Rapp, John A. "Works of Daoist Anarchism." *Daoism and Anarchism: Critiques of State Autonomy in Ancient and Modern China*. London: Continuum, 2012. 221–262. Contemporary Anarchist Studies. *Bloomsbury Collections*. Web. 26 Apr. 2023. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781501306778.ch-012>>.

Downloaded from Bloomsbury Collections, www.bloomsburycollections.com, 26 April 2023, 12:47 UTC.

Copyright © John A. Rapp 2012. Released under a CC BY-NC-ND licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>). You may share this work for non-commercial purposes only, provided you give attribution to the copyright holder and the publisher, and provide a link to the Creative Commons licence.

Works of Daoist Anarchism

1. *Zhuangzi*, Chapter 9, “Horses’ Hoofs”

Translated by Burton Watson, in Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, 98–106, with abridged translator’s notes, © 1970, Columbia University Press, reprinted with permission of the publisher.

Horses’ hoofs are made for treading frost and snow, their coats for keeping out wind and cold. To munch grass, drink from the stream, lift up their feet and gallop—this is the true nature of horses. Though they might possess great terraces and fine halls, they would have no use for them.

Then along comes Po Lo.¹ “I’m good at handling horses!” he announces, and proceeds to singe them, shave them, pare them, brand them, bind them with martingale and crupper, tie them up in stable and stall. By this time two or three out of ten horses have died. He goes on to starve them, make them go thirsty, race them, prance them, pull them into line, force them to run side-by-side, in front of them the worthy of bit and rein, behind them the terror of whip and crop. By this time over half the horses have died.

The potter says, “I’m good at handling clay! To round it, I apply the compass; to square it, I apply the T square.” The carpenter says, “I’m good at handling wood! To arc it, I apply the curve; to make it straight, I apply the plumb line.” But as far as inborn nature is concerned, the clay and the wood surely have no wish to be subjected to compass and square, curve and plumb line. Yet generation after generation sings out in praise, saying, “Po Lo is good at handling horses! The potter and the carpenter are good at handling clay and wood!” And the same fault is committed by the men who handle the affairs of the world!

In my opinion, someone who was really good at handling the affairs of the world would not go about it like this. The people have their constant inborn nature. To weave for their clothing, to till for their food—this is the Virtue they share. They are one in it and not partisan, and it is called the Emancipation of Heaven. Therefore in an age of Perfect Virtue the gait of men is slow and ambling; their gaze is steady and mild. In such an age mountains have no paths or trails, lakes no boats or bridges. The ten thousand things live species by species, one group settled close to another. Birds and beasts form their flocks and herds, grass and trees grow to fullest height. So it happens that you can tie a cord to the birds and beasts and lead them about, or bend down the limb and peer into the nest of the crow and the magpie. In this age of Perfect Virtue men live the same as birds and beasts, group themselves side-by-side with the ten thousand things. Who then knows anything about “gentleman” or “petty man”? Dull and unwitting,² men have no wisdom; thus their Virtue does not depart from them. Dull and unwitting, they have no desire; this is called uncarved simplicity. In uncarved simplicity the people attain their true nature.³

Then along comes the sage, huffing and puffing after benevolence, reaching on tiptoe for righteousness, and the world for the first time has doubts; mooning and mouthing over his music, snipping and stitching away at his rites, and the world for the first time is divided. Thus, if the plain unwrought substance had not been blighted, how would there be any sacrificial goblets? If the white jade had not been shattered, how would there be any scepters and batons? If the Way and Its Virtue had not been cast aside, how would there be any call for benevolence and righteousness? If the true form of the inborn nature had not been abandoned, how would there be any use for rites and music? If the five colors had not confused men, who would fashion patterns and hues? If the five notes had not confused them, who would try to tune things by the six tones? That the unwrought substance was blighted in order to fashion implements—this was the crime of the artisan. That the Way and its Virtue were destroyed in order to create benevolence and righteousness—this was the fault of the sage.

When horses live on the plain they eat grass and drink from the streams. Pleased, they twine their necks together and rub; angry, they turn back-to-back and kick. This is all horses know how to do. But if you pile poles and yokes on them and line them up in crossbars and shafts, then they will learn to snap the crossbars, break the yoke, rip the carriage top, champ the bit, and chew the reins.⁴ Thus horses learn how to commit the worst kinds of mischief.⁵ This is the crime of Po Lo.

In the days of Ho Hsü,⁶ people stayed home but didn't know what they were doing, walked around but didn't know where they were going. Their mouths crammed with food, they were merry; drumming on their bellies, they passed the time. This was as much as they were able to do. Then the sage came along with the crouchings and bendings of rites and music, which

were intended to reform the bodies of the world; with the reaching-for-a-dangled-prize of benevolence and righteousness, which was intended to comfort the hearts of the world. Then for the first time people learned to stand on tiptoe and covet knowledge, to fight to the death over profit, and there was no stopping them. This in the end was the fault of the sage.

2. Ruan Ji, “The Biography of Master Great Man” (excerpt)

Translated by Donald Holzman, from Holzman, *Poetry and Politics: The Life and Times of Juan Chi, A.D. 210–263*, 193–6, © Cambridge University Press 1976, reprinted with the permission of the publisher.

I suppose Master Great Man is old. I know neither his family name nor his polite appellation [*tzu*]. But his description of the beginning of the universe and his remarks on the affairs of Shen-nung and the Yellow Emperor are brilliant. No one knows how long he has lived. Since he once resided on Mount Su-men, some people call him by that name. From time to time he nourishes his nature and prolongs his longevity, glowing with a radiance equal to that of Nature’s own. He sees the acts of Yao and Shun as if they were in the palm of his hand! Ten thousand leagues are to him no more than a pace, and a thousand years, one morning; his movements take him nowhere, and his sojourns are in no place. All he seeks is the great *tao*: He has no temporary residences. The Master, by responding to the vicissitudes of the world, remains in harmony with them: The universe is his home. Should the conditions of fortune and the world be unfavorable, he stays apart, leading a solitary existence, feeling that it is enough to be able to evolve with the whole of creation. And so he silently seeks out the *tao* and its virtue and has no dealings with the world of men. The self-satisfied criticize him; the ignorant think him strange: Neither recognize the spirit-like subtleties of his transformations. But the Master does not change his calling because of worldly criticism or wonder. The Master believes that the central area [in which China is located] occupies a position in the universe not even equivalent to the space occupied by a fly or a mosquito stuck in a curtain. And so he pays no attention to it and lets his thoughts stretch out endlessly to foreign places and strange regions, roams about enjoying the sights, unseen by the world, going back and forth, ending nowhere. He left his book on Mount Su-men before he went away—no one in the world knows where.

Someone gave a letter to Master Great Man which reads, “Among the things honored in the world, nothing is more honored than a gentleman. In his dress a gentleman wears prescribed colors; his facial expressions follow prescribed forms; his words obey prescribed rules; his conduct is according

to prescribed models. When standing [in the presence of a superior] he bends in two like the musical stone, his hands folded before him as if he were holding a drum. His periods of activity and repose are measured; his pace in walking conforms to a musical beat. When he advances or when he retreats, in all his relations with others, everything is done according to rule. His heart seems filled with ice, so tremulous he is, so nervous. He restrains himself, cultivates his conduct and is each day more prudent than the preceding. He would choose the very ground he walked on, and only be afraid of committing some error. He recites the instructions left to us by the Duke of Chou and Confucius and sighs over the *tao* and the virtue of Yao and Shun. He cultivates only the [Confucian] law; disciplines himself only with ritual. His hands hold the symbols of his rank and his feet toe the line of orthodoxy. In his conduct he wants to be a model to the present world; in his speech he wants to set up eternal standards. In his youth he is praised in his native place and when he grows up his fame spreads throughout the entire nation. At best he desires to become one of the three highest officers in the central government, or, at least, to become the governor of a province. Thus he clasps his gold and jade, dangles his patterned silk bands, enjoys honored position and is granted fiefs. He spreads his fame down to later generations and pits his merits against the past. He humbly serves his sovereign and governs the flock of the common people. When he retires he manages his own family and instructs his wife and children. He performs divination to build a propitious residence and plans to procure myriad celestial favors for it, to keep catastrophes far away and good fortune near, to keep his family and descendants eternally secure. This is truly the highest achievement of a gentleman, the kind of praiseworthy conduct that has not changed from ancient times until our own. But now, Master, you let your hair down and live in the middle of the great ocean, far from these gentlemen. I fear the world will sigh over you and criticize you. Your conduct is laughed at by the world and you have no way of achieving success: This indeed can be called shame and disgrace! You dwell in difficult conditions and your conduct is laughed at by the men of the world; I cannot believe that the Master can accept such a fate!"

Thereupon Master Great Man sighed in a relaxed way and sent him the following answer, using the clouds [to carry his message]: "What can all that you have said mean? Now, a Great Man is of the same essence as Creation and was born with the universe itself. He freely floated in the world, reaching perfection with the *tao*. In accord with the successive transformations that take place he disperses himself or gathers himself together: He does not keep a constant form. The divisions of the universe are all within him so that his free and easy understanding penetrates all without. The [true idea of] the eternity and stability of the universe is not something that the men of the world can approach. I am going to explain it to you. In the past, at one time the heavens were below and the earth was above; they turned over

time and again, and had not yet reached a stable condition. How [if you had been living then] could you not have lost your 'rules' and 'models'? How then could you have counted them as 'prescribed'? When the heavens moved with the earth, the mountains crashed down and the rivers rose up, the clouds dispersed and the lightning broke apart; the six directions lost their order; how then could you have been able to 'choose the very ground you walk on' or 'make your pace in walking conform to a musical beat'? Formerly the living fought for existence; the creatures died of worry; men's limbs were not obedient; their bodies turned to dust. [They were like trees] whose roots were pulled out and branches cut off; all lost their place. How then could you 'restrain yourself and cultivate your conduct,' 'bent in two like a musical stone' 'as if holding a drum'?

Li Mu lost his life in spite of his merit;⁷ Po Tsung was loyal, and his family was killed off⁸; if entry into official life to seek for profit [thus] leads to loss of life, and working for titles and awards leads to the extermination of one's family, how then are you able to 'clasp your gold and jades' in myriads and myriads and respectfully 'serve your sovereign' and still able to keep your wife and children alive? Can it be that you have never seen a louse in a pair of drawers? When he runs away into a deep seam or hides in some broken wadding, he thinks he has found a 'propitious residence.' In his movements he dares not leave the seam's edge nor part from the crotch of the drawers, and thinks he is 'toeing the orthodox line' that way. When he is hungry he bites his man and thinks he can eat forever. But when, [in the event of a great fire] there are hills of flame and streams of fire, when towns are charred and cities destroyed, then the lice, trapped where they are, die in their pair of drawers. What difference is there in your gentleman's living in his small area and a louse in a pair of drawers? How sad it is that he thinks he can 'keep catastrophes far away and good fortune near' and '[his family and descendants] eternally secure'!⁹

Look, too, at the Sun Crow¹⁰ who roams beyond the dust of the world, and at the wrens who play among the weeds and grasses: There can certainly be no contact between the small [wrens] and the great [Sun Crow]; how could you ever imagine that your gentleman had heard of me? And again, in recent times the Hsia were defeated by the Shang;¹¹ the Chou were banished by the Liu [Han];¹² Keng¹³ and Po¹⁴ became ruins; Feng-hao¹⁵ became a mound. In the length of time it would take a Perfect Man to come and look, one dynasty had succeeded another; before their residence was established, others had taken their place. From whom, then, would you 'receive' an eternal 'fief'? That is why the Lordly Man lives without taking up a dwelling, is orderly without 'cultivating' himself. The sun and the moon are his rule; the *yin* and the *yang* his measure. How could he have feelings of regret for the world or be bound to any single period in time? He comes on a cloud from the east and rides the wind that blows from the west. With the *yin* he keeps his femininity, and with the *yang* his masculinity. His ambitions are

satisfied, his wishes fulfilled so that he is never exhausted by exterior things. Why, then, should he not be able to succeed by himself? Why should 'he fear the laughter of the world'?

In the past, when heaven and earth divided and the ten thousand things were all born together, the great among them kept their natures tranquil, and the small kept their forms calm. The *yin* stored up their vital breath, and the *yang* gave forth their vital essence. There was no fleeing from harm, no fighting for profit. What was put aside was not lost; what was stored up did not become surfeit. Those who died did not die young; those who lived did not become old. Good fortune procured nothing; bad fortune brought no calamity. Each followed his fate and preserved himself with measure. The bright did not win because of their knowledge; the ignorant were not overcome because of their stupidity. The weak were not cowed by oppression, nor did the strong prevail by their force. For then there was no ruler, and all beings were peaceful; no officials, and all affairs were well ordered. Men preserved their persons and cultivated their natures, not deviating from their norm. Only because it was so were they able to live to great ages. But now when you make music you get sounds in disorder; when you indulge in sexual activity you weaken the body. You change your exterior appearance to hide your passions within you. Filled with desires, you seek excess; you practice counterfeits to make yourself famous. When rulers are set up, tyranny arises; when officials are established, thieves are born. You idly ordain rites and laws to bind the lowly common people. You cheat the stupid and fool the unskillful, and hide your knowledge to make yourselves appear to be like spirits. The strong look fierce and are oppressive; the weak shiver with anguish and are servile. You pretend to be honest to attain your avaricious ends; you harbor dangerous thoughts within you but appear benevolent to the outside world. When you commit some crime you do not repent of it, but when you encounter some good fortune you take it as a matter for personal pride. Because you pursue these things to the exclusion of all else [?], you become stagnant and do not develop.

Now, if there were no honors, those in low position would bear no grudges; if there were no riches, the poor would not struggle [to obtain them]. Each would be satisfied within himself and would have nothing else to seek. If liberalities and favors did not bind one to [a sovereign], there would be no reason [to expose oneself to] death and defeat against [his] enemies. If rare music were not performed, the ear's hearing would not be altered; if lascivious views were not shown, the eye's sight would not be changed. If the ear and the eye were not altered and changed, there would be no way to disrupt the spirit. This was the perfection arrived at in former times. But now you honor merit to make one another exalted; you compete with your abilities to set one above the other; you struggle for power to make one rule over another; and you esteem honors so that you can offer them to one another. You encourage the whole world to pursue these aims,

and the result is that the upper and lower classes harm one another. You exhaust all the creatures of the universe to their very limits in order to purvey to the endless desires of your senses. This is no way to nourish the common people! And then you fear the people will understand what is going on, so you add rewards to please them and strengthen punishments to keep them in awe. But when there is no more wealth, rewards can no longer be given; when there are no more punishments, sentences cannot be carried out. Then begin the calamities of ruined states, assassinated rulers and armies defeated and dispersed. Are these things not caused by you gentlemen? Your rites and laws are indeed nothing more than the methods of harmful robbers, of trouble-makers, of death and destruction. And you, you think they form an inalterable way of excellent conduct: How erroneous you are! . . .”

3. Bao Jingyan

From Etienne Balazs, *Chinese Civilization and Bureaucracy: Variations on a Theme*, 243–6, © Yale University Press, 1964, reprinted with permission of Yale University Press.

The Confucian literati say: “Heaven gave birth to the people and then set rulers over them.” But how can High Heaven have said this in so many words? Is it not rather that interested parties make this their pretext? The fact is that the strong oppressed the weak and the weak submitted to them; the cunning tricked the innocent and the innocent served them. It was because there was submission that the relation of lord and subject arose, and because there was servitude that the people, being powerless, could be kept under control. Thus servitude and mastery result from the struggle between the strong and the weak and the contrast between the cunning and the innocent, and Blue Heaven has nothing whatsoever to do with it.

When the world was in its original undifferentiated state, the Nameless (*wu-ming*, that is, the Tao) was what was valued, and all creatures found happiness in self-fulfillment. Now when the cinnamon-tree has its bark stripped or the varnish-tree is cut, it is not done at the wish of the tree; when the pheasant's feathers are plucked or the kingfisher's torn out, it is not done by desire of the bird. To be bitted and bridled is not in accordance with the nature of the horse; to be put under the yoke and bear burdens does not give pleasure to the ox. Cunning has its origin in the use of force that goes against the true nature of things, and the real reason for harming creatures is to provide useless adornments. Thus catching the birds of the air in order to supply frivolous adornments, making holes in noses where no holes should be, tying beasts by the leg when nature meant them to be free, is not in accord with the destiny of the myriad creatures, all born to live out their lives unharmed. And so the people are compelled to labor so that those

in office may be nourished; and while their superiors enjoy fat salaries, they are reduced to the direst poverty.

It is all very well to enjoy the infinite bliss of life after death, but it is preferable not to have died in the first place; and rather than acquire an empty reputation for integrity by resigning office and foregoing one's salary, it is better that there should be no office to resign. Loyalty and righteousness only appear when rebellion breaks out in the empire, filial obedience and parental love are only displayed when there is discord among kindred.

In the earliest times, there was neither lord nor subject.¹⁶ Wells were dug for drinking-water, the fields were plowed for food, work began at sunrise and ceased at sunset; everyone was free and at ease, neither competing with each other nor scheming against each other, and no one was either glorified or humiliated. The waste lands had no paths or roads and the waterways no boats or bridges, and because there were no means of communication by land or water, people did not appropriate each other's property; no armies could be formed, and so people did not attack one another. Indeed since no one climbed up to seek out nests nor dived down to sift the waters of the deep, the phoenix nested under the eaves of the house and dragons disported in the garden pool. The ravening tiger could be trodden on, the poisonous snake handled. Men could wade through swamps without raising the waterfowl, and enter the woodlands without startling the fox or the hare. Since no one even began to think of gaining power or seeking profit, no dire events or rebellions occurred; and as spears and shields were not in use, moats and ramparts did not have to be built. All creatures lived together in mystic unity, all of them merged in the Way (*Tao*). Since they were not visited by plague or pestilence, they could live out their lives and die a natural death. Their hearts being pure, they were devoid of cunning. Enjoying plentiful supplies of food, they strolled about with full bellies.¹⁷ Their speech was not flowery, their behavior not ostentatious. How, then, could there have been accumulation of property such as to rob the people of their wealth, or severe punishments to trap and ensnare them?

When this age entered on decadence, knowledge and cunning came into use. The Way and its Virtue (*Tao te*) having fallen into decay, a hierarchy was established. Customary regulations for promotion and degradation and for profit and loss proliferated, ceremonial garments such as the [gentry's] sash and sacrificial cap and the imperial blue and yellow [robes for worshiping Heaven and Earth] were elaborated. Buildings of earth and wood were raised high into the sky, with the beams and rafters painted red and green. The heights were overturned in quest of gems, the depths dived into in search of pearls; but however vast a collection of precious stones people might have assembled, it still would not have sufficed to satisfy their whims, and a whole mountain of gold would not have been enough to meet their expenditure: so sunk were they in depravity and vice, having transgressed against the fundamental principles of the Great Beginning. Daily they became

further removed from the ways of their ancestors, and turned their back more and more upon man's original simplicity. Because they promoted the "worthy" to office, ordinary people strove for reputation, and because they prized material wealth, thieves and robbers appeared. The sight of desirable objects tempted true and honest hearts, and the display of arbitrary power and love of gain opened the road to robbery. So they made weapons with points and with sharp edges, and after that there was no end to usurpations and acts of aggression, and they were only afraid lest crossbows should not be strong enough, shields stout enough, lances sharp enough, and defenses solid enough. Yet all this could have been dispensed with if there had been no oppression and violence from the start.

Therefore it has been said: "Who could make scepters without spoiling the unblemished jade? And how could altruism and righteousness (*jen* and *i*) be extolled unless the Way and its Virtue had perished?" Although tyrants such as Chieh and Chou were able to burn men to death, massacre their advisers, make mincemeat of the feudal lords, cut the barons into strips, tear out men's hearts and break their bones, and go to the furthest extremes of tyrannical crime down to the use of torture by roasting and grilling, however cruel they may by nature have been, how could they have done such things if they had had to remain among the ranks of the common people? If they gave way to their cruelty and lust and butchered the whole empire, it was because, as rulers, they could do as they pleased. As soon as the relationship between lord and subject is established, hearts become daily more filled with evil designs, until the manacled criminals sullenly doing forced labor in the mud and the dust are full of mutinous thoughts, the Sovereign trembles with anxious fear in his ancestral temple, and the people simmer with revolt in the midst of their poverty and distress; and to try to stop them revolting by means of rules and regulations, or control them by means of penalties and punishments, is like trying to dam a river in full flood with a handful of earth, or keeping the torrents of water back with one finger.

4. Tao Qian, "Peach Blossom Spring"

Translated by Burton Watson, in Watson (trans. and ed.), *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, 142–3, © 1984, Columbia University Press, reprinted with permission of the publisher.

During the Tai-yuan era (376–397 CE) of the Chin dynasty, there was a man of Wu-ling who caught fish for a living. Once he was making his way up a valley stream and had lost track of how far he had gone when he suddenly came upon a forest of peach trees in bloom. For several hundred paces on either bank of the stream there were no other trees to be seen, but fragrant grasses, fresh and beautiful, and falling petals whirling all around.

The fisherman, astonished at such a sight, pushed ahead, hoping to see what lay beyond the forest. Where the forest ended there was a spring that fed the stream, and beyond that a hill. The hill had a small opening in it, from which there seemed to come a gleam of light. Abandoning his boat, the fisherman went through the opening. At first it was very narrow, with barely room for a person to pass, but after he had gone twenty or thirty paces, it suddenly opened out and he could see clearly.

A plain stretched before him, broad and flat, with houses and sheds dotting it, and rich fields, pretty ponds, and mulberry and bamboo around them. Paths ran north and south, east and west across the fields, and chickens and dogs could be heard from farm to farm. The men and women who passed back and forth in the midst, sowing and tilling the fields, were all dressed just like any other people, and from white-haired elders to youngsters with their hair unbound, everyone seemed carefree and happy.

The people, seeing the fisherman, were greatly startled and asked where he had come from. When he had answered all their questions, they invited him to return with them to their home, where they set out wine and killed a chicken to prepare a meal.

As soon as the others in the village heard of his arrival, they all came to greet him. They told him that some generations in the past their people had fled from the troubled times of the Ch'in dynasty (221–207 BCE) and had come with their wives and children and fellow villagers to this faraway place. They had never ventured out into the world again, and hence in time had come to be completely cut off from other people. They asked him what dynasty was ruling at present—they had not even heard of the Han dynasty, to say nothing of the Wei and Chin dynasties that succeeded it. The fisherman replied to each of their questions to the best of his knowledge, and everyone sighed with wonder.

The other villagers invited the fisherman to visit their homes as well, each setting out wine and food for him. Thus he remained for several days before taking his leave. One of the villagers said to him, "I trust you won't tell the people on the outside about this."

After the fisherman had made his way out of the place, he found his boat and followed the route he had taken earlier, taking care to note the places that he passed. When he reached the prefectural town, he went to call on the governor and reported what had happened. The governor immediately dispatched men to go with him to look for the place, but though he tried to locate the spots that he had taken note of earlier, in the end he became confused and could not find the way again.

Liu Tzu-chi of Nan-yang, a gentleman-recluse of lofty ideals, heard the story and began delightedly making plans to go there, but before he could carry them out, he fell sick and died. Since then there have been no more "seekers of the ford."¹⁸

5. *Wunengzi*

Translated by Catrina Siu; edited by John Rapp, with (limited) notes based on various editions of the complete (surviving) Chinese text.

Preface

Wu Nengzi was my friend who's now passed away. As a young man he was widely learned and of few desires. As he grew he investigated principle to the fullest extent and the nature of things and got to the very nature of fate. During the Huangchao rebellion [874–884 CE] he fled and traveled around with no regular abode. He was cold and famished. In the third year of the Guangqi reign period [887] when the Son of Heaven was in Bao, all around there were armies. Wu Nengzi was staying in the home of the peasant Mr Jing who was from the town of Zuofu and the peasant dwelling was most lowly and there was stuff all about. In the daytime Wu Nengzi liked to stay in bed and not get up. As he lay in bed he would take a pen in hand and write one or two pieces of paper and then he would put them in the breast of his garment and not show anyone. From [such a such a date] to [such an such a date] he had written several tens of pieces of paper and put them in a bag and it would seem as if he had produced a book and I stole a look at them and tried to note down as much as I could see so that I could talk about these words with my brothers and friends. The main import of what he wrote concerns elucidating natural principle and getting to the origin of nature. Behave naturally and don't labor. Make sure that you follow nature without desire, and thereby he treated lightly the teachings of ritual and externalized the affairs of the world. People who are in the know won't need to be told about these things to believe them. Will people who aren't in the know be able not to condemn them? I divided his writing up into chapters, thirty-four in all, and made a book of three parts, first, second, and third volumes, with the purpose of sharing it with those in the know. Now because the doings of Wu Nengzi's life are hidden away I will not record his name or any of his particulars here.

Part 1

Chapter 1: The mistakes of the sages

Before Heaven and Earth split, there was a mass [*hundun*] of unitary ether [*qi*]. This mass of *qi* became full and overflowed, and split into two principles. At this point they were clear and muddy, light and heavy. The light and clear rose upwards, and became the element Yang of Heaven; the heavy and

turbid dropped to the bottom, and became the element Yin of the Earth! The then robust and solid Heaven moved the then malleable and docile Earth [and things were?] peaceful; this is the natural way of *qi*. Heaven and Earth were already in their positions, the Yin and Yang *qi* interacted, thereupon the naked creatures: The scaly creatures, hairy/furry creatures, feathery creatures, and shelly creatures were born. [Thus] Humans, [or the] naked creatures, the scaly, hairy/furry, feathery, and shelly creatures were [all] born from Heaven and Earth; they [all come from] the interaction of the *qi*, there is no difference [between the two].

Someone says there [is a principle] that already exists that differentiates [between things], [but] is it not that people themselves maintain this difference between the scaly, feathery, hairy/furry, and the shelly creatures? But don't [people have] intelligence and wisdom [and] language? Oh well, birds and beasts, up to and including insects and worms, all favor life and avoid death, construct their nests and caves, plan their food, give birth to and raise their type and protect them; compared to people who [also] favor life and avoid death, construct their palaces and mansions, plan their clothing and meals, give birth to and raise their sons and daughters, and treat them with private love, there is no difference [between the two]. How can one maintain that there is no intelligence and wisdom [in these creatures]? Well, birds and beasts, up to and including insects and worms, they call, chirp and screech, each has their own sound; how [can we] know that among their kind, there is no language? Humans, by means of not knowing [animals'] sounds, maintain their inability to speak. Moreover, how [can we] know that the birds and beasts are not making an analogy of people's speech, also maintaining that people are incapable of language? Therefore, the sound of their cries, calls, chirps, and screeches must be speech. Moreover, how can one maintain that [animals] are incapable of language? As for intelligence, wisdom, and language, people and creatures are one and the same; that which is different is shape and form. So, [since] among the scaly, hairy/furry, feathery, and scaly [creatures], there are also differences in shape and form, how can it be that [they are] especially different from humans? Among humans, shapes and forms also have similarities and differences, differences and similarities; how can it be that [humans' forms are] especially different from the shapes and forms of the four creatures?

Alas! As for Heaven and Earth, the elements yin and yang are big things. The naked, scaly, hairy/furry, feathery, and shelled, these five vital classes, they followed the *qi* that harmonized the big things (Heaven and Earth); moreover they form a body within the big things. Also it's like river streams and oceans providing lodging for fishes and other water creatures, [like] mountains and hills encompassing grasslands and woods.

In the most ancient times, the naked creatures and the scaly, hairy/furry, feathery, and shelled lived together indiscriminately, female and male, male and female. They [lived] together naturally, with no distinction between men

and women, husband and wife [and no hierarchical order among] father and son, older brother and younger brother. In the summer they created nests and in the winter they created caves; there was no construction of palaces and mansions. They ate raw meat and drank blood, without eating the food of the one hundred grains.¹⁹ The living moved around, the dead keeled over, [there was] no [desire for] stealing and murder, [and there were] no funeral [rites]. They followed what was natural; there was no ruling or shepherding, [and everything was] in its original simplicity; according to these principles they could live long lives.

Not long after, among the naked creatures arose a bunch of “wise” and “intelligent” animals who called themselves “people” who established rules under which they could [dominate] the scaly, hairy/furry, feathery, and shelled creatures. Moreover, they taught [each other] sowing and planting in order to eat the food of a hundred grains, and thereafter [learned] to use the plow. They hewed wood and made mud bricks to construct mansions and palaces, and thereupon started to use the blade and the axe. They instituted marriages, which started the distinction between men and women, and thereafter began the distinction between husband and wife and the hierarchical distinction among fathers and sons and older brothers and younger brothers. They made coffins and shrouds to bury their dead, and thereupon there [developed] funeral rites. They tied knots together to make nets in order to catch the scaly, hairy/furry, feathery, and shelled creatures; thereupon emerged the taste for prepared food. Original simplicity was thereby broken up, thereby giving rise to selfish passions and intentions. People were strong and weak by their natural abilities; there was still no way to regulate this. Among the crowd that called themselves the “wise” and “intelligent,” they chose one who would unite the rest of them; this one was called the ruler, and the multitude were called his servants [officials]. The one could control the multitude, but the multitude could not gain supremacy over the one. From this came the distinction between the ruler and the ministers, and the exalted and lowly. The honored were set on high and the multitude placed on the same low level [beneath him].

In later times hierarchy and emoluments were established among the “wise and intelligent.” Thereupon, material things distinguished the ranks between the wealthy and the poor, people satisfied their desires in accordance with their ranks and emoluments. Then they called the wise and intelligent ones “sages.”

But soon the debased and disgraced started to become jealous of the honored, the poor became jealous of the wealthy, and from this was born the spirit of competition. Those who called themselves sages worried about this and together they said, “in the time of original purity, who was it who called themselves people? We artificially imposed the name ‘people’ and therefore people were separated from the animals. At that time, there were no exalted and debased, [so] who was it who called themselves rulers and ministers?

But after we imposed the construction of hierarchy; there came about rulers and ministers. At that time, there was no grasping and no desires, [so] what were ranks and emoluments to them? We imposed assessments on people, so now they started to realize the distinction between honorable and disgraced. Now, the pure and natural has been weakened, and passions and predilections are embraced by vying hearts. If there is competition, there is stealing, if there is stealing, there is chaos [*luan*], [so] what is to happen in the future?" From among the group of the "wise and intelligent," one who was most "wise and intelligent" spoke and said: "I have a scheme!"; from this he taught the principles of benevolence, virtue, loyalty, and trustworthiness and to regulate them by means of ritual and music. When a ruler oppressed his subjects he was to be called cruel, and the ministers would say that the government was illegitimate. When the ministers usurped [the ruler's authority], the ruler would call them rebels. A father who did not love his son, would be called un-nurturing, and a son who did not obey his father would be called unfilial. When older brother and younger brother were not in accordance, they would be called disrespectful and unfraternal; when a husband and wife were not united as one, they would be called unchaste and inharmonious. People who acted in these ways were called the wrong and people who did not were called the right. The right were honored and the wrong were disgraced, thus was cultivated the feeling of pleasure in being right and the shame of being in the wrong, and feelings of competition were suppressed.

As even more generations passed, predilections and desires became more inflamed; thereupon [people] turned their backs on benevolence, virtue, loyalty, and trustworthiness, and they transgressed from ritual and music and [started to] compete [with each other]. Those who called themselves sages regretted this. They had no other option but to establish laws and punishments and organized armies to keep the people under control. When there were small offenses, [people] were punished. When offenses were big, an army was set onto them. Therefore punishments such as imprisonment, using the *kang*, and being whipped were spread out over the country. Spears, pikes, bows and arrows were spread out over the world, families were destroyed and kingdoms wiped out. There were too many to count. The common people came to dire poverty and died; this spread without end.

Alas! It was natural to treat [the people] as beasts; it was not natural to treat them as humans. Imposing the establishment of palaces and mansions, [formal] meals and [prepared] food stirred up desires; imposing distinctions between the exalted and debased and the honorable and disgraced excited competition; imposing benevolence, virtue, ritual, and music perverted what was natural. Imposing punishments and laws and [using] military [force] immiserated [people's] lives; this caused people to seek after the branches [the extraneous] and forget about the root [the essential]; this disturbed their passions and attacked their lives, and together in great numbers they

died. They could not revive the past. This was the fault of those who called themselves sages.

Chapter 2: Illuminating the origin

That which people call the origin is the being at the heart of nonbeing; the shape of the body and the skeletal structure relies upon it in order to stand up straight; it is long-lasting and never dies. Just like fire that can be used to burn things, one cannot take away its heat. Just like how water can be used to moisten things, one cannot take away from its wetness. If you try to take it, then you will not have it. If you try to hide it, then it does not cease to exist. If it moves then you'll be able to examine even if it is as small as an autumn hair²⁰ and investigate it even if it is as silent as the buzzing of a mosquito; if it remains still, then if it's as big as Mount Qiu, then you won't be able to see it; even if it's as loud as thunder, you won't be able to hear it. When it's big it's capable of encompassing the entire universe; when it's small it can enter into the pupil of an eye. It appears suddenly, neither coming nor going. Suddenly, and without being aware, it is neither overflowing nor diminishing. The recluses Chao Fu and Xu You, the escape of Dong Yuan Gong and Qi Liji, they had a single-minded purpose at the root to only do what was right. Emperor Yao passed the empire to Shun, Emperor Shun passed the empire to Yu, Emperor Yu passed the empire to Jie, Tang kicked out Emperor Jie, and King Wu who attacked the state of Zhou took hold of the opportunity to benefit everyone simultaneously. One who understands this root, if he must hide, he will then hide, if he must act, then he will act, he responds to things and establishes affairs/gets things done, he is vast and without partiality/feelings. One who is blind to this, his predilections and desires are his motivation; every day, he mindlessly uses his environment, he isn't conscious and doesn't understand. The skilled is able to illuminate by means of an unfixed light, it shifts around according to the harmony of nature, then the great nameless origin will be seen in the midst of the unseen!

Chapter 3: Analyzing misconceptions/The clarification of errors

As for human nature, it is spirit, as for fate, it is ether [*qi*]. Human nature and fate—these two must mutually come together in the vast void; they give birth to each other in nature. They are similar to Yuan and Fu's mutual responding to each other/harmony, the mutual harmonizing of Yin and Yang. That which we term the skeletal part that is the body, it is the apparatus of human nature and fate. Is it not that fire is on top of the firewood, if there is no firewood then the fire does not burn, if there is no fire, the firewood

does not glow (from heat). If there is not skeletal structure and body, human nature and fate has no means of standing up, if human nature and fate attach themselves to the body, then it causes them to be lively, therefore human nature and fate bubbles forth from nature and is born; the natural skeletal structure and the body stagnate and die. That which is born from Nature, although it exists separately and can be broken off, is eternally alive. That which naturally dies, although it moves around, it will always die.

Nowadays, everyone likes life and despises death; [people] do not understand the principle of the natural cycle of life and death, they look to the thing that is not moving and is rigid/stiff and they worry about it. They cast aside that which is naturally born, devoting themselves to preserving that which is naturally dead, the more diligently they preserve it, the more distant is life. This is desire that sinks feathers and floats rocks—how great is this stupidity!

Chapter 4: Having no worries

As for people, they most despise death, which is to say that they despise the shape and skeletal body being rigid and not moving. As for the shape and skeletal body, blood, flesh, ear, and eyes, they cannot be empty and yet vital, therefore we know that they are not the implements of life. Therefore the reason you should not wait to call death the point at which there is no movement and stiffness; rather, death is at its root already there when we run about and move around! Therefore that which runs about and moves around relies on nothing more than that which is not dead. And, secondly, it is not that which is able to move and hasten about by itself. The body and skeletal shape are originally dead; therefore it is not dying today, therefore it is not dead today, and therefore it is not going to die! As for death, it is the most despised by the people. But there is no death to be despised, besides the shape and skeletal structure; is there anything really to disturb feelings of utmost harmony and satisfaction?

Chapter 5: Criticizing foolishness (in two sections)

Part 1

The things that which everyone in the world commonly hastens after without knowing where to stop are wealth, nobility, and a good name. As for those we call wealthy and noble, they are satisfied by material things. At the high points of wealth are emperors and princes; at the low points of wealth are the dukes and marquises. Is it not by the crown they wear, the fancy palace they live in, and their security guards and attendants that we call them emperors and princes? Is it not because they wear a bureaucrat's hat [when they go outside], have noisy carts and horses, flags and big axes that we call

them dukes and marquises? If we do not decorate them with an emperor's clothing, palaces, large umbrellas decorated with bird feathers, boards that prohibit people from passing, bureaucrat hats, carts, horses, axes, and flags, then what can make them emperors, princes, dukes, and marquises? As for the emperor's clothes, large umbrellas decorated with bird feathers, axes, flags, carts, and horses, these are all material things. When there is a sufficiency of material objects, then we have the condition of nobility. When one is wealthy and ennobled, then there are emperors, princes, dukes, and marquises. That is the reason why I say that the wealthy and noble are merely sufficient in material objects. As for material nothings, they are things that people are capable of making. There are those who make these things by themselves and on the contrary, there are those that do not create [these things], who enjoy them. Well then, just as we designate those with sufficient material things as wealthy and ennobled, we [also designate] those without material things to be poor and lowly; because of this, we take pleasure in wealth and honor and are ashamed to be poor and lowly; of those who do not achieve happiness, there is no conduct too extreme for them [to get what they want]. From ancient times until the present, [we] have been awake but not enlightened. How powerful is the strength of material things!

As for those who are said to have a fine name, are they not the type to live at home and be filial, the type to serve their superiors with loyalty, the type to make friends and be trustworthy, the type when confronted with objects of value are honest; are they the ones who are filled with talent, are they the ones who are sufficient in skills? These are the ones whom the so-called sages value, in order to control the stupid common people. As for what can be considered a fine name, it is a person's external bodily form and inner character. Without an external bodily form, then, one is equivalent to empty space, thus unwanted praise cannot be added to it. As for the external bodily form, it is [merely] a bag to hold the blood and all the internal organs; in the morning, it is whole and in the evening, it spoils—how can it be said that it has a good name? Among people today, why are there none who do not cast off their natural and correct human nature and [instead] hasten after wealth, nobility, and a fine reputation, which then leads to activities of cheating and falsifying? It is because the so-called sages have misled them.

Part 2

People of ancient times until now, those determined to be their relatives were their blood-kin, thereupon their affections had a point to specialize on. When gathered together, they cheer for each other, when separated, they become sick looking for each other, when sick, they worry for each other, when there was death, they cried for each other. Now, everyone under Heaven is a kin to me, we are all one body: we are like hands, feet, stomach, back, ears, eyes, mouth, nose, head, neck, eyebrows, and hair. How can you separate and differentiate this one from me? Therefore, the distinction between the self

and the other resides only in the name. The reason why people feel distant from other people under Heaven is because we are not mutually familiar with each other; the reason why we are close to our relatives is because we are mutually familiar to them.

Alas! If among the people, you divide up their bodies into hands, feet, stomachs, backs, ears, eyes, mouths, noses, heads, necks, eyebrows, and hair and attempt to call them bodies, you will have no success, who could you say are your relatives? Who could you say have people? You'll have to achieve this act of distinction by imposing names. If you use the name that you use to name your relatives to name the people under Heaven, then all people under Heaven will be your relatives! If you use the way you familiarize yourself with relatives to familiarize yourself with people of the world, then all the people under Heaven will all be your relatives! What need is there to speak of an exclusive object of our affections? If there are none to be familial to or paternally benevolent to, then we can be familial and paternally benevolent to all under Heaven; but if there are those that we must be familial and paternally benevolent to, then we will only be familial and paternally benevolent to the people in one single household, and moreover, filial piety and paternal benevolence will become a burden! But if you get rid of them then there is insincerity; and if there is insincerity, then fathers, sons, older brothers, and younger brothers will have dislike and resentment!

Zhuang Zi said, "when a group of fishes are placed on land, they pass water to each other mouth to mouth [to keep each other alive], this is not as good as forgetting each other in the rivers and lakes." How true are these words! As like fish that should take no notice of each other in rivers and lakes, people should also take no notice of each other in Nature, this is what is suitable! Therefore finding an exclusive location toward which to direct your feelings is what an intelligent person will not do.

Chapter 6 (missing from surviving Chinese text)

Chapter 7: Cultivating your original nature (in four sections)

Part 1

As for the scale and mirror, they are material things; they are things that are made by people. People themselves make these things, and in return, they seek to know the lightness or heaviness from the scale and they seek to know the beauty or ugliness from the mirror, how is this so? The scale has no intentionality and is balanced; the mirror has no intentionality and is perfectly-reflective. As for material things without hearts, they are balanced and bright; with the people with intentionality, you must polish them with

nothingness, clean them with emptiness, and cultivate in them a sense of formlessness and quietness, then they will not know who they are. I see them accompany Heaven and Earth in their boundlessness, reducing and rolled up in the *qi*, but become inexhaustible, and under heaven, there is none who are/nothing that is able to compete with them/it.

Part 2

As for the nature of water, when it is dammed up, it forms clear pools, when it is channeled, it flows, when it rises up and evaporates, it becomes clouds and it will rain, when it lands on earth, it will moisten it, it forms rivers and oceans but feels no need to boast of its vastness, it may be in ravines and caves but it is not embarrassed/shamed by its smallness, it may divide into one-hundred rivers but it will not be exhausted, it will benefit the ten-thousand things and not run out of energy/quit, it is the most pliant of things. Laozi said, “therefore, the pliant and weak will be victorious over the rigid and strong.” Then it contains the mysterious form of spirit [*shen*], the one where the special *qi* arrives and goes to, it is the thing that has obtained the most original essence of nature.

Part 3

When water flows, it is wet, when fire burns, it is dry and sultry, dragons originate from clouds, tigers originate from the wind; these are the natural principles of stimulus and response. Therefore that which is the mysterious form of spirit brings about *qi*, the *qi* brings about that which is mysterious, that is the way things are. If you want to know how things of nature respond to each other, then you should concentrate on returning to the root of the Mysterious Mother²¹ [*Xuan Mu*], then you will have almost no problems in your understanding.

Part 4

Well now, that birds fly in the sky and fish swim in water is not by intentional design; rather, they naturally do so. Therefore they have no self-consciousness of their own ability to fly or swim. If they had consciousness of it and made up their mind in order to do these things, then they will necessarily fall out of the sky and drown! Also, just as how people walk with their feet, grab with their hands, listen with their ears, see with their eyes, they need not be taught to have the ability to do it. At that moment at which they are walking, grabbing, listening, and seeing, then the reflex takes over; moreover there is no need for them to think about things before they do it. If they first had to think about these things and afterwards do them, then they will become exhausted! If they followed along with nature, they will last a long time; those who attain its rhythms will be saved. As for the great, empty void, this is the natural state of the mind. Today, people’s hands, feet, ears, and eyes follow along with their nature and walk, grab, listen, and see. As for their

minds, they do not follow along with their nature and they are obstructed and hindered; [thus] if we desire the greatest harmony and enlightenment, that will be difficult.

Part 2

Chapter 1: King Wen speaks, Part 1

Lü Wang²² was fishing on the bank of the Wei River.²³ Before Xi Bo²⁴ went out to hunt, he divined using stalks of plants. The result of the fortune telling said, "There will indeed be no bears of any kind, and heaven will bestow upon you a teacher." Getting to the hunt, he found Wang, and thereupon Xi Bo again entreated him, yet Wang kept fishing without interruption. Only after Xi Bo repeatedly beseeched him, Wang sat down with his legs crossed like a basket and laughed, saying "Why did you come here?!" Xi Bo said, "The Shang government is in chaos! The people are in great pain! I, a foolish peon, desire to save them, yet I think I should get a worthy gentleman to help me." Lü Wang said, "The Shang dynastical government became chaotic by itself, and the people are in great pain out of their own doing. What is the connection to you? Why do you want to sully me?" Xi Bo said, "Well, sages should not hide their usefulness or keep their benevolence to themselves. They must exhaust their wisdom by helping all things universally. Isn't this so?" Lü Wang said, "Well now, Human beings are floating between heaven and earth, together with the birds, beasts, and many insects, in the middle of unitary *qi*, and nothing more, exactly the same as castle walls, houses, and cottages all really are based on hollow air. If something completely destroyed the castle walls, houses, and cottages, then the air would still be the air. If something killed off all humans, birds, beasts, and insects, the *qi* would still be the *qi*. How can we do anything about the Shang government's tyranny? How can we say anything of people's hardship? Despite all of this, the castle walls, houses, and cottages are already built and so need not be destroyed, just as the people are already formed and need not be killed, so I will save them!" Then, he agreed with Xi Bo and rode back home with him in the same carriage.

Tai Dian Hong Yao²⁵ personally went to Xi Bo and said, "The accumulated virtue and amassed achievement of Gong Liu²⁶ and Hou Ji,²⁷ and through the current reign, the King's virtue extends above and beyond his ancestors! Now the earth is divided into three parts, and the King possesses two of them; this can be called 'fantastic'! You, Lü Wang, are a fisherman, so what would you ever want to say beneath the extreme greatness of the King?" Xi Bo said, "Well, the virtue of inaction envelopes and pervades heaven and earth, while the virtue of action gets things started and accomplishes things. Xüan Yüan²⁸ and Tao Tang's²⁹ actions made them Sons of Heaven, and it

was with the virtue of action that they obtained an audience with Master Guang Cheng³⁰ at Mount Kong Tong and asked for Xü You³¹ at Sieve Mountain, although they didn't catch his attention. Besides, my virtue is not yet accomplished like that of Xüan Yüan and Yao, and isn't my inferiority the result of the virtue of inaction?" Tai Dian Hong Yao said, "If what the King says is true, then Wang is really the epitome of the virtue of inaction, so why is he following the King's actions?" Xi Bo said, "Heaven and Earth are inactive, yet the sun, moon, stars, and constellations move in the day and the night. There are rain, dew, frost, and freezing rain in the autumn and winter. The great rivers flow without pause, and the grass and trees grow without stopping. Therefore, inaction can be flexible. If there is a fixed point in action, then it cannot be inaction." Lü Wang heard this and knew that Xi Bo really did have compassion for the people and didn't want any profit from the Shang Dynasty's world. Thereupon, Lü Wang and Xi Bo finally made the State of Zhou prosperous and powerful.

Chapter 2: Sayings of the masters of Shou Yang

When King Wen³² died, King Wu attacked King Zhou³³ and destroyed him. Bo Yi³⁴ and Shu Qi³⁵ grabbed hold of Ma Chen's horse and said, "your father died and is not yet buried, and you have already taken up this large enterprise, and you have stirred up all the people, this is not filial. Being a minister, you have killed your ruler, this is not loyal." King Wu's retainers wanted to attack Bo Yi and Shu Qi, but King Wu performed a righteous act and let them go. Bo Yi and Shu Qi then left and hid in Mount Shou Yang and became known as the Masters of Mount Shou Yang. (Below: A possible friend's remonstrance to Bo Yi and Shu Qi)

"If you go in accordance with Earth's natural rhythm, there is no distinction between rulers and ministers. Someone created rulers and ministers in order to differentiate between the noble and based, those who called themselves sages, they, by means of their wisdom, deceived the stupid. By means of wisdom, they deceived the stupid, how absurd. With you, I've said this quite often! It was illegitimate to make a distinction between rulers and ministers; it was illegitimate to proclaim the Shang dynasty. Within the illegitimate Shang dynasty, there was one who was illegitimately known as Xin.³⁶ As the illegitimate last king of the Shang dynasty, he was illegitimately cruel and illegitimately violent in order to fulfill his illegitimate desires. Ji Fa's rebellion was also predicated on desire. [The rebels'] desires were also illegitimate, therefore we can say that this is a case of the illegitimate replacing the illegitimate. As for taking no action [*wuwei*], it is pure and upright and is in accordance with Heaven's principles; father, sons, rulers, ministers, do they exist in this natural state? Taking action [*youwei*] is based on predilections and desires, and it wreaks havoc on human nature; filial piety is not really filial piety, loyalty is not really loyalty, what difference

does one have from another? Now, you are considering what we have always been saying to be illegitimate, by illegitimizing what we have to say, you can cover up your illegitimate actions in order to invite a righteous reputation. You are relying on your bones, which will necessarily rot away, in order to move toward an empty reputation; this is like trying to put out a fire with the wind. Ji Fa did not attack you, how lucky. If his retainers had attacked you, then you would have obtained a good name, [but then] what good would your rotting body be to you? As for dragons that shed their scales, phoenixes who shed their wings, they will be looked down upon by fishermen and hunters. How sad! You are probably not friends of mine.”

Bo Yi and Shu Qi thereupon escaped into Mount Shou Yang, we did not know how they died, and people thereafter thought they starved to death.

Chapter 3: Sayings of the old ruler

Confucius established the correct form of rituals and music and illustrated the ancient statutes. He edited *The Book of Poetry*, *The Book of Documents*, and *The Spring and Autumn Annals*, so he thought he could, by means of all of this, put into correct order human relationships, and stop the hearts of the chaotic ministers, thieves, and rebels, and then he went to tell Laozi about it. Laozi said, “as for governing a large country, it is like frying a small fish, if you use these kinds of knives, it will be mashed! In the past, the sages invented material things and managed affairs, they seduced and moved people’s passions, and people’s passions lost what was natural, and people’s human nature and fate came to an early end in many ways! Nowadays, you added new complications to the sages’ system and tied up human feelings even more, and [so] you have complicated people’s passions. People’s passions are multiple, which makes them idle, idleness causes swindling and cheating, and cheating causes even more chaos. This is a case of attacking Heaven’s nature and having success, [meaning that] disaster is imminent.” Confucius was scared, but he would not bring himself to stop.

Thereafter, he was kicked out of the country of Wei, and then he was disgraced in the state of Song, then he almost starved in Chen and Cai, and then he was surrounded by people who did not like him in Kuang. He spent his whole life anxiously, and several times he was almost killed. Confucius turned around and looked at his disciple Yan Hui and said: “You don’t suppose what Laozi said was right, do you?”

Chapter 4: Sayings of Confucius (in two sections)

Part 1

Confucius was surrounded by people who did not like him in Kuang, for 7 days, he strummed a string instrument and sang without stopping.

Zi Lu³⁷ said: "I have heard that the gentleman can protect his body from any kind of harm, and never has trouble for even a single day. Well now, you who are a sage has nevertheless starved in the state of Chen, and been surrounded by people who did not like you in Kuang; why is this so? And now, you, Master, are strumming on a stringed instrument and singing without stopping, and you do not have a melancholy expression, do you have a secret method?" Confucius said: "You, come over here, I want to tell you something: well now, people themselves have it in their power to do the correct, incorrect, the evil, and the upright, incorrect, the evil, and the upright derive from people themselves, whether you get a lot or a little [luck] depends on Fate, having success or failing depends on the time. The light of the sun and the moon, even these things cannot avoid the disaster of an eclipse. These sages, who are wise men, their intelligence and wisdom are not able to change the human allotment of how much or little success or failure [one receives]. The gentleman is able to be benevolent to people, but not able to cause people to be benevolent to himself; he is able to be righteous to people, but not able to make people behave righteously towards him. [If] the people of Kuang are surrounding me, it is not due to any fault of my own; I am powerless to keep them from surrounding me! Moreover, the thing that can be surrounded, it is only my body. I am merely floating without form in an empty space above, I am floating without passion in another space, and I know of nothing of which to be anxious about, so I am, by chance, harmonizing my instrument with my song and nothing more." Before he was finished speaking, the people of Kuang had dispersed.

Part 2

When Confucius's disciple Yuan Xian lived in a lowly lane, his other disciple Zi Gong was simultaneously serving ministers in the states of Lu and Wei. [Zi Gong] saddled up his horses and assembled his retinue to call on Mr Xian! Xian was wearing his tattered clothing. Zi Gong said: "As for you, are you sick?" Xian said: "I have heard that if you do not cultivate virtue and justice—that is what is called sickness, being without wealth—that is called poverty. I am poor, but not sick." Zi Gong was embarrassed by what Xian said, and for the rest of his life, he did not dare to go to see Xian again.

Confucius heard this and said: "What Zi Gong was in the wrong. Well, now, he is concerned merely with external appearances and not emptiness, one who keeps these things inside his heart is not pure because he is not empty, so then his thinking is not clear, because it causes his heart to not be chaste. Zi Gong⁵ is close to being arrogant and desirous; Xian is close to steadfastness and purity, we can compare them to the clear and muddy, they are mutually distant by quite a large degree!"

Chapter 5 (missing from original text)

Chapter 6: Sayings of Fan Li

Fan Li helped King Gou Jian of Yue destroy Wu and killed Fu Cha,³⁸ and in discussions with Minister Zhong said, “I have heard that for one who secretly schemes against other people, disasters will necessarily rebound on him. As for the destruction of the Kingdom of Wu and the death of King Wu, this has followed from the secret schemes you and I have made. Moreover, as for the way the king treats people, he likes to share his worries, but he doesn’t share his happiness. This is not to mention, numerous achievements, a well-known reputation, and going into retirement—this is the way of Heaven.”

Minister Zhong said, “as for the whole world and the ten-thousand things, they are born in the spring and killed in the winter, as for the ten-thousand things, how can they, by being killed in the winter, cause disaster for Heaven and Earth? I hear that sages are not valued for their solitary goodness; rather, they are valued for getting rid of harm and helping things grow/getting things done. If you have helped something grow, you could be said to have gotten rid of disaster. This is what the Yellow Emperor did when he killed Chi You.³⁹ The legendary emperor Xun eliminated the four evil ones, I have gotten rid of chaos in the state of Wu and have brought [things] to a successful state of completion, [with] hegemony in the state of Wu under Yue; this is nothing more than getting things done and getting rid of harm, [so] what disaster/retribution will come back to strike me? Just now, the King was able to destroy Wu because he had you and me; we must serve in office from start to finish, don’t hasten towards retirement!”

Fan Li said: “No, you’re wrong. Not to mention, as for the universe, it has no intentionality, it does not control itself. Moreover, how can it control the other things? Heaven and Earth are by themselves Heaven and Earth, the ten-thousand things are by themselves the ten-thousand things, spring, by means of warmth gives birth to itself, winter, by means of the cold, kills itself, it is not Heaven and Earth that causes this to be so. Sages, although they have intentionality, what they can perform is part of Heaven and Earth. Heaven and Earth, although without intentionality, when stimulated, they will respond, when affairs push them, they will obey, when things pass by them, they will resist and go against them, getting rid of harm and causing things to come to completion, it has nothing to do with hate or love. Therefore [even when] we have gotten rid of harm and avoided disasters and brought material things to a completion, we will have no good fortune. Recently, because he hated the state of Wu, [the king] employed you and me in order to get our schemes. You and I benefitted from this pay and therefore we schemed against Wu, and [can] take as a sign of our success, the destruction of the people, and as payback, he gives

us our emoluments. The duplicity of people is such that they say that they are like Heaven and Earth's births and killings [and] that they are agents of Heaven and Earth; what sages call getting rid of harm and bringing things to completion, isn't this just a big scam?" Minister Zhong was not happy, and he was greatly suspicious of it all and would not do it [retire from office?].

Fan Li in the end took his leave from Gou Jian and sailed on a boat to [Lake Tai]; not long thereafter, King Yue killed Minister Zhong.

Chapter 7: Sayings of Song Yue

Qu Yuan was a minister at Chu who held the title of "San Lu Dai Fu" of three closely allied clans. King Chu was not virtuous, clever Minister Jing Shang had the King's good graces, and so the state of Chu was not [well] governed. Qu Yuan was worried about this, so he remonstrated with King Xiang, and asked him to get rid of Jing Shang. The king did not listen, so Qu Yuan remonstrated with the King to the utmost point.

His disciple Song Yu stopped him and said, "as for the intentions of a gentleman, he cultivates himself and does not find fault with others, he hides his usefulness and does not show it off to the public, when the time comes, then he responds, when material things come, then he follows through; he responds in time, but does not make plans for himself in advance; he follows through with these things but is not devoted to his own achievements, and for this reason the ruler's benevolent intentions will not accrue to him, and resentment has no place to gather. Recently, the king was misled by one with a clever tongue. He was confused, causing the government to become chaotic, the people in the state of Chu were all envious of Jing Shang's noble status and made a lot of commotion to try to appease him. Qu Yuan, at this point, was all alone; he held onto his loyalty and trustworthiness, called out in his midst, and no one listened to him, and the country was still not [well] governed, and all he accomplished to display to others was they were wrong and he was right, all he was doing was buying enmity and fishing for disaster." Yuan said, "I heard that as a gentleman, when residing at home, one must be filial and fraternal, when one acts as an official, one must be loyal and trustworthy. If he reaches his aspirations, although dead, he is like the living; if he does not reach his aspirations, although he is alive, he is like the dead." He kept remonstrating without stopping. Jing Shang resented this, so he calumniated to the king [about Qu Yuan].

Song Yu remonstrated to him, saying, "previously, you were all alone, holding onto your loyalty and trustworthiness, and you kept on saying the same thing! But you did not listen, so now what do you have to be sad about? It could not be rank and emoluments that you're thinking about, is it that you are thinking about the country you are exiled from?" Yuan

said, “neither. Well, I am depressed about the non-usage of my loyalty and trustworthiness, and that the state of Chu is not well governed.”

Yu said, “previously, you thought that you should die for filial piety, fraternal love, loyalty, and trustworthiness, so why are you sad? Moreover, your facial expression, form and body, they are not yours. The beautiful cannot be made ugly, the ugly cannot be made beautiful, the long cannot be made short, the short cannot be made long; the overflowing and strong are not able to be weakened, the weakened are not able to be made to overflow and strong; you cannot drive out sickness, when dead you cannot take things with you. My form and my body seem to belong to me, but I am not able to be in control of it. If your own body is like this, moreover, how would you desire to cause the people of the state of Chu to be ordered out of chaos by your own power. Your error is so deep! Well, the gentleman who lives in this world in the temporary lodgings of his body should have an empty heart when he responds to material things; there is neither wickedness nor righteousness, no right and no wrong, no good and no evil, no merit and no blame. If you have an empty heart, even if you are judging the Kings Jie,⁴⁰ Zhou,⁴¹ and Jiao Ji,⁴² they are not to be blamed. If you preserve this emptiness of heart, even if you are judging the Kings Yan, Xun, Kui, and Xie,⁴³ they are not worthy of merit. Then, as for your loyalty and trustworthiness and Jian Shang’s evil cleverness, who is to differentiate between the right and the wrong? There is no way to differentiate between them, so then loyalty, trustworthiness, evilness, and cleverness are one. [Even] if there is a way to differentiate between them, to make these distinctions is illegitimate. Well then, you have left your nature far behind by relying upon these illegitimate distinctions, and you are relying on yourself to cast dispersions on others—you should not have waited for the king to exile you, you should have exiled yourself! Now, you have sought after being loyal and trustworthy and have achieved being loyal and trustworthy, and you are depressed about it and are unable to stop yourself; you are one who is known to have lost your incorrect way of thinking. I have heard that the people of the highest intelligence understand the rules, the ones of middle intelligence obey the rules, and the ones of power intelligence break the rules. As for the person who has an empty heart and is far away from taking action [*youwei*], they understand and transcend the rules; as for the ones who control their hearts and differentiate between right and wrong, they are obeying the rules; as for the ones who get the distinction yet get distressed and let it pass, they will be victims of the rules.”

Yuan did not understand, in the end, he threw himself into the Mi Luo River and died.

Chapter 8: Sayings of Shang Yin

When Emperor Gao of the Han was infatuated with Qi Ji,⁴⁴ he wished to replace the crown prince, Ru Yi⁴⁵ of Zhao, with the prince of Ying.⁴⁶ The

great ministers were unable to resist this. Lu Hou⁴⁷ was really worried about this; she schemed with the Marquis of Liu, Zhang Liang. Liang said, “only when there are extraordinary people, can extraordinary things get done. I heard that there were four recluses living on Mount Shang Luo; they are called: Minister Xia Huang, Minister Lu Li, Minister Dong Yuan and Qi Li Ji. The emperor often summoned them but they have never come. Now, the crown prince was truly able to humble himself and seek for them to come, so then, the four people, for the time being, came. If they came, they will be guests of the prince, and this will be a great help to him.” [After] Emperor Lu followed Liang’s plan, she sent Lu Ze⁴⁸ to invite them.

The four people, in the beginning, refused him, but they got together and discussed [the matter], saying, “Liu Ji was high and mighty, moreover, he knows the means by which he is higher (exalted) than us, he sought after us but we will not go, he has embarrassed himself and nothing more! As for Empress Lu, that woman, her nature is cruel and mean, her son Ying was not yet firmly established as the crown prince, so she was necessarily pushed to crisis. In crisis, she has come seeking us; the peaceful resolution of the crisis depends on us. If she seeks us but does not get us, she will necessarily bring disaster upon us, therefore we must answer yes to her.”

One day the four of them accompanied the crown prince into the palace. The Emperor saw them and asked them, and all four of them introduced themselves. The king was surprised, and then said: “I often sought for you but you would not come for me, so why do you follow the crown prince?” The four recluses responded, “your majesty has treated us poorly, we do not, in principle, allow ourselves to be humiliated. The crown prince honors people, so we have come as his honored guests.” The emperor departed from them. He pointed to the four recluses and addressed Qi Li, saying, “the crown prince now has his own feathers and wings,⁴⁹ now he cannot be harmed!”

Empress Lu treated them virtuously, she wanted to honor and give them rank and ennoblements. The four recluses discussed this and said, “the reason we came here was to avoid disaster, it was not from the desire of our hearts. Yin is now secure and Ru Yi has been undermined. The Empress Lu has now gotten her wish and Qi Ji was killed. Now we are afraid of disaster, we have caused Yin to succeed and Ru Yi to be undermined, we caused Empress Lu to be happy and Qi Ji to despair; this is called destroying others to keep yourself whole, so this is probably not a case of killing to achieve virtue. Moreover, are we going to deal with the humiliation of being ennobled by a woman and by this means, get a position at court—what difference is this from being a thief and going into a person’s home and taking their gold and becoming a rich person?” So they left and again hid themselves in Mount Shang, and Empress Lu was unable to keep them.

Zhang Liang also became enlightened, thereupon he controlled his breathing and stopped eating and he left the palace and went into reclusion.

Chapter 9: Sayings of Yan Ling

When Guang Wu⁵⁰ was in his early years, he made friends with Yan Ling when he was in poverty. When he ascended the throne, Ling was still a fisherman on Fu Chun Lake. [When] Guang Wu thought about their past, he admired and yearned for Yan Ling's virtue; he himself went to invite him to be part of his court, but Ying did not follow.

Guang Wu said, "you and I are friends; recently, I have been given the status of emperor, and you are still a fisherman; on your behalf, I am ashamed for you. I have official and noble titles by which I can ennoble you, gold and jade that can make you rich and cause you to be above millions. Taking action can move mountain summits, a single command [from you] can cause rain and clouds to rise up—this will bring honor to you and fame to your clan, you will have a succession of lines and marquises, you will have courtyards and palaces and mansions, multitudes of different carts and horses, beautiful clothes, delicate foods, people will play the bell and drum wherever you go, and there will be joint song and dance wherever you go; you yourself will be happy for your entire life, your name will pass on for ten-thousand generations. How would your life of dropping bait in this pool and having no fame compare with the life of the high and mighty, those who rise up and fall down? Why don't you follow me?"

Ying smiled and said: "In the beginning when I made friends with you, and you cultivated your virtuous intentions, and were satisfied with being poor and lowly, it seemed like you were one who I could select. Nowadays, you brag and are misled, you are a fool. As for the world, since antiquity, people have thought that it is the biggest thing. Among its ten parts, mountain summits, streams and oceans comprise half of it, the Man, Yi, Rong, and Di⁵¹ possess three parts, and the Middle Kingdom has only one or two of those parts. Within this Middle Kingdom, war has never ceased. As for the noble emperor of the Middle Kingdom, he is merely one who has proclaimed himself to be noble in this one or two tenths of the world that is constantly at war; you were the one with self-respect. As for the one who is ennobled and calls himself the greatest, he is nothing more than one who according to his likes and dislikes controls death within these one or two parts, in these one or two parts of the world, one who cuts bricks and wood to make palaces and mansions, one who assembles silks and other treasures to decorate his carts and clothes, one who kills oxen and sheep and plants of the one hundred grains in order to make delectable foods, lines up beautiful people and has them bang on gold and rock instruments, all in order to delight his eyes and ears. The emperor's desires are never satisfied; when old age arrives, then he will die, then his muscles will be cast aside and be food for the ants and maggots, and his rotting bones are reduced to mud and soil; he is no different than any common man or any common woman—where is the nobility of an emperor?"

Those offices and ennoblements by which you honor me, I see through them all! Since antiquity, the noble title of minister, marquis, prime minister, great minister, these have been given by dukes and kings, they are all names that have been fabricated by the sages, who used rank to differentiate between the honored and lowly in order to seduce and guide the stupid people. Nowadays, you have the body of the emperor, but that's the same body you had when you were wearing cloth clothing; although people today call you emperor, still you ought to look at yourself—what differences are there in you now from the former times? Most likely, you want to seduce me with these made up names, to cause yourself to be happy and boast. Nowadays, you want to seduce me by means of these titles of minister, marquis, prime minister, and great minister—is this not treating me as if I am stupid? As for fake names, everyone is capable of making them. If I like doing this thing, then I could make up names and call myself minister, marquis, prime minister, or great minister! Why would I need you to make them up for me? Probably you will necessarily reply that the one with office and an ennobled title can by means of this become rich. Office and an ennobled title are in truth fake names; only I can truly enrich and ennoble myself; without thus sense of self, who has office and nobility? As for what is meant by title and nobility, it is nothing more than a tall hat, tinkling jade pendants, people walking in front of your horse carts, and people following behind your carriage, sitting in a large mansion, wearing new clothing, ears wearied from so much music of stringed instruments and bamboo instruments, your mouth entertained with chilies and orchids; this I say, is all with which you mean to seduce me and nothing more. As for carts and horses, they replace labor; whether it is a thoroughbred horses or an old man, it is one and the same; a house is there to protect from the wind and rain, whether it is a palace or a shack, they are one and the same; clothing is used to hide the body, whether it is fine silk fabrics or skins and cloth, they are one and the same; eating is to eliminate hunger, whether it is chilies and orchids or simple foods, they are one and the same. Moreover, I fish in the great emptiness, and I eat from the extreme harmony, I neither move nor am still, I am united in a single wave with the elements Yin and Yang. Just now, I forgot my own surname, I make no plans for when I go or when I stop, holding onto a fishing line and hurling fishing net, everywhere is my lodging place. Moreover, what time do I have to shackle my own body and deplete my energy; how lowly is craving for fake names and fulfilling illegitimate desires!

Whether King Meng⁵² or Geng Zhi⁵³ possesses the world, what is the difference between that and you having all under Heaven? Aren't all of you are merely seeking to be the most honored in the Middle Kingdom? It is not that you are really concerned about the world. Now, you wage war and kill, not knowing when to stop, and you exterminate people's lives and fate, to obtain one's own desires; one who is benevolent cannot bear to speak of this. Moreover, you are not ashamed; rather, you are ashamed that I am a fisherman!"

Guang Wu was embarrassed and thereupon he did not dare to call upon Ling to be a minister.

Chapter 10: Sayings of Sun Deng

Minister Sun Deng hid in Mount Su Men [as a recluse]. Ji King admired this and went to see him, and said, “I have heard that bugs are not able to know a tortoise’s age, a swallow and sparrow are not able to compare with the Hong bird. My heart is not sufficient to receive true teachings, nevertheless the light of the sun and the moon makes no distinctions when it shines on the main village of the little town; the rain doesn’t choose whether it will water the fragrant orchids or the little weeds. Now [since] you have mastered your pursuit of self-cultivation, you must have extra which you can pass on to me, which can cause me to transcend from the finite into the infinite.”

It was a while before Deng responded, “just now when I was in deep meditation, it seemed like I had a thought. If I did not have a thought, I was all bound up with the universe as if I had a spirit, but I did not have a spirit. Thoughts and spirits are true; if you want to leave them, you cannot, if you want to stay with them, you cannot. What can be called extending one’s life? What can be called cultivating self? What can be said to have a limit? What can be said to have no boundaries? Yet within emptiness and nothingness, everything is flowing and continuous, both entry and exit leave no trace; they are the root of Heaven and Earth. The one who knows this is enlightened; the one who obtains this is respected. That which you just said is not even getting a look at the gateway. I heard multiple times that Laozi said, ‘the good merchant hides his goods as if they were nothing, and a gentleman who is prosperous in virtue can appear to look stupid.’ Moreover, just because the oyster has a pearl, it is cut open; the elephant, because of his tusks, is killed, orchids are rendered into precious oils, birds are plucked to make human beings pretty, this is what common people know. You are a well-known talent; you have forgotten the secret mystery of the dark universe. It is as if you are holding a bright candle, bright and illuminating your own skills, and Heaven hates you. I once read your book, *Letters Objecting to the Recommendation of Mr. Shan Ju Yuan*, which is about the two great reasons and seven minor reasons why you should be an official and would be [great] by the times. As for one who is empty at his center, neither the court nor the marketplace will disrupt him; the one who has desires at his heart, the high cliffs and dark valleys will provide for him no rest. Office should not be able to shake you from your resolve; going into reclusion will not aid you in seeking peace. If you became an official then you have a lot to do, if you are not an official, then you will not have anything to do; also you brought up the fact that you want to cut off interactions with people, and that you are a useless creature, but that is the same as getting into a vulgar argument that you want to disentangle yourself

from; and now you say you want to seek after eternal life, this can be called disliking one's own shadow and running away from it in the sun. How are you good enough to listen to my instruction?"

Kuang was confused and seemed as if he was drunk, and later on in life, he was executed.

Part 3

Chapter 1: Answering Tong

When Wu Nengzi was impoverished, his elder brother and his younger brothers' sons were cold and starving and they all sighed and followed each other. On day his elder brother's son Tong addressed Wu Nengzi and said, "alas, I'm cold and hungry and I've been so for many years. Last night I dreamt of being an official with a big salary and I had a lot of carriages, horses, gold, and silk. When I was dreaming I was happy; when I awoke then I was sad. How can I manage to flip dream and reality?" Wu Nengzi said, "your unhappiness during the day and your unhappiness at night are all the same. There's no need to change them." So his elder' bother's son then said, "oh, so you mean to say that happiness at night is just a dream and nothing more?" Wu Nengzi replied, "at night when you dream of residing in a mansion and riding a carriage with horses and wearing fancy clothes and eating and drinking and having love for your wife and children and despising your enemies, are those feelings of sadness, happiness, delight, and anger any different from the desire and actions you take when you are awake?" His elder bother's son responded, "there's no difference." Wu Nengzi said, "since there is no difference, how do you know that what you do when you are asleep and what you do when you are awake are both no dreams? Now the human lifespan is about 100 years. It's divided about equally between day and night, so half the time you're happy and half the time you're sad. What's there to be resentful about with that situation? Now, as for those people who can maintain themselves in the cultivation of the void [*xu*], even if they were to become kings and marquises that would not be sufficient to ennoble them, and even if they were to become slaves, that would not debase them. Even if they had jade and silk and sons and daughters, that would not be enough to enrich them and if they had meager porridge and tattered clothes that would not be enough to impoverish them. For them, there's no space for sadness and happiness. The emotions being moved and then taking form in the body are nothing more than being stimulated by things, and that which we mean by things are nothing more than wealth and honor. Bodies and things are the root of decay. When your feelings are moved by them and you feel sadness or happiness, this is impermanence [*wuchang*]. With impermanent feelings getting tied up with the root of decay, is this not like saying that the waking state is like a dream and that the 100-year lifespan is

nothing more than one nighttime? If you are able to maintain yourself in the cultivation of the void then you won't know the meaning of starvation, cold, wealth, and ennoblement. If your emotions are moved and they take form in your body, then night and day, sleeping and awake, will be all a dream. Think about that."

Chapter 2: Responding to Hua Yangzi

Wu Nengzi had an acquaintance whose name was Hua Yangzi, who was being pressured by another acquaintance to take office. Hua Yangzi couldn't decide what to do and so he consulted Wu Nengzi. "I have been practicing to be without intention for a long time. If I go and become an official, then I will be going against my desires, but if I don't go and become an official, then I will anger that friend. What should I do?"

Wu Nengzi said, "Having no intentionality [*wuxin*] is not something that you can learn. Having no intentionality has nothing to do with serving in office or not serving in office. If you confused and your thinking is too deep, it's like you have seen a blind person on the verge of a pit and you instruct him to walk forward. As for a person who takes no action [*wuwei*] that means there's no action that he cannot take, and as for a person who takes action, there are certain actions that he can't take. Only those people who are closest to their original nature [*zhishi*] will be able to understand this great principle. That which is closest to the highest public spiritedness [*zhigong*] is what we mean by no action and it takes its root in having no desires and having no selfishness. So if you have desire then even if you're a fisherman, a woodcutter, a farmer, or a shepherd, you'll have intentionality [*youxin*]. But if you have no desire, and you're the emperor riding in his carriage or you're a marquis wearing his robes, then you'll have no intentionality. Therefore, sages abide where it is appropriate and take action [*xing*] where it is appropriate. Principle is located at the point where one cultivates the self. Xuyou and Shan Zhuan [hermits from the time of Shun] were not embarrassed to be commoners, but when the situation is favorable then it is permissible to provide aid to the world. Therefore the emperors Yao and Shun didn't decline the office of emperor. In both cases [i.e., the hermits and the emperors] they were united in having no intentionality. When Yao and Shun were on the throne they had no concern for the nobility that the office of Son of Heaven gave them. They merely let their robes hang down and the world was governed. So when it was evident that Dan Zhu [the son of Yao] and Shang Zhun [who was the son of Shun] were of small ability, then Yao passed the throne to Shun and Shun passed the throne to Yu; therefore they cast aside their own sons as if they were scabs and they set aside the world as if it were spittle. For this reason there were generations when the world was at peace. In the time of the Duke of Zhou, King Wen's son and King Wu's younger brother, [King Cheng] everyone knew that the Duke of Zhou was

virtuous but because King Cheng was alive it was not a favorable time for the Duke of Zhou and therefore he didn't become the Son of Heaven. Because King Cheng was young it was correct for the Duke of Zhou to remain as regent and this he didn't decline. He did all this in order to make sure that the House of Zhou would last for generations and that the people of the state of Zhou would have good lives and he was greatly successful and the fame of his deeds has never declined. This is all because he had no desires himself and there was nothing that he would not do. If you can understand this, although you might be cock fighting or racing dogs in the butcher's market or grasping an enemy's battle flag on the battlefield, it doesn't matter, you can do both of them, so why are you worried about serving in office?"

Chapter 3: Answering Yu Zhongzi

Wu Nengzi's intimate friend, Yu Zhongzi had pain in his heart, so he asked Wu Nengzi for some medicine.

Wu Nengzi said, "what's the symptom?"

His friend said, "it hurts."

Wu Nengzi said, "where does it hurt?"

His friend said, "in my heart."

Wu Nengzi said, "where is your heart?"

And Yu Zhongzi said, "my sickness is better now."

Wu Nengzi said, "You can really say that this fellow understands the nature of heaven and is one who is truly enlightened."

Chapter 4: On fish

On the Yellow River there's a place called Dragon Gate [a tight spot in the Yellow River where in ancient times people said that if fish could jump over the pass they would become dragons and if they couldn't they would remain fish] that is close to Li that is in the ancient state of Jin. The pass in the river was carved out by Emperor Yu [when he was controlling the floods]. The water there falls down some tens of *ren* [Chinese yards]. The water that comes over it has a gushing sound like thunder that can be heard for ten miles around. In the springtime the great fish of the river assemble below it and use their strength to try to surmount it, and those who pass over the gate then become dragons who are then capable of creating clouds and causing the rain to fall. The little fish look at each other and say, "we're also fish and we could transform in this matter as well. Why are we just paddling around here hiding ourselves in little rock caves?"

One from among them said, ‘how wrong you are. Within the universe the forms that things take numbers more than ten million. The magnitude of things’ form ranges from the big to the small. According to a thing’s form, it fulfills its destiny, each of which is appropriate to itself. As for the ones that become dragons, when the river is turbulent then it knocks them around; when it’s placid, then it leaves them at peace. And at that time whether they are deep in the water or floating in the surface, they’re happy and safe, but when it comes time to change into dragons, they assemble at the bottom of the waterfall and the force of the waterfall is angry and they struggle, then it becomes cloudy and starts to rain. Now the clouds and the rain are only the product of the moisture of the river. This has absolutely nothing to do with the fish themselves. If the fish who were becoming dragons were to have the intention of making clouds and rain, some of the time the clouds would form and the rain would fall, but this is actually just a product not of their intention and it’s not an achievement of theirs. The horns on their head and the claws of their feet are the same as the whiskers that we have on our face. We swim around with our whiskers in the water and they fly around with horns and feet. Both of us are doing what is natural. Why would we want to change our struggle-free life swimming around here in the river and our carefree life here hidden in the caves and our happiness which results from people not knowing where we are not harming us for the laboriousness of their horn-footed life in the clouds and the rain?’”

Chapter 5: The [Zhi bird] speaks

The Bird meets a snake and the bird goes forward and bites the snake and the snake says, “everyone in the world says that you are poisonous. To be poisonous is to have a bad reputation. The reason that you have a bad reputation is because you’re trying to eat me. If you don’t eat me, then you won’t be poisonous. If you are not poisonous then your bad reputation will go away.” The bird laughed and said, “aren’t you also poisonous to people? And yet you point to me and say that I’m poisonous and by this means you’re trying to cheat me, and the reason that you’re poisonous to the people of the world is that you’re trying to eat them and I’m angry at you for trying to eat the people. Therefore by eating you, I’m punishing you. The people of the world know that I can punish you and therefore will blame me for protecting you. They also know that when I eat you your poison become infused in my feather and my body and therefore I can kill people. My poison is actually your poison. I hate my bad reputation and yet I live with it, but what kills people are really people themselves. For example, when people use weapons to kill

other people, is the weapon at fault or is the human at fault? Therefore it is clear that it's not my poison that kills people.⁵⁴ Now the people of the world blame me and don't blame me—that's clear. Unintentionally I poison people—it's merely because I hate bad things that I have gotten this reputation. I'm used by people but my actions are not selfish. I'm not selfish and I'm happy to have a bad reputation, and that's in fact not having a bad reputation. You on the other hand have the intention to poison people and you skulk in the grass and bushes and enjoy waiting for people to come by. Now your meeting with me today is fate, and yet you want to use rhetoric to argue your way out of it." The snake was unable to respond, so the bird ate him.

Now creatures cannot have intentionality, what about people?

Chapter 6: Answering Lu (Note: No one knows who he is except that he is Wu Nengzi's cousin) (in two parts)

Part 1

Wu Nengzi's cousin went to study with Wu Nengzi and Wu Nengzi said, "What do you want to study," and the cousin said, "I would like to study morality and refined behavior [*wen*]." Wu Nengzi replied, "I don't know what you mean by morality and I don't know what you mean by literature, but among those who in the past were called sages, I occasionally have seen what you're talking about. They have said that 'morality is putting things into action, that is to say, putting into action the goodness [*shan*] in your heart. And by refined behavior is meant embellishing the goodness of your actions.' So the funeral rite is based in sorrow and the wearing of the mourning clothes and the implements used in sacrifice are all the embellishment. Ritual is based in respect; respect is an action, but the rising up, the going down, the bowing, and the yielding are all embellishment. Music is based in harmony; harmony is an action; the pottery, the gourds, the silk, and the bamboo of the instruments, are all embellishment. Embellishment derives from the action; the action derives from the heart; and the heart derives from what is natural. If it's not natural, then we have the birth of intentionality. With intentionality we have a brittleness of action, and with brittle action, then we have the corruption of embellishment. When embellishment is corrupt then it's false; when it's false, then it's disordered. When things are disordered, even sages will be of no help. Now you have to take hold of the root [*gen*] and not the branch. Trace things back to their source and don't worry about the offshoots. If you can verify that you have no intention, then you can return to what is natural and you won't need to have the example of the sages before you or the example of mysterious heaven above you. Action and embellishment are both like in not studying."

Part 2

On another day Lu consulted Wu Nengzi again, saying, "I have often been troubled by not being able to reach the goal of my studies; I seek after it, but it disappears and I'm melancholy. After I have gotten drunk I am happy and ignorant of my distress, so I can't give up drinking."

Then Wu Nengzi said, "your worries and your melancholy do they come from your body? Or do they come from your heart?"

Lu responded, "from my heart"

Wu Nengzi said, "can you see your heart?"

And the disciple said, "I can't see it."

"That which you can't see is giving rise to your troubles and your melancholy. If you seek after what gives rise to your troubles and melancholy and you can't see it, where then do your troubles and melancholy lie? Since there is no location, for your troubles and melancholy, then when you seek after something and can't get it, and go after something and it's already gone, where do those things lie? Now you are sad and melancholy about not finding them. This is like trying to tie up the wind and catch shadows. Your worries and your melancholy have no real location and moreover you have a taste for the oblivion [*taoran*] of alcohol and you are not satisfied, so you drown your sorrows in wine. Are you nothing more than a wine barrel?"

Chapter 7 (missing)

Chapter 8: A record of things seen (in three parts)

Part 1

In a market town in the former state of Qin, there was a conjurer who could put his hands and feet into a boiling vat of oil and yet remain with a smile on his face. Wu Nengzi sought him out and asked him some questions about the magic and the conjurer said, "I studied this trick from my master; the kind of magic that I practice can eliminate the heat of fire; moreover there's a little magic formula that I say which goes, 'when I see the pot of boiling oil, I first have to forget all about myself.' Not only do I have to look on my own hands and feet as if they were the sticks of an old tree, but I have to also forget about these hands and feet which are like the sticks of an old tree and only then will my trick work. But even if for one moment I start to fear, then the trick will fail. This is the secret to my success."

Wu Nengzi turned around and said to his disciples, "Young ones, take note of this. With a body without intention, the conjurer can cause even a boiling pot of oil to seem cold. Shouldn't people of superior virtue be able to do more?"

Part 2

One time when Wu Nengzi was staying with a peasant family named Jing in a village in the ancient state of Qin, at night an owl came by and landed on a branch and called out, and Mr. Jing's expression changed to one of sadness and he wanted to shoot it. Wu Nengzi stopped him and Mr. Jing said, "but the owl is an inauspicious bird. When something inauspicious is going to happen in a family(s) household then the bird comes and calls. If I kill it then maybe this inauspiciousness won't exist."

Wu Nengzi said, "if your family were really to have something bad happen to it because this bird came and called nearby, then that would really be the fault of the bird, and if the owl could really cause people to have bad things happen to them, then even if you killed the bird, it wouldn't be enough to get rid of the bad thing. If on the other hand something bad was going to happen at a family's home and only then did the bird come and cry, couldn't you say that owl is actually quite loyal to people and gives them a forewarning of bad things to come? And since the bad thing doesn't come from the owl itself then killing the owl is like killing a loyal and sincere bird. Moreover, we who call ourselves people and animals like this bird are both born from the impartial *qi* of the universe. People have horizontal eyes and square feet and birds fly up into the air; these are our differences. But these are just incidental to the clearness, the turbidity, the lightness or heaviness of *qi* and by this way they come into being. They don't come into being by any judgment of love or hate. Who commanded the birds to be in charge of ill omens? Who was the one who deemed this so? Did heaven and earth say this was going to be so? Did the owl himself say this was going to be so? But if heaven and earth didn't say this and the owl didn't say this, why must it be so? We don't know who originated this idea; moreover the beautiful colored bird we call the phoenix may not be auspicious and in the same way the owl may not be inauspicious." So Mr Jing didn't kill the owl and no harm came to his family.

Part 3

In the Pan clan there was a handsome man who was about thirty years old. On some days he would let down his hair and run all about. Other days he would just sit quietly for the whole day and not say anything. When he would speak he would say the horse is a goat and that a mountain is water. Whenever he pointed to any particular object he would use the wrong word to name it. Everyone in his family and everyone in the village thought he was crazy and no one paid any attention to him. Wu Nengzi also thought that he was crazy.

One day Wu Nengzi met this crazy one in a forest and he sighed and said, "you are a sturdy looking fellow with good looking features. What a shame it is that you're so sick." The crazy one slowly said, "I am not sick." Wu Nengzi was startled and said, "you don't wear your hat and your belt correctly. You get up and you sit down with no regularity. You misname

everything. You don't observe the proper rituals of your family and the other villagers. This is insanity. How can you say that you're not sick?" The crazy one said, "do you really mean to say that wearing the belt and the hat in the proper way and having regularity in rising and sitting and showing respect or love towards my family members and respect toward my fellow villagers comes from my own nature? In the past there were people who fabricated things and they embellished things and called them the rites and they have caused people to practice these rites down to the present day. But weak wine and strong wine are still wine. One who knows this and nevertheless goes against this and then pretends not to know this is therefore called by everyone an insane person. Moreover, as for the names of the ten thousand things, do they also come from nature? The clear stuff that's gone up is called heaven; the yellow stuff that's gone down is called earth. The bright shiny thing in the day we call the sun and the bright shiny thing at night we call the moon, and as for the flowing, are they not all fabricated and forced names of things? For example, the wind, the clouds, the rain, the dew, the smoke, the fog, the frost, and the snow, mountains, peaks, rivers seas, grass, trees, birds, beasts, Chinese, barbarians, emperors, kings, dukes, marquises, officials, farmers, artisans, merchants, slaves, of all kinds, and even truth, falsehood, goodness, good and evil, the correct, the incorrect, the honored and the debased, they are all this way. People are used to these names so they don't see that they were in the beginning forced, so they continue the practice of using them and don't dare to change, but what would have happened if in the past the original fabricator had said that the light stuff that goes up is called earth and the yellow stuff that goes down is called heaven and the shiny thing in the sky is called the moon and the shiny thing at night is called the sun and we had used that practice till today? So these forced names derive from people. I'm also a person; on what authority did someone create these forced names and why can't I do the same? As for wearing my hat and my belt, getting up and sitting down, I'll do any of those as I please and I will name any of the ten thousand shapes and things as I please. Is this insane? I don't know, but is it right for others who don't know to say that I'm insane?"

Chapters 9 and 10 (missing)

Chapter 11: Holding firmly to the root (in four parts)

Part 1

All the five types of weaponry have as a purpose the killing of people. Various kinds of nets have as a purpose capturing birds, beasts, other kinds of animals and fish. The sages made them and afterwards people could kill each other. People could also catch the birds, the beasts, the fish, and other animals. First they caused them to know how to kill people and know

how to catch things, then they set up penalties to stop people from killing each other and they set up prohibitions for entering the mountains and the marshes in order to stop people from catching animals. And now in this era of decayed morality, people can't protect their own fathers, their own children, and their own brothers and now the animals have ability to give birth to their young like little deer and little fish. The laws have become clearer and yet they can't prohibit [people from doing what they want]. This is because people have learned about weapons and nets. If the people who invented these things were to come back to life today, would they be able to control themselves [and not make these stupid inventions]?

Part 2

A coffin is of great help to the dead, but the people who make the coffins don't intend to help the dead; rather, they just intend to make money for themselves. Hoping to sell something every day, they hope that more and more people die. It's not that they hate other people, it's just that they hope to get profit. Doctors take pleasure in sickness, but they also hope that they can cure sickness. It's not that they take pleasure in saving people and helping them, it's that they like profit. Coffins and medicine all are an aid to people. Taking pleasure in life and pleasure in death don't come from love or hate, they just come from the coffin maker or the doctor's desire. For this reason treating the universe benevolently through inaction is not like the profit seeking of the coffin maker and the doctor. It is rather, the real desire to help the dead and cure the sick.

Part 3

Animals with horns spear their enemy; animals with hooves kick their enemy; snakes bite, insects sting; they all use what is their own particular strength. If you investigate what they use then you can guard against what they use. For this reason, things that use something are not as good as those that don't use anything. There's an insect known as the silkworm that eats mulberries and produces silk in its stomach. It weaves its own little cocoon and is transformed inside. When it comes out it has wings and is a moth. It is relying on its nature to be so. This is just like the fetuses of animals and the eggs of birds; these are not things that they themselves have decided upon. Wise people know that you can turn silk into thread and thread into cloth. So therefore they boil the silk and then they weave it into cloth, turn it into material and wear it. Now the silkworm enters into its cocoon to become a moth, not for the purpose of allowing people to enjoy clothing. The reason why they're boiled is because they're burdened by the very silk that they produce. The people who boil them are not mad at the silkworms themselves; they just want to get profit from it. Now the animal's placenta, the bird's egg, and the silkworm's cocoon are all what is natural to them. That the silkworm alone produces silk and silk must be boiled is unlucky

and that seems to be just dependent on fate. Now one who does nothing has neither luck nor no luck; there's no fate involved.

Part 4

Those who take action and perform good deeds will not necessarily become prosperous, and those who perform bad deeds will not necessarily meet with disaster; this is all determined by fate. For this reason the sages particularly held as valuable the idea of inaction [*wuwei*]. If you are to tell the little insect that lives in a wall and the frog that lives in a well about tigers and leopards that live in mountains and whales that live in the sea, they would have their doubts because of the limits of their own experience. Similarly, if you tell people who are addicted to the affairs of the world about the principle of *wuwei*, they will necessarily have doubts because they are enmeshed in their own practices. Fathers cannot pass on [the idea of *wuwei*] to their sons. Older brothers can't pass it on to their younger brothers. Some people will remain lost in their desire until the moment they die. Of people who return to the source [*yuan*] and don't give rise to anything, in today's world there's not a single one. Alas! Inaction depends on me. Desire also depends on me. If I follow inaction then I will be at peace; if I follow desire, then I will toil. If I'm at peace then I will be happy; if I toil then I will be troubled. Ordinary people are deluded and there's nothing you can do to cause them to understand. What they study causes them to be this way. Bright people will turn their backs on these customs.

Notes

- 1 Frequently mentioned in early texts as an expert judge of horses.
- 2 Reading *t'ung* with the man radical; see Chapter 10, n. 12.
- 3 The terms *su* and *p'u* (uncarved simplicity) appear frequently in the *Tao-te-ching*, for example, Chapter XIX. Waley translates them as "Simplicity" and "the Uncarved Block" respectively.
- 4 There are many different interpretations of the terms in this sentence. I follow the emendations and interpretations of Ma Hsü-lun.
- 5 Following texts that read *neng* rather than *t'ai*.
- 6 Legendary ruler of high antiquity.
- 7 Li Mu was a famous general in Chao during the Warring States period. In spite of his brilliant service against the Hsiung-nu and the Ch'in, he was executed by the sovereign of Chao who believed a calumny against him.
- 8 Po Tsung was an outspoken courtier of the state of Ch'in during the Ch'un-ch'iu [Spring and Autumn] period who was killed, along with his family, because his frankness irritated less scrupulous courtiers than himself.
- 9 The analogy of lice in a pair of drawers, the most famous part of the 'Biography,' was probably inspired by a passage in *Chuang-tzu*, 24 [see Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, 276] in which a class of men

- are compared to lice living on a pig. The 'great fire' is probably also inspired by that passage and should be read with the fall of dynasties in mind.
- 10 Literally 'yang crow.' This seems to be the earliest usage of this term as an heroic bird (like the phoenix or roc), a usage often found in later poetry. The comparison between heroic and small birds is based on the first chapter of *Chuang-tzu*. Like so many of the creatures referred to by Juan Chi, the Sun Crow was probably a well know mythological animal, perhaps the black crow often shown against the sun in early (Former Han) paintings. . . . Archeological discoveries of this type continue to show us that so many of the strange birds and beasts Juan Chi delights in mentioning were an important and perhaps even a commonplace of contemporary daily life.
 - 11 Traditionally in 1766 [BCE].
 - 12 The Chou were actually defeated by the Ch'in in 255 [BCE] and the latter by the Han in 206 [BCE], but Master Great Man can hardly be expected to take a mere half century into account!
 - 13 Said to be the capital of the Shang king Tsui-I (reigned 1525–1505 [BCE]).
 - 14 Po [refers] in all probability [to] the three capitals of the Shang dynasty, T'ang, variously located near Lo-yang . . .
 - 15 The capital of the early kings of the Chou dynasty, in the northwest of Ch'ang-an.
 - 16 The description of "paradise" in *Lieh-tzu*, 5, where *pu chiin pu ch' en* occurs (A. C. Graham, *The Book of Lieh-tzu*, 102, translates "no one is ruler or subject"), and of Utopia, *Lieh-tzu*, 2 (translated by Graham, 34: "In this country there are no teachers and leaders; all things follow their natural course").
 - 17 *Chuang-tzu*, IX [see Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, 104–6].
 - 18 An allusion to *Analects*, XVIII, 6, in which Confucius sends one of his disciples to inquire about a fording place across a river. Here, of course, the phrase refers to seekers of the utopian land of the Peach Blossom Spring.
 - 19 "Food from the one hundred grains" means food that needed to be processed through machinery or technology.
 - 20 An autumn hair is traditionally considered the finest of hairs, those that are used for calligraphy brushes.
 - 21 Implying the womb.
 - 22 Lü served under Kings Wen and Wu of the Zhou Dynasty.
 - 23 A large tributary of the Yellow River in today's Shaanxi Province.
 - 24 Xi Bo later became King Wen, the first King of the Zhou Dynasty.
 - 25 A high minister under King Wen.
 - 26 Ancestor of the Zhou clan; he passed his job on to Hou Ji's great grandson.
 - 27 Another ancestor of the Zhou clan who was supposedly an agricultural official that ruled the fief of Tai under Emperor Shun, the legendary founder of the Xia Dynasty.
 - 28 Another name for the Mythical Yellow Emperor.
 - 29 Another name for the legendary Emperor Yao, who abdicated his throne to Shun.
 - 30 A legendary virtuous man.
 - 31 A hermit from the time of Emperor Yao who supposedly refused all offers of honors and offices by becoming a hermit and living in a deep mountain cave.

- 32 The first king of the Zhou dynasty.
- 33 The last king of the Shang dynasty.
- 34 Bo = the oldest of the sons.
- 35 Shu = the middle of the sons.
- 36 Xin = King Zhou of the Shang.
- 37 One of Confucius's disciples.
- 38 King of Wu.
- 39 A person who attacked the emperor.
- 40 The last king of the Xia dynasty.
- 41 The last king of Shang.
- 42 An immoral robber.
- 43 Four legendary rulers.
- 44 A royal concubine.
- 45 Son of the emperor's first wife.
- 46 Son of [the emperor's] favorite concubine.
- 47 The legitimate empress.
- 48 Empress Lu's eldest brother.
- 49 That is, has now grown up and can make his own decisions.
- 50 Later Han emperor Guang of Wu, ninth generation descendant of Emperor Gao of Han, who rebelled during the Wang Mang dynasty and reestablished the Han Dynasty.
- 51 Four non-Chinese minority tribes.
- 52 A famous usurper.
- 53 Emperor Guang Wu's brother.
- 54 People would use this bird's poison to assassinate people by putting it in their wine.