanity or madness, but that the crucial question is their relative proportion.

9.

This story illustrates the power of suggestion overriding reality.

Modern experiments validate this observation. In one study subjects who were told they were going to hear the sound of a cat purring were pleased by the sound of a man snoring, while subjects told they were going to hear the sound of a man snoring were displeased by the sound of a cat purring.

IV. Confucius

1.

This story suggests that even if a specific system cannot by its very nature be absolute, that does not mean it has no relative value. In Buddhist terms, this is conventionally referred to as transcending the world without destroying the features of the world.

2.

A fuller version of this encounter, in the text entitled *The Master of the Hidden Storehouse*, also illustrates the principle of transcending the world without destroying its features. It begins with the master mourning one of the associates of Laozi; an apprentice asks,

“Everyone in the world dies—why do you mourn him?” The master answered, “Everyone in the world mourns; how can I not mourn?”

The apprentice said, “But mourners grieve, whereas you have never sorrowed; what about that?” The master replied, “I have no pleasure or happiness with anyone in the world—what would bring on sorrow? Remove the solid, and there is liquid; remove liquid, and there is gas. Remove gas, and there is emptiness; remove emptiness, and there is the Way. The Way is the means of preserving the spirit. Virtue is the means of broadening capacity. Etiquette is the means of equalizing manners. Things are the means of supporting the body. In something that should be white, blackness is considered pollution; in something that should be black, whiteness is considered pollution. So how do we know what in the world is truly pure or polluted? For this reason, I do not focus solely on the purity or pollution of things. Those whose vision is dim mistake yellow for red and blue for grey. Now how do we know that what we call black and white would not be considered red and yellow by the perceptive? And how do we know what in the world are true colors? For this reason, I do not get lost in the colors of things.

Those whose fondness for money is extreme do not see anything else as likeable; those whose fondness for horses is extreme do not

see anything else as likeable; those whose fondness for books is extreme do not see anything else as likeable. So how do we know what in the world is actually likeable or detestable? For this reason I do not see anything to be attached to. Nothing can mix me up!"

Thunder in the Sky pp. 102-103

3.

The *Three Kings* here refers to the founders of the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties, the classical age of Chinese history. The *Five Emperors* of high antiquity are variously listed, as are the culture heroes known as the *Three August Ones*.

The statement *There is a sage among the people of the West*, according to a Buddhist collection called *The Gold Broth of Buddhism*, alludes to the historical Buddha.

4.

Zixia, You Hui, Zigeng, Zilu, and Zizhang were all noted disciples of Confucius.

13.

Han Tan and Gongsun Long were logicians. The image of the archer hitting arrow after arrow in succession to form a solid line of arrows that never hits the ground is a very clever illustration of the Buddhist doctrine that cognitive reality is based on a subjectively

constructed continuity of conception linking successive perceptions into an internally consistent picture, never 'hitting the ground' of objective reality.

V. Questions of Tang

1.

Tang of Yin (r. 1766-1753 BCE) was the founder of the Shang dynasty (1766-1122 BCE). Ji of Xia was one of his officers.

Nu Wa was a legendary prehistoric leader, pictured as a woman. Gonggong was a legendary figure of a different ethnic group. Zhuanyu, an ancient chieftain, is reckoned in some lists as one of the Five Emperors of antiquity.

Bo Yi was the ancestor of the royal family of Qin, traditionally pictured as an expert in herding and hunting, put in charge of supervising mountains and wilds by king Shun (2255-2205 BCE)

Yi Jian was a legendary encyclopedist.

The Master of Expanded Development was traditionally portrayed as a teacher of the Yellow Emperor, supposed to have lived for more than twelve centuries.

This story emphasizes the roles of history and environment in conditioning people and other forms of life. This understanding helps overcome chauvinistic bias, wherein the familiar becomes

unconsciously absolutized as the standard against which everything is judged.

2.

This story alludes to the relativity of time and the practical difference between a narrow short-term view and a broad long-term view, in respect to the energy that can be released and directed to a given end.

3.

This story seems to suggest some sort of awareness of societies and civilizations preceding the ancient dynasties, consciousness of gigantic achievements of the immemorial past, now become part of the surroundings. This theme of worlds and events in an inconceivably remote past having produced conditions of the present is prominent in Ekayana Buddhist scriptures. Archeological finds confirm civilizations along the Yellow River long before the Xia dynasty.

4.

This point-counterpoint illustrates the Buddhist proposition that conditional origination implies emptiness of inherent existence.

5.

Guan Zhong (Guan Yiwu, or Guanzi, Master Guan) was a minister of Duke Huan of the state of Qi (r. 685-643 BCE). Guan devised a program for enriching and strengthening the state. Xi Peng was also an assistant to Duke Huan.

6.

Made into policies by rulers, these are made into customs by subjects, and so nothing to wonder at. This is another critique of the limitation of Han-centrism, explaining customs as human artifice, representative of differences that are acquired and not intrinsic.

7.

This story illustrates how logic can be limited by its premises, as reasoning can be logical in its own terms and yet lead to false conclusions because of faulty framing of the problem under consideration.

8.

This story represents the 'soft art.' Applied to physical health, it means adjusting sensitively to minute changes to minimize the stress of resistance. Applied to statesmanship, it represents balancing the forces of state structure by means of each other, rather than be crushed or torn asunder by standing between them trying to control them separately.

9.

JY: “In the overall process from birth to death, people change again and again; if you look upon your childhood from the perspective of old age, the differences in appearance and intelligence are even greater than the two men whose bodies were switched. However, the course of change in the overall process is in minute shifts, and since people base their perceptions on them, they are unaware of the changes. Here where the physician has replaced their hearts, however, everyone is surprised by the change because it is so sudden.”

13.

Pan Yu and Mo Di were military engineers. The dismantling of the manikin represents a Buddhist meditation technique of analysis, in which the practitioner inwardly analyzes body and mind into elements to observe that an absolute self or soul cannot be located in any element, or indeed in any combination of elements.

14.

This story illustrates the origin of esotericism as a protective device, to eliminate the factor of competition and struggle for supremacy, excluding those who approach an art for purposes of personal aggrandizement or aggression against others. This is why

candidates for mystic sciences associated with power are tested so severely.

15.

This story illustrates the technique of 'using intent, not strength' that underlies the soft martial arts. This technique saves energy, and is used in 'lightening' the body for health purposes by reducing the complex of gross muscular tensions experienced as weight or heaviness in movement.

16.

This story illustrates the martial art of *diankong* that works by attacking sensitive points to paralyze muscles by interfering with nerves. Some also see in this a sort of parody of popular rebellions against the Han dynasty that did not manage to destroy tyranny but did weaken the dynasty.

17.

The West refers to Central Asia, a major source of jade. The red edge on the knife was probably corundum or ruby dust. Ruby is the gem quality of corundum and is considerably harder than jade and jadeite, suitable for creating an abrasive tool for the notoriously difficult task of working jade. Notice of a Central Asian ambassador to China in a Taoist history also mentions a diplomatic gift of a

Central Asian glue of extraordinary strength, described in terms that suggest it could have been used to fix corundum or ruby dust to steel. The cloth laundered in fire was woven of asbestos fibers.

VI. Effort and Destiny

The word for destiny or fate means order or imperative; in this usage it was anciently thought of as a divine command. In Buddhism, among five inconceivables is listed cause and effect, meaning that even a Buddha cannot fully understand the totality of cause and effect relations. This is to be understood in a context of intensive investigation of causality, and does not imply fatalism at all, but rather acknowledgement of human limitation. The range of causal factors beyond our ken may be called destiny or fate, according to our perceptions. Here in Master Lie, destiny is cited in unspoken contrast to three contemporary belief systems: the Legalistic doctrine of containing all activity within a humanly constructed rule of law; the Confucian concept of human organizations being sustained by a divine order that would respond to certain behavior with specific results; and the immortalist concept of countermanding the natural order by deliberate practices.

In sum, the concept of destiny or fate in Master Lie is not a mark of fatalism, but a challenge to absolutist concepts of control

and causation. Neither the moral determinism of Confucianism nor the psychological determinism of Legalism had produced the society they had envisioned; and no philosophy accounted entirely for the ups and downs of human affairs.

1.

Destiny's concluding remarks in this story reveal the nature of the teaching presented here. Destiny may overrule effort, but that does not imply an external omnipotent will with a fixed agenda. Here, 'destiny' is a default term, and what it signifies does not replace effort or reduce it to meaninglessness, but requires a larger perspective on effort, and a more flexible understanding than simplistic schemes of punishment and reward such as were invoked and applied by the Legalist doctrine of state on the human level, and by the Celestial Masters cult in supernatural terms.

The Sanskrit *Hitopadesa* is adamant about the ignorance of those who give up effort believing in fate. According to the 17th century Japanese Confucian Yamaga Soko, 'making peace with destiny' refers to destiny as the action of nature that is beyond human capacity. Psychologically, he interprets this is a counter to resentment and bitterness, not an admonition to resign intention and effort.

3.

Guan Yiwu was Guan Zhong, a famous practical philosopher of the seventh century BCE, cited above in note V.5. The work associated with his name, augmented in later times, has been labeled Taoist as well as Legalist. For the specifically Taoist portions of the classic, see *The Way of the World: Readings in Chinese Philosophy*.

The notion of people acting as they do because they have no choice under the circumstances prevailing, by appearing as one extreme, presents a counterpoint to a traditional Chinese model of history that emphasizes individual persons as history makers and authors of their own ethical choices. While this view lends itself to moralizing, as was the wont of Confucians, it can convey the impression of personality, character, and motive as being prime movers, with inadequate consideration of the conditions that form people and influence their actions. Personal philosophies or preferences may not exert as much influence on actions as other factors, hence this story illustrates how the force of circumstances cannot be ignored even if personal qualities factor into political considerations.

4.

This story also illustrates the idea that the sum total of forces in any situation, the structure of necessities, possibilities, and perils created by conditions, is larger than any of the players, whose roles and relations may therefore alter unforeseeably, or uncontrollably.

5.

This story also emphasizes the idea that the totality of causality is not entirely within human control, whether individual or collective; this principle of uncertainty is represented by the concept of destiny or fate in order to modify the influence of presumptions and expectations.

6.

This story seems to refute the common notion of supernatural causes of illness, an idea cults relied upon heavily in magical curing practices. There is a famous story in early Chan Buddhist tradition that invokes the background belief in sin being the cause of sickness, and illustrates the meditation used by the last doctor. A layman came to the Second Patriarch of Chan and said, "I am sick all over. Please absolve me." The Patriarch said, "Bring me your sin and I'll absolve you of it." After a long silence, the man said, "When I look for my sin, I can't find it." The Patriarch said, "I've absolved you of your sin." Then the patriarch taught him that 'mind is Buddha,

mind is the teaching.’ The man said, “Today for the first time I’ve realized that sinfulness is not on the inside, not on the outside, and not in between.” After that his illness gradually remitted.

A story is also told of the Second Patriarch of the Tiantai school of Buddhism, Huisi, illustrating the introspective contemplation referred to in the Chan story as ‘looking for my sin.’ Once Huisi became so weak he couldn’t even get up and walk after a meditation intensive. Then he reflected, “Sickness arises from *karma* , karma comes from mind; if the mental source is not agitated, what are external objects like? Sickness, karma, and the body too are all like shadows of clouds.” After practicing this contemplation, he recovered. His disciple Zhiyi, famed as the de facto founder of the Tiantai school and author of the monumental *Stopping and Seeing* series of manuals on meditation, came from a Taoist family and included Taoist healing visualizations of the internal organs in his meditation instructions. See *Sitting Meditation* for some of these practices.

7.

Formulas for physical culture and immortalism abound, but they are not guaranteed to work automatically. *It’s better not to look to divine*

will and try to figure out gain and loss means that informed reason is more effective than superstition when it comes to maintaining health.

8.

Here the idea of destiny is used to maintain emotional and intellectual equilibrium in face of changing conditions. This makes it possible to maintain the will, because it cannot be crushed by the frustration of expectations. Therefore the *trust in destiny* spoken of here is not fatalism but freedom— *who can block the way?*

9.

This story illustrates the handicapping effect of blind belief in destiny. Each of the characters thinks his own way is right and sufficient, as if it were his destiny, thus failing to learn and communicate, synthesize and integrate, because of the preconception that a personal inclination is destined or fated to be. In historical context, this story satirizes the political philosophers who each claimed to have *the Way*, and who all failed to save society from disintegration.

10.

The Buddhist *Sandhinirmocana-sutra* says, “Enlightened beings do know the bliss of nirvana very well and can quickly realize it, yet they relinquish immediate experience of the state of bliss and rouse a

mind of great aspiration to benefit living beings, without object, without expectation, and therefore remain in the midst of many kinds of suffering over a long time.” (*Buddhist Yoga* pg. 75)

11.

This is a commentary on the folly of immortalism. A ruler may wish to live forever, but if that were possible there would already be an immortal ruler.

12.

Changes in conditions appear differently depending on the point of comparison. When nothing can be done about an event, it may be possible to understand it or accept it to a greater or lesser extent depending on the context in which it is considered.

VII. Yang Zhu

An academic convention concerning the doctrines of Yang Zhu is to construct an image of Yang Zhu from the description of Mencius and then wonder at this book of Master Lie.

1.

Guan Zhong initiated reforms in Qi, in the 7th century BCE, establishing government monopolies and instituting economic warfare on other states. Qi was greatly strengthened by such measures.

Mr. Tian was Tian Cheng, a minister of the state of Qi in the 5th century BCE. In 481 he assassinated the lord of Qi, set up a successor of his own choice, and took over as prime minister. Eventually his great-grandson Tian He became a feudal lord and ruler of Qi.

Yao and Shun were ancient rulers, allegedly of the 3rd millennium BCE. Xu You and Shan Juan were recluses. Bo Yi and Shou Qi were nobles of the Shang dynasty who wouldn't join the new Zhou order when it supplanted the Shang politically, considering it disloyal to do so. Hence they are considered purists, but they 'refused to eat the grain of Zhou' and died of starvation in the mountains

3.

Contemplating rotting corpses and skeletons was a standard part of early Buddhist meditation, either in actual graveyards or by visualization. In actual practice, such a negative meditation is supposed to be followed up by positive meditations on kindness and compassion. This story makes the point that sameness in death does not imply sameness in life, that our destiny to die does not render the present life indifferent or meaningless, but rather the opposite—the inevitability of death for good and bad alike implies

that whatever choices we have, moral or otherwise, are all played out in the context of life. This contemplation of death and concluding focus on life thus parallels the Buddhist practice of contemplating death followed by cultivation of friendliness and compassion.

4.

Bo Yi and Liu Xiahui represent extremes of moralism. Yuan Xia and Zigeng were disciples of Confucius.

6.

While this story is often very effective as a test, the crux is in the contrast between internal versus external control, natural order versus imposed regime.

7.

With the amassing of enormous fortunes by a few, and the development of chronic poverty among the multitudes, redistribution of wealth was necessary for social stability. This might be done through land redistribution programs enacted by the government, or by clan or religious organizations, or by private charity. Some of the people considered saints in Taoist traditions were Confucian officials who actually put humanitarian teachings into practice and helped the needy. In this story, the rich man distributed his excess wealth without considering it charity, or covert commerce. This reflects an

analogy of the Buddhist concept of perfect charity characterized by so-called *emptiness of the three spheres*, meaning charity given without the sense of self as being generous, without a view of others as being needy, and without either pride or regret at the value of the gift.

8.

Even a hundred years is too long, to say nothing of the misery of perpetual life. This is an ironic twist on the argument about immortality—not whether it’s possible, because it’s not—even if it were, what would be the point?

9.

This is a study in balancing extremes, and a representation of the relativity of reason to context. Lao Dan is Laozi, Guan Yu is Guan Zhong. Both are associated with self-preservation. Great Yu was responsible for controlling flood waters in antiquity, Mo Di was leader of a band of volunteer warriors who defended the weak against the strong during the Era of Warring States; thus both represent service of others.

This story seems to contrast these two standpoints, self-preservation and service of others, but in doing so conserves both as contexts calling for conclusions consistent with themselves but not

over-generalized to universals. Generalization into universals pits them against each other; consistency with their own contexts enables them to complement one another. Since both self-preservation and service to society are normal parts of life, varying in proportion from time to time but nonetheless mutually interdependent, therefore conserving the functions of both is better than dissipating their energy in mutual antagonism.

10.

This story questions idealization of sagehood as a magical condition, and idealization of material prosperity and pleasure. It deflates the notion that the ideal state runs itself while the sage ruler does nothing; and the notion that people's worth is reflected by their rewards in life.

12.

The Three August Ones, Five Emperors, and Three Kings, as classical models of Confucian ideology, are cited here to represent ideological structuring of views. This story highlights the folly of ideological conflict, as it can consume all sense of meaning, robbing the obsessed of any other purpose in life, including the basic experiences of life itself, sacrificed for the sake of an imaginary ideal.

15.

This story takes another look at reputation and reality. While it typically rebukes the folly of concern for reputation at the expense of reality, a way of life providing no peace, yet it is careful to conserve an objective understanding of the reality of reputation. Slander and libel are illegal, not because they injure self-esteem, but because they compromise the ability to make a living and otherwise function normally in society. While it is folly to pursue a false or vain reputation, that doesn't mean that the consensual reality of reputation and its consequences can be safely ignored.

VIII. The Tally of the Teaching

1.

This story illustrates the principle of 'arriving first by leaving last,' used in martial arts to signify the tactic of remaining still while awaiting movement on the part of the opponent, then countering that movement. The idea is to have the opponent take the initiative, as doing so creates a form, making a counter-strike possible.

2.

Observe exits to know entries, observe goings to know comings means to examine past history to predict future behavior.

3.

The *Tao Te Ching* says, “If you know when you have enough, you won’t be disgraced; if you know when to stop, you won’t be endangered. This way you can live a long time.”

4.

Sages do not examine survival and destruction, they examine the reasons for them. Focus is on cause rather than result, because thinking about the desired result can distract and disrupt the operation of concentration on the means of attaining that aim.

6.

Considering the quantity of produce required to feed and clothe a person for three years, this story provokes a consideration of the productivity of the earth. One of the traditions of Legalism and Taoism is that commercial art and luxury trade should not supersede basic production as the foundation of the economy, as this would make a state dependent on others for a sufficiency of foodstuffs and raw materials.

10.

...all the thieves fled to Qin. This is an excellent crack at Qin Legalism. The policy of Qin, based on the Legalist doctrines of The Lord of Shang, was to take from others, luring population with

exemptions, draining other states of basic goods by market manipulation, and taking land by expansionist warfare.

12.

The Duke of Bai was a grandee of Chu during the Era of the Warring States. He tried to engineer a coup, but was thwarted and strangled himself to death in his bathhouse.

Confucius is here portrayed as a perceptive, exercising extreme caution in responding to the Duke lest he get caught up in a plot, yet making his point, however subtly and however futilely, to warn the Duke against rash ambition.

13.

The Di were tribes living in several of the pre-Chinese states during the Zhou dynasty.

19.

The *Tao Te Ching* says, "Sages want not to want, and do not value hard-to-get goods. They learn not to imitate, and reform the mistakes of the crowd."

20.

While they use different rationales, in each case the killers decide to kill. The story illustrates how a foregone conclusion or inherent bias

may remain unaltered in changing situations, as it summons suitable rationales to assure arriving at the intended conclusion in any event.

21.

This story represents a powerful argument against leaving misunderstandings, false assumptions, and circumstantial evidence unexamined and uncorrected.

23.

The *Tao Te Ching* says, “Which is more important, your name or your body?”

25.

Unity was considered a political ideal, but its interpretation differed. In stereotyped terms, Legalism and Confucianism would impose unity, the former by law and the latter by ritual, whereas Taoism would discover it as an organic reality underlying difference. In actuality even theorists tended to combine these approaches to unity.

27.

Both Buddhism and Taoism recommend secret charity for this reason.

32.

This story illustrates the phenomenon of the 'tell,' when someone with a secret is unable to contain excitement, so that inward agitation creates an outward manifestation.

34.

Physiognomy and reading of bodily postures and movements were practiced in India as well as China. This practice is originally based on the 'tell' phenomenon noted above, but it can be distorted. This story illustrates the problem of underlying attitudes or assumptions dictating terms of interpretation.