THE OPERATIONS AND MANIFESTATIONS OF THE TAO EXEMPLIFIED IN HISTORY

OR

THE TAO CONFIRMED BY HISTORY*

12th Essay in Huai Nan Tzü

Evan Morgan

INTRODUCTION.

The paper this evening will introduce us to the twelfth essay of Huai Nan Tzü—this term means The Philosopher South of the Huai—Huai Nan is the name of a small principality. The work was composed by its prince, hence the name. The author's personal name was Liu An, a nephew of the famous Liu Ch'ang, and grandson of the founder of the Han Dynasty. He was born in 162(?). B.C. and died 122 B.C. He was made Prince of Huai Nan, but accused of being involved in political intrigue by Wu Ti, who esteemed him highly, he committed suicide before the arrival of the commissioners sent to examine into the accusation.

The times were out of joint and cursed and little congenial to a man of philosophic temperament. Liu An was brought up in a court full of corruption and intrigue. Empresses and concubines fomented trouble and promoted murder and massacre to attain the fulfillment of selfish schemes. Usurpation of powers however by unscrupulous factions could only last for a time. The usurpers in turn were driven from power by the assassin knife or some such means. The ruthless extermination of rivals to benefit one's own more immediate kin, placed helpless children in jeopardy and made them the playthings of the whims of passing factions. When force and ambition prevail, and wily machinations and crafty schemes for power predominate in the

*Read before the Society.

1
counsels of state, the hapless condition of politics may be imagined. The blood that flowed in decadent imperial Rome was almost contemporaneous with similar play of human passions in China. In both countries the times were turbulent and the age was military. Where law and justice fail to animate the mind of those in authority, “thieves and bandits multiply.”

It seems necessary to say that much at least on the history of the period to enable us to create for ourselves the conditions in which the young prince grew up to manhood. The din of arms and the schemes of shifting policies were the common events of life. To a humane and sensitive mind, to a keen student of human affairs, it must have been a perplexing time. Political conditions led him probably to test the validity of the foundations of society and the art of government. The prevailing disorders, the inhumanity and injustice of politics, must have suggested to his perplexed mind whether there could be any real law in the universe, and whether all did not fall out by the fortuity of chance and human passions. Was the art of government as preached by Confucius of any value to human institutions, and were the multitude of prescriptions of outward deportment of any practical service? The scums of evil seem to predominate and leave virtue out of account. Was it then that—

“Thy pillars firmament is rottenness
And earth’s base built on stubble.”

He turned to history and experience for an answer. Experience must be the great teacher and the guide of the philosopher. From an examination of this source he evidently found that—

Evil on itself shall back recoil
And mix no more with goodness, when at last
Gather’d like scum, and settle to itself;
It shall in eternal restless change
Self-fed and self-consumed.

What scraps of history there were within his reach, in that ancient time, proved this much to him, as is clear in the essays he wrote. How then could misrule be explained and the unruly condition of the age be accounted for? Simply because men had a wrong view of life. They went astray because they tried to exercise their own untutored fancies and followed the lead of passions. What they should have done was to listen to the spirit voice within, and follow that. Thus there was the Non-action so often mentioned. Follow the light, and your energies will have full scope, in the right way. By the adoption of written enactments and prescribed formulae government of men must fail. More human wit and knowledge will fail of success. The only sure way is to have the springs of action centred in the inspiration of the eternal and inexhaustible Spirit. Let a man draw on this inexhaustible and unfailing supply—and he will have at command abundant powers. But this demands a sense of poverty of spirit—the only condition that will ensure the true riches of life.

The creations of the sages, the laws and ceremonial prescriptions then, may be assumed, were artificial and harmful. Since they were an obstacle to these very conditions; and at best the maxims and ceremonialisms were dead and lifeless things, and incomparably inferior to the touch of the human spirit by the spirit of the vital and ever mobile Tao. Dead law and lifeless traditions wither all progress in their icy hands. The Tao is clear, limpid, vital, active, always operating and operative. Let men lean on this, and cease from self-action. Thus their Non-action would be supremely efficient.

The philosophy of Confucius then was a failure: since his method relied too much on human ingenuity. But there was a more original mind at hand in the exposition of the true art of life. Lao Tao had preached a more mobile Tao. His Tao was fundamentally more suited to the world. This Tao was great: it filled Heaven and Earth; it was macrocosm and microcosm. It filled everywhere and everything and pervaded even the non-spatial. Liu An then grasped a more spiritual idea of the Universe and life than was outlined in the minutiae of the sages. The guidance offered by the maxims of books was unreliable and insufficient. The necessary thing was to have the mind of the ruler under the immediate and direct guidance of the Tao. Thus equipped, the ruler would always be able to meet the varied events of life, and he never need be nonplussed by the infinite flux of circumstances.

Contemporary literature was not held in any high esteem. Brute force was what the militarists of the day extolled. Literature was decadent in ruling circles. The land had been robbed of civil dignity by the burning of the books. Scholars did not venture to pride themselves on their art. Confucianism did not yield its later autocratic powers. Therefore there was no predominant school of thought. They were all equally looked on with contempt. In that respect at any rate it was more easy to have a free discussion of ideas. Probably therefore it was not difficult to examine and formulate independent systems of thought. A man could belong to any school of thought without being under the stigma of unorthodoxy.
It is therefore likely that Liu An investigated the writings and systems of past ages. Dr. E. H. Parker concludes that the philosopher must have been a diligent student of Kuan Tzu, and incorporated many of his ideas, as is evident from an examination of the 21 essays. However, that may be, his mind was influenced mostly by the trite and luminous maxims of Lao Tan. In the essay before us he tests his "law" by historical examples, and in turn, each historical example is illumined by a saying of Lao Tze.

We are not told how he became so much under the influence of this great sage. Possibly it might have been through his wife. Incidentally we may have here a glimpse into the home life of Liu An. His wife was evidently a student. She was in possession of a very rare book. Shall we call it her book of devotions? The author of this work was reputed to be Lao Tan and its name was the Tao Tè Ching. This evidently was the home classic. The lady and her husband had possibly committed it to memory. That was the safest thing to do in those turbulent times. And the frequent quotations in his writings lead us to think that it was so. He and she knew it by heart. Its teaching at any rate seem to have become the ideal of their life and through them to have coloured the stream of Chinese thought.

At one time it is known that to avoid the suspicions of being a politician he had withdrawn into the seclusion of the study. He gathered round him twenty or thirty celebrated scholars—all more or less imbued with the principles of Taoism. It was during this time of seclusion that these essays were composed. Whether they are actually the work of the prince himself or the result of the collaborators is uncertain; at any rate they went forth under his name, and he became the philosopher of Huai Nan. In a way this reminds us of King Alfred and the scholarly men he gathered round him. He set them to make translation of history, Bede's 'Comforts of Philosophy,' history, poetry and so on. And Huai An Tzu and his scholars translated history and philosophy creating the compendious collection of essays before us to-day. He and Alfred attained some results that were similar. Alfred made English the richest language of Europe, and Huai Nan Tzu created a new style for China, chaste and elevating: and if difficult to understand in some parts, yet the style is excellent if not faultless, and the mass of historical events has been of great profit. Possibly Su Ma Ch'ien poured over these pages, and found in them much material for his great history. The ideas of this ancient writer have done much to form Chinese ethical and political thought and to create those "group thoughts" that have done so much for the world.

His method and treatment will help all students to understand the principles of Taoism. In the abstract these are not easily understood as they are enshrined in the cryptic sayings of Lao Tan. But here we have a practical commentary on these sayings. The Tao is to be understood best in its operations. There are intimations and hints of the Tao in the abstract. But it is in concrete examples that it may best be understood.

The Tao fills all space and impinges on everything. It operates everywhere, and in everything, both great and small. It has no visible body that one can see and touch, but its impulsive force is manifest in all creation. It is very great just because it is without form. It is absolutely just, impartial, unfailing. Whoever is in accord with it succeeds. Its laws cannot be transgressed with impunity. The ancient idea is in line with the modern interpretation as expressed by Matthew Arnold, "The Eternal not ourselves that makes for righteousness." The spirit of man has eternally followed the quest. What is it that is behind all phenomena? What is it that creates the perfect harmony of the Universe? What is that breath of life that operates without sound or voice, so silently, mysteriously, harmoniously, and powerfully? "There is no voice or sound, their language is not heard.

This all powerful and all pervading essence, how far is it applicable to human affairs? Let the study of history offer its response.

Here it is well to remind ourselves that this conception of the Tao held by the Taoists may help us to understand much of their thought. The fundamental idea is that all human enactments are artificial and harmful. Man has only to live in harmony and in alliance with the Tao and all society would get on well. So the sages with their laws and rules and fine sayings are a nuisance. Destroy all human enactments: break up the yard measure, your weights and scales and the world would get on famously. It is a magnificent idea. But you remember it stirred the wrath of the great essayist Han Yu, who in his essay on Yuan Tao, poured his scorn on the theory.

Again the Taoist terms are often hard to understand. But some of the historical examples that we shall read this evening may help us to put a meaning into some of their phrases. The word Wu-wei often translated as Inaction or Non-Action does not really imply that a person is a do-nothing kind of fellow. Not the men of non-action were busy
men, carrying great responsibilities. They were men of
non-action because they did nothing by the effort of mere-
artificial creations of knowledge, but in perfect harmony with
the Tao. The possession of the Tao is not an easy matter.
It is difficult. There must be great training of the heart,
the suppression of the senses, concentration of the spirit;
given these, "the Spirit will soon settle on your person, and
the Tao will dwell with you."

The method of this essay is a good example of the style
and treatment of all the others, and in fact, of much Chinese
composition and lines of thought. The general theme is
stated in recondite and sometimes allegorical language, then
his history and surroundings. Many of the examples seem
follows the exposition and treatment which is generally
occupied with historical incidents showing how the Tao
operates, and confirming its existence and justice.

In our reading it is necessary to try and put ourselves
in the position of the author and consider the limitations of
his history and surroundings. Many of the examples seem
somewhat peculiar to us, and the meaning is often elusive.
It should also be remembered that the paucity of
materials may account for the tenuity of the evidence.

The Theme Stated.

Great-Purity asked Exhaustless, "whether he knew
anything about the Tao."

Exhaustless replied, "No, nothing." Non-action being
asked the same question replied that he had some knowledge
of it. "Is the knowledge you have finite?" "My knowledge
is finite," Non-action replied. "How much then do you
know of the Tao?" "I know such things as the following
are possible through the energies of the Tao, viz.: yieldingness
and firmness, courtesy and severity, the negative and the
positive, the recondite and the clear. Thus it is possible for
the Tao to enwrap Heaven and Earth, and to operate with
perfect response in the whole Universe. This is the limit of
knowledge."

Great-Purity also asked Without-Beginning, saying:
"Formerly I asked Exhaustless about the Tao who-
replied he had no knowledge, and subsequently I asked
Non-action who on the contrary replied that he had know-
ledge. We have thus the knowledge of Non-action and the
non-knowledge of Exhaustless. Which of them is right and
which is wrong?" Without-Beginning replied, "The non-
knowledge of Exhaustless is the more profound; knowledge
is superficial, non-knowledge knows the intrinsic, but know-
ledge only the extrinsic, non-knowledge sees the essence,
knowledge the accident." Great-Purity was surprised, and,
sighing replied, "Thus then, is non-knowledge the same as
knowing? And is not knowing the same as non-knowing?
There is no difference, who knows that knowledge is non-
knowledge and non-knowledge is (really) knowledge. Isn't
that so?" Without-Beginning replied, "The Tao cannot be
understood, the Tao that can be understood is not the Tao.
The Tao cannot be seen, that which can be seen is not the
Tao. The Tao cannot be spoken, were it possible to express
it then it would not be the Tao. Who is it that can under-
stand the form of the formless?"

Thus Lao Tzu said:

THE GOODNESS THAT IS RECOGNIZED AT SUCH BY
ALL THE WORLD IS NOT THE GOODNESS: AND SO
I'LL MAY BE SAID, HE WHO KNOWS DOES NOT SPEAK,
AND HE WHO SPEAKS DOES NOT KNOW.

Historical Verifications of the Operations
Of the Tao.

(1) A case of conscience—Silence is golden.—Duke Pei
asked Confucius, "May men use an occulting way of speech?"
Confucius made no response. Duke Pei said, "What about
a stone thrown into the water; would it be found out?" The
reply was, "The expert swimmers of Wu and Yueh would
get to the bottom and feel it." He again enquired what
about the effect of throwing water into water, no trace of one
as distinct from the other would be found? Confucius
replied, "The two waters Chia and Sheng of Ch'i though
united would be detected as to the tastes of each by such
as I Shen." Duke Pei then said, "Such being the case, men
certainly cannot use occulting language." To which Con-
fucius replied, "What you say is not correct." Who knows
the sense of words that are spoken? He who knows what
words signify does not express (his thought) in words.
"A fisherman must enter the deep water to catch his
fish, a hunter must brave the danger and enter the wild to
get his prey. Hence the most perfect language does away
with words, and the perfect action consists in non-action.
He who has but a superficial knowledge in a matter in
dispute is shallow and fails to go to the root."
Duke Pei failed to adopt this advice (of Confucius) and died at Yu Shih. Lao Tzu says:

WORDS HAVE A SIGNIFICANCE
AFFAIRS HAVE A FOUNDATION

There is a phrase that fits the case of Duke Pei exactly: "The man without understanding fails to understand my words."

Duke Pei was son of Tai Tsê Chien, and grandson of Ping Wang of Ts'U. Tai Tsê Chien was slain by Ping Wang, his father—and the grandson mediated the avengement of his father's death. Hence the reason for his dark and obscure parables in questioning Confucius.

Pei Lo Tien, the Tang poet has a little poem in criticism of Lao Tzu, reminding us of some contradictions in Carlyle, who preached in favour of silence in forty volumes. Pei's words are:—

"Who speaks much little knowledge has indeed
The wise is silent, Thus is Lao Chun's creed.
If Lao Chun ranks among the men who know
Why does he make five thousand words to flow"*

(2) Theoretical laws are useless.—Hui Tzu created a system of laws for King Hui for the government of the Kingdom. When completed these were shown to all the scholars, who without exception praised them. They were then presented to King Hui, who was very pleased with them, and showed them to Tsê Chien, who said they were good. King Hui said, "Since they are good they should be put into operation." But on (Tsê) Chai Chien objecting to the suggestion, the King wanted to know his reason. Chai Chien replied that when men carried a heavy log of wood they Ha'd and Hô'd, those behind responding to those before. This is the song they have for carrying heavy loads. They do not use the more classic songs of Cheng and Wei with their high plaintive notes, simply because such are not so fitting to the work. The rites for governing a country do not consist of written enactments. Too much law is not good. This is as Lao Tzu says:

WHEN LAWS AND COMMANDS APPEAR IN PROFUSION BANDITS AND THIEVES ALSO ABOUND

(3) The ruler must be guided by First Principles.—The art of education is to teach "How to see."—T'ien P'ien was expounding certain principles of the Tao to the King of Ch'i, and the King in replying said, "What I am faced with are the practical policies of the Kingdom of Ch'i; these principles of yours are useless as means to abolish the distresses of the land. I want to hear something definite and practical on the art of government." T'ien P'ien replied that though his words contained nothing on government, yet they could be made to apply. And he gave this illustration. A forest is composed of raw timber, it has no ready made material. Wood must be dressed accordingly to suit the need. Would the king kindly examine the principles he had stated and adopt them to the needs of the government of Ch'i. The King would find them adaptable. Though they may not abolish the embarrassments of the country, yet this is the Tao that moves Heaven and changes the world in the evolutionary flux. The affairs of Ch'i are small in comparison." This episode exemplifies Lao Tan's statement:

THE FORM THAT IS FORMLESS
THE PHENOMENA THAT HAS NO SUBSTANCE

The King wanted practical advice on the administration of Ch'i, and T'ien P'ien gave him general principles. Now the actual manufactured article is of less importance than the trees of the forest since the one depends on the other. The forest is nothing without rain; rain is nothing without the operations of Yin and Yang; Yin and Yang are nothing without the essential co-operating harmony; harmony is nothing without the Tao.¹

(4) A word of advice to the avaricious profiteer. True self-interest.—When Sheng, the Duke of Pei, gained the kingdom of Ching, and on his failing to distribute the contents of the Treasury between the people, members of his party after the lapse of seven days came in and told him, "If what is gained illicitly is not distributed to the public distress is sure to come. It is better to burn the treasures if they can't be distributed amongst the people so that disaster may not fall on us." Duke Pei wouldn't listen to the advice. In nine days Duke Shê attacked the place and having gained entrance distributed the goods in the treasury amongst the multitude; he also issued the munitions of war, in the High Treasury, to the people. In consequence of this he captured Duke Pei after investing his palace for 19 days. The Kingdom didn't really belong to Pei and his desire for it may be said to be a piece of avarice. That he failed to act generously towards the people and serve his own true self-interest thereby showed that he was most stupid as well as avaricious. The niggliness of Duke Pei

¹ Dr. N. D. Hill's has a very pertinent remark bearing on this. He says, "Some of our schools are open to criticism, because the teachers emphasize facts to be known instead of the vision that sees the fact. The teacher is the man who should teach how to see."
was in no way different from the love of the owl for its young. This agrees with Lao Tzu's saying:

**It is enough to carry a full vessel, don't try to add to it and make it to overflow.**

**Trying to sharpen a point already sharp may make it hard to keep an edge at all.**

(5) *Character is the essential thing in a ruler. Hereditary power is useless.—Ch'ien Chien Tzu adopted Hsiang Tzu as his heir. Tung Ngo Yu objected on the grounds of Wu Hsi's (Hsiang Tzu) obscurity, holding he was not fit to be a successor. Chien Tzu replied, "that his character was such as to ensure success. He would bear indignity for the sake of the kingdom."

Some time after, Chih Pei when drinking with Hsiang Tzu slapped his face. A minister suggested he should be put to death for this, but Hsiang Tzu, the King, argued that the deceased Prince had adopted him because he could bear personal indignity for the throne. "Do you think," he said, "that he put me in this place to slay people?" After the passing of ten months Chih Pei invested Hsiang Tzii at Ching Yang. Hsiang Tzii divided his army and attacked him on either side and routing Chih Pei slew him and made his skull into a drinking vessel. This confirms Lao Tzu's saying:

**He who is conscious of his prowess but at the same time who maintains gentleness and patience is he to whom will flow all the streams of empire.**

(6) *The inspired man is the discerning man.—Yeh Ch'iueh sought to know the Tao from Pei I. Pei I replied, "If you correct your deportment, and guard your eyes from wandering, the blessings of Heaven will come down on you." If you preserve your knowledge, and rectify your standards the Spirit will soon settle on your person: and virtue will abide with you. If you exercise the Tao it will make its abode with you. Unsophisticated as a newly born calf never asking the why or wherefore of its origin"—but before he had finished this sentence, Yeh Ch'iueh seemed to have lost interest in what Pei I was saying, so he got up and departed singing this ditty as he was going, "His form and limbs look withered and dried up: his mind looks dead like ashes. Truly I don't know how to deal with such a show of stupidity. I have no mind to talk to him. What kind of a man is he really?" This just confirms Lao Tzu's saying:

"Can he who is clear on every matter be without knowledge in discernment?"

(7) The use of the mailed fist is not the way to maintain the fruits of victory.—Chao Hsiang Tzu attacked Ts's and overpowered him and took his two prefectures of Yu Jen and Chung Jen. The messenger came to announce the victory and to offer congratulations; and when Hsiang Tzu was about to sup it was noticed that he was of a sad countenance, which being noticed by those about him led them to say, "People find it a matter of joy to become possessors of two cities in a morning. So what may be the cause of the present sadness of the Prince?" Hsiang Tzu replied to them, "The floods of the rivers and streams last only three days at most. Storms of winds and rain pass over quickly. There is no accumulated merits in our family Chao; how is it that now in one morning two cities have fallen to me: is not this ominous of disaster?" When Confucius heard of this he said, "The good fortune of the family of Chao must increase. Dejection, or moderation of spirit, is the foundation of greatness, and hilarity is the root of decay! It isn't victory that is difficult, but the maintenance of the fruits of victory: this is the difficulty. The worthy kings of the past who maintained victory in this spirit handed down their happiness to their successors. Chi, Ts'ü, Wu Yueh gained victories in their time, but eventually fell into decay, simply because they failed to apprehend how to maintain victory. This can only be done by making the Tao dominant." Similarly Confucius could manipulate the ponderous gate of the Customs, but not by his physical strength (for he never used force to compel men). It is said that Mei-tsü (who knew no art of war) maintained the defensive and offensive against Duke Yu Pan and brought him to submission, but not by military force. They knew that the effective way of maintaining victory was by looking upon gentleness, Right not Might, as the strong power, just as Lao Tzu says:

**When the Tao is flush and put into operation the recipient is unconscious of its overflow.**

(8) *Not Might but Right.—Hui Meng had an interview with King Sung K'ang. He bore his characteristic way of restless feet, of humming, and coughing, and speaking with rapidity. The King said, "What I admire is valour and military conquest. I dislike the principles, 'humanity' and 'justice.' Have you, Sir, anything to instruct me?" Hui Meng replied, "Your servant has a Way according to which even the shafts of the valiant will do it no harm, neither can force however cleverly used succeed against it. Great Prince have you truly a mind to try it?" The King replied, "Very excellent: Its just what I want to hear..."
always picks out the fragrant grass for the Chiung Chiung. Chu Hsiu supplies it with this grass (another animal with long fore legs and short hind legs. It can’t ascend hills). The Chiung Chiung therefore always carries the Chueh on its back because of the infirmity of its legs.

Here we have a case of one ability throwing its disability on another. This fits in with Lao Tsu’s words:

FEW SUBSTITUTES FOR A WOOD CUTTER CAN AVOID CUTTING THEIR HANDS.

(10) Everything is easy to him who has the Law.—Po I counselled Wei Si Si Chün on the art of government. In replying to him the Prince said, “The country of a thousand Chariots under my charge would receive advice from you.” Po I replied that Wu Hu, the lifter of a thousand catties, would think nothing of lifting one catty.

(11) Tu Hé counselled Chou Chao Wen, the prince, on how to pacify the empire.—(This after the disruption of Chou) Wen Chun said to Tu Hé, “I would earnestly learn from you how to bring peace to Chou.” Tu Hé replied, “If you can’t act on the words of your servant there is no possibility of pacifying Chou. If you can put your words into operation Chou will settle down of itself.” This is the meaning of the saying: Not pacified, yet at peace.

This is expressed by Lao Tzu thus:

THE GREAT LAW BRINGS NO HARM.

(12) Be guided by big and generous ideas. Avoid a parsimonious spirit.—It was a law in Luh that should any of their people be taken prisoner by the Feudal Lords to pay their ransom out of the treasury should an opportunity offer itself to liberate them. Tzu Kung ransomed one such captive but declined the redemption money. Confucius told him: “Tzu you haven’t done quite right.” Whenever the sage takes any matter in hand (or acts) he supplies a principle that affects the conventions of life and manners of society, and the effect of the teaching is such as to be handed down to succeeding generations. He never acts with a view to his own individual case. The kingdom at the present time has but few wealthy people, the majority are poor. To receive the cost of a ransom from the Public Treasury should not be looked on as avaricious: it would be impossible to redeem many under present conditions if help from the Treasury is not accepted. Under such circumstances no Luh prisoners in the hands of the Feudal Lords could be ransomed after this!” This view of Confucius showed that he was profoundly versed in true policy and.
principle of action, which is consonant with Lao Tzu's dictum:

A SMALL EXPERIENCE IS CLEAR AND GOOD
(But not enough to form a comprehensive principle. Small economies are not always wise).

(13) Militarism is baseful.—Wei Wu Hou enquired of Li Ke the cause of the decay of the Wu nation: His reply was: "Wu was too often victorious in war. Wu Hou, answered, that frequent victories in war should lead to the greatness (and not the fall) of a country, and he could not see how this could be the cause of decay. Li Ke replied, "Frequent wars exhaust the people: frequent victories make the masters drunk with pride. The more the pride the more is the vitality of the people consumed in vainglorious wars. Few are the countries that can stand such a strain and not decay. Pride and arrogance lead to licence and anarchy, exhausting goods and people. Thus there come hatred and dislike leading to enmity.

TO RETIRE AFTER SUCCESS IS WON AND NAME ESTABLISHED
IS A GOOD PRINCIPLE OF ACTION AND IT IS THE LAW OF HEAVEN.

(14) The Saviour of his Country.—Ning Yueh desired an official post from Duke Huan of Ch'i, but he had no means of getting an interview with him. In the meantime he followed the work of a merchant, and was on his way to Ch'i, driving his cart loaded with goods. Resting one evening outside the city gate, Duke Huan came out to receive a guest to whom the gates were opened. The carts round the gate were ordered to move off. The lamps and lights were many and the retainers were numerous. Ning Yueh tapping the horns of his cow sang a ditty in high clear notes. Duke Huan tapped the arm of his attendant, saying, "How strange, the singer can be no ordinary person. Let him come in the train of the carriages." When Duke Huan had arrived his attendants waited his instructions regarding the guest. The duke prepared court robes for him for the interview. Duke Huan was delighted and was about to offer him a post when the entourage remonstrated that the guest was a man of Wei, and that Wei was not far away.

is no hurry. Let enquiries be made, and if we find that his past record is good he can then be engaged." "Not so," replied the Duke. "If it be found that he has some minor defects against him, we shall lose the excellent services of a man for some slight error of his in the past. This is how governors lose the scholars of the country. You can always judge from what you hear; and after hearing there is no need of enquiries into the past. This man is quite agreeable to me. To get just the right men is a difficult matter. Men must be estimated at their best."

Duke Huan acted quite correctly in this matter. Thus Lao Tzu says:

HEAVEN IS GREAT, EARTH IS GREAT, THE TAO IS GREAT. WHEN THOSE FOUR GREATENESSES EXIST WITHIN THE BORDERS THE KING SHARES ONE OF THEM. BECAUSE EACH IS ABLE TO BE SELF CONTAINED

"(15) The man worthy to rule and be King.—Shan Fu, the great ancestor, lived in Pien. Being attacked by the Tartars, he paid tribute of furs and cotton and silk fabrics of precious stones, which being refused (wanting more) made him say, "What Tartars want is my land: wealth and goods will not do for them. T'ai Wang Shan Fu sermonised is this way. To live with the people (elder brothers) and kill their brothers: to mingle with the fathers and slay their sons are acts I will not be a party to: so rest you here in peace to serve the Tartars will not be different from serving me. Moreover I have heard it said, "Don't hurt the people for the sake of territory." So taking his staff he departed. The people clung to him, and they went forth and founded a kingdom in the Ch'i mountain. T'ai Wang Shan Fu may be accredited with knowing how to preserve his kind.

Though rich and honourable he did not injure his person by his mode of life: though poor and lowly he did not permit the love of gain to entangle his person. Being in possession of the honours and emoluments of State it was no little matter to lose what his ancestors had bequeathed him, and handed down through long ages. But he lightly abandons these. Do you think he made a mistake? Listen to what Lao Tzu says:

THE EMPIRE CAN BE ENTRUSTED TO HIM WHO RECKONS IT HONOURABLE TO SPEND SELF FOR THE PEOPLE, THE EMPIRE CAN BE COMMITTED TO HIM WHO DELIGHTS TO SPEND HIS BODY FOR HIS COUNTRY.

1The classic story for children.
2Order one of the attending carriages, and tell them to carry me.
3Odes Pt. II. Bk. 8. Ode 6, 1.
4Cp. Analects 8, Chap. VI. Pro patria mori est dulce.
Moral strength is gained by conquest of the desires.

--- True vision. --- Kung Tzu Mu of Chung Shan talking to Shan Tzu said, “What is your opinion of the man whose thought and will are always occupied in guarding his inner life or personal nature?” Shan Tzu replied, “He has the best view of life. Thinking thus of life he condemns the sway of passion.”

Kung Tzu Mu said, “Though knowledge of the law may exist, how is there failure to subdue the desires?” To which Shan Tzu replied, “Failure of self-conquest and forced submission to the passions implies a double submission to desire; would you not grieve by acquiescence in desire? On the other hand inability to win self-conquest and a forced submission to the passions implies a double loss. Persons who experience this double suffering belong to a short-lived race.” Lao Tzu speaks:

THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE HARMONY IS CALLED THE CONSTANT LAW OR RULE OF LIFE.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE CONSTANT LAW GIVES TRUE INTELLIGENCE.

THE WELL BEING OF LIFE IS CALLED HAPPINESS.

PASSIONS UNDER THE RULE OF THE REASON GIVES STRENGTH.

So that when a person lives in the light of the law it is like the blind finding vision.

A more knowledge of the art of government insufficient for ruling. --- Chuang Wang of Tsu’s consulted Shan Ho on how to govern a country. He replied, “Ho (I am) is versed in the government of the person, but not in government of a country.” Tsu Wang further said: “I have come into possession of the Penatées and Látées and would like to learn how to preserve them.” Shan Ho replied, “Your servant has never heard of any country being in disorder when the person of the ruler is well-governed: nor, on the other hand, have I ever heard that order can be had in a nation where the personal life of the ruler is disordered. So I place the whole responsibility (of government) on the person: personal renovation. I would not venture to attribute it to the art of government itself (which should be an attribute of the personal life).” This is confirmed by what Lao Tzu says:

THE PERSON THAT IS UNDERGOING TRAINING IN VIRTUE POSSESS THE REAL VIRTUE.

There is no bloom in any stereotyped law of life. --- Duke Huan was reading in his study when a wheelwright

1 When those feelings have been stirred and they act in their due degree there ensues what may be called Harmony. Doctrine of Mean, Chap. I, 4.

2 Who was trimming wheels outside, leaving his adze and awl, came near and asked the Duke what he was reading and the Duke replied “The books of the Sages.” The wheelwright asked where these men were, to which the Duke responded that they were all dead. The wheelwright said “These books are but the drags and lees of the Sages.” The Duke Huan was angered and said, as the colour mounted his cheeks, “Do you a workman venture to criticise my reading. If you can justify yourself, well; otherwise you will be put to death.” The wheelwright replied, “Of course I can justify myself. Permit your servant to explain himself from his own work of wheelwright. If the wedges are driven in to fast they will not enter (but break): if driven in too slowly they will not be firm: neither too slow nor too fast is an art whereby the hand and will wholly act in concert, and in this way perfect workmanship is got. Your servant cannot transmit this expertness to his son, nor can the son get it from him, and so he is still working at wheels, though I am 70 years old. It is so with the words of the sages, the real bloom of these died with their authors and there is nothing but the empty dead husks remaining.” Lao Tzu’s words supply the principle:

THE TAO THAT CAN BE EXPRESSED IN WORDS IS NOT THE REAL TAO.

THE NAME THAT CAN BE NAMED IS NOT THE REAL NAME.

You must have the daimonion in yourself.

A wily old diplomat. --- In ancient time Han Tzu, the city-guardian, being Prime Minister of Sung, spoke to the King, making the following suggestion: “The peace and unrest of a nation, the government and the anarchy of the people depend on the king’s rewards and punishments. Rewarding with titles and the giving of largess is what the people like. Let the King himself exercise this power. But the death penalty and punishment arouse the disgust of the people. Let your servant therefore discharge this function.” The King of Sung replied, that it was a good suggestion, since he would get the praise and his minister bear the brunt of opprobrium, and he was sure that the Feudal Lords would not scorn him for this. Nevertheless, continued the King, when the people realized that the autocratic powers of death were in the hands of the minister, the officers would pay him respect and the people would fear him. In less than a year, Tsu Han overshadowed the king and usurped the power of government. Lao Tzu says:

THE FISH SHOULD NOT LEAVE HIS POOL.

THE SHARP TOOLS OF AUTHORITY SHOULD NOT BE GIVEN INTO OTHER HANDS.
(20) Tradition is no law of life.—Wang Shou carried his books and went to see Hsi P'ing at Chou. Hsi P'ing observed that things should respond to change and circumstance. Change depended on times, so that a knowledge of the times is not bound by an unchanging custom. Books come from language: language comes from thought: thought is imbedded in books. On hearing this Wang Shou burnt his books and leapt for joy. Thus Lao Tzu says:

THE USE OF EVERY ART AND MANY WORDS IS NOT ESSENTIAL TO MAINTAINING THE DOCTRINE OF THE MIDDLE COURSE. THAT IS WHAT THE TAO HAS.

(21) Conserve and Concentrate the mind.—Tzii Pei, Mayor of the Palace, invited Chwang Wang to a feast, which he accepted. Tzii Pei was wanting in courtesy and the king did not keep the appointment. One day the Mayor was standing in the courtyard and looking north (towards the King) Tzii Pei said, 'Ancient kings kept their appointments, do you not really mean to go? I fear your servant has committed some fault.' 'I have been told,' replied the King, 'that you prepared a feast for me in the Chi-ang T'ai. This fairy edifice looks south on the Liao mountain, at the foot of which are the waters of Fang Huang. On the left is the Chiang, on the right is the Hui river. The joy of such a scene would make one forget death itself. Such joy is not for such an imperfect man as myself. I would be afraid that I would never return were I to go.' As Lao Tzu says:

NOT TO LOOK ON WHAT STIRS THE DESIRES IS THE WAY TO KEEP THE MIND FROM WANDERING.

(22) A discerning wife.—Chung Erh, the son of the Duke of Ts'in, in the course of his wandering life happened to pass through Ta-so, the prince of which country showed him no courtesy. The wife of Hsi Fu Chi, the prince, however, said to her husband: 'You are not very attentive to the son of the Duke of Ts'in. I notice that all who accompany him are able men. When they return into power they are certain to come and attack Ta-so. Why don't you pay some attention to them.' Tai Fu Chi in consequence presented them with a costly feast and sent a present of jade. Chung Erh took the food, but declined the jade. After returning to his country he organised an expedition against Ta-so and got its submission. He commanded the three regiments not to enter the domicile of the wife of Hsi Fu Chi: We find this principle enunciated by Lao Tzu in the words:

IN HUMILITY YOU WILL FIND SALVATION
IN BENDING YOU WILL FIND FREEDOM

1Some 13 words wanting in the text.
of this kind would not raise dust in galloping, nor leave a trace of its steps behind it. My son's qualities are secondary. He may recognise a good horse, but not the unique one. I have an assistant, however, who helps me in feeding and grooming the horses, who is in no whit inferior to myself: his name is Chiu Fang Yin. Please interview him."

The Duke commissioned this person to buy a horse. He returned in three months with the information, that he had got a horse, in Sha Chiu. Duke Mu asked him what kind of a horse it was and he replied that it was a stallion of yellow colour. Men were sent for it and when it came it was found to be a black mare. The Duke called Pei Yoh and said what a mess the man whom he had recommended had made of things. He neither knew the colour of the hair, nor the quality of the animal: neither was he aware of whether it was a stallion or a mare. "What kind of a horse fancier could such an individual be?" Pei Yoh breathed deeply and heaved a sigh, saying, "Is it a bad as that?" This man is a thousand times superior to me as a connoisseur of horses. "What Yin sees in a horse is its natural endowments and not merely the outward accidents. In seeking its vitality he doesn't think of the flesh and bone (rough elements); he looks for the intrinsic merits without regarding the extrinsic form. He searches for the essentials and has no eyes for the non-essentials. He sees what he wants to see and pays no attention to what he doesn't want to see. Such points as he observes are above the mere form of the horse." When the horse was led in it proved to be truly a horse of a thousand li. This illumines the saying of Lao Tsu:

THE TRULY STRAIGHT LOOKS CROOKED THE TRULY SKILLFUL APPEARS UNSKILLFUL.

(26) The maxim that necessity knows no law is alien to the true art of government.—Wu Chi filled the office of Prime Minister of Ts'u. Going to Wei he told Ch'u I Jo that the King had overlooked his demerits and made him Prime Minister, so he asked Ch'u to please give an opinion on his qualities as a man. Ch'u Tzu asked in turn what his real aims were, to which Wu Chi replied that his policy was to lower the power of the nobles, equalize the scale of salaries by lowering some, and increasing that of those who had too little: to make the armaments of the nation perfect and by constant struggle gain a dominant place in the empire. Ch'u Tzu responding said, "the ancients governed best by not making any changes in past methods and not altering the usual practices. But since you propose doing so let me tell you it will not be good. I have also heard that enmity is but cruel and savage energy: the military is an obnoxious and hurtful instrument, on which people depend in settling their quarrels. You now secretly plan this method of brute force, and delight in the use of this hurtful instrument. If you were to carry on those struggles you would be acting most banefully. Further when you employed the Luh troops against Ch'1 you gained your purpose in spite of a bad cause: in like manner you conquered Ts'in in the face of all right."

I have heard it said, "If you keep from bringing disaster and miseries on men you will keep yourself from your own ruin. By ruining others you complete your own ruin." I firmly believe that our country's King has transgressed the laws of Heaven and wreaked human principles often, but no disaster has hitherto overtaken him and it must be that you are the man to bring this on." Ch'i Wu became alarmed and asked if there were a possibility of avoiding such a catastrophe? Ch'u Tzu replied that as the catastrophe impending over all had already taken form it would be impossible to avert it. All that could be done was to alleviate the deleterious effects by generous love and sincere actions. As Lao Tsu says:

BLUNT THE EDGE, DISPERSE ALL TEMPTATIONS KEEP IN CHECK YOUR BRILLIANCE MAKE YOURSELF ONE WITH THE PUBLIC.

(27) The quality of humility fits Kings.—When Ts'in was going to attack Ts'u and when the army was not more than 105 li away, and still coming on, the ministers of Ts'u asked authority to meet the enemy and strike him. Chuang Wang responded that Ts'in did not attack Ts'u in the past, so it must be that he was personally guilty of something to bring on such shame. All the ministers replied that Ts'in did not attack Ts'u during the regime of past ministers, so it must be owing to their fault that Ts'in came to attack the country now, they begged for an order to attack. The King weeping bitterly, the tears falling down his garments, rose up and made obeisance to all the ministers.

When the people of Ts'in heard of this they said, 'King and ministers are vying the one with the other each asking to bear the responsibility of our aggression, the King even doing homage to his ministers,' they said, 'This expedition must not be made.' The army returned. Just as Lao Tsu says:

HE WHO CAN BEAR INDIGNITY FOR THE NATION IS THE MAN TO BE ITS MASTER.

(28) The character of a man worthy to be King.—In the time of Duke Ching of Sung the planet Mars was in the Heart constellation, which so alarmed the Duke that he
called the astronomer Tzii Wei for consultation on the portent. He reported that the appearance of Mars signified a judgment of Heaven, since the Heart constellation was the celestial sign that governed the territory of Sung. Further, the Prince would have to bear the calamity: nevertheless it would be possible to shift this on to the shoulders of the ministers. But the Duke objected to this since these were the agents of government and it would be unfortuitous for them to die. “In that case,” Tzii Wei said, “it could be shifted on to the people.” Again the Duke objected on the plea that if the people were to die he would have no one over whom to rule, and it would be preferable for him alone to die. “Let it then be transferred on to the Seasons,” said Tzii Wei. Once more the Duke expressed his unwillingness to this proposal, since the livelihood of the people depended on the Seasons, for should the people experience a famine they would die. “And were I,” he continued “to risk the life of the people to save my own, who would desire to have me as their King! My days are finished so there’s an end of it.” To these objections Tzii Wei made no further response. He turned to the north and making his obeisance said, “May I venture to congratulate your Majesty. Though Heaven is placed high it yet hears those below. The Prince has given expression to the thought of a good man in his three objections. So Heaven will surely reward the Prince threefold. To-night this planet will move 21 li and the Duke will have 21 years lease of life.” In response to the question of what assurance there was of this, Tzii Wei replied, “the Prince spoke three times the words of a wise man and the star must remove the distance I indicated. May I ask you to come outside and see. If it doesn’t deviate the distance mentioned you may take my life.” The Duke assented. That evening the star did move away 21 li. Lao Tzii says: 

HE WHO CAN TAKE ON HIMSELF THE ILL OMENS OF A NATION SHALL BE THE KING. 

(30) Who should get the decoration?—Tzii Fa attacked and overcame Ts’ai. The (King) Hsuan Wang met him on his return. He apportioned 100 ch’in of the best land to him for the purposes of sacrifices. But Tzii Fa refused this grant on the grounds that all government administration, and tributes, and the visits of the Feudal Lords were the result of the King’s merits. The issue of commands, the distribution of orders and the dispersion of the enemy even before the army was engaged in battle were the result of the awe inspired by the chief magistrate. The victory of the army in battle was the result of the soldiers effort. To take advantage of these successes to increase the emoluments of the nobility would be neither humane nor just.” Hence he refused. This episode shows what Lao Tzii says:

HE HAS ACHIEVED SUCCESS BUT DOES NOT THINK OF IT; THE VERY FACT OF NOT DWELLING ON IT ENSURES THAT THE RENOWN SHALL ABIDE WITH HIM.

(31) A contract is more than a scrap of paper.—Wen Kung of Ts’in in going to attack the Yuan State assured his ministers that the enemy would submit in three days and afterward they would proceed to his enterprise by this hope. But when the three days had passed without the capitulation, Wen Kung withdrew his troops. An officer said the place would capitulate in a day or two therefore let them hold on. The Prince replied that he was fully convinced that Yuan could be taken in three days when he made the promise: but as he failed to capture it within the prescribed time he had given to his ministers, he had therefore broken faith with them by such a promise of taking Yuan: so he would not take it. When the people of Yuan heard this they said: “Having such a Prince can we refrain from surrendering?” Which they did forthwith. The people of Wen hearing these things also begged to be received. Thus Lao Tzii says:

HOW DEEP AND ABSTRACT! WITHIN THE TAO THERE IS THE ESSENCE, THE ESSENCE IS ABSOLUTELY TRUE: IN ITS VERY CENTRE REPOSE SINCERITY AND GOOD FAITH.
(32) First things first.—When Duke Kung I became Premier of Luh the whole country brought him presents of fish, knowing he was fond of it, but which he refused to accept. Ti Tsu remonstrated with him and wanted to know why he refused every gift of fish seeing he was so fond of it? He gave as his reason that he declined the presents for the very reason that he was fond of it. Were he to accept such, he said, it would involve his vacating the post of minister. Though he liked fish yet he could not afford to buy it himself (out of office). But his refusal to accept any presents of fish did away with the necessity of retiring from office and thus he could afford to supply himself with fish always. Thus he was clear on altruism and egotism. Just as Lao Tsu says:

BY PUTTING HIS PERSON LAST IT BECAME FIRST BY DENYING HIS BODY HE PRESERVED IT IT WAS NOT WHOLLY A MATTER OF UNSELFISHNESS THAT HE WAS ABLE TO GRATIFY HIS PRIVATE DESIRES.

Another saying of his is:

SATISFIED WITH WHAT ONE HAS WILL PRECLUDE THE SNER OF OTHERS.

(33) An elderly man of Hu Ch'i said to Sun Hsü Ao, "People have three kinds of hatreds. Do you know them?" Well they are, "The scholars envy a high noble: the king dislikes a great officer: and all dislike those with big salaries." Sun Hsü Ao replied, "My nobility is the highest and my ambitions are the lowest: my post is the highest but my mind is the humblest: my salary is the biggest but I lavishly distribute it hence I escape the three hatreds." As Lao Tsu says:

THE EXALTED MUST MAKE LOWLINESS THEIR ROOT.
THE HIGH MUST TAKE THE LOW AS A FOUNDATION.

(34) Concentration of purpose leads to perfection of Action.—The man who acted as smith for Ta Ssu Ma was still beasting swords at 80 years of age without ever making a mistake in shaping even the finest edge. The minister said to him: "Is it skill or is there some secret about it that you can work thus." The smith replied, "It is practice and attention. When your servant was twenty years old, I liked to beat swords, and paid no attention to anything else. I never examined an article that wasn't a sword. Therefore in the use of this skill it came to be second nature to me, and by this concentrated practice I became perfect." How much more of that which is in constant use like the art of government. No affair but can come to perfection, as the saying is:

TO ACT ACCORDING TO THE TAO IS THE WAY THAT MAKES A PERSON ONE WITH THE TAO ITSELF.

(35) Bear present indignity and wait for empire.—Wen Wang sharpened his virtues and cultivated his government so that in three years two-thirds of the country owned him allegiance. Chou the emperor, was troubled when he heard it, and said: "Should I rise early and retire late and mend my ways and cultivate virtue, belabouring my mind and wearing my body with heavy toils: should I let him go and think no more about him, I fear he would attack me." Ts'un Hou Hu said to him, "Chou Pei Ch'ang is a person of benevolence and justice and of good judgment. His eldest son Fa is a man of courage and determination. His second son Tan is a person of pious and frugal habits, and possesses the gift of reading the drift of the times. Should you give way to him you cannot escape the danger of such a course; if you take no notice of him, and let him go free, you are bound to come to a bad end. Even an ugly cap must be worn on the head. So before his schemes are matured I counsel you to check him." Thereupon Ch'u Shang held Wen Wang captive in Yu Li. Whereupon San I Sheng having a thousand ingots of silver, sought for the most curious and precious stones in the empire; he obtained a tandem of the tiger-marked horses: 300 pieces of black jade: 500 cowries: the dusky leopard: the yellow p'i: the blue kan: 2,000 pieces of the white tiger with the striped skin. Having collected these he presented them to Chou by means of an intermediary, the minister Fei Chung. When Chou saw the gifts he was delighted with them and liberated Wen Wang, killing an ox and offering it to him as a parting gift. On his return home, Wen Wang simulated an infatuation for building doors inlaid with jade, and lofty towers: played with girls and spent his time dilly dallying with drums and music, but really he was waiting his chance to fall on Chou. When Chou heard of these infatuations it made him say: "Chou Pei Ch'ang has changed his way and altered his course of life. There will be no more disquiet for me." Chou however, did not mend his ways but cast the iron man; he took out the heart of Pei Kan:
and ripped out the embryo of a pregnant woman; and slew the minister who remonstrated with him. Wen Wang at length arose at these enormities and put his plans into execution. Lao Tzu says:

CONSCIOUS OF GLORY YET BEARING PRESENT SHAME, SUCH A MAN IS AS A VALLEY TO WHICH ALL THE CURRENTS OF EMPIRE SHALL CONVERGE.

(36) Kings should stand in awe of the people.—Ch'eng Wang sought advice from Yen I on political matters, asking how he should act so that the authorities might win the affection of the people. The reply was “employ them at suitable seasons;” “be mindful of their interests, respect their feelings.” And in response to the King’s further question how this was to be done, replied “Act with circumspection as though you were approaching a deep pool or treading on thin ice.” To which the king said, “Fearful for kings then?” Yen I replied, “Within the whole empire if the king acts well the people are his dependents; if he acts ill they are his enemies. The servants of Hsia and Shang become the enemies of the two Kings Chieh and Chou and transferred their allegiance to Tang and Wu. The people of Hsu Sha attacked their ruler and allied themselves to Shen Nung. 2 All the world knows these things: Kings should stand in awe.” The words of Lao Tzu illustrate the principle:

WHAT MEN STAND IN AWE OF IS TO BE FEARED BY ALL KINGS.

(37) The principles of the Sages should be abolished as they are the maxims of robbers.—The followers of Ché asking their chief if thievish had any principles, received the reply that it was not possible for them to be without such. The person who could guess where stored was a “superior man:” he who entered first was a man of courage: and he who was last to leave was the person of heroism or the loyal person. In the average division of spoils there was the element of justice. The member who knew when to act or otherwise possessed knowledge and wisdom. Where one of these five factors was lacking, no great act of plunder could be successful. Nothing in the world could be done without principles. From this it may be seen that the

mind of the brigand must needs borrow the teaching of the sages for carrying on his trade. Lao Tzu says:

ABOLISH THE SAGES. ABANDON THE ART OF SAGACITY AND THE WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE WILL BE INCREASED A HUNDREDFOLD.

(38) Use for the rough diamonds of Society.—General Tzu Fa of Ts' u liked to look out for men of skill. He encouraged everyone who showed any talent. Now there was a clever thief in Ts' u who heard of this, so he went to see the general saying that he had heard he was on the look out for men of skill, that his was in thieving; and as he would like to try his skill so he offered himself as a soldier. Hearing this the general was in such haste to see him that he could hardly wait to put on his hat and robes to receive him civilly. His attendants tried to dissuade him from showing any civility to a thief. The general replied that this was no business of theirs.

Not long after Ch'i marshalled its troops to attack Ts' u. Tzu Fa, the commander of the Ts' u army, was pressed and had to withdraw his forces three times. The best leaders of Ts' u had exhausted their plans and used every device, but the army of Ch'i still advanced and was stronger than ever. Just then the quondam thief begged permission of the general to use his little talent. Tzu Fa consented, and without asking any particulars, sent him off. So the thief entered the camp of the Ch'i commander and stole the curtain of his bed, as he was sleeping, and brought it to his general. The general thereupon sent it back by a messenger with the words that one of his soldiers found the commander’s curtain when gathering fire sticks: so he was returning it to the man in charge by a messenger. The next day the thief soldier stole the pillow of the commander as he was sleeping. This again Tzu Fa returned in the same way. The next day he went and abstracted the commander’s hair fastening. Tzu Fa once more returned the article. When the soldiers became aware of this they were greatly alarmed, and the commander held a consultation with his officers maintaining that if they didn’t immediately return home it was not impossible that the King of Ts’u would get the commander’s head next. He then withdrew the troops and departed. This is as the common saying has it: no gift is too little, no ability too slight for the king to use. Just as Lao Tzu says:

THE ROUGH DIAMONDS OF SOCIETY ARE THE MATERIAL FOR THE USE OF THE GOOD MAN.

(39) The true culture of the Tao and life.—Yen Hui told Confucius, “I have made progress.” “How so,” asked

Confucius mentions this in the Analecta Br. I, Chap. XVI. The people had to give free service to government; each person, in good years, 3 days; in medium years, 2 days; in bad years, 1 day. They were not to be taken in busy seasons but only during times of leisure.

In the interval between Fu Hsi and Shen Nung, Kung King, a Feudal Lord, obtained power and was the autocrat of the empire.
Confucius. He replied "Hui can forego Etiquette and Music." Confucius said: "Good, but your progress is not yet complete."

These are the Fundamentals of the Sage's Teaching. The Abolishment of the Sage the Elimination of Sagacity implies entrance into the State of Non-Action.

Another day Hui saw Confucius and said: "Hui has made progress." "In what way," asked Confucius. "I have dispensed with Jen and I, Benevolence and Justice" answered Hui. Confucius said "Very good," there is yet room to advance. Yet another day on seeing Confucius, Hui said, "I can sit without being conscious of my body. I have reached the abstraction of the Tao." Confucius suddenly asked, "What do you mean by sitting in a state of abstraction." Yen Hui replied: "Lose all sense of the physical body: be detached from sentiency, be separated from this outward form, abandon knowledge: thus situated penetrate within the spiritual flux (or essence): passivity is what I mean by sitting in a state of insensibility." Chung Ni replied, "Penetration into these implies a state without thought goodness, virtue: the state of spiritual passivity or flux implies a state without the constant principles and maxims of the Sages. You have entered sainthood before me." I must beg to follow after you. Lao Tzu says:

Clothed with Thought and Animal Spirits: Embracing Unity of the Tao and able to abide in it without interruption, the indivisual breath absolutely in a State of Fluidity and in a Perfect State of Yielding-ness similar to that of an infant child. Being in such a state is to be in the Tao.

A false move.—Duke Mu of Ts' u mobilised his troops for a surprise attack on Cheng. Ch'i's Hsü disagreed with the proposal, on the grounds that to be successful, the chances must not be over 100 li away, and the infantry not over 30 li from the objective; that the plans must be secret and not divulged; the soldiers keenness must not have lost its edge (as they would after long marches); the commissariat must not be depleted: the people must not be exhausted; but all by uniting their keen spirit and abounding strength in the object, attack the enemy, and overawe him. "But in the case before us," he said "the distance is several thousand li: the territories of several Feudal Princes must be crossed to make this surprise attack. Your servant wonders whether the King would not reconsider the plan." But Duke Mu refusing the advice, Ch' en Hau in sending forth the troops wore mourning, hemp garments and wept.

The army on its march had to pass through Chou and was met on the east of it by a trader from Cheng Hsuan, Kao by name, who had come inspired by the command of the Baron of Cheng to welcome the weary troops of Ts'in by an offering of 12 oxen. The three commanders were alarmed and deliberated saying they had marched several thousand li to a surprise attack on a people, but before they had reached their objective, people were aware of their purpose, and so were prepared: the surprise therefore would be impossible. They withdrew the troops and departed.

Just then Duke Wen of Ts'in fell sick and died; but before the burial had taken place, Hsien Chen spoke to the young king, Haung Kung, saying, "My former Prince, in days gone by, was friendly with Duke Mu, as is well known to everybody and none of the Feudal Lords but was aware of it. But here we find that even our dead King is buried, he (Mu) does not offer his condolences nor ask permission to pass over our territory. This is because he sees our King is dead and despises our new King; I beg for authority to attack him." This being granted Hsien Chen called up the army and meeting the forces of Ts'in at Yao routed them. He captured their three commanders and led them captive. On hearing these tidings Duke Mu put on sack-cloth and walked in the temple as he related the events to the people. Lao Tzu says:

To have knowledge and yet appear not to know is the Superior Way. To have no knowledge and yet give the appearance of knowing is an Inferior Art.

(41) In the choice of a wife don't be led away by the senses.—After the death of the empress of Ch'i the King desired to wed a new empress. The matter still pending he took counsel with the ministerial body. Duke Hsieh wished to fall in with the purpose of the King sent a present of ten maidens to him, adorning one of them. One morning enquiring where the beautiful maid was, and advising the King to make her his consort, the king of Ch'i was greatly delighted, and highly honoured the duke Hsieh. Thus when the master purpose and desires are given outward expression to the servants they have a handle for controlling the master. Just as Lao Tzu says:

Plug up the sense avenues, close up the doors of desires, do not let the body belabour itself with these.

(42) Another case of Newton and the sands. The world is only at the threshold of knowledge (H. G. Wells).—Lu Ao, a man haughty and proud, went touring towards the North
entered the Hsuan Ch'ieh mountain and arrived at the top of the Meng Ku range. Here he met with a person whose eyes were deep set, his temples covered with jet black hair, tears stood in his eyes: he had the shoulders of a kite: his head was generous above and reeding below.\footnote{1} He seemed full of merriment, as he danced in the breezes. He looked at Lu Ao and appeared ill pleased to see him there: the arms that were swaying in his gyrations he let fall and he slipped behind a stone column. Lu Ao came forward and looked at him, just as he was seated on a tortoise shell and swallowing oysters. Lu Ao addressed him thus, "I thought I of the species, the former remains only individual habibs.\footnote{2} I see no reason for my not doing so. The fisherman replied that Chi Tzǔ didn't wish people to capture small fishes. That was the reason. Wu returned to Confucius and told him this, remarking that Chi Tzü's virtue was perfect, in that he had induced people to act in their privacy as though a monitor stood by their side with the admonitions of severe punishment. How could he have attained to this degree of excellence? Confucius replied, (Mu) I have seen the statement that in government the experience of punishment in one thing makes one careful in another thing. Chi Tzǔ has exercised this art in his administration. Lao Tzū put it in this way:

**Keep clear of one by adopting another.**

(44) **Follow the Spirit and cultivate the habit of Non-action.**—The Spirit of the water said to the Shadow: "Is Luminosity a spirit?" The Shadow replied, "Nay." The Spirit of the water said, "How do you know?" "Nay." Shadow replied, "The light passes Fu Sang, the orient, and daily illuminates the Universe. The brilliancy of the light tinging the four seas and the world has no means of entering the closed door and the stopped up window, but Spirit penetrates everywhere and floods everything. Above, it spreads to the very borders and limits of Heaven; below it covers the earth, nourishing all creation. An image cannot be made of it. Up and down even to the extremities of the world and beyond the Spirit's energies operate. Luminosity cannot be such as spirit." As Lao Tzǔ says:

**THE MOST YIELDING THING IN THE WORLD INTERPENETRATES THE FIRMEST.**

Thus Chuang Tzǔ says:

**"THE CREATURES OF A SHORT YEAR ARE INFERIOR TO THOSE OF A LONG YEAR. A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE IS INFERIOR TO GREAT KNOWLEDGE. THE MOTH THAT SEES THE MORNING LIGHT DIES BEFORE A MONTH COMES ROUND. THE CICADA KNOWS NEITHER AN AUTUMN NOR SPRING."**

These words show clearly that there are many things we can never know.

(49) **Let the King cultivate a conscience in the people.**—Chi Tzū ruled Shun Fu for three years. Wu Ma Ch'i, making himself incognito, went about to see the effect of his administration. Seeing a fisherman throw back into the stream a fish he had taken, he asked the reason why he did so, telling him that fishermen as a rule kept the fish they had taken; what was the reason for his not doing so? The fisherman replied that Chi Tzū didn't wish people to capture small fishes. That was the reason. Wu returned to Confucius and told him this, remarking that Chi Tzū's virtue was perfect, in that he had induced men to act in their privacy as though a monitor stood by their side with the admonitions of severe punishment. How could he have attained to this degree of excellence? Confucius replied, (Mu) I have seen the statement that in government the experience of punishment in one thing makes one careful in another thing. Chi Tzǔ has exercised this art in his administration. Lao Tzū put it in this way:

**KEEPT CLEAR OF ONE BY ADOPTING ANOTHER.**

(44) **Follow the Spirit and cultivate the habit of Non-action.**—The Spirit of the water said to the Shadow: "Is Luminosity a spirit?" The Shadow replied, "Nay." The Spirit of the water said, "How do you know?" The Spirit of the water said, "How do you know?" The Shadow replied, "The light passes Fu Sang, the orient, and daily illuminates the Universe. The brilliancy of the light tinging the four seas and the world has no means of entering the closed door and the stopped up window, but Spirit penetrates everywhere and floods everything. Above, it spreads to the very borders and limits of Heaven; below it covers the earth, nourishing all creation. An image cannot be made of it. Up and down even to the extremities of the world and beyond the Spirit's energies operate. Luminosity cannot be such as spirit." As Lao Tzǔ says:

**THE MOST YIELDING THING IN THE WORLD INTERPENETRATES THE FIRMEST.**

---

1 A sign of great intellectual powers.

2 A mythical name of some deity unknown.
Brilliancy asked Non-Being. "Have you really an existence or are you really non-existent?" Non-Being made no reply to this. Not able to see any objective form which he could address he kept gazing on non-being's appearance, dim and vague. He gazed but saw no manifest form; he listened but discerned no sound; he clutched at it but failed to grasp it not even the idea. The past though not in apprehend the qualities (or better) I could not address he kept gazing on non-being's non-existence or are you really non-existent."

This shows that when the mind is occupied with distant objects things nearer home. Hence there is no attention paid to wounds nearer home. Hence when the mind is occupied with distant objects things nearer are foregone. Just as Lao Tzu says:

**SINCE THE FORMLESS ENTERS INTO THE NON-SPATIAL I KNOW THEREFORE THAT NON-ACTION IS PROFITABLE.**

(45) The Supremacy of the Spirit.—Pei Kung Sheng meditated a revolution. After the end of an audience he stood in his home on his lance; the point pricked his jaw and the blood flowed but without his being conscious of it. When the people of Ch'eng heard of it they said "If he is unconscious of this, what will he not be unconscious of." This shows that when the spirit follows ideas beyond the physical frame, and mind is flooded with thoughts and designs there is no attention paid to wounds nearer home. Hence when the mind is occupied with distant objects things nearer are foregone. Just as Lao Tzu says:


The saying is illustrated by the foregoing historical episode.

(46) Forts are not the best guardians of the frontier.—The emperor T'ai in anxious about maintaining the empire he had won, assigned guardposts on the frontiers: built the great wall: organized liulin stations, and bridges: erected fortifications: prepared express services: and appointed frontier officials. Nevertheless Liu Pang captured the empire most easily.  

When Wu Wang punished Chou and broke his power at Mu Yeh he nevertheless sealed up the grave of Pi Kan (Chou's founder): he exhibited notices of immunity and protection over the shops of the merchants: he placed a guard at the door of Chi Tzu. He offered his respects at the temple of Ch'eng Ch'iao: he distributed the grain at Chu Chi'ao: he disbursed the money hoards at Lu Ts'ai: he broke his war drum and war staff: he unhect his bows and broke their strings: he abandoned his palace and lived in the suburbs to show the settlement of peace and the change of regime. He laid by the sword and adopted the ivory tablet to show that all enmity had been laid aside. Whereupon the whole empire became jubilant and praised him. The Feudal Lords brought their tributes (silk) and paid court for 34 generations without a break. As Lao Tzu says:

**HE WHO KNOWS HOW TO CLOSE SECURELY WITHOUT BARS AND BOLT WILL FIND THAT NO ONE WILL OPEN THE DOOR. HE WHO SECURES WELL WITHOUT CORDS WILL FIND THAT NO ONE WILL BREAK THE BOND.**

(47) The mental condition that will lead to mastery.—Yin Hsii tried to learn driving for three years without success. He was extremely troubled and thought hard on the matter. One night in a dream Chi'ui Chia (the great charioteer) appeared as his teacher in a dream. Going to call the following day, on his usual instructor, he was greeted with the remark, "I isn't that I dislike instructing you. I fear it is that you are incapable of instruction. To-day I am going to tell you the art of Chi'ui Chia (I can't do more). Yin Hsii turned to go, but did the usual courtesy saying: "Your pupil has met with great good fortune. I truly received his instruction in a dream last night." This is what Lao Tzu says:

**HE WHO HAS REACHED A PERFECT STATE OF EMPTINESS AND IS CONSCIOUS OF PERSONAL FAILURE, AND WHO ABIDES WHOLLY IN A STATE OF QUIESCENCE WILL FIND THAT NATURE WILL CO-OPERATE WITH HIM.**

(48) Superior Men.—Formerly Sun Hsii Ao thrice gained the post of Prime Minister without showing any special gratification. He also vacated the office thrice with-

---

1. The one is visible the other invisible.
2. Who died in Korea.
out any compunction or manifestation of chagrin, Ch'i Tzū of Yen Ling was pressed by the Wu people to become their King but was unwilling. Hsü Yu declined the throne and refused to accept it. An Tzū made an oath to Ts'ui Shu that he would not serve him nor change his loyalty to the old house, though he were to suffer death for it.

All these loyal men had a vision of something beyond the present. Their spirits were indifferent to life and death, and so they were not to be beguiled by any worldly goods.

49) The spirit of Self-sacrifice.—The Ch'ing nation had a man named Tz'u Fei, who gained an excalibur in the Kan army. On returning from the war he had to cross a river. When midway a violent storm was raised by Yang Hou the spirit of the water, and two scaly dragons clutched the sides of the boat. Tz'u Fei asked the ferrymen whether they had survived another such storm. They replied it was most unusual. So Tz'u Fei shutting his eyes, rolling up his sleeves and drawing out his sword exclaimed, "A soldier may be persuaded by the courteous way of kindness and justice, but he refused to submit to intimidation. You rotten and despicable creatures of the river, I wouldn't grieve if I lost my precious sword in attacking you!" So jumping into the river he slashed at the dragons and cut off their heads. All the passengers were saved, and the wind and waves died away. Tz'u Fei was made a baron of Ching with territory.

Confucius hearkening of it remarked, "Tz'u Fei did well in drawing his sword at the hideous monsters of the river." Thus Lao Tzǔ says:

HE WHO SACRIFICES HIS LIFE IS SUPERIOR TO HIM WHO WOULD SAVE IT.

50) The man of fickle purpose is unfit to be a leader.—Shun Yu K'un of Ch'i counselled King Wu to adopt the principle of Federation. The King accepted the advice and gave him ten fine chariots to go to Ch'ing. When about to depart, his men held that federation was not good enough, so he offered the King the further advice of Imperialism. Just as he was departing with this alternative idea, the King stopped him, as he had lost confidence in a man who had as suddenly abandoned the purpose of federation, holding such a person incompetent to work out the principle of imperialism, as he was unstable. Words should be based on conviction and business should be carried on on fundamental principles. When these are both lost, devices though many are useless. This is the significance of the figure biting his finger cast on the Chou tripod. It showed the mind of the ancient kings that they didn't care to use more cleverness and schemes. Hence Sheng Tzǔ says,

A WORKMAN KNOWS HOW TO MAKE A DOOR BY HIS SKILL; BUT IT REQUIRES AN ARCHITECT TO PLAN THE DOOR.

51) Personality must not be hampered.—Tien Chiu of the sect of Mei Tzǔ followed the master's method. Desiring to see Hui Wang of Ch'ing, he hung up the reins of his fine carriage, vainly waiting. He remained a whole year at the court without getting an interview. Some one advised him to go and see the King of Ts'ū. This king received him gladly and gave him credentials to go as minister to Ch'ing. On arriving Hui Wang finding that he was duly accredited with a general's commission, received him willingly and gave him an audience. In leaving the palace he sighed deeply saying to those around him: "I stayed for three years at Ch'ing without an audience; never did I imagine I could get one via Ts'ū." In business matters thus: "The near is distant and the distant is near." Hence the ways of the great man may not be gauged by any ordinary standard. He arrives at his object in his own way and that is all about it; as Kuan Tzǔ remarks: "In flying an owl its wings must not be tied by a string."

The great depths of the Feng waters do not keep any dust and debris on their surface. Throw a needle in and it is quite visible at the bottom. It isn't the depth, but clearness that matters. Neither fish turtle nor dragon nor snake care to appear within. For the same reason cereals will not grow on a stone, nor do deer and stags roam on the bare hills since there is no shade to give them hiding.

52) Generosity of Spirit.—Once on a time Chao Wen Tzǔ asked Shu Hsiang¹ which of the six generals of Tsin would die first. He replied that it would be Chib of the centre army: "because," he said, "this man in administering, carried on his examination with harshness; he informed himself of vexatious details; he regarded loyalty to consist in being stingy to his underlings and reckoned that merit lay in gaining many good marks. Such a person may be likened to one stretching leather. Pull it and it can be made larger. Nevertheless this is the way to tear it. Lao Tzǔ says:

HE WHO ADMINISTERS IN A GENEROUS SPIRIT WILL HAVE A SINCERE AND SIMPLE PEOPLE. HE WHO IS PETTY-FOGGING AND VEXATIOUS, WILL HAVE A PEOPLE OF MANY IMPERFECTIONS.

¹A clairvoyant.
(53) Strict justice and loyalty.—Duke Ching addressing T'ai P'u asked him what his teaching could accomplish. And the reply was: "It can shake the Earth." An Tsū went to interview the duke and the duke said to him, "T'ai P'u told me his teaching could shake the Earth. Now how can he shake the earth?" An Tsū was silent and made no reply. He went out and spoke to T'ai P'u saying, "I saw formerly the planet Kou in the region of Fang Hsin (方氏), Did it shake the earth?" "T'ai P'u replied, "Naturally it did." An Tsū returned and told the Duke, that P'u didn't mean to say that he could shake earth, but that the earth was about to shake from natural causes. Tien Tsū Yang hearing this said, "The perplexing silence of An Tsū arose from his desire to shield T'ai P'u from death." His interview with T'ai P'u showed his desire to know the truth, fearing lest the king should have deceived him in what he had said. It may be truly said that An Tsū acted loyally to his superior and thought fully towards those under him. As Lao Tsū says:

TO BE JUSTLY STRICT WITHOUT INJURING OTHERS IS THE RIGHT WAY.

(54) A mistaken judgment.—Wei Wen Hou at a feast he gave to his ministers at Yang Ch'u (Tai Yuan) being somewhat under the influence of liquor, sighed deeply, as he said, "I alone have no minister like to Yu Jiang." Ch'un Chung poured out a large cupful of liquor and held it up to the king saying, "May it please you to drink up this as a fine." "Why so," replied the king. "Your servant has heard it said, that the carrying out of the requests of parents is not thought of as filial piety. A just prince does not think of the loyalty of ministers who carry out their duties."

These are natural and not exceptional merits

Now what kind of man was Yu Jiang's king? He was a bad prince.

Wen Hou drank the cup at one gulp, saying: "The deed of Yu Jiang arose from the lack of loyal ministers of the who assassinated the murderer of his prince type of Kuan Chung and Tao Hsu." Hence Lao Tsū says:

THE ANARCHY OF A NATION REVEALS LOYAL MINISTERS.

(55) Do not be puffed up by knowledge.—When Confucius was viewing the fane of Duke Huan, in which was a vessel called Yu Chih—or the leaning tube—he exclaimed, "how splendid that we have seen this vessel!" Turning to his disciples, he said, "Boys bring some water." When the vessel was half filled it stood: but when the water reached the brim, the centre of gravity was lost and the vessel overthrown. Suddenly Confucius changed countenance saying, "Perfect is the lesson of him holding a full vessel!" "Tzŭ Kung standing at his side said, "Please tell us more of this grasping a full vessel." "Superfluity brings its penalty," said Confucius. What do you mean by this? Anything too overflowing may be easily spoilt; a wild joy is followed by a melancholy: the sun goes down after its zenith; a full moon wanes.

Hence cleverness and a boundless knowledge should be preserved by simplicity: encyclopaedic information and wide attainments by lowliness: martial strength and bold courage by awe: great wealth and position by economy: universal power by reserve and modesty. It was by observing these five qualities that the empire was not lost. History affirms that the spirit of these five principles could not be contravened with impunity. As Lao Tsū says:

THEY WHO ADHERE TO THIS DOCTRINE HAVE NO DESIRE FOR EXUBERANCE, BUT RATHER THAT THEY BE WITHOUT EXCESSES AND THUS BE ABLE TO KEEP A STATE OF MODESTY WITHOUT OUTWARD OSTENTATION.

(56) A criticism of current methods of government which were based on opportunism and therefore a great contrast to true government based on the Tao.—Wu Wang enquired of T'ai Kung an opinion as to his action in punishing Chou whether the world would not look on it as the murder of a master by his servant, and whether his fears were not groundless that the example might be followed by later ages giving rise to constant employment of troops and the perpetuation of strifes. T'ai Kung replied that the king's question was most opportune, saying in illustration that sportsmen were anxious lest the hit was too little before they had had the prey: but once they had the bag the fear was lest the flesh had been torn too much. Did the king therefore desire to hold the nation securely for long he should satisfy the appetites of the people in every way.

Occupy the attention of eye, ear, nose, mouth.

The Tao was useless for the people and education but c. bother. When the people are all pleased with their occupations and their desires all gratified, such is the plausible way of carrying on government. It makes a good show. The Tao is too profound for popular use. Give the people

Cp. Confucius Analect 8 Chap. 9. The people should follow a path, without understanding it.
a show of culture' and the cap of a scholar. Disarm their wild proclivities and give them the ivory (the mark of culture). Let the people be made to be in mourning for three years so that the population be diminished. Let the high refuse office and the masses yield their rights. To keep them from strifes and struggles let them be saturated with wine and flesh and amused with music and orchestras; let them be awed by religion; multiply etiquettes and swell ceremonies in profusion so that nature may be buried in these artificialities; let burials be costly and mourning be protracted in order to weaken the family power. Let them spend freely on pearls and ornaments: on silk tassels elaborately worked so that they may be impoverished. Let them dig deep trenches and build high walls to exhaust their energies. Impoverished in family wealth, diminished in population their whole attention will be concerned with their poverty. Let social reforms move on these lines and it will be possible to keep the country without the fear of loss.

As Lao Tzu says:

I WILL GRATIFY THEIR SENSES FOR CULTURE
AND HOLD THEM IN RESTRAINT BY UN SPEAKABLE JERKINESSE.

A COMPARISON.

In conclusion we may compare the Taoist view of life in one respect with that of Socrates. Socrates maintained that he was at his best when his daimonion was working; and his thought clearest when he was most sure of divine guidance. Prof. Bury says that “Socrates represents his own life work as a sort of religious quest: he feels convinced that in devoting himself to philosophic discussion he had done the bidding of a superhuman guide and he goes to death rather than be untrue to his personal conviction. Because of this he became the champion of free discussion and the supremacy of the individual conscience over human law.” And we have the Taoist view that human enactments and the wisdom of Sages may be abolished. Tradition binds man and therefore is inferior to “conscience.” If men followed the Tao they would never be opportunists, but always act according to principle and right. Both had unbounded faith in spiritual laws. Mere human knowledge is of itself wholly inadequate and uncertain. But the Tao is always full to those who have the mind for it. How then is it that we have different qualities and characters in men?

The answer is because of the different response given by man to the influence of the Tao. An illustration from natural history will help us.

“The Praying Mantis goes in for battle and cannibalism: the Empusa is peaceable and respects her kind. To what causes are these profound moral differences due, when the organic structure is the same? The mantis is the gorman-gizer, gorged with meat and strong drink, a fruitful source of savage outbursts; it could not possess the gentleness of the ascetic who dipped his bread in milk. The Empusa is the ascetic. But whence does the one derive her temperate ways when it would seem identical structure ought to produce identity of needs. Propensities and aptitudes do not depend exclusively upon anatomy. High above the physical laws that govern matter rise other laws that govern instincts.” (J. H. Fabre).