Basic Writings of MO TZU, HSÜN TZU, *and* HAN FEI TZU

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Basic Writings of MO TZU, HSÜN TZU, *and* HAN FEI TZU

Translated by BURTON WATSON

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HONORING THE WORTHY

PART I

(SECTION 8)

Master Mo Tzu[1] said: These days the rulers and high officials who govern the nation all desire their states to be rich, their population numerous, and their administration well ordered. And yet what they achieve is not wealth but poverty, not a numerous population but a meager one, not order but chaos. In actual fact, they fail to get what they seek and instead achieve what they abhor. Why is this?

Mo Tzu said: It is because the rulers and high officials who govern the nation fail to honor the worthy and employ the capable in their administration. If a government is rich in worthy men, then the administration will be characterized by weight and substance; but if it is poor in such men, then the administration will be a paltry affair. Therefore the task confronting the high officials is simply to increase the number of worthy men. But what means are to be used to increase the number of worthy men?

Mo Tzu said: Let us suppose that one wishes to increase the number of skilled archers and chariot drivers in the state. One must set about enriching and honoring such men, respecting and praising them. Once this has been done, one will have no difficulty in obtaining a multitude of them. How

[1] This title, Tzu Mo Tzu (Master Mo Tzu), is repeated innumerable times in the text. For the sake of brevity, I shall hereafter translate it simply as "Mo Tzu."

much more appropriate, therefore, that one should do this for worthy men, who are ardent in the practice of virtue, skilled in discourse, and broad in learning! Men such as these are the treasures of the nation and the keepers of its altars of the soil and grain. They too should be enriched and honored, respected and praised, and when this has been done, they may be obtained in plenty.

Therefore, when the sage kings of ancient times administered their states, they announced: "The unrighteous shall not be enriched, the unrighteous shall not be exalted, the unrighteous shall be no kin to us, the unrighteous shall not be our intimates!" When the rich and exalted men of the kingdom heard this, they all began to deliberate among themselves, saying, "We have trusted in our wealth and exalted position, but now the lord promotes the righteous without caring whether they are poor or humble. We too, then, must become righteous." Likewise the kin of the ruler began to deliberate, saying, "We have trusted in the bond of kinship, but now the lord promotes the righteous without caring how distant the relationship. We too, then, must become righteous." Those who were intimate with the ruler deliberated, saying, "We have trusted in the intimacy we enjoyed, but now the lord promotes the righteous without caring how far removed they may have been from him until now. We too, then, must become righteous." And when those who were far removed from the ruler heard it, they also deliberated, saying, "We used to believe that, since we were so far removed from the ruler, we had nothing to trust in. But now the lord promotes the righteous without caring how far removed they may be. We too, then, must become righteous." So the vassals of distant and outlying areas, as well as the noblemen's sons serving in the

palace, the multitudes of the capital, and the peasants of the four borders, in time came to hear of this, and all strove to become righteous.

Why did the ancient kings do this? Those in a superior position have one thing by which to attract men to their service—the promise of material benefits; those in a subordinate position have one thing to offer to their superiors—a knowledge of the arts of government. Let us suppose there is a rich man who has built a high wall all around his house. When the wall is finished and plastered with mud, he pierces it with only one gate. Then, if a thief steals in, he may shut the gate by which the thief entered and set about searching for him, confident that the thief has no means of escape. Why? Because the rich man, like the ruler, has control of the vital point.

Therefore in their administration the sage kings of ancient times ranked the virtuous high and honored the worthy, and although a man might be a farmer or an artisan from the shops, if he had ability they promoted him. Such men were honored with titles, treated to generous stipends, entrusted with important matters, and empowered to see that their orders were carried out. For it was said that if their stipends were not generous, the people would have no confidence in them; and if their orders were not carried out, the people would not stand in awe of them. These three benefits were bestowed upon the worthy not because the ruler wished to reward them for their worth but because he hoped thereby to bring about success in the affairs of government. Therefore at that time ranks were assigned according to virtue, duties allotted according to the office held, and rewards given according to the effort expended; achievements were weighed and stipends distributed accordingly. Thus no official was necessarily assured of an exalted position for life, nor was any member of the common people

necessarily condemned to remain forever humble. Those with ability were promoted, those without it were demoted. This is what it means to promote public righteousness and do away with private likes and dislikes.

In ancient times Yao raised up Shun from the sunny side of Fu Lake and entrusted the government to him, and the world was at peace. Yü raised up Yi from the land of Yin and entrusted the government to him, and the nine provinces were well ordered. T'ang raised up Yi Yin from his labors in the kitchen and entrusted the government to him, and his plans were successful. King Wen raised up Hung-yao T'ai-tien from his place among the hunting and fishing nets and entrusted the government to him, and the western regions bowed in submission.[2]

So among the officials who enjoyed high ranks and generous stipends in those days, there were none who were not unfailingly cautious and respectful, none who did not encourage and strive with each other in honoring virtue. It is gentlemen of true worth, therefore, who must act to assist and carry on the government. If the ruler can obtain the services of such gentlemen, then his plans will never be thwarted nor his body worn by care; his fame will be established and his undertakings brought to a successful conclusion; his excellence will be manifest and no evil will appear to mar it. All this will come about because he has obtained the services of gentlemen.

Therefore Mo Tzu said: When things are going well, gen-

[2] Yao, Shun, Yü, T'ang, and King Wen were all ancient sage rulers, the last three the founders of the Hsia, Shang, and Chou dynasties respectively, the so-called Three Dynasties. Yi of the land of Yin was an eminent minister of Shun and Yü. Yi Yin was supposed to have been working in T'ang's royal kitchens when his worth was recognized. The identity of Hung-yao T'ai-tien and the anecdote upon which Mo Tzu's statement is based are unknown.

tlemen of worth must be promoted; and when they are not going well, gentlemen of worth must be promoted. If one wishes to emulate and carry on the ways of Yao, Shun, Yü, and T'ang, then one must honor the worthy, for honoring the worthy is the foundation of good government.

PART II

(SECTION 9)

Mo Tzu said: In caring for the people, presiding over the altars of the soil and grain, and ordering the state, the rulers and high officials these days strive for stability and seek to avoid any error. But why do they fail to perceive that honoring the worthy is the foundation of government?

How do we know that honoring the worthy is the foundation of government? Because when the eminent and wise rule over the stupid and humble, then there will be order; but when the stupid and humble rule over the eminent and wise, there will be chaos. Therefore we know that honoring the worthy is the foundation of government.

Therefore the sage kings of ancient times took great pains to honor the worthy and employ the capable, showing no special consideration for their own kin, no partiality for the eminent and rich, no favoritism for the good-looking and attractive. They promoted the worthy to high places, enriched and honored them, and made them heads of government; the unworthy they demoted and rejected, reduced to poverty and humble station, and condemned to penal servitude. Thus the people, encouraged by the hope of reward and awed by the fear of punishment, led each other on to become worthy, so

that worthy men increased in number and unworthy men became few. This is what is called advancing the worthy. And when this had been done, the sage kings listened to the words of the worthy, watched their actions, observed their abilities, and on this basis carefully assigned them to office. This is called employing the capable. Those who were capable of ordering the state were employed to order the state; those who were capable of heading a government bureau were employed as heads of bureaus; and those who were capable of governing an outlying district were employed to govern the outlying districts. Thus the administration of the state, of the government bureaus, and of the outlying districts was in every case in the hands of the most worthy men of the nation.

When a worthy man is given the task of ordering the state, he appears at court early and retires late, listens to lawsuits and attends to the affairs of government. As a result the state is well ordered and laws and punishments are justly administered. When a worthy man heads a government bureau, he goes to bed late and gets up early, collecting taxes on the barriers and markets and on the resources of the hills, forests, lakes, and fish weirs, so that the treasury will be full. As a result the treasury is full and no source of revenue is neglected. When a worthy man governs an outlying district, he leaves his house early and returns late, plowing and sowing seed, planting trees, and gathering vegetables and grain.[3] As a result there will be plenty of vegetables and grain and the people will have enough to eat. When the state is well ordered, the

[3] The text reads as though the officials of the outlying districts actually go out and work in the fields, which seems highly unlikely. The probable meaning is that they supervise the work of the peasants. Mo Tzu, like many earlier Chinese writers, is sometimes betrayed by his fondness for strict verbal parallelism into saying something other than just what he means.

laws and punishments will be justly administered, and when the treasury is full, the people will be well off. The rulers will thus be supplied with wine and millet to use in their sacrifices to Heaven and the spirits, with hides and currency to use in their intercourse with the feudal lords of neighboring states, and with the means to feed the hungry and give rest to the weary within their realm, to nourish their subjects and attract virtuous men from all over the world. Then Heaven and the spirits will send down riches, the other feudal lords will become their allies, the people of their own realm will feel affection for them, and worthy men will come forward to serve them. Thus all that they plan for they will achieve, and all that they undertake will be brought to a successful conclusion. If they stay within their realm, their position will be secure, and if they venture forth to punish an enemy, they will be victorious. It was by this method alone that the sage kings of the Three Dynasties, Yao, Shun, Yü, T'ang, Wen, and Wu, were able to rule the world and become the leaders of the other lords.

But if one knows only the policy to be adopted, but does not know what means to use in carrying it out, then he cannot be sure of success in government. Therefore three principles should be established. What are these three principles? They are that if the titles and positions of worthy men are not exalted enough, then the people will not respect such men; if their stipends are not generous, then the people will not have confidence in them; and if their orders are not enforced, then the people will not stand in awe of them. Therefore the sage kings of antiquity honored the worthy with titles, treated them to generous stipends, entrusted them with important affairs, and empowered them to see that their orders were carried out. These benefits were bestowed not because the ruler wished to

reward his ministers, but because he hoped thereby to bring about success in the affairs of government.

The *Book of Odes* says:

> I admonish you to take thought for the needy;
> I teach you how to assign the titles;
> For who can take hold of something hot
> Without first moistening his hand?[4]

This verse shows how important it was for the rulers and lords of antiquity to secure good men to be their ministers and aides, and compares this to the necessity of moistening the hand before grasping anything hot so as to spare the hand from injury.

Thus the sage kings of antiquity gave all their thought to finding worthy men and employing them, handing out titles to honor them, apportioning lands to enfeoff them, and never to the end of their days stinting their efforts. Worthy men for their part thought only of finding an enlightened lord and serving him, exhausting the strength of their four limbs in carrying out their lord's business, never to the end of their days growing weary, and if they achieved anything that was beautiful or good, they gave credit for it to the ruler. Thus all that was beautiful and good came to reside in the ruler, while all grudges and complaints were directed against his subordinates. Peace and joy was the portion of the ruler, care and sorrow that of his ministers. This was how the sage kings of ancient times administered their rule.

Now the rulers and high officials of the present day attempt to imitate the ancients in honoring the worthy and employing the capable in their governments. But although they honor them with titles, the stipends which they allot to them do

[4] *Ta ya* section, "Sang jou" (Mao text no. 257).

not follow in proportion. Now if an official has a high-sounding title but a meager stipend, he can hardly inspire the confidence of the people. Such an official will say to himself, "The ruler does not really appreciate me, but is only making use of me as a means for his own ends." And how can men who feel that they are being made use of ever have any affection for their superiors? Therefore the kings of antiquity used to say: "He who is greedy for power in government can never bring himself to assign responsibility to others, and he who is too fond of wealth can never bring himself to dole out stipends." And if one refuses to delegate responsibility or dole out stipends, though one invites all the worthy men of the world, what inducement will they have to come to the side of the ruler and his officers?

If the worthy do not come to the side of the ruler and his officers, it will be the unworthy who will wait at their left and right, and when the unworthy wait upon their left and right, then praise will not be meted out to the worthy and censure to the wicked. If the ruler honors unworthy men such as these and uses them in governing the state, then rewards will not necessarily find their way into the hands of the worthy, and punishments will not necessarily fall upon those who deserve them. If the worthy are not rewarded and the wicked are not punished, then there will be no way to encourage the worthy or put a stop to evil. Unworthy men such as these are not loving or filial to their parents at home nor respectful and friendly to the people of their neighborhood. Their actions show no sense of propriety, their comings and goings no sense of restraint, and their relations with the opposite sex no sense of decorum. Put in charge of a government bureau, they steal and plunder; assigned to guard a city, they betray

their trust or rebel. If their lord encounters difficulty, they will not accompany him into exile. When they are assigned the task of hearing lawsuits, their judgments are not apt; when they are given that of apportioning wealth, their allotments are not equitable. With men such as these to work with, the ruler's plans will reach no fulfillment and his undertakings no success. Though he stays within his realm, he will know no security, and if he ventures forth to battle, he will win no victory. It was for this reason alone that the evil kings of the Three Dynasties, Chieh, Chou, Yu, and Li, lost their kingdoms and brought destruction to their altars of the soil and grain.[5]

All of this comes about as a result of understanding petty affairs but failing to understand important ones. Now the rulers and high officials know that if they cannot cut a suit of clothes for themselves, they must employ the services of a skilled tailor, and if they cannot slaughter an ox or a sheep for themselves, they must employ the services of a skilled butcher. In these two instances the rulers are perfectly aware of the need to honor worthy men and employ the capable to get things done. And yet when they see the state in confusion and their altars of the soil and grain in danger, they do not know enough to employ capable men to correct the situation. Instead they employ their relatives, or men who happen to be rich and eminent or pleasant-featured and attractive. But just because a man happens to be rich and eminent or pleasant-featured and attractive, he will not necessarily turn out to be wise and alert when placed in office. If men such as these are

[5] Chieh was the last ruler of the Hsia dynasty, Chou the last ruler of the Shang, and Yu and Li two rulers of the Chou dynasty in the 9th and 8th centuries B.C. All four are symbols of evil and incompetent rulers.

given the task of ordering the state, then this is simply to entrust the state to men who are neither wise nor intelligent, and anyone knows that this will lead to ruin.

Moreover, the rulers and high officials trust a man's mental ability because they are attracted by his looks, and treat him with affection without bothering to examine his knowledge. As a result a man who is incapable of taking charge of a hundred persons is assigned to a post in charge of a thousand, and a man who is incapable of taking charge of a thousand persons is assigned to a post in charge of ten thousand. Why do the rulers do this? Because if they assign a man they like to such a post, he will receive an exalted title and a generous stipend. Hence they employ the man simply because they are attracted by his looks.

Now if a man who is incapable of taking charge of a thousand persons is given a post in charge of ten thousand, then he is being given a post that requires ten times what he is capable of. Affairs of government arise every day and must be attended to each day, and yet the day cannot be made ten times longer for the sake of such a man. Furthermore, it takes knowledge to attend to such affairs, but if the man's knowledge cannot be increased tenfold and he is still assigned to a post that requires ten times what he is capable of, then it will result in his attending to one matter and neglecting nine others. Though the man works day and night to attend to the duties of his post, it is obvious that they will never be attended to. All of this comes about because the rulers and high officials do not understand how to honor the worthy and employ the capable in their government.

Earlier I described the method for honoring the worthy and employing the capable in government so as to achieve order, and here I have described how rejecting the worthy

and failing to employ the capable in government leads to chaos. Now if the rulers and high officials truly wish to order the state properly, to achieve stability and avoid error, why do they fail to perceive that honoring the worthy is the foundation of good government?

Moreover, this principle, that honoring the worthy is the foundation of government, is not something asserted by Mo Tzu alone. It is the way of the sage kings, and is found recorded in the books of the former kings and embodied in the sayings which have been handed down from antiquity. Thus one book says: "Seek out sages and wise men to protect and aid you!" And the "Oath of T'ang" states: "Then I sought out a great sage with whom to unite my strength and join my mind in governing the empire." [6] These quotations show that the sages did not fail to honor the worthy and employ the capable in their government. Thus the sage kings of ancient times gave all their attention to this problem alone, and did not allow themselves to become distracted by other affairs, and all the world enjoyed the benefits thereof.

In ancient times Shun farmed at Mount Li, made pottery on the banks of the river, and fished at Thunder Lake. Yao discovered him on the sunny side of Fu Lake and promoted him to the position of Son of Heaven, turning over to him the task of ruling the empire and governing the people. Yi Chih served in the bridal party of the daughter of the Hsin clan when she went to marry T'ang, and by his own wish became a cook in T'ang's kitchens. There T'ang discovered him and made him his chief minister, turning over to him the task of ruling the empire and governing the people. Fu Yüeh,

[6] The "Oath of T'ang" is one of the sections of the *Book of Documents,* but no such passage is found in the present text of that section. The source of the preceding quotation is unknown.

wearing a coarse robe and a girdle of rope, was working as a convict laborer at Fu-yen when Wu-ting discovered him and made him one of the three highest officers, turning over to him the task of ruling the empire and governing the people.

How did it happen that these men started out in humble positions and ended in exalted ones, began in poverty and ended in riches? Because the rulers and their high officials understood the importance of honoring the worthy and employing the capable. So among their people were none who were hungry and yet found no food, cold and yet found no clothing, weary and yet found no rest; there were none who were disorderly and yet in time did not learn obedience.

The ancient sage kings, in giving all their thought to honoring the worthy and employing the capable in government, were patterning their actions on the ways of Heaven. For Heaven too shows no discrimination between rich and poor, eminent and humble, near and far, the closely and the distantly related. It promotes and honors the worthy, and demotes and rejects the unworthy.

If this is so, then who were those that, possessing wealth and eminence, still strove to be worthy, and received their reward? The sage kings of the Three Dynasties of old, Yao, Shun, Yü, T'ang, Wen, and Wu, were such. And how were they rewarded? When they ruled the world, they loved all men universally, worked to benefit them, and taught their subjects to honor Heaven and serve the spirits. Because they loved and benefited their subjects, Heaven and the spirits rewarded them by setting them up as Sons of Heaven and causing them to act as fathers and mothers to the people. The people in turn praised them, calling them sage kings, and so they are called even today. These then were the rich and eminent ones who strove to be worthy and who received their reward.

Who were those that, possessing wealth and eminence, still practiced evil, and were punished for it? The wicked kings of the Three Dynasties of old, Chieh, Chou, Yu, and Li, were such. How do we know that this is so? Because when they ruled the world, they hated all men universally, set about to oppress them, and taught the people of the world to curse Heaven and abuse the spirits. Because they oppressed and tyrannized their subjects, Heaven and the spirits punished them by bringing execution and death to their persons, scattering their sons and grandsons, destroying their houses, and cutting off their descendants. The people accordingly condemned them, calling them wicked kings, and so they are called even today. These then were the rich and eminent ones who practiced evil and who were punished for it.

Who was it that, though closely related to the ruler, failed to do good and was punished for it? Such was Lord Kun, the eldest son of the emperor.[7] He turned his back on the virtuous ways of the emperor and so was banished to the fields of Yü and imprisoned where no warmth nor light could reach him, and the emperor showed him no favor. He, then, was one who, though closely related to the ruler, failed to do good and was punished for it.

Who were the capable ones who were employed by Heaven? Such were Yü, Chi, and Kao T'ao.[8] How do we know that this is so? Because among the documents of the former kings is the "Penal Code of Lü," which says: "The august emperor carefully inquired among the lower people, and there were

[7] Various accounts are given of this mythical figure. According to the one which Mo Tzu appears to be following, he was the son of a ruler named Chuan Hsü. It is not clear whether Chuan Hsü himself, or one of his successors, banished Lord Kun.

[8] These men were all said to have been enlightened ministers under the sage Shun. In the quotation from the *Book of Documents* which follows, however, Kao T'ao is not mentioned, but instead Po Yi, another eminent minister of Shun.

complaints against the Miao barbarians. . . . The attention of the various lords was extended among the lower people and they brought to light the enlightened, no matter who they were, so that even widowers and widows were not left unrecognized. The virtuous might of the sovereign overawed the people; his virtuous enlightenment made them bright. Then he charged three lords to be zealous in doing good for the people. Po Yi handed down the statutes, restraining the people with punishments. Yü regulated the water and the land and presided over the naming of the hills and rivers. Chi descended from his high position to sow seed and teach the people to grow fine grain. When these three lords had completed their work, the people were greatly benefited." [9]

The three sages mentioned in this passage were careful in their words, circumspect in their actions, and thorough in their thoughts and plans. They sought to discover every hidden matter in the world, every benefit that had previously been overlooked. They served Heaven above, and Heaven responded to their virtue. They acted for the sake of the people below, and the people received benefit their whole life through.

Thus the former kings used to say: "This Way! Use it on a grand scale throughout the world and it will never prove too petty; use it on a small scale and it will never prove confining; use it for a long time and the people will benefit their whole lives through." The hymns of Chou speak of it in these words:

The virtue of the sage
Is high as heaven,

[9] From the *Lü hsing,* or "Penal Code of Lü," in the *Book of Documents.* On the whole I have followed the interpretation of Karlgren, though for "they brought to light the enlightened, no matter who they were," he reads "clearly elucidated the irregular practices (*sc.* punishments)." In most cases we can only guess from context how Mo Tzu himself interpreted the passages which he quotes from the *Odes* and *Documents.*

Broad as the earth;
It shines upon the world,
Solid as the ground,
Lofty as the mountains,
Never faltering, never failing,
Brilliant like the sun,
Bright like the moon,
Constant as heaven and earth.[10]

This describes how brilliant, broad, deep-rooted, and everlasting is the virtue of the sage. The virtue of the sage may in fact be said to embrace all heaven and earth!

Now the rulers and high officials wish to rule the world and become leaders of the feudal lords. Yet if they are without such virtue and righteousness, what means will they have to achieve their aims? Some say that such aims can be accomplished through a display of might and power, but why should the rulers attempt to display might and power? Those who strive to overthrow others simply drive the people to their death. What the people long for most is life, and what they hate most is death. Yet under such rulers they cannot achieve what they long for, but are subjected in case after case to what they hate. From ancient times down to the present there has never been anyone who succeeded in ruling the world and becoming the leader of the feudal lords in this way. Now the rulers and high officials say they want to rule the world and become leaders of the feudal lords. But if they really wish to have their way with the world and leave behind them a name for future generations to remember, why do they not realize that honoring the worthy is the foundation of good government? This is a principle which the sages were most careful to practice.

[10] No such passage is found among the hymns (*sung*) of Chou preserved in the *Book of Odes*.

AGAINST FATALISM

PART I

(SECTION 35)

Mo Tzu said: These days the rulers and high officials who govern the nation all desire their states to be rich, their population to be numerous, and their administration to be well ordered. And yet what they achieve is not wealth but poverty, not a numerous population but a meager one, not order but chaos. In actual fact, they fail to get what they seek and achieve what they abhor. Why is this? Mo Tzu said: It is because of the large number of fatalists among the people.

The advocates of fatalism say, "If fate decrees that the state will be wealthy, it will be wealthy; if it decrees that it will be poor, it will be poor. If it decrees that the population will be numerous, it will be numerous; if it decrees that it will be meager, it will be meager. If it decrees that there will be order, there will be order; if it decrees that there will be chaos, there will be chaos. If it decrees that a man will have a long life, he will have a long life; if it decrees that he will die young, he will die young. Though a man tries to combat fate, what can he do?" They expound such doctrines to the rulers and high officials, and keep the people from pursuing their tasks. Hence the fatalists are lacking in benevolence, and their words must therefore be carefully examined.

Now how are we to go about examining their doctrines? Mo Tzu said: We must set up a standard of judgment, for to try to speak without a standard of judgment is like trying to

establish the direction of sunrise and sunset with a revolving potter's wheel. It will be impossible to determine the difference between what is right and wrong, what is beneficial and what is harmful. Therefore a theory must be judged by three tests. What are these three tests of a theory? Its origin, its validity, and its applicability. How do we judge its origin? We judge it by comparing the theory with the deeds of the sage kings of antiquity. How do we judge its validity? We judge it by comparing the theory with the evidence of the eyes and ears of the people. And how do we judge its applicability? We judge it by observing whether, when the theory is put into practice in the administration, it brings benefit to the state and the people. This is what is meant by the three tests of a theory.

Now among the gentlemen of the world there are those who believe in the existence of fate. Let us try examining this belief in the light of what we know of the sage kings. In ancient times chaos prevailed under Chieh, but T'ang followed him and there was order; chaos prevailed under Chou, but King Wu followed him and there was order. Within a single generation, with the same people, the world was in chaos under Chieh and Chou, and well ordered under T'ang and Wu. How then can we say that order or chaos in the world are decreed by fate? [1]

Yet there are still some gentlemen in the world who believe in the existence of fate. Let us try examining this belief in the light of the writings of the former kings. Among the writings of the former kings are those that were issued by the state and promulgated among the people, and these were called "stat-

[1] This argument, needless to say, does not refute the claims of the fatalists, who can just as well assert that the decree of fate changed abruptly when the rule passed from Chieh to T'ang and from Chou to Wu.

utes." Among the statutes of the former kings, were there ever any that said: "Good fortune cannot be sought for and bad fortune cannot be avoided. Being reverent will not help your chances, and doing evil will not harm them."? The writings by which law cases were settled and crimes punished were called "codes of punishment." Among the codes of punishment of the former kings, were there ever any that said: "Good fortune cannot be sought for and bad fortune cannot be avoided. Being reverent will not help your chances, and doing evil will not harm them."? The writings by which the armies were organized and the soldiers commanded to advance or retreat were called "declarations." Among the declarations of the former kings, were there ever any that said: "Good fortune cannot be sought for and bad fortune cannot be avoided. Being reverent will not help your chances, and doing evil will not harm them."? I have not exhausted all the evidence—it would be impossible to cite all the excellent writings in the world—but have enumerated only a few important examples, namely, the three types of writings mentioned above. Yet no matter how we search, we can find no evidence to support the theories of the fatalists. Should not such theories be rejected then?

To accept the theories of the fatalists would be to overthrow righteousness in the world. To overthrow righteousness in the world would be to replace it with the concept of fate and create worry for the people. And to expound a doctrine that creates worry for the people is to destroy the men of the world.

Why do we desire righteous men to be in authority? Because when righteous men are in authority, the world will be ordered, the Lord on High, the hills and rivers, and the ghosts and spirits will have worshipers to sacrifice to them, and the people will enjoy great benefit. How do we know? Mo Tzu

said: In ancient times T'ang was enfeoffed in Po. Making allowances for the irregular boundary line, his domain measured only a hundred square *li*. He worked with his people for universal love and mutual benefit, and shared with them what was in abundance. He led his people to honor Heaven and serve the spirits above, and therefore Heaven and the spirits enriched him, the feudal lords became his allies, the people loved him, and worthy men came to serve him. Before he died he became ruler of the world and leader of the other lords.

In former times King Wen was enfeoffed in Chou at Mount Ch'i. Making allowances for the irregular boundary line, his domain measured only a hundred square *li*. He worked with his people for universal love and mutual benefit, and shared with them what was in abundance. So those nearby found security in his government and those far away were won by his virtue. All those who heard of King Wen rose up and went to him, and the morally weak, the unworthy, and the crippled who could not rise stayed where they were and pleaded, saying, "Couldn't the domain of King Wen be extended to our borders, so that we too could benefit? Why can't we too be like the people of King Wen?" Therefore Heaven and the spirits enriched him, the feudal lords became his allies, the people loved him, and worthy men came to serve him. Before he died he became ruler of the world and leader of the other lords. Previously I said that when righteous men are in authority, the world will be ordered, the Lord on High, the hills and rivers, and the ghosts and spirits will have worshipers to sacrifice to them, and the people will enjoy great benefit. And this is how I know that it is so.

Therefore the ancient sage kings issued statutes and published laws, providing rewards and punishments in order to

encourage good and prevent evil. So men were loving and filial to their parents at home and respectful and friendly to the people of their neighborhood. Their actions showed a sense of propriety, their comings and goings a sense of restraint, and their relations with the opposite sex a sense of decorum. Thus, if they were put in charge of a government bureau, they did not steal or plunder; assigned to guard a city, they did not betray their trust or rebel. If their lord encountered difficulties, they would risk death for him; if he was forced to flee the state, they would accompany him into exile. Conduct like this was what the authorities rewarded and people praised. And yet the advocates of fatalism say: "Whoever is rewarded by the authorities was destined by fate to be rewarded. It is not because of his worthiness that he is rewarded!"

If this were so, then men would not be loving or filial to their parents at home nor respectful and friendly to the people of their neighborhood. Their actions would show no sense of propriety, their comings and goings no sense of restraint, and their relations with the opposite sex no sense of decorum. Put in charge of a government bureau, they would steal and plunder; assigned to guard a city, they would betray their trusts or rebel. If their lord encountered difficulty, they would not risk death for him; if he was forced to flee the state, they would not accompany him into exile. Conduct like this is what the authorities punish and the people condemn, and yet the advocates of fatalism say: "Whoever is punished by the authorities was destined by fate to be punished. It is not because of his evil actions that he is punished!" Believing this, rulers would not be righteous and subjects would not be loyal; fathers would not be loving and sons would not be filial; older brothers would not be brotherly and younger brothers would

not be respectful. Those who insist upon holding such views are the source of pernicious doctrines. Theirs is the way of evil men!

How do we know that fatalism is the way of evil men? In ancient times there were impoverished people who were greedy for food and drink and lazy in pursuing their tasks, and as a result they did not have enough food and clothing, and found themselves troubled by cold and hunger. But they did not have sense enough to say, "We are weak in virtue and unworthy, and we have not been diligent in pursuing our tasks." Instead they said, "Fate has decreed that we shall be poor!" In ancient times there were evil kings who could not control the passions of their ears and eyes, or the wicked desires of their hearts. They did not follow the way of their ancestors, and so in time they lost their countries and brought destruction to their altars of the soil and grain. But they did not have sense enough to say, "We are weak in virtue and unworthy, and have not governed well." Instead they said, "Fate has decreed that we shall fail!"

The "Announcement of Chung Hui" says: "I have heard that the man of Hsia, pretending that he was acting under the mandate of Heaven, issued orders to his people. God was displeased and destroyed his hosts." [2] This shows how T'ang condemned Chieh's belief in fate.[3]

The "Great Declaration" says: "Chou lived in insolence and would not serve the Lord on High and the spirits. He cast

[2] The "man of Hsia" is Chieh; Chung Hui is identified as a minister of King T'ang, who overthrew Chieh. Both this and the following quotation are presumably from lost sections of the *Book of Documents*.

[3] Mo Tzu apparently feels justified in making this statement because the words translated as "mandate" and "orders" are written with the same character as the word "fate." Taken in context, however, the words are so far apart in meaning that the quotation can hardly be said to prove that Chieh believed in fate.

aside his ancestors and the spirits and would not sacrifice to them, saying, 'My people are ruled by fate.' He gave himself up to arrogance and tyranny, and Heaven thereupon cast him aside and would not protect him." This shows how King Wu condemned Chou's belief in fate.

Now if we were to accept the theories of the fatalists, then those above would not attend to affairs of state and those below would not pursue their tasks. If those above do not attend to affairs of state, then the government will fall into disorder, while if those below do not pursue their tasks, there will not be enough wealth and goods. There will be no way to provide millet and wine for offerings to the Lord on High and the spirits above, and no way to provide security for the worthy and able men of the world below. There will be no means to entertain and conduct exchanges with the feudal lords who come as guests from abroad, while within the state there will be no means to feed the hungry, clothe the cold, and care for the aged and weak. Hence fatalism brings no benefit to Heaven above, no benefit to the spirits in the middle realm, and no benefit to mankind below. Those who insist upon holding such views are the source of pernicious doctrines, and theirs is the way of evil men.

Therefore Mo Tzu said: If the gentlemen of the world truly hate poverty and wish to enrich the world, if they truly hate disorder and wish to bring order to the world, then they cannot but condemn the doctrines of the fatalists, for these bring great harm to the world.

THE REGULATIONS OF A KING

(SECTION 9)

Someone asked how to govern, and I replied: In the case of worthy and able men, promote them without waiting for their turn to come up. In the case of inferior and incompetent men, dismiss them without hesitation. In the case of incorrigibly evil men, punish them without trying to reform them.[1] In the case of people of average capacity, teach them what is right without attempting to force them into goodness. Thus, even where rank has not yet been fixed, the distinction between good and bad will be as clear as that between the left and right ancestors in the mortuary temple.[2] Although a man may be the descendant of kings, dukes, or high court ministers, if he cannot adhere to ritual principles, he should be ranked among the commoners. Although a man may be the descendant of commoners, if he has acquired learning, is upright in conduct, and can adhere to ritual principles, he should be promoted to the post of prime minister or high court official.

[1] This recognition of a category of incorrigibly bad men seems to contradict the rest of Hsün Tzu's philosophy and is rare in early Confucian thought as a whole. Nevertheless, Hsün Tzu refers to it elsewhere, as in sec. 18, where he argues that the existence of a very few such perverse and unteachable men even in the time of a sage ruler is not to be taken as evidence that the ruler himself is at fault.

[2] This sentence has long puzzled commentators, and the translation is tentative. According to Chou practice, the mortuary temple of the founder of a noble family was placed in the center, with the temples of the second, fourth and sixth descendants ranged to the left and called *chao,* while those of the third, fifth, and seventh descendants were ranged to the right and called *mu.*

When it comes to men of perverse words and theories, perverse undertakings and talents, or to people who are slippery or vagrant, they should be given tasks to do, taught what is right, and allowed a period of trial. Encourage them with rewards, discipline them with punishments, and if they settle down to their work, then look after them as subjects; but if not, cast them out. In the case of those who belong to the five incapacitated groups,[3] the government should gather them together, look after them, and give them whatever work they are able to do. Employ them, provide them with food and clothing, and take care to see that none are left out. If anyone is found acting or using his talents to work against the good of the time, condemn him to death without mercy. This is what is called the virtue of Heaven and the government of a true king.

These are the essential points to remember when listening to proposals in government. If a man comes forward in good faith, treat him according to ritual; if he comes forward in bad faith, meet him with punishment. In this way the two categories will be clearly distinguished, worthy and unworthy men will not be thrown together, and right and wrong will not be confused. If worthy and unworthy men are not thrown together, then men of extraordinary character will come to you, and if right and wrong are not confused, then the nation will be well ordered. This accomplished, your fame will increase each day, the world will look to you with longing, your orders will be carried out, your prohibitions heeded, and you will have fulfilled all the duties of a king.

In listening to reports and proposals, if you are too stern and severe and have no patience in guiding and drawing

[3] Defined by commentators as those who are dumb, deaf, crippled, missing an arm or leg, or dwarfed.

others out, then your subordinates will be fearful and distant and will withdraw into themselves and be unwilling to speak. In such a case important matters are likely to be left unattended to and minor matters to be botched. If, however, you are too sympathetic and understanding, too fond of leading and drawing others out, and have no sense of where to stop, then men will come with all sorts of perverse suggestions and you will be flooded with dubious proposals. In such a case you will find yourself with too much to listen to and too much to do, and this also will be inimical to good government.

If there are laws, but in actual practice they do not prove to be of general applicability, then points not specifically covered by the laws are bound to be left undecided. If men are appointed to posts but they have no over-all understanding of their duties, then matters which do not specifically fall within their jurisdiction are bound to be neglected. Therefore there must be laws that prove applicable in practice and men in office who have an over-all understanding of their duties. There must be no hidden counsels or overlooked ability on the lower levels and all matters must proceed without error. Only a gentleman is capable of such government.

Fair-mindedness is the balance in which to weigh proposals;[4] upright harmoniousness is the line by which to measure them. Where laws exist, to carry them out; where they do not exist, to act in the spirit of precedent and analogy—this is the best way to hear proposals. To show favoritism and partisan feeling and be without any constant principles—this is the worst you can do. It is possible to have good laws and still have disorder in the state. But to have a gentleman acting as ruler and disorder in the state—from ancient times to the present I have never heard of such a thing. This is what the

[4] Reading *t'ing* instead of *chih*.

old text means when it says, "Order is born from the gentleman, disorder from the petty man."

Where ranks are all equal, there will not be enough goods to go around; where power is equally distributed, there will be a lack of unity; where there is equality among the masses, it will be impossible to employ them. The very existence of Heaven and Earth exemplifies the principle of higher and lower, but only when an enlightened king appears on the throne can the nation be governed according to regulation. Two men of equal eminence cannot govern each other; two men of equally humble station cannot employ each other. This is the rule of Heaven. If men are of equal power and station and have the same likes and dislikes, then there will not be enough goods to supply their wants and they will inevitably quarrel. Quarreling must lead to disorder, and disorder to exhaustion. The former kings abhorred such disorder and therefore they regulated the principles of ritual in order to set up ranks. They established the distinctions between rich and poor, eminent and humble, making it possible for those above to join together and watch over those below. This is the basis upon which the people of the world are nourished. This is what the *Documents* means when it says, "Equality is based upon inequality." [5]

If the horses are frightened of the carriage, then the gentleman cannot ride in safety; if the common people are frightened of the government, then the gentleman cannot occupy his post in safety. If the horses are frightened of the carriage, the best thing to do is to quiet them; if the common people are frightened of the government, the best thing to do is to treat them

[5] I take it that this is the way Hsün Tzu, quoting very much out of context, wishes us to understand these four characters. In context, in the section called *Lü-hsing* or "The Code of Marquis Lü," they have a quite different meaning.

with kindness. Select men who are worthy and good for government office, promote those who are kind and respectful, encourage filial piety and brotherly affection, look after orphans and widows and assist the poor, and then the common people will feel safe and at ease with their government. And once the common people feel safe, then the gentleman may occupy his post in safety. This is what the old text means when it says, "The ruler is the boat and the common people are the water. It is the water that bears the boat up, and the water that capsizes it." Therefore, if the gentleman desires safety, the best thing for him to do is to govern fairly and to love the people. If he desires glory, the best thing is to honor ritual and treat men of breeding with respect. If he desires to win fame and merit, the best thing is to promote the worthy and employ men of ability. These are the three great obligations of the ruler. If he meets these three, then all other obligations will likewise be met; if he does not meet these three, then, although he manages to meet his other obligations, it will scarcely be of any benefit to him. Confucius has said, "If he meets both his major and minor obligations correctly, he is a superior ruler. If he meets his major obligations but is inconsistent in meeting his minor ones, he is a mediocre ruler. If he fails to meet his major obligations, though he may meet his minor ones correctly enough, I do not care to see any more of him."

Marquis Ch'eng and Lord Ssu were rulers who knew how to collect taxes and keep accounts, but they did not succeed in winning the support of the people.[6] Tzu-ch'an won the sup-

[6] Two rulers of the state of Wei (the small state northwest of Ch'i, not to be confused with the much more powerful state in the old territory of Chin whose name is also read "Wei") in the late fourth century B.C. As the state of Wei dwindled in size and power, its rulers voluntarily downgraded themselves from the title of duke to marquis, and later from marquis to lord.

port of the people but did not succeed in governing them.[7] Kuan Chung governed the state but did not get around to promoting ritual.[8] He who promotes ritual will become a true king; he who governs well will be strong; he who wins over the people will find safety; but he who pays attention only to the collection of taxes will be lost. Thus, a king enriches his people, a dictator enriches his soldiers, a state that is barely managing to survive enriches its high officers, and a doomed state enriches only its coffers and stuffs its storehouses. But if its coffers are heaped up and its storehouses full, while its people are impoverished, this is what is called to overflow at the top but dry up at the bottom. Such a state will be unable to protect itself at home and unable to fight its enemies abroad, and its downfall and destruction can be looked for at any moment. The ruler of such a state, by collecting excessive taxes, brings about his own destruction, and his enemies, by seizing his territory, make themselves stronger than ever. Too much attention to tax collecting invites bandits and fattens

[7] Chief minister of the small state of Cheng in the 6th century B.C. (The *Tso chuan* records his death in 522 B.C.) He was widely praised for his wise and benevolent policies, especially by Confucius (see *Analects* V, 15). But Hsün Tzu here follows the more reserved estimation of Mencius (*Mencius* IVB, 2): "Tzu-ch'an . . . was kind but did not understand how to govern."

[8] Chief minister to Duke Huan of Ch'i in the 7th century B.C. and a well-known figure in history and legend. According to *Shih chi* 32, he died in 645 B.C. The philosophic work known as *Kuan Tzu* is said to embody his teachings on economics and statecraft. He is credited with having made Duke Huan the first of the *pa* (overlords, dictators, or hegemons). Hsün Tzu, like all early Confucian writers, distinguishes carefully between the *wang,* the true kings who qualify for their position by virtue and public sanction and who conduct their government on the basis of correct ritual principles, and the *pa,* feudal lords who, by strengthening their military and economic power and overawing the other feudal lords, were for a time able to dictate to the empire and even force a kind of recognition from the Chou king.

one's enemies. It is the path which leads to the destruction of the state and the peril of its lord, and for that reason the enlightened ruler does not follow it.

The king works to acquire men, the dictator works to acquire allies, and the ruler who relies on force works to acquire territory. He who acquires men wins the allegiance of the feudal lords; he who acquires allies wins the friendship of the feudal lords; but he who acquires territory incurs their enmity. He who commands the allegiance of the feudal lords may become a king; he who wins their friendship may become a dictator; but he who incurs their enmity is in danger.

He who lives by force must use his might to conquer the cities that other men guard and to defeat the soldiers[9] that other men send forth to battle, and in doing so he inevitably inflicts great injury upon the people of other states. If he inflicts great injury upon them, they will inevitably hate him fiercely and will day by day grow more eager to fight against him. Moreover, he who uses his might to conquer the cities that other men guard and to defeat the soldiers that other men send forth to battle must inevitably inflict great injury upon his own people as well. If he inflicts great injury upon his own people, they will inevitably hate him fiercely and will day by day grow less eager to fight his battles. With the people of other states growing daily more eager to fight against him, and his own people growing daily less eager to fight in his defense, the ruler who relies upon strength will on the contrary be reduced to weakness. He acquires territory but loses the support of his people; his worries increase while his accomplishments dwindle. He finds himself with more and more cities to guard and less and less of the means to guard them with; thus in time the great state will on the contrary be stripped

[9] Reading *shih* instead of *ch'u* here and in the parallel sentence below.

down in this way to insignificance. The other feudal lords never cease to eye him with hatred and to dream of revenge;[10] never do they forget their enmity. They spy out his weak points and take advantage of his defects, so that he lives in constant peril.

One who truly understands how to use force[11] does not rely upon force. He is careful to follow the commands of the nominal king, builds up his might, and creates a fund of good will.[12] With his might well established, he cannot be weakened by the other feudal lords; with a fund of good will to rely on, he cannot be reduced to insignificance by the other feudal lords. Thus, if he happens to live in a time when there is no true king or dictator in the world, he will always be victorious. This is the way of one who truly understands how to use force.

The dictator is not like this. He opens up lands for cultivation, fills the granaries, and sees that the people are provided with the goods they need. He is careful in selecting his officials and employs men of talent, leading them on with rewards and correcting them with punishments. He restores states that have perished, protects ruling lines that are in danger of dying out, guards the weak, and restrains the violent. If he shows no intention of annexing the territories of his neighbors, then the other feudal lords will draw close to him. If he treats them as friends and equals and is respectful in his dealings with them, he will win their favor. He can win their intimacy by not attempting to annex them, but if he shows any inclination to annex their lands, they will turn away from him. He can win their favor by treating them as friends and equals, but if he

[10] Following the interpretation of Liu Shih-p'ei.

[11] Reading *tao* instead of *ta*.

[12] Hsün Tzu says, literally, "establishes his virtue." But it is clear that he is using the word *te* (virtue), not in the higher ethical sense, but in the sense of favors or good turns done to others which put them in debt to one.

shows any inclination to treat them as subjects, they will reject him. Therefore he makes it clear from his actions that he does not wish to annex their territory, and inspires faith in them that he will always treat them as friends and equals. Thus, if he happens to live in a time when there is no true king[13] in the world, he will always be victorious. This is the way of one who truly understands how to be a dictator. The reason that King Min of Ch'i was defeated by the armies of the five states, and that Duke Huan of Ch'i was threatened by Duke Chuang of Lu was none other than this: they did not follow the way appropriate to their own positions, but tried to act in the manner of a true king.[14]

The true king is not like this. His benevolence is the loftiest in the world, his righteousness is the loftiest in the world, and his authority is the loftiest in the world. Since his benevolence is the loftiest in the world, there is no one in the world who does not draw close to him. Since his righteousness is the loftiest in the world, there is no one who does not respect him. Since his authority is the loftiest in the world, there is no one who dares to oppose him. With an authority that cannot be opposed, abetted by ways which win men's allegiance, he gains victory without battle and acquires territory without attack. He need not wear out his men and arms, and yet the whole world is won over to him. This is the way of one who understands how to be a king. He who understands these

[13] Omitting the *pa,* which is clearly superfluous here.

[14] In 285 B.C., according to *Shih chi* 46, King Min, who had aroused the anger of the other feudal lords, was attacked by a combination of them and driven from his capital. In 681 B.C., Duke Huan of Ch'i, the first of the *pa* or dictators, called the other feudal lords to a conference in Ch'i. According to what is probably a late legend, recorded in the *Kung yang Commentary* (Duke Chuang 13), the general of Duke Chuang of Lu managed to threaten Duke Huan with assassination and force him to return to Lu the territory which he had earlier seized.

three ways may choose to become a king, a dictator, or a man of force as he wishes.

These are the king's regulations: they do not seek to pattern themselves on anything earlier than the Three Dynasties,[15] they do not reject the model of later kings. Seeking a pattern in the age before the Three Dynasties will lead to confusion; rejecting the model of later kings will lead to inelegance. Clothing should be of a fixed type, dwellings of fixed size, and servants and followers of fixed number. Likewise, the vessels and trappings used in mourning and sacrifice should all be fixed in accordance with social rank. All music that is lacking in classical elegance should be abandoned; all decorations that do not follow old patterns should be given up; all vessels and trappings that are not like those of earlier times should be discarded. This is what is called reviving the old. These are the king's regulations.

These are the judgments of a king: no man of virtue shall be left unhonored; no man of ability shall be left unemployed; no man of merit shall be left unrewarded; no man of guilt shall be left unpunished. No man by luck alone shall attain a position at court; no man by luck alone shall make his way among the people. The worthy shall be honored, the able employed, and each shall be assigned to his appropriate position without oversight. The violent[16] shall be repressed, the evil restrained, and punishments shall be meted out without error. The common people will then clearly understand that, if they do evil in secret, they will suffer punishment in public. This is what is called having fixed judgments. These are the king's judgments.

[15] The Hsia, Shang or Yin, and Chou dynasties. By Hsün Tzu's time the Chou dynasty was regarded as extinct in all but name.

[16] Reading *pao* instead of *yüan*.

These are the king's laws.[17] They fix the various rates of taxation, regulate all affairs, exploit the ten thousand things, and thereby provide nourishment for all people. The tax on the fields shall be one tenth. At barriers and in markets, the officials shall examine the goods but levy no tax. The mountains, forests, lakes, and fish weirs shall at certain seasons be closed and at others opened for use, but no taxes shall be levied on their resources. Lands shall be inspected and the amount of tax graded according to their productivity. The distance over which articles of tribute must be transported shall be taken into consideration and the amount of tribute fixed accordingly. Goods and grain shall be allowed to circulate freely, so that there is no hindrance or stagnation in distribution; they shall be transported from one place to another as the need may arise, so that the entire region within the four seas becomes like one family. Thus those close to the king will not hide their talents or be stinted in their labors, and all regions, even the most distant and out of the way, will hasten to serve him and find peace and joy under his rule. This is what is called being the leader of men. These are the king's laws.

In the far north there are fast horses and howling dogs; China acquires and breeds them and puts them to work. In the far south there are feathers, tusks, hides, pure copper, and cinnabar; China acquires them and uses them in its manufactures. In the far east there are plants with purple dye, coarse hemp, fish, and salt; China acquires them for its food and clothing. In the far west there are skins and colored yaks' tails; China acquires them for its needs. Thus the people living in lake regions have plenty of lumber and those living

[17] Supplying the word *fa* from the end of the paragraph.

in the mountains have plenty of fish. The farmers do not have to carve or chisel, to fire or forge, and yet they have all the tools and utensils they need; the artisans and merchants do not have to work the fields, and yet they have plenty of vegetables and grain. The tiger and leopard are fierce beasts, but the gentleman strips off their hides for his personal use. Thus, wherever the sky stretches and the earth extends, there is nothing beautiful left unfound, nothing useful left unused. Such goods serve above to adorn worthy and good men, and below to nourish the common people and bring them security and happiness. This is what is called a state of godlike order. The *Odes* refers to this when it says:

> Heaven made a high hill;
> T'ai Wang opened it up.
> He began the work
> And King Wen dwelt there in peace.[18]

One starts with general categories and moves to particular ones; one starts with unity and moves to plurality. What begins must end; what ends must begin again; and so the cycle repeats itself without interruption. Abandon this principle, and the empire will fall into decay. Heaven and earth are the beginning of life, ritual principles are the beginning of order, and the gentleman is the beginning of ritual principles. Acting on them, practicing them, guarding them, and loving them more than anything else—this is the beginning of the gentleman. Therefore Heaven and earth produce the gentleman and the gentleman brings order to Heaven and earth. The gentleman forms a triad with Heaven and earth; he is the controller of all things, the father and mother of the people. Without

[18] "Hymns of Chou," *T'ien-tso,* Mao text no. 270. The high hill is Mount Ch'i, where T'ai Wang, the ancestor of the Chou royal family, built his capital.

the gentleman, Heaven and earth will lack order and ritual principles will lack unity. There will be no true ruler or leader above, no true father or son below. This is what is called the extreme of chaos. The correct relationships between ruler and subject, father and son, elder and younger brother, and husband and wife begin and are carried through to the end, end and begin again. They share the order of Heaven and earth, they last for ten thousand generations. They are what is called the great foundation. The rules that govern mourning and sacrificial rites and the ceremonies of the court and army are based upon this single foundation. Those which guide the ruler in honoring or humbling, punishing or freeing, giving or taking from his subjects are based upon this unity. Those which teach men how to treat rulers as rulers, subjects as subjects, fathers as fathers, sons as sons, elder brothers as elder brothers, younger brothers as younger brothers are based upon this unity. Those which make a farmer a farmer, a man of breeding a man of breeding, an artisan an artisan, and a merchant a merchant are based upon this unity.

Fire and water possess energy but are without life. Grass and trees have life but no intelligence. Birds and beasts have intelligence but no sense of duty.[19] Man possesses energy, life, intelligence, and, in addition, a sense of duty. Therefore he is the noblest being on earth. He is not as strong as the ox, nor as swift as the horse, and yet he makes the ox and the horse work for him. Why? Because he is able to organize himself in society and they are not. Why is he able to organize himself in society? Because he sets up hierarchical divisions. And how is he able to set up hierarchical divisions? Because he has a sense of duty. If he employs this sense of duty to set up hier-

[19] *Yi.* Elsewhere I have translated this word as righteousness.

archical divisions, then there will be harmony. Where there is harmony there will be unity; where there is unity there will be strength; and where there is strength there will be the power to conquer all things. Thus men can dwell in security in their houses and halls. The reason that men are able to harmonize their actions with the order of the seasons, utilize all things, and bring universal profit to the world is simply this: they have established hierarchical divisions and possess a sense of duty.

Men, once born, must organize themselves into a society. But if they form a society without hierarchical divisions, then there will be quarreling. Where there is quarreling, there will be chaos; where there is chaos, there will be fragmentation; and where there is fragmentation, men will find themselves too weak to conquer other beings. Thus they will be unable to dwell in security in their houses and halls. This is why I say that ritual principles must not be neglected even for a moment. He who can follow them in serving his parents is called filial; he who can follow them in serving his elder brothers is called brotherly. He who can follow them in serving his superiors is called obedient; he who can follow them in employing his inferiors is called a ruler.

The ruler is one who is good at organizing men in society.[20] When society is properly organized, then all things will find their proper place, the six domestic animals[21] will breed and flourish, and all living beings will fulfill their allotted span of life. If breeding and tending is done at the proper time, the six domestic animals will increase. If planting and cutting is

[20] Hsün Tzu is here punning on the words *chün* (ruler) and *ch'ün* (to form a group).

[21] Horses, cows, sheep, pigs, dogs, and chickens. Dogs were raised to be eaten.

done at the proper time, plants and trees will flourish. If government commands are issued at the proper time, then the common people will be unified, and worthy and good men will offer their services. These are the regulations of a sage king.

When plants and trees are flowering or putting out new growth, no axes may be taken into the hills and forests, for they would destroy life and injure the growing things. When fish and other water creatures are breeding, no nets or poisons may be used in the lakes, for they would destroy life and injure the growing things. The farmers plow in spring, weed in summer, reap in fall, and store away in winter. Because they do each at the proper season, there is a never-ending supply of grain and the people have more than enough to eat. Because the lakes and rivers are watched over carefully and closed off at the proper time, there is an ever-increasing supply of fish and other water creatures and the people have more than they can use. Because the felling of trees and cutting of brush is done only at the proper time, the hills are never denuded and yet the people have all the wood they need. These are the measures of a sage king. He looks up to examine heaven, looks down to direct the work of the earth, completes all that is necessary between heaven and earth, and applies his action to all things. His actions are dark and yet of bright result, brief and yet long-lasting, narrow and yet broad. His understanding is of godlike clarity and breadth, and yet of the finest simplicity. Therefore it is said, he whose every move is founded on unity is a sage.[22]

The list of officials. The master of tiles shall have charge of

[22] The end of this paragraph is couched in highly mysterious language and the translation, particularly of the last sentence, is tentative. Commentators offer various suggestions for amending the text, but none seems convincing enough to adopt.

matters pertaining to the reception of guests, religious ceremonies, banquets, and sacrifices. The minister of the interior shall have charge of matters pertaining to clan regulations, the walling of cities, and the standardization of utensils. The minister of war shall have charge of matters pertaining to military expeditions, weapons, carriages, and troop divisions.

To enforce the ordinances and commands, examine songs and writings, and abolish licentious music, attending to all matters at the appropriate time, so that strange and barbaric music is not allowed to confuse the elegant classical modes—these are the duties of the chief director of music. To repair dikes and weirs, open up canals and irrigation ditches, and cause water to flow freely and to be stored up properly in the reservoirs, opening or closing the sluice gates at the appropriate time, so that even in times of bad weather, flood, or drought, the people have fields that can be planted—these are the duties of the minister of works. To inspect the elevation of the fields, determine the fertility of the soil, decide what type of grain should be planted, examine the harvest and see that it is properly stored away, attending to all matters at the appropriate time, so that the farmers remain honest and hard-working and do not turn to other occupations—these are the duties of the administrator of the fields. To enforce the laws pertaining to the burning off of forests, and to conserve the resources of the mountains and woods, the marshes and lakes, such as trees, shrubs, fish, turtles, and various edible plants, attending to all matters at the appropriate time, so that the nation has the articles it needs and no resources are depleted —these are the duties of the director of resources. To order the provinces and communities, fix the regulations pertaining to dwellings, promote the raising of domestic animals and the planting of trees, encourage moral education, and promote

filial piety and brotherly affection, attending to all matters at the appropriate time, so that the people are obedient to commands and live in their communities in security and happiness —these are the duties of the director of communities. To judge the merits of the various artisans, determine the most appropriate time for their work, judge the quality of their manufactures, encourage efficiency and high quality, and see that all necessary goods are available, making sure that no one dares to manufacture sculptured or ornamented decorations privately at home—these are the duties of the director of artisans. To observe the yin and yang, judge the meaning of portents, divine by the tortoise and milfoil, conduct exorcisms, fortunetelling, and divination by the five types of signs, and understand all that pertains to good and bad fortune—these are the duties of hunchback shamanesses and crippled shamans. To attend to affairs of public sanitation, keep the roads in repair, eliminate thieves and highway bandits, insure a fair assignment of public buildings and market stalls,[23] attending to all matters at the appropriate time, so that traveling merchants can conduct their business in safety and there is an unobstructed flow of goods—these are the duties of the director of markets. To forestall violence and cruelty, prevent licentiousness, and wipe out evil, employing the five punishments[24] as a warning, causing the violent and cruel to change their ways and the wicked to desist from wickedness—these are the duties of the minister of justice.

To lay the foundation of governmental education, see that the laws and regulations are upright, receive reports and proposals and review them at fixed times, judge the merits of the

[23] Reading *ssu* instead of *lü*.

[24] Tattooing of criminals, cutting off the nose, cutting off the feet, castration, and death.

lesser officials, and decide what rewards or punishments are to be meted out, attending to all matters carefully and at the proper time, so that the minor officials are encouraged to do their best and the common people do not dare to be slack—these are the duties of the prime minister. To fix rites and music, reform conduct, spread moral education, and beautify the customs of the people, taking cognizance of all matters and harmonizing them into a unity—these are the duties of the high officials.[25] To complete the Way and its virtue, establish the highest standards, unite the world in the fullest degree of order, overlooking not the smallest detail, and causing all men in the world to be obedient and submissive—these are the duties of the heavenly king. Therefore, if the affairs of government are in disorder, it is the fault of the prime minister. If the customs of the country are faulty, it is due to the error of the high officials. And if the world is not unified and the feudal lords are rebellious,[26] then the heavenly king is not the right man for the job.

When[27] one has all the appurtenances of a king, he can be a king; when he has all the appurtenances of a dictator, he can be a dictator; when he has the appurtenances of a ruler who can preserve his state, he will preserve his state; and when he has the appurtenances of a ruler who will destroy his state, he will destroy it. If one heads a state of ten thousand war chariots, then his might and authority will naturally com-

[25] Following Kanaya, I take the phrase *pi-kung* to refer to the *san-kung* or three high officials: the grand tutor, the grand protector, and the director of music. They had charge of affairs pertaining to manners and moral education. Some translators, however, take *pi-kung* to refer to the feudal lords.

[26] Reading *pei* instead of *su* in accordance with the suggestion of Kubo Ai.

[27] The remainder of the chapter lacks Yang Liang's commentary and is difficult to make out at numerous points. I have in general followed Kanaya and somewhat expanded the original in a few places to make it intelligible in translation.

mand respect, his fame will be widespread, and his enemies will submit. It will be within the power of the ruler himself, not men of other states, to regulate his safety and goodness. It will be within the power of the ruler himself, not other men, to decide whether he will become a king or a dictator, whether he will choose preservation or destruction. But if his might and authority are not sufficient to intimidate his neighbors and his fame is not the kind to spread throughout the world, then he does not yet have the power to stand alone, so how can he hope to escape difficulties? Threatened by the power of some evil neighbor state, he and the rulers of other states may have to ally themselves with it and be forced to do things they do not wish to do. But although they may find themselves day by day imitating the deeds and actions of the tyrant Chieh, it does not necessarily mean that, given the opportunity, they could not become sage rulers like Yao. Only this is not the way to win merit and fame and to assist other states that are in danger of being wiped out. The way to win merit and fame and to assist other states that are in danger of being wiped out is to remain free and flourishing and to act from the sincerity of one's innermost heart. If one is truly able to administer his state in the manner of a king, then he may become a king. If he administers his state so as to place it in a condition of danger and near destruction, then he will face danger and destruction.

He who is in a flourishing condition may stand upon what is right, showing no favoritism to any side but conducting all his affairs as he wishes; he may keep his armies at home and sit back and watch while the evil and violent nations of the world fall upon each other. If he regulates the teachings of his government properly, examines carefully the rules and proposals of his officials, and encourages and educates his people,

then the day will come when his armies can stand up against the strongest forces in the world. If he practices benevolence and righteousness, honors the highest principles, makes his laws upright, selects worthy and good men for his government, and looks after the needs of his people, then the day will come when his reputation may match in fairness that of any ruler in the world. Weighty in authority, strong in military might, fair in reputation—even the sages Yao and Shun who united the world could find nothing to add to such a ruler.

If schemers and plotters who would overthrow the state are forced to retire, then men of worth and sage wisdom will come forward of themselves. If punishments and government regulations are just, the people harmonious, and the customs of the country well moderated, then the armies will be strong, the cities secure against attack, and enemy nations will submit of their own free will. If attention is paid to agriculture, and wealth and goods are accumulated, if one does not forget to guard against lavishness and excessive expenditure, and causes the officials and common people to act in accordance with the rules and regulations, then wealth and goods will increase and the state will automatically grow rich. If these three conditions are realized, then the whole world will pay allegiance to such a ruler, and the rulers of evil states will automatically find themselves unable to use their armies against him. Why? Because no one will join them in the attack.

If they carry out a military expedition against him, it must be with the support of their own people. But if their own people favor the good ruler, look up to him as a father or mother and rejoice in him as in the fragrance of iris or orchid, and on the contrary regard their own rulers as so many wielders of branding irons and tattooing knives, as their foes and enemies, then, human nature being what it is, even if the

people should be as cruel and violent as the tyrant Chieh or Robber Chih, how could they be willing to fight for the sake of men they hate and do harm to one they love? For this reason such evil rulers will be overthrown. Therefore, in ancient times there were men who began as rulers of a single state and ended by becoming rulers of the world, but it was not because they went about making conquests. They conducted their government in such a way as to make all men wish to become their subjects, and in this manner they were able to punish the violent and suppress the wicked. Thus when the duke of Chou marched south, the states of the north were resentful and asked, "Why does he neglect only us?"; and when he marched east, the states of the west grew angry and asked, "Why does he leave us to the last?" [28] Who could stand up against such a ruler? Therefore he who can order his state in this way may become a true king.

He who is in a flourishing condition may hold his armies in reserve and give his soldiers rest, may love and look after his people, open up new lands for cultivation, fill his granaries, and see that all necessary goods are supplied. With care he will select men of talent and promote them to office, where he will offer rewards to encourage them and threaten strict punishments in order to restrain them from evil. He will choose men who know how to handle such things and employ them to attend to and manage all affairs. Then he may sit back at ease and goods will pile up, all will be well ordered, and there will be enough of all things to go around. When it comes to weapons and military supplies, his war-loving enemies will day by day be smashing and destroying theirs and leaving

[28] Mencius (1B, 11) quotes a similar passage from a lost section of the *Book of Documents* where the hero, however, is not the duke of Chou but T'ang, the founder of the Shang dynasty.

them strewn over the plains of battle, while he polishes and mends his and stacks them away in his arsenals. As for goods and grain, his enemies will day by day be wasting theirs and pouring them out to supply the campgrounds, while he gathers his in and stores them in his granaries and supply houses. As for men of talent, wise counselors, and brave and fierce warriors, his enemies will day by day be destroying and wearing theirs out in strife and battle, while he attracts more and more of them to his state, selects all those who are worthy, and trains them at his court. In this way his enemies will daily pile up depletion while he piles up abundance; they will daily pile up poverty while he piles up riches; they will daily pile up labor while he piles up ease. In the states of his enemies relations between ruler and minister, superior and inferior will be pervaded by bitterness and day by day grow more harsh and strained; while with him such relations will be marked by warmth and will daily become closer and more affectionate. Therefore he can stand by and wait for the decay of his enemies and, ordering his own state in this way, may become a dictator.

If a ruler follows ordinary customs in his behavior, attends to affairs in accordance with ordinary practice, selects ordinary men and promotes them in government, and treats his inferiors and the common people with ordinary lenience and bounty, then he may dwell in safety. If a ruler is frivolous and coarse in his behavior, hesitant and suspicious in attending to affairs, selects men for office because they flatter and are glib, and in his treatment of the common people is rapacious and grasping, then he will soon find himself in peril. If a ruler is arrogant and cruel in his behavior, attends to affairs in an irrational and perverse manner, selects and promotes men who are insidious and full of hidden schemes, and in his treatment

of the common people is quick to exploit their strength and endanger their lives but slow to reward their labors and accomplishments, loves to exact taxes and duties but neglects the state of agriculture, then he will surely face destruction.

One must be careful to choose well from among these five categories, for these are the appurtenances that make one a king, a dictator, a ruler who dwells in safety, one who faces peril, or one who faces destruction. He who chooses well can control others; he who chooses badly will be controlled by others. He who chooses well may become a king; he who chooses badly will be destroyed. To be a king or to be destroyed, to control others or to be controlled by them—the two conditions are far apart indeed!

THE WAY OF THE RULER

(SECTION 5)

The Way is the beginning of all beings and the measure of right and wrong. Therefore the enlightened ruler holds fast to the beginning in order to understand the wellspring of all beings, and minds the measure in order to know the source of good and bad. He waits, empty and still,[1] letting names define themselves and affairs reach their own settlement. Being empty, he can comprehend the true aspect of fullness; being still, he can correct the mover.[2] Those whose duty it is to speak will come forward to name themselves; those whose duty it is to act will produce results. When names and results[3] match, the ruler need do nothing more and the true aspect of all things will be revealed.

Hence it is said: The ruler must not reveal his desires; for if he reveals his desires his ministers will put on the mask that pleases him. He must not reveal his will; for if he does so his ministers will show a different face. So it is said: Discard likes and dislikes and the ministers will show their true form; discard wisdom and wile and the ministers will watch their step. Hence, though the ruler is wise, he hatches no schemes from his wisdom, but causes all men to know

[1] Omitting the first *ling*. This section, like sec. 8 below, is distinguished by the frequent use of end rhymes.

[2] Reading *wei* for the second *chih*.

[3] Literally, "forms" or "realities." But Han Fei Tzu is discussing concrete problems of political science, i.e., do the officials really do what they say they are going to do? Does their actual performance match the title they hold?

their place. Though he has worth, he does not display it in his deeds, but observes the motives of his ministers. Though he is brave, he does not flaunt his bravery in shows of indignation, but allows his subordinates to display their valor to the full. Thus, though he discards wisdom, his rule is enlightened; though he discards worth, he achieves merit; and though he discards bravery, his state grows powerful. When the ministers stick to their posts, the hundred officials have their regular duties, and the ruler employs each according to his particular ability, this is known as the state of manifold constancy.

Hence it is said: "So still he seems to dwell nowhere at all; so empty no one can seek him out." The enlightened ruler reposes in nonaction above, and below his ministers tremble with fear.

This is the way of the enlightened ruler: he causes the wise to bring forth all their schemes, and he decides his affairs accordingly; hence his own wisdom is never exhausted. He causes the worthy to display their talents, and he employs them accordingly; hence his own worth never comes to an end. Where there are accomplishments, the ruler takes credit for their worth; where there are errors, the ministers are held responsible for the blame; hence the ruler's name never suffers. Thus, though the ruler is not worthy himself, he is the leader of the worthy; though he is not wise himself, he is the corrector of the wise. The ministers have the labor; the ruler enjoys the success. This is called the maxim of the worthy ruler.

The Way lies in what cannot be seen, its function in what cannot be known. Be empty, still, and idle, and from your place of darkness observe the defects of others. See but do not appear to see; listen but do not seem to listen; know but do

not let it be known that you know. When you perceive the trend of a man's words, do not change them, do not correct them, but examine them and compare them with the results. Assign one man to each office and do not let men talk to each other, and then all will do their utmost. Hide your tracks, conceal your sources, so that your subordinates cannot trace the springs of your action. Discard wisdom, forswear ability, so that your subordinates cannot guess what you are about. Stick to your objectives and examine the results to see how they match; take hold of the handles of government carefully and grip them tightly.[4] Destroy all hope, smash all intention of wresting them from you; allow no man to covet them.

If you do not guard the door, if you do not make fast the gate, then tigers will lurk there. If you are not cautious in your undertakings, if you do not hide their true aspect, then traitors will arise. They murder their sovereign and usurp his place, and all men in fear make common cause with them: hence they are called tigers. They sit by the ruler's side and, in the service of evil ministers, spy into his secrets: hence they are called traitors. Smash their cliques, arrest their backers, shut the gate, deprive them of all hope of support, and the nation will be free of tigers. Be immeasurably great, be unfathomably deep; make certain that names and results tally, examine laws and customs, punish those who act willfully, and the state will be without traitors.

The ruler of men stands in danger of being blocked in five ways. When the ministers shut out their ruler, this is one kind of block. When they get control of the wealth and resources of the state, this is a second kind of block. When they are free to issue orders as they please, this is a third kind.

[4] On the two handles of government—punishment and favor—see below, sec. 7.

When they are able to do righteous deeds in their own name, this is a fourth kind. When they are able to build up their own cliques, this is a fifth kind. If the ministers shut out the ruler, then he loses the effectiveness of his position. If they control wealth and resources, he loses the means of dispensing bounty to others. If they issue orders as they please, he loses the means of command. If they are able to carry out righteous deeds in their own name, he loses his claim to enlightenment. And if they can build up cliques of their own, he loses his supporters. All these are rights that should be exercised by the ruler alone; they should never pass into the hands of his ministers.

The way of the ruler of men is to treasure stillness and reserve. Without handling affairs himself, he can recognize clumsiness or skill in others; without laying plans of his own, he knows what will bring fortune or misfortune. Hence he need speak no word, but good answers will be given him; he need exact no promises, but good works will increase. When proposals have been brought before him, he takes careful note of their content; when undertakings are well on their way, he takes careful note of the result; and from the degree to which proposals and results tally, rewards and punishments are born. Thus the ruler assigns undertakings to his various ministers on the basis of the words they speak, and assesses their accomplishments according to the way they have carried out the undertaking. When accomplishments match the undertaking, and the undertaking matches what was said about it, then he rewards the man; when these things do not match, he punishes the man. It is the way of the enlightened ruler never to allow[5] his ministers to speak words that cannot be matched by results.

[5] Supplying *te* before *ch'en*.

The enlightened ruler in bestowing rewards is as benign as the seasonable rain; the dew of his bounty profits all men. But in doling out punishment he is as terrible as the thunder; even the holy sages cannot assuage him. The enlightened ruler is never overliberal in his rewards, never overlenient in his punishments. If his rewards are too liberal, then ministers who have won merit in the past will grow lax in their duties; and if his punishments are too lenient, then evil ministers will find it easy to do wrong. Thus if a man has truly won merit, no matter how humble and far removed he may be, he must be rewarded; and if he has truly committed error, no matter how close and dear to the ruler he may be, he must be punished. If those who are humble and far removed can be sure of reward,[6] and those close and dear to the ruler can be sure of punishment, then the former will not stint in their efforts and the latter will not grow proud.

[6] This first clause has dropped out of the text but can be restored from a quotation preserved elsewhere.

WIELDING POWER [1]

(SECTION 8)

Both Heaven [Nature] and man have their fixed destinies. Fragrant aromas and delicate flavors, rich wine and fat meat delight the palate but sicken the body. Fair lineaments and pearly teeth warm the heart but waste the spirit. Therefore renounce riot and excess, for only then can you keep your health unharmed.

Do not let your power be seen; be blank and actionless. Government reaches to the four quarters, but its source is in the center. The sage holds to the source and the four quarters come to serve him. In emptiness he awaits them, and they spontaneously do what is needed. When all within the four seas have been put in their proper places, he sits in darkness to observe the light. When those to his left and right have taken their places, he opens the gate to face the world. He changes nothing, alters nothing, but acts with the two handles of reward and punishment, acts and never ceases: this is what is called walking the path of principle.

Things have their proper place, talents their proper use. When all are in their proper place, then superior and inferior may be free from action. Let the cock herald the dawn, let the cat catch rats. When each exercises his ability, the ruler need do nothing. If the ruler tries to excel, then nothing will go

[1] In this chapter, Han Fei Tzu borrows the laconic language of Taoist quietism to express his political philosophy, using short, neatly balanced phrases with frequent end rhymes. Because of the deliberately arcane mode of expression he employs, commentators disagree at many points on exactly what he is saying.

right. If he boasts of an eye for the abilities of others, he will invite deceit among his subordinates. If he is lenient and fond of sparing lives, his subordinates will impose upon his kind nature. If superior and inferior try to change roles, the state will never be ordered.

Use the single Way and make names the head of it. When names are correct, things stay in place; when names are twisted, things shift about. Hence the sage holds to unity in stillness; he lets names define themselves and affairs reach their own settlement. He does not reveal his nature, and his subordinates are open and upright. He assigns them tasks according to their ability and lets them settle[2] things for themselves; he hands out rewards according to the results and lets them raise their own station. He establishes the standard, abides by it, and lets all things settle themselves. On the basis of names he makes his appointments, and where the name is not clear, he looks to the actual achievement it applies to. According to how achievement and name tally, he dispenses the reward or punishment deserved. When rewards and punishments are certain to be handed out, then subordinates will bare their true nature.

Attend diligently to these matters, await the decree of Heaven, do not lose hold of the vital point, and you may become a sage. Discard wisdom and wile, for, if you do not, you will find it hard to remain constant. When the people use wisdom and wile, they bring grave danger to themselves; when the ruler uses them, his state faces peril and destruction. Follow the way of Heaven, reflect on the principle behind human affairs; investigate, examine, and compare these things, and when you come to the end, begin again. Be empty, quiet, and retiring; never put yourself forward. All the worries of

[2] Reading *ting* instead of *shih*.

the ruler come about because he tries to be like others. Trust others but never be like them, and then the myriad people will follow you as one man.

The Way is vast and great and without form; its Power is clear and orderly and extends everywhere. Since it extends to all living beings, they may use it proportionately; but, though all things flourish through it, it does not rest among things. The Way pervades all affairs here below. Therefore examine and obey the decrees of Heaven[3] and live and die at the right time; compare names, differentiate events, comprehend their unity, and identify yourself with the Way's true nature.

Thus it is said: The Way does not identify itself with the myriad beings; its Power does not identify itself with the yin and yang, any more than a scale identifies itself with heaviness or lightness, a plumb line with bumps and hollows, a reed organ with dampness or dryness,[4] or a ruler with his ministers. All these [the myriad beings, the yin and yang, heaviness and lightness, etc.] are products of the Way; but the Way itself is never plural—therefore it is called a unity. For this reason the enlightened ruler prizes solitariness, which is the characteristic of the Way. The ruler and his ministers do not follow the same way. The ministers name their proposals, the ruler holds fast to the name, and the ministers come forward with results. When names and results match, then superior and inferior will achieve harmony.

The way to listen to the words of the ministers is to take the statements that come from them and compare them with the powers that have been invested in them. Therefore you must

[3] Reading *t'ien* instead of *erh*. In Taoist terminology, Heaven is synonymous with the Way, or Tao.

[4] A kind of reed musical instrument whose pitch was said to remain unaffected by changes of humidity; it could therefore be used to set the pitch for other instruments.

examine names carefully in order to establish ranks, clarify duties in order to distinguish worth. This is the way to listen to the words of others: be silent as though in a drunken stupor. Say to yourself: Lips! teeth! do not be the first to move; lips! teeth! be thicker, be clumsier than ever! Let others say their piece—I will gain knowledge thereby.

Though right and wrong swarm about him, the ruler does not argue with them. Be empty, still, inactive, for this is the true nature of the Way. Study, compare, and see what matches, for this will reveal how much has been accomplished. Compare with concrete results; check against empty assertions. Where the root and base of the affair are unshaken, there will be no error in movement or stillness. Whether you move or remain still, transform all though inaction. If you show delight, your affairs will multiply; if you show hatred, resentment will be born. Therefore discard both delight and hatred and with an empty mind become the abode of the Way.

The ruler does not try to work side by side with his people, and they accordingly respect the dignity of his position. He does not try to tell others what to do, but leaves them to do things by themselves. Tightly he bars his inner door, and from his room looks out into the courtyard; he has provided the rules and yardsticks, so that all things know their place.[5] Those who merit reward are rewarded; those who deserve punishment are punished. Reward and punishment follow the deed; each man brings them upon himself. Therefore, whether the result is pleasant or hateful, who dares to question it? When compass and rule have marked out one corner of truth, the other three corners will become evident of themselves.

If the ruler is not godlike in his isolation, his subordinates

[5] Omitting *ts'an* and reading *chih* (to know) in place of the present *chih*.

will find ways to move him. If his management of affairs is not impartial, they will guess at his inclinations. Be like Heaven, be like earth, and all coils will be untangled. Be like Heaven, be like earth; then who will be close to you, who will be distant? He who can model himself on Heaven and earth may be called a sage.

Would you order the affairs of the palace? Delegate them and be intimate with no one. Would you order outside affairs? Appoint one man to each office. Let no one do as he pleases, and never permit men to change office or to hold two offices at the same time. Take warning when there are many men gathered at the gates of the high ministers! The height of good government is to allow your subordinates no means of taking advantage of you. Make certain that name and result match, and then the people will stick to their posts. If you discard this and look for some other method to rule, you will win the name of one who is profoundly deluded; wily men will only increase, and evil ministers fill your ranks. Hence it is said: Never enrich a man to the point where he can afford to turn against you;[6] never ennoble a man to the point where he becomes a threat; never put all your trust in a single man and thereby lose your state.

When the shin grows stouter than the thigh, it is hard to run; when the ruler loses his godlike qualities, tigers prowl behind him. If the ruler fails to take notice of them, then he and his ministers, who should be tigers themselves, become as impotent as dogs. If the ruler fails to check the danger, then the dogs will continue to increase in number; the tigers will form a band and assassinate their master. A ruler who has no ministers—how can he keep possession of a state? Let the ruler apply the laws, and the greatest tigers will tremble; let

[6] Reading *erh* instead of *tai*.

him apply punishments, and the greatest tigers will grow docile. If laws and punishments are justly applied, then tigers will be transformed into men again and revert to their true form.[7]

If you wish to govern the state, you must make certain to destroy conclaves; if you do not do so, they will only grow more numerous. If you wish to govern the land, you must make certain that your bestowals pass into the right hands; if you do not do so, then unruly men will come seeking gain. If you grant what they seek, you will be lending a battle-ax to your enemies; this you must not do, for it will only be used against you.

The Yellow Emperor used to say, "Superior and inferior fight a hundred battles a day." The subordinates hide their private desires and see what they can get from the ruler; the ruler employs his standards and measures to weigh what they are up to. Thus the standards and measures that are set up are the ruler's treasures; and the parties and cliques that are formed are the ministers' treasures. The only reason the ministers do not assassinate their sovereign is that their parties and cliques are not strong enough. Hence, if the ruler loses an inch, his subordinates gain a yard.

The ruler who knows how to govern his state does not let his cities grow too large; the ruler who understands the Way does not enrich the powerful families[8] nor ennoble his ministers. Were he to enrich and ennoble them, they would turn about and try to overthrow him. Guard against danger, fear peril, make haste to designate your heir, and misfortune will have no means to arise.

[7] There are various theories on the symbolic meaning of the tigers and dogs in this paragraph, depending upon which the interpretation of the passage differs considerably. I have followed that of T'ao Hung-ch'ing.

[8] Reading *chün* instead of *ch'en* and *fu* instead of *kuei*.

In ferreting out evil within the palace and controlling it outside, you yourself must hold fast to your standards and measurements. Whittle away from those who have too much, enhance those who have too little, but let the taking and the giving be according to measure. Never allow men to form cliques or join together to deceive their superiors. Let your whittling be as gradual as the slimming moon, your enhancing like a slow-spreading heat. Simplify the laws and be cautious in the use of penalties but, where punishments are called for, make certain they are carried out. Never loosen your bow, or you will find two cocks in a single roost, squawking in fierce rivalry. When wildcat and wolf break into the fold, the sheep are not likely to increase. When one house has two venerables, its affairs will never prosper. When husband and wife both give orders, the children are at a loss to know which one to obey.

The ruler of men must prune his trees from time to time and not let them grow too thick for, if they do, they will block his gate; while the gates of private men are crowded with visitors, the ruler's courts will stand empty, and he will be shut in and encircled. He must prune his trees from time to time and not let them obstruct the path for, if they do, they will impinge upon his dwelling. He must prune his trees from time to time and not let the branches grow larger than the trunk for, if they do, they will not be able to bear up under the spring wind, and will do injury to the heart of the tree. When cadet houses become too numerous, the royal family will face anxiety and grief. The way to prevent this is to prune your trees from time to time and not let the branches grow too luxurious. If the trees are pruned from time to time, cliques and parties will be broken up. Dig them up from the roots, and then the trees cannot spread. Fill up the pools, and

do not let water collect in them.[9] Search out the hearts of others, seize their power from them. The ruler himself should possess the power, wielding it like lightning or like thunder.

[9] Omitting *hsiung* and reading *yen* for *ch'ing* in accordance with the suggestion of Ch'en Ch'i-yu. The language of these last two paragraphs is so extravagantly metaphorical that it presents difficulties of interpretation at numerous points.

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BOOK IA

[1A1] Mencius met with King Hui of Liang.[1]

The king said, "Venerable sir, you have not considered a thousand *li*[2] too far to come. Surely you have some means to profit our state?"

Mencius replied: "Why must the king speak of profit? I have only [teachings concerning] humaneness and rightness. If the king says, 'How can I profit my state?' the officers will say, 'How can I profit my house?' and the gentlemen and the common people will say, 'How can I profit myself?' Those above and those below will compete with one another for profit, and the state will be imperiled. One who murders the ruler over a state of ten thousand chariots surely will be from a house of a thousand chariots; one who murders the ruler over a state of a thousand chariots surely will be from a house of a hundred chariots.[3] A share of a thousand in ten thousand or a hundred in a thousand is hardly negligible; yet, when rightness is subordinated to profit the urge to lay claim to more becomes irresistible. It has never happened that one given to humaneness abandons his parents, nor that one given to rightness subordinates the interests of his lord. Let the king speak only of humaneness and rightness. What need has he to speak of profit?"

[1A2] Mencius went to see King Hui of Liang. As he stood overlooking a pond, watching the geese and the deer, the king asked, "Do the virtuous also enjoy such things?"

1. King Hui of Liang was known during his lifetime as Marquis Ying of Wei, or, after moving his capital to Daliang, in 361, as Marquis Ying of Liang. Having ruled from 370 to 319 B.C.E., he became known posthumously as King Hui of Liang.

2. A *li* 里 is a unit of linear measure equal to around a third of a mile.

3. The chariot was used for military purposes and therefore the importance of a state was measured in terms of the number of chariots it possessed and could field.

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Mencius replied, "Only the virtuous [truly] are able to enjoy these things. Those who are not virtuous, although they might have such things, cannot [truly] enjoy them.[4] The ode says,

He began by measuring the spirit tower,
He measured it and planned it.
The common people worked on it,
Finishing before a day was out.
In beginning to measure he urged against haste,
Yet the people came as if they were his children.
The king was in the spirit park,
The doe lying down,
The doe glistening,
The white bird glittering.
The king was by his spirit pond,
How full it was with dancing fish![5]

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"King Wen used the strength of the people to build his tower and his pond, and the people found their delight and their joy in it. They called his tower 'the spirit tower' and his pond 'the spirit pond' and found joy in his having deer, and birds, and turtles. The ancients shared their joys with the people and it was this that enabled them to feel joy.

" 'The Declaration of Tang' says,

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O sun, when will you perish?
We will die along with you.[6]

4. As Mencius will go on to argue, only a virtuous person can enjoy such things with others and thereby enjoy them fully. He also invokes the idea, seen in texts like the *Xunzi*, that a ruler who does not share his joy with his people cannot remain secure in his enjoyment of such pleasures.

5. Ode 242. See James Legge, trans., *The Chinese Classics*, 5 vols. (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong Press, 1970), 4:456–57. The ode refers, as Legge puts it, to "the joy of the people in the growing opulence and dignity of King Wen."

6. From the *Classic of Documents*, in Legge, *Chinese Classics*, 3:175. The passage refers to the people's desire for the death of Jie, known as the "bad last ruler" of the Xia dynasty. The apparent meaning is that the people were so anxious to see Jie's death that they were willing to die themselves if this would ensure his death as well.

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"If the people wished to die along with him, although he had a tower and pond, how could he enjoy them alone?"

[1A3] King Hui of Liang said, "I, this solitary man,[7] devotes his entire mind to the state. When the year is bad within the river, I transfer people to the east of the river and transfer grain to the area within the river. When the year is bad to the east of the river, again, I act accordingly. Look into the governments of neighboring states: there is no one as mindful as I, and yet people in the neighboring states do not decrease, nor do my people increase. Why should this be?"

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Mencius said, "The king is fond of war; so please allow an analogy that derives from war. Drums rumbling, the soldiers having crossed weapons, some then flee, abandoning their armor and trailing their weapons behind them. Some stop after a hundred paces and some after fifty paces. How would it be if those who ran only fifty paces were to laugh at those who ran a hundred paces?"

The king said, "That would not do. It was only that they did not run a hundred paces, that is all. But they ran just the same."

Mencius said, "If the king understands this, there is no reason to expect the people to be more numerous than they are in neighboring states. If the agricultural seasons are not interfered with, there will be more grain than can be eaten. If close-meshed nets are not allowed in the pools and ponds, there will be more fish and turtles than can be eaten. And if axes are allowed in the mountains and forests only in the appropriate seasons, there will be more timber than can be used. When grain, fish, and turtles are more than can be eaten, and timber is more than can be used, this will mean that the people can nourish their lives, bury their dead, and be without rancor. Making it possible for them to nourish their lives, bury their dead, and be without rancor is the beginning of kingly government.

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"Let mulberry trees be planted around households of five *mu*,[8] and people of fifty will be able to be clothed in silk. In the raising of chickens,

7. The Chinese term *gua ren* 寡人 (literally, lonely or friendless person) was one used by rulers to speak of themselves. It implies a sense (or pretense) of self-depreciation. Hereafter, it will be translated simply as "I."

8. A *mu* 畝 is a measure of area; 6.6 *mu* equal 1 acre.

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pigs, dogs, and swine, do not neglect the appropriate breeding times, and people of seventy will be able to eat meat. With fields of a hundred *mu* do not interfere with the appropriate seasons of cultivation, and families with several mouths to feed will be able to avoid hunger. Attend carefully to the education provided in the schools,[9] which should include instruction in the duty of filial and fraternal devotion, and gray-haired people will not be seen carrying burdens on the roads. The ruler of a state in which people of seventy wear silk and eat meat and where the black-haired people are neither hungry nor cold has never failed to become a true king.[10]

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"The king's dogs and pigs eat food intended for human beings and he does not know enough to prohibit this. On the roads there are people dying of starvation, and he does not know enough to distribute food. People die, and he says, 'It was not I; it was the year.' How is this different from killing a person by stabbing him and then saying, 'It was not I; it was the weapon'? When the king ceases to place the blame on the year, then the people of the world will come to him."

[1A4] King Hui of Liang said, "I would like a quiet moment in which to receive your instruction."

Mencius replied, saying, "Is there any difference between killing a man with a stick or killing him with a blade?"

He said, "There is no difference."

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"And if it were done with a blade or through government, would there be any difference?"

He said, "There is no difference."

Mencius said, "In your kitchen, there is fat meat, and in your stables fat horses. Yet the people have a hungry look, and out beyond, in the more wild regions, lie the bodies of those who have died of starvation. This is to lead animals to devour people.[11] Now, animals devour

9. Mencius here mentions two kinds of schools, the *xiang* 庠 and the *xu* 序. In 3A3, he refers to these and several more, explaining that *xiang* was a Zhou term, while *xu* was a term used in the Yin or Shang dynasty.

10. That is to say, one who attracts loyal subjects to him and thereby unifies the empire.

11. In 3B9, the preceding three sentences are attributed to Gongming Yi, identified by Zheng Xuan in his commentary on the "Jiyi" chapter of the *Book of Rites* (*Liji* 禮記) as a disciple of Zengzi.

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one another, and people hate this about them. If one governs as father and mother of the people and yet is not deterred from leading animals to devour people, in what sense is he father and mother of the people? Confucius said, 'The one who first made grave figures—was he not without posterity?'[12] This was because he made human images for such a use. How then should it be with one who causes his people to die of starvation?"

[1A5] King Hui of Liang said, "Under Heaven there was no state stronger than Jin,[13] as you, venerable sir, are aware. But when it came to my reign, Jin was defeated by Qi in the east, and my oldest son died there. In the west seven hundred *li* were lost to Qin, while in the south we were humiliated by Chu.[14] Having incurred such shame, I wish, for the sake of the departed, to expunge it. How may this be done?"

Mencius replied, "With a territory of no more than one hundred *li*, one can become a true king. If the king bestows humane government on the people, reduces punishments, and lightens taxes, causing the plowing to be deep and the weeding thorough, the strong will be able to use their leisure time to cultivate filiality and brotherliness. Within the home they will serve their fathers and brothers; outside they will serve their elders and superiors. They can then be made to take up sticks and overcome the strong armor and the sharp weapons of Qin and Chu.

"Those other rulers lay claim to the time of their people, so that they are unable to plow or to weed and thus to nourish their parents. Their parents then suffer from cold and hunger; older and younger brothers are parted; wives and children are separated. These rulers bury their people and drown them. Were you to go and punish them, who would

12. These were wooden images in human form used in burials in the belief that they could perform service for the deceased. This, though, reinforces the deeply inhumane idea and encourages the practice of human sacrifices to the dead.

13. In the middle of the fifth century B.C.E., the state of Jin was divided up among the ruling families of Han, Zhao, and Wei and became known as the three Jin. King Hui is here referring to his state of Wei.

14. The chain of events referred to by King Hui began when Jin attacked Han and Han called for help from Qi.

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oppose you?[15] Therefore, it may be said that the humane man has no enemy. May it please the king to have no doubt about this."[16]

[1A6] Mencius saw King Xiang of Liang.[17] On emerging he said to someone, "Seeing him from a distance, he does not appear to be a ruler of men; approaching him, one sees nothing imposing about him. He abruptly asked, 'How can the empire be settled?'

"I replied: 'It can be settled through unity.'

" 'Who is able to unite it?'

"I replied: 'One who is not fond of killing people can unite it.'

" 'Who can give it to him?'

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"I replied: 'There is no one in the empire who will deny it to him. Does the king know the way of seedlings? If there is drought in the seventh or eighth month, the seedlings dry out. But when dense clouds gather in the sky and the rain falls in torrents the plants spring up and are revived. When this happens, who can stop them? Now, among the herders of men in the world there is none who is not fond of killing people. If there were one who was not fond of killing people, the people of the empire would crane their necks to look for him. If this were truly to happen, the people would return to him like water flowing downward, torrentially—who could stop them?' "

[1A7] King Xuan of Qi[18] asked, "Would it be possible to hear about the affairs of Duke Huan of Qi and Duke Wen of Jin?"[19]

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15. The word translated "punish" here is *zheng* 征, which has the special connotation of a justified military campaign carried out by a legitimate authority. Compare 1B11, 7B2, and 7B4.

16. For Mencius's judgment of King Hui, see 7B1.

17. The successor to King Hui, he ruled from 318 to 296 B.C.E.

18. King Xuan ruled in the powerful state of Qi from 319 to 301 B.C.E.

19. Duke Huan of Qi (r. 685–643 B.C.E.), one of the most powerful feudal lords of the seventh century, was considered the first of the "Five Hegemons," and Duke Wen of Jin (r. 636–628 B.C.E.) was considered the second. Mencius's statement in the ensuing passage that he has "heard nothing about" these hegemons is not to be taken literally. The reputation of neither ruler was entirely negative, but Mencius is making the point here that he prefers to talk about true kings (*wang* 王) rather than lord-protectors or hegemons (*ba* 霸), whose claim to rule was believed by Confucians to be, morally speaking, more ambiguous.

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Mencius replied, "The followers of Confucius did not speak of the affairs of Huan and Wen, and thus nothing about them has been transmitted to later generations. Not having heard, and having nothing to say on that matter, how would it be if I were to speak about being a true king?"

The king said, "What must one's Virtue be like in order to become a true king?"[20]

Mencius said, "One who protects the people becomes a true king, and no one is able to stop him."

"Could someone like me protect the people?"

"He could."

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"How do you know that I could?"

"I have heard Hu He say that while the king was seated in the upper part of the hall someone led an ox past the hall below [in the courtyard]. On seeing this, the king asked where the ox was going and was told that it was being taken to serve as a blood sacrifice in the consecration of a bell. The king said, 'Spare it. I cannot bear its trembling, like one who, though blameless, is being led to the execution ground.' Asked whether in that case the consecration of the bell should be dispensed with, the king said, 'How can it be dispensed with? Substitute a sheep instead.' Did this actually happen?"

"It did."

Mencius said, "With such a mind[21] one has what it takes to become a true king. Though the people all thought it was because the king grudged the ox, I know it was surely because the king could not bear to see its suffering."

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The king said, "That is so. The people must truly have thought this, but, although the state of Qi is small and narrow, how could I grudge a single ox? It was because I could not bear its trembling—like one who,

20. The word translated "Virtue" here is *de* 德. It connotes the moral quality of a person's character—good or bad. One with abundant, good Virtue enjoys a kind of moral charisma, which attracts and secures the support of others. For a study of this notion in early Chinese philosophy, see David S. Nivison, "'Virtue' in Bronze and Bone" and "The Paradox of 'Virtue,'" both in *The Ways of Confucianism: Investigations in Chinese Philosophy*, ed. Bryan W. Van Norden, 17–43 (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1996).

21. In speaking of "such a mind," Mencius is obviously referring not to the king's intellective or rational abilities but to his capacity for empathy.

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though blameless, was being led to the execution ground—that I had a sheep substituted instead."

Mencius said, "The king should not think it strange that the people assumed that he grudged the ox. How could they know why he substituted the smaller creature for the larger one? If the king had been grieved over its being led, blameless, to the execution ground, then what was there to choose between an ox and a sheep?"

The king smiled and said, "What kind of mind was this, after all? It was not that I grudged the expense, yet I did exchange the ox for a sheep. No wonder the people said that I grudged it."

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Mencius said, "There is no harm in this. This was after all the working of humaneness—a matter of having seen the ox but not the sheep. This is the way of the noble person in regard to animals: if he sees them alive, then he cannot bear to see them die, and if he hears their cries, then he cannot bear to eat their flesh. And so the noble person stays far away from the kitchen."

The king was pleased and said, "When the ode says, 'What other people have in their minds, I measure by reflection,'[22] it is speaking about someone like you. When I tried reflecting, going back and seeking my motive, I was unable to grasp my own mind. Yet when you spoke of it, my mind experienced a kind of stirring. How is it that this mind of mine accords with that of a true king?"

Mencius replied, "Suppose someone were to report to the king, saying, 'My strength, while sufficient to lift a hundred *jun*, is not sufficient to lift a feather.[23] My sight, while sufficient to scrutinize the tip of an autumn hair, is not sufficient to see a cartload of firewood.' Would the king accept this?"

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"No," he said.

"How do these examples differ from the case of kindness sufficient to extend to animals yet without its benefits reaching the people? Not lifting a feather is the result of not exerting one's strength to do so; not seeing a cartload of firewood is the result of not employing his eyesight on it. That the people are not protected is because one does not exercise

22 Ode 198. Translation adapted from Legge, *Chinese Classics*, 4:342.

23. A *jun* 鈞 was a traditional measure of weight, around 30 catties, or 40 pounds.

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kindness toward them. Therefore, that the king is not a true king is because he does not do it; it is not because he is unable to do it."

The king asked, "How can one distinguish between 'not doing something' and 'not being able to do it'?"[24]

Mencius said, "If it were a matter of taking Mount Tai under one's arm and jumping over the North Sea with it, and one were to tell people, 'I am unable to do it,' this would truly be a case of being unable to do it. If it is a matter of bowing respectfully to an elder, and one tells people, 'I am unable to do it,' this is a case of not doing it rather than a case of being unable to do it.[25] And so the king's failure to be a true king is not in the category of taking Mount Tai under one's arm and jumping over the North Sea with it; his failure to be a true king is in the category of not bowing respectfully to an elder. By treating the elders in one's own family as elders should be treated and extending this to the elders of other families, and by treating the young of one's own family as the young ought to be treated and extending this to the young of other people's families, the empire can be turned around on the palm of one's hand.[26] The ode says,

> He set an example for his wife;
> It extended to his brothers,
> And from there to the family of the state.[27]

"This ode simply speaks of taking this mind and extending it to others. Thus, if one extends his kindness it will be enough to protect

24. For a discussion of the issue raised in this and other passages in *Mencius* concerning the difference between not doing something and not being able to do it, see David S. Nivison, "Mengzi: Just Not Doing It," in *Essays on the Moral Philosophy of Mengzi*, ed. Xiusheng Liu and Philip J. Ivanhoe, 132–42 (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002).

25. The interpretation of this line is influenced by the very helpful comments of Yang Bojun (Yang Bojun, 楊伯峻, *Mengzi yizhu* 孟子譯注 [Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960], 24, n. 24).

26. What Mencius means by "extension" is a matter that has generated considerable scholarly debate. For a review of this literature, see Philip J. Ivanhoe, "Confucian Self-Cultivation and Mengzi's Notion of Extension," in *Essays on the Moral Philosophy of Mengzi*, 221–41.

27. Ode 240 is a poem about the morally influential mother of King Wen. See Legge, *Chinese Classics*, 4:446–48.

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all within the four seas, whereas if one fails to extend it, he will have no way to protect his wife and children.[28] The reason the ancients so greatly surpassed most people was nothing other than this: they were good at extending what they did. Now, your kindness is sufficient to extend to the animals but the benefits do not reach the people. Why do you make an exception in the case [of the people]?

"It is by weighing that we know which things are light and which are heavy, and by measuring that we know which are long and which are short. This is true of all things, and especially so with regard to the mind. May it please the king to measure his mind. When the king raises arms, endangers his subjects, and excites the enmity of the other feudal lords—does this perhaps bring pleasure to his mind?"

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The king replied, "No. How could I take pleasure from this? It is just that I seek to realize what I greatly desire."

"May I hear about what it is that the king greatly desires?"

The king smiled and did not speak.

Mencius said, "Is it that the king does not have enough rich and sweet foods to satisfy his mouth? Or enough light and warm clothing for his body? Or enough beautiful colors for his eyes to gaze upon, or enough sounds for his ears to listen to? Is it that he does not have servants enough to come before him and receive orders? The king's ministers are sufficient to provide for all of this. How could the king's desire be for any of these things?"

He said, "No, it is none of these."

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Mencius said, "Then what the king greatly desires can be known. His desire is to expand his territory, to bring Qin and Chu into his court, to rule the Central Kingdom, and to pacify the four Yi.[29] But to pursue such a desire by acting in the way you do is like climbing a tree in search of a fish."

The king said, "Is it as bad as *that*?"

"It is even *worse*. When one climbs a tree in search of a fish, though one gets no fish, no disaster will ensue. But if one acts in the way you do in pursuit of what you desire, and devotes the full strength of his mind to such endeavor, disaster is bound to ensue."

28. Mencius makes a similar claim in 2A6.

29. The four Yi were non-Chinese peoples.

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"May I hear about this?"

"If the people of Zou were to go to war with the people of Chu, who, in the king's opinion, would win?"

"The people of Chu would win."

"Thus the small definitely cannot contend with the large, the few definitely cannot contend with the many, and the weak definitely cannot contend with the strong. Within the seas, there are nine territories of a thousand leagues square, and Qi is only one of them. What difference is there between one part attacking the other eight and Zou contending with Chu? Why not rather return to the root of the matter? If the king were to institute a government that dispensed humaneness, he would make all the officers in the world wish to stand in his court, all the tillers wish to till his fields, all the merchants wish to entrust their goods to his marketplaces, and all travelers wish to journey upon his roads. All those in the world who have grievances to express against their rulers would wish to lay their complaints before him. If you could bring this to pass, who could stop you from becoming a true king?

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The king said, "I am unintelligent and incapable of following this advice. I should like you to assist my will and be clear in giving me instruction, so that, while not clever, I may endeavor to carry it out."

"It is only a gentleman who will be able to have a constant mind despite being without a constant means of livelihood. The people, lacking a constant means of livelihood, will lack constant minds, and when they lack constant minds there is no dissoluteness, depravity, deviance, or excess to which they will not succumb. If, once they have sunk into crime, one responds by subjecting them to punishment—this is to entrap the people. With a person of humanity in a position of authority, how could the entrapment of the people be allowed to occur?[30] Therefore, an enlightened ruler will regulate the people's livelihood so as to ensure that, above, they have enough to serve their parents and, below, they have enough to support their wives and children. In years of prosperity they always have enough to eat; in years of dearth they are able to escape starvation. Only then does he urge the people toward goodness; accordingly, they find it easy to comply.

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30. Mencius is recorded, in 3A3, as saying the same thing, in almost exactly the same words, to Duke Wen of Teng.

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"At present, the regulation of the people's livelihood is such that, above, they do not have enough to serve their parents and, below, they do not have enough to support wives and children. Even in years of prosperity their lives are bitter, while in years of dearth they are unable to escape starvation. Under these circumstances they only try to save themselves from death, fearful that they will not succeed. How could they spare the time for the practice of rites and rightness?

"If the king wishes to put this into practice, he should return to the root of the matter.[31] Let mulberry trees be planted around households of five *mu*, and people of fifty will be able to be clothed in silk. In the raising of chickens, pigs, dogs, and swine, do not neglect the appropriate breeding times, and people of seventy will be able to eat meat. With fields of a hundred *mu*, do not interfere with the appropriate seasons of cultivation, and families with eight mouths to feed will be able to avoid hunger. Attend carefully to the education provided in the schools, which should include instruction in the duty of filial and fraternal devotion, and gray-haired people will not be seen carrying burdens on the roads. The ruler of a state in which people of seventy wear silk and eat meat and where the black-haired people are neither hungry nor cold has never failed to become a true king.

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31. What Mencius describes here as returning to "the root of the matter," or to what is fundamental, repeats almost exactly what he said, in 1A3, to King Hui of Liang.

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Mencius. Mencius.
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