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# CLASSICAL AND MEDIEVAL LITERATURE CRITICISM

Criticism of the Works of World  
Authors from Classical Antiquity through the  
Fourteenth Century, from the First Appraisals  
to Current Evaluations

**Lawrence J. Trudeau**  
Editor

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# Mencius

## 372-289 BC

(Also known as Meng Ke or Mengzi) Chinese philosopher.

### INTRODUCTION

Mencius is the Latinized name of Meng Ke, the Chinese sage generally considered to be the single most important figure in the development of Confucian thought. The texts containing Mencius's ideas—often referred to collectively as the *Mencius* (circa third century BC) or *Mengzi* (Master Meng)—were probably compiled from the notes and recollections of his disciples, sometime after his death. The *Mencius* consists primarily of dialogs with other philosophers and political rulers of Mencius's time, interspersed with sayings, parables, and other commentaries on a variety of topics. Mencius elaborated and—to some extent—systematized the fundamental ideas articulated by his fifth-century BC predecessor Confucius, developing several basic concepts at a more complex and nuanced level.

Confucian philosophy emphasized ethical ideals and proper social order, and Mencius's distinctive contributions include an insistence on the essential goodness of human nature and an emphasis on the practical implementation of Confucian ideals. In Mencius's time Confucianism was still one school of thought among many, and Mencius himself was one of many interpreters. During the Han dynasty (206 BC-AD 220), Confucian thought came into the foreground, but Mencius was not regarded as a particularly important figure until the Tang dynasty (618-907). Late in the Song dynasty (960-1297), the *Mencius* was officially recognized as one of the Four Books, a set of texts that along with the Five Classics subsequently acquired great significance as canonical works of Confucianism and the basis for China's system of civil-service examinations. Western scholarship concerning Mencius, which began with a focus on the translation of Confucian texts in the sixteenth century, has since branched out to explore his place in the history of Chinese thought and to examine his ideas in relation to those of Western philosophers.

### BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Most of the information about Mencius's life comes from *Records of the Grand Historian* (85 BC), a general history

of China written by Sima Qian. According to Sima, Mencius was born in 372 BC, in the state of Zou (located on the Shandong peninsula in eastern China). His father died soon afterward, leaving little money, and, according to legend, his mother moved three times in order to find the best location for raising her son. Another legend asserts that Mencius studied with Zisi, a grandson of Confucius. Though many scholars doubt the story, it underlines the idea that Mencius was engaged with Confucian ideas from an early age.

Mencius lived during the Warring States period (475-221 BC). Although the Zhou dynasty (circa 1046-256 BC) had initially unified most of China, over time local rulers increased their own power and fell into violent conflicts with one another. Political strife and a perceived decline in moral virtue had already begun by the time of Confucius, who advocated for a return to the precepts of an earlier golden age. Confucius died almost a century before Mencius was born, and it is likely that the *Analects* (479-400? BC), a collection of sayings attributed to Confucius, was not codified as a text until after Mencius himself had died. However, a number of smaller books, containing notes made by Confucius's students and followers, are thought to have been available to Mencius. Mencius, influenced by Confucian philosophy, reputedly spent much of his adult life traveling in the hope of finding a ruler who would adopt his ideas about proper governance. Although he may have held a post in the state of Qi for a time, he never succeeded in establishing a significant base of influence. At some point after 314 BC, Mencius abandoned his travels and spent the rest of his life focused on teaching. The traditional date given for his death is 289 BC, at which time he would have been eighty-three years old.

### TEXTUAL HISTORY

Scholars generally agree that the content of the *Mencius* was not written down by Mencius himself but, rather, represents material recorded or recollected by his disciples and passed on to later followers. At the same time, it is also generally accepted that the text accurately represents Mencius's teachings and, for the most part, reflects his style of speaking. The text as it exists today was passed

down through a commentary written by the Confucian scholar Zhao Qi in the second century AD. The earliest surviving print editions of the *Mencius* date from the seventeenth century, and the first scholarly English translation was produced by James Legge in 1861.

### MAJOR WORK

The *Mencius* comprises seven books, each divided into two parts, designated “A” and “B” in English translations. Each part is further subdivided into chapters, which are ordered numerically. Thus, the first passage of the work is always referenced as 1A1 and the last as 7B38. This convenient system makes it easy to find a specific passage in any translation. Each of the first six books is named after a person with whom Mencius engaged in dialog. The seventh book is frequently referred to by its theme, which is typically translated as “exhausting all his heart” and largely features short aphorisms by Mencius. Each book has a central theme, though all may include a variety of topics. Some passages are repeated almost exactly in different books, which suggests they were favored ways of explaining particular ideas.

The *Mencius* is not a programmatic explanation or articulation of Mencian philosophy but, rather, a series of commentaries covering a wide variety of topics. By the time of the Warring States, many scholars could no longer find employment at court and so took on the role of public intellectuals, offering opinions and advice on everything from the proper role of government to the finer points of etiquette. Unlike most of his contemporaries, however, Mencius was developing a coherent set of ideas, which can be extracted from the text of the *Mencius*. These ideas can be assigned to four interconnected categories: the *Dao* (way) of heaven, the moral foundations of good governance, the characteristics of human nature, and the process of self-cultivation. In each of these categories, Mencius begins with ideas attributed to Confucius and develops them further. In some instances he shifts focus or emphasis, while in others he probes ideas at a deeper level or elaborates them in greater detail.

Like Confucius, Mencius sought to clarify and promote a strategy that would restore China to cultural and political unity. Early Zhou rulers had developed a theory of governance based on the idea that *Tian* (heaven) supported an earthly ruler only as long as he ruled in accordance with heavenly moral principles, caring for the welfare of the people and behaving honorably. Later, as local rulers became increasingly powerful and contentious, these princi-

ples were frequently distorted or ignored. In his dialogs with various princes, Mencius attempts to explain why and how the earlier ideals should be reestablished. In several of these books, he begins with the proposition that human nature is essentially good and that the innate faculty of *ren* (kindheartedness) can be encouraged both by surrounding conditions and by self-cultivation. *Ren* is expressed in the feeling of compassion or sympathy. According to Mencius, the good leader rules from kindheartedness and creates conditions that nurture kindheartedness in his subjects.

Throughout the text, he also indicates that the good ruler must also behave in a proper manner, demonstrating *li* (decorum) by giving precedence to others and observing appropriate rituals. While other Confucians had focused largely on the importance of kindheartedness and decorum, Mencius also emphasized the value of *zhi* and *yi*. Viewed broadly, *zhi* comprises not only knowledge of worldly things but also awareness of right and wrong. *Yi*, which is perhaps the most complex of the four virtues, might be described as an inclination to recognize what is right and the ability to act in a righteous or just manner. According to Mencius, a ruler should practice the four virtues and live modestly, putting before all else the obligations to care for his people and to carry out appropriate ceremonial duties. In his care for the people, he limits taxation, uses punishment sparingly, and ensures that all have sufficient means to nourish their families. Through these practices, he emulates the character of heaven, and so maintains his right to rule. If he abandons moral governance, he will be resented, even revolted against by his people, and eventually defeated or deposed.

At the center of Mencian thought is the concept of *xin* (heart-mind). Heart-mind is the source of those feelings that create and nurture the cardinal virtues. It is in this sense that good is inherent in human beings, rather than dependent on external rewards or coercions. If heart-mind is not cultivated properly, the result is moral failure. The *Mencius* maintains that the cultivation of heart-mind is accomplished in part by a continuous action of behaving rightly and in part by regularly taking in good *qi*, a pervasive vital energy that promotes emotional balance and general well-being. As suggested by the seventh book of the *Mencius*, it is through the fullest development, or exhaustion, of heart-mind that one can reach alignment with the principles of heaven.

### CRITICAL RECEPTION

Critical interest in Mencius often focuses on his role in the development and expansion of Confucian philosophy.

Rufus Suter (1937) made note of a passage from the *Mencius* that commends ingenuousness, a trait that Confucian ethics did not previously consider “part of the perfect moral character.” Kung-chuan Hsiao (1979) found that while Confucius did not fully appreciate the significance of the people in his model of the government, Mencius saw them “not only as the objective toward which government is directed, but also as the chief element of the state.” Carsun Chang (1958) argued that although Confucius’s theories provided the basis for Confucianism, Mencius “clearly defined the principles, penetrated into their meanings more profoundly, and built a more comprehensive system.” Additionally, he found that Mencius developed principles that were critical of leaders and eventually provided greater power to the people. Timothy Brook (1995; see Further Reading) investigated the influence of Mencius’s apparently contrasting view between profits and righteousness upon the Confucian tradition’s attitude toward wealth. Kwong-loi Shun (1997) examined how Mencius appealed “to the shared ethical predispositions of the heart/mind” to defend Confucianism against its detractors. He Weifang (2012; see Further Reading) considered the ways in which Mencius’s legal arguments contributed to the development of laws in modern-day China. He observed that “Confucianism’s strong moral orientation and the enduring imperial civil examination system,” as discussed in Mencius’s works, prevented technocracy early in the history of ancient China, and the introduction of Confucian legal thought “has afforded the best opportunity for China to extricate itself from the old trap and move toward a brand-new future.”

Mencius’s Confucian ideals are also often treated in relation to those of Western philosophers. Lee H. Yearley (1990) summarized the significant differences between Mencius’s Confucianism and Thomas Aquinas’s Christianity, arguing, for instance, that while “Aquinas’s cosmology represents in paradigmatic form that kind of theism in which a deity creates and preserves the world but remains fundamentally distinct from it,” Mencius treats cosmology as “organismic or even ‘familial’: all elements are intimately interconnected; they are what they are only through their relationships with other elements and their place in the whole.” Kang Jung In and Eom Kwanyong (2003) examined Aristotelian views of tyranny in relation to Mencius’s political beliefs to suggest that the Western perception of unchecked tyranny in Asia is inaccurate in the case of East Asian Confucianism. Instead, they indicated that the *Mencius* demonstrates “there has been a strong tradition in Confucian political thought that criticizes and resists tyranny and even justifies revolting against it.” Bryan W. Van Norden (2004; see Further Reading) considered the lan-

guage of shame used in the West and distinguished between conventional shame and ethical shame. Relating the Mencian virtue of righteousness to Western shame, he found that ancient China is a better cultural representation of ethical shame than ancient Greece and suggested that the studies of Chinese philosophy and Western philosophy can productively inform one another.

Cynthia Giles

Academic Advisor: Bin Song,  
Boston University

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## PRINCIPAL WORK

*Mencius*. Circa third century BC. MS. (Dialogs and speeches)

### Principal English Translations\*

*The Works of Mencius*. Translated by James Legge. Hong Kong, Legge, 1861. Rev. ed. Oxford, Clarendon P, 1895. Print.

*Mencius*. Translated by Leonard A. Lyall. London, Longmans, Green, 1932. Print.

*The Sayings of Mencius*. Translated by James R. Ware. New American Library, 1960. Print.

*Mencius: A New Translation Arranged and Annotated for the General Reader*. Translated by W. A. C. H. Dobson. London, Oxford UP, 1963. Print.

*Mencius*. Translated by D. C. Lau. Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1979. Rev. ed. 2004. Print.

*Mencius*. Translated by Lau. Bilingual ed. Hong Kong, Chinese UP, 1984. Rev. ed. 2003. Print.

“The Mencius.” In *The Four Books: The Basic Teachings of the Later Confucian Tradition*, translated by Daniel K. Gardner, Hackett Publishing, 2007, pp. 53-106. Print.

*Mengzi: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries*. Translated by Bryan W. Van Norden. Hackett Publishing, 2008. Print.

*Mencius*. Translated by Irene Bloom. Edited by Philip J. Ivanhoe. Columbia UP, 2009. Print.

\*These are modern English translations of the *Mencius*.

## CRITICISM

## James Legge (essay date 1875)

SOURCE: Legge, James. "Prolegomena." *The Life and Works of Mencius*, translated by Legge, London, Trübner, 1875, pp. 1-13.

[In the following essay, Legge examines the scholarly reception of Mencius's work. Though Mencius's writings were known and read during the Han dynasty, Legge notes, his role in advancing Confucian philosophy was not fully acknowledged until the Song dynasty.]

SECTION I. THEIR RECOGNITION UNDER  
THE HAN DYNASTY, AND BEFORE IT

1. In the third of the catalogues of Lëw Hin,<sup>1</sup> containing a list of the Works of Scholars which had been collected up to his time (about A.D. 1), and in the first subdivision, devoted to authors of the classical or orthodox School, we have the entry—"The Works of Mencius, in eleven Books." At that date, therefore, Mencius' writings were known and registered as a part of the literature of China.

2. A hundred years before Hin, we have the testimony of the historian Sze-ma Ts'ëen. In the seventy-fourth Book of his "Historical Records," there is a brief memoir of Mencius, where he says that the philosopher, having withdrawn into private life, "with his disciples, Wan Chang and others, prefaced the *She* and the *Shoo*, unfolded the views of Confucius, and made 'The Works of Mencius, in seven Books.'"

The discrepancy that appears between these testimonies, in regard to the number of the **Books** which went by the common name of **Mencius**, will be considered in the sequel. In the mean while it is shown that the writings of Mencius were recognized by scholars a hundred years before the Christian era, which takes us back to little more than a century and a half from the date assigned to his death.

3. Among writers of the Han dynasty earlier than Sze-ma Ts'ëen, there were Han Ying, and Tung Chung-shoo, contemporaries, in the reigns of the emperors Wän, King, and Woo, (B.C. 178-86). Portions of their Works remain, and in them are found quotations from Mencius. Later than these there were Yang Hëung (B.C. 53—A.D. 18), who wrote a commentary on Mencius, which was existing under the Sung dynasty, and Wang Ch'ung (died about A.D. 100), who left a chapter of animadversions on our philosopher, which still exists.

4. But we find references to Mencius and his **Works** [*Mencius*] anterior to the dynasty of Han. Between him and the rise of the Ts'in dynasty flourished the philosopher Seun K'ing, of whose writings enough is still preserved to form a large volume. By many he is regarded as the ablest of all the followers of Confucius. He several times makes mention of Mencius, and one of his most important chapters,—“That Human Nature is Evil,” seems to have been written expressly against Mencius' doctrine of its goodness. He quotes his arguments, and endeavours to set them aside.

5. I have used the term *recognition* in the heading of this section, because the scholars of the Han dynasty do not seem to have had any trouble in forming or settling the text of Mencius such as we have seen they had with the Confucian Analects.

And here a statement made by Chaou K'e, whose labours upon our philosopher I shall notice in the next section, deserves to be considered. He says:—"When Ts'in sought by its fires to destroy the classical books, and put the scholars to death in pits, there was an end of the School of Mencius. His **Works**, however, were included under the common name of 'Philosophical,' and so the tablets containing them escaped destruction." Ma Twan-lin does not hesitate to say that the statement is incorrect;<sup>2</sup> and it seems strange that Mencius should have been exempted from the sweep of a measure intended to extinguish the memory of the most ancient and illustrious sovereigns of China and of their principles. But the same thing is affirmed in regard to the writings of at least one other author of antiquity, the philosopher Yuh; and the frequent quotations of Mencius by Han Ying and Tung Chung-shoo, indicating that his **Works** were a complete collection in their times, give some confirmation to K'e's account.

On the whole, the evidence seems rather to preponderate in its favour. Mencius did not obtain his place as "a classic" till long after the time of the Ts'in dynasty; and though the infuriate emperor would doubtless have given special orders to destroy his writings, if his attention had been called to them, we can easily conceive their being overlooked, and escaping with a mass of others which were not considered dangerous to the new rule.

6. Another statement of Chaou K'e shows that the **Works of Mencius**, once recognized under the Han dynasty, were for a time at least kept with a watchful care. He says that, in the reign of the emperor Hëaou-wän (B.C. 178-154), "the Lun-yu, the Hëaou-king, Mencius, and the Urh-ya were all put under the care of a Board of 'Great Scholars,' which was subsequently done away with, only 'The Five King' being left under such guardianship." Choo He has



observed that the Books of the Han dynasty supply no evidence of such a Board; but its existence may be inferred from a letter of Lëw Hin, complaining of the supineness with which the scholars seconded his quest of the scattered monuments of literature. He says:—"Under the emperor Hëaou-wăn, the Shoo-king reappeared, and the She-king began to sprout and bud afresh. Throughout the empire, a multitude of books were continually making their appearance, and among them the Records and Sayings of all the Philosophers, which likewise had their place assigned to them in the Courts of Learning, and a Board of Great Scholars appointed to their charge."<sup>3</sup>

As the Board of Great Scholars in charge of the Five King was instituted B.C. 135, we may suppose that the previous arrangement hardly lasted half a century. That it did exist for a time, however, shows the value set upon the writings of Mencius, and confirms the point which I have sought to set forth in this section,—that there were **Works of Mencius** current in China before the Han dynasty, and which were eagerly recognized and cherished by the scholars under it, who had it in charge to collect the ancient literary productions of their country.

#### SECTION II. CHAOU K'É AND HIS LABOURS UPON MENCIUS

1. It has been shown that the **Works of Mencius** were sufficiently well known from nearly the beginning of the Han dynasty; but its more distinguished scholars do not seem to have devoted themselves to their study and elucidation. The classics proper claimed their first attention. There was much labour to be done in collecting and collating the fragments of them; and to unfold their meaning was the chief duty of every one who thought himself equal to the task. Mencius was but one of the literati, a scholar like themselves. He could wait. We must come down to the second century of the Christian era to find the first great commentary on his writings.

In the Prolegomena to the Confucian Analects, Section i. 7, I have spoken of Ch'ing Heuen or Ch'ing K'ang-shing, who died at the age of 74 some time between A.D. 190-220, after having commented on every ancient classical book. It is said by some<sup>4</sup> that he embraced the **Works of Mencius** in his labours. If he did so, which to me is very doubtful, the result has not come down to posterity. To give to our philosopher such a treatment as he deserved, and compose a commentary that should descend to the latest posterity, was the Work of Chaou K'é.

2. K'é was born A.D. 108. His father was a censor about the court of the emperor Hëaon-gan, and gave him the name of Këa, which he afterwards changed into K'é for the purpose

of concealment, changing also his original designation of T'ae-k'ing into Pin-k'ing. It was his boast that he could trace his descent from the emperor Chuen-hëuh, B.C. 2510.

In his youth K'é was distinguished for his intelligence and diligent study of the classics. He married a niece of the celebrated scholar and statesman Ma Yung, but bore himself proudly towards him and her other relatives. A stern independence and hatred of the sycophancy of the times were from the first characteristic of him, and proved the source of many troubles.

When he was over thirty, K'é was attacked with some severe and lingering illness, in consequence of which he lay upon his bed for seven years. At one time, thinking he was near his end, he addressed a nephew who was with him in the following terms:—"Born a man into the world, in retirement I have not displayed the principles exemplified on mount Ke,<sup>5</sup> nor in office achieved the merit of E and Leu.<sup>6</sup> Heaven has not granted me such distinction. What more shall I say? Set up a round stone before my grave, and engrave on it the inscription,—'Here lies a recluse of Han, by surname Chaou, and by name Këa. He had the will, but not the opportunity. Such was his fate. Alas!'"

Contrary to expectation, K'é recovered, and in A.D. 154 we find him again engaged in public life, but in four years he is flying into obscurity under a feigned name, to escape the resentment of T'ang Hang, one of the principal ministers, and of his partizans. He saved his life, but his family and relatives fell victims to the vengeance of his enemies, and for some time he wandered about the country of the Këang and Hwae, or among the mountains and by the sea-coast on the north of the present Shan-tung. One day, as he was selling cakes in a market-place, his noble presence attracted the attention of Sun Ts'ung, a young gentleman of Gan-k'ëw, who was passing by in a carriage, and to him, on being questioned, he made known his history. This proved a fortunate rencontre for him. Sun Ts'ung took him home, and kept him for several years concealed somewhere, "in the centre of a double wall." And now it was that he solaced his hard lot with literary studies. He wooed the muse in twenty-three poetical compositions, which he called "Songs of Adversity," and achieved his commentary on Mencius.

On the fall of the T'ang faction, when a political amnesty was proclaimed, K'é emerged from his friendly confinement, and was employed in important offices, but only to fall a victim again to the intrigues of the time. The first year of the emperor Ling, A.D. 168, was the commencement of an imprisonment which lasted more than ten years; but nothing could crush his elasticity, or daunt his perseverance. In 185, when he had nearly reached fourscore, he was

active as ever in the field of political strife, and wrought loyally to sustain the fortunes of the falling dynasty. He died at last in A.D. 201, in King-chow, whither he had gone on a mission in behalf of his imperial master. Before his death, he had a tomb prepared for himself, which was long shown, or pretended to be shown, in what is now the district city of Keang-ling in the department of King-chow in Hoo-pih.

3. From the above account of Chaou K'e it will be seen that his commentary on Mencius was prepared under great disadvantages. That he, a fugitive and in such close hiding, should have been able to produce a work such as it is shows the extent of his reading and acquirements in early days. I have said so much about him, because his name should be added to the long roll of illustrious men who have found comfort in sore adversity from the pursuits of literature and philosophy. As to his mode of dealing with his subject, it will be sufficient to give his own account:—

"I wished to set my mind on some literary work, by which I might be assisted to the government of my thoughts, and forget the approach of old age. But the six classics had all been explained and carefully elucidated by previous scholars. Of all the orthodox school there was only Mencius, wide and deep, minute and exquisite, yet obscure at times and hard to see through, who seemed to me to deserve to be properly ordered and digested. Upon this I brought forth whatever I had learned, collected testimonies from the classics and other books, and divided my author into chapters and sentences. My annotations are given along with the original text, and of every chapter I have separately indicated the scope. The **Books** I have divided into two Parts, the first and second, making in all fourteen sections.

"On the whole, with regard to my labour, I do not venture to think that it speaks the man of mark, but, as a gift to the learner, it may dispel some doubts and resolve perplexities. It is not for me, however, to pronounce on its excellencies or defects. Let men of discernment who come after me observe its errors and omissions and correct them;—that will be a good service."

#### SECTION III. OTHER COMMENTATORS

1. All the commentaries on Mencius made prior to the Sung dynasty (A.D. 975) having perished, excepting that of Chaou K'e, I will not therefore make an attempt to enumerate them particularly. Only three names deserve to be mentioned, as frequent reference is made to them in Critical Introductions to our philosopher. They were all of the T'ang dynasty, extending, if we embrace in it what is called "The after T'ang," from A.D. 624 to 936. The first is that of Luh Shen-king, who declined to adopt Chaou K'e's division of the text into fourteen sections, and many of whose

interpretations, differing from those of the older authority, have been received into the now standard commentary of Choo He. The other two names are those of Chang Yih and Ting Kung-choh, whose principal object was to determine the sounds and tones of characters about which there could be dispute. All that we know of their views is from the works of Sun Shih and Choo He, who have many references to them in their notes.

2. During the Sung dynasty, the commentators on Mencius were a multitude, but it is only necessary that I speak of two.

The most distinguished scholar of the early reigns was Sun Shih, who is now generally alluded to by his posthumous or honorary epithet of "The Illustrious Duke." We find him high in favour and reputation in the time of T'ae-tsung (977-997), Chin-tsung (998-1022), and Jin-tsung (1023-1063). By imperial command, in association with several other officers, he prepared a work in two parts under the title of "The Sounds and Meaning of Mencius," and presented it to the court. Occasion was taken from this for a strange imposture. In the edition of "The Thirteen King," Mencius always appears with "The Commentary of Chaou K'e" and "The Correct Meaning of Sun Shih." Under the Sung dynasty, what were called "correct meanings" were made for most of the classics. They are commentaries and annotations on the principal commentator, who is considered as the expounder of the classic, the author not hesitating, however, to indicate any peculiar views of his own. The genuineness of Shih's "Correct Meaning of Mencius" has been questioned by few, but there seems to be no doubt of its being really a forgery, at the same time that it contains the substance of the true Work of "the Illustrious Duke," so far as that embraced the meaning of Mencius and of Chaou K'e. The account of it given in the preface to "An Examination of the Text in the Commentary and Annotations on Mencius," by Yuen Yuen of the present dynasty, is—"Sun Shih himself made no 'Correct Meaning'; but some one—I know not who—supposing that his Work was really of that character, and that there were many things in the commentary which were not explained, and passages also of an unsatisfactory nature, he transcribed the whole of Shih's Work on 'The Sounds and Meaning'; and having interpolated some words of his own, published it under the title of 'The Annotations of Sun Shih.' He was the same person who is styled by Choo He 'A scholar of Shaou-woo.'"

In the 12th century Choo He appeared upon the stage, and entered into the labours of all his predecessors. He published one Work separately upon Mencius, and two upon Mencius and the Confucian Analects. The second of these,—"Collected Comments on the Analects and Mencius," is now the standard authority on the subject,

and has been the test of orthodoxy and scholarship in the literary examinations since A.D. 1315.

3. Under the present dynasty two important contributions have been made to the study of Mencius. They are both published in the "Explanations of the Classics under the Imperial dynasty of Ts'ing."<sup>7</sup> The former, bearing the title of "An Examination of the Text in the Commentary and Annotations on Mencius," forms the sections from 1039 to 1054. It is by Yuen Yuen, the Governor-general under whose auspices that compilation was published. Its simple aim is to establish the true reading by a collation of the oldest and best manuscripts and editions, and of the remains of a series of stone tablets containing the text of Mencius, which were prepared in the reign of Kaou-tsung (A.D. 1128-1162), and are now existing in the Examination Hall of Hang-chow. The second Work, which is still more important, is embraced in the sections 1117-1146. Its title is—"The Correct Meaning of Mencius, by Ts'eaou Seun, a *Keu-jin* of K'ang-too." It is intended to be such a Work as Sun Shih would have produced, had he really made what has been so long current in the world under his name; and is really valuable.

SECTION IV. INTEGRITY; AUTHORSHIP;  
AND RECEPTION AMONG THE CLASSICAL BOOKS

1. We have seen how the **Works of Mencius** were catalogued by L'ew Hin as being in "eleven Books," while a century earlier Sze-ma Ts'een referred to them as consisting only of "seven." The question has very much vexed Chinese scholars whether there ever really were four additional Books of Mencius which have been lost.

2. Chaou K'e says in his preface:—"There likewise are four additional Books, entitled 'A Discussion of the Goodness of Man's Nature,' 'An Explanation of Terms,' 'The Classic of Filial Piety,' and 'The Practice of Government.' But neither breadth nor depth marks their composition. It is not like that of the seven acknowledged Books. It may be judged they are not really the production of Mencius, but have been palmed upon the world by some subsequent imitator of him." As the four Books in question are lost, and only a very few quotations from Mencius, that are not found in his **Works** which we have, can be fished up from ancient authors, our best plan is to acquiesce in the conclusion of Chaou K'e. The specification of "Seven Books," by Sze-ma Ts'een is an important corroboration of it. In the two centuries preceding our era the four Books whose titles are given by him may have been made and published under the name of Mencius, and Hin would only do his duty in including them in his catalogue, unless their falsehood was generally acknowledged. K'e, devoting himself to the study of our author, and satisfied from internal evidence that they were

not his, only did his duty in rejecting them. There is no evidence that his decision was called in question by any scholar of the Han or the dynasties immediately following, when we may suppose that the Books were still in existence.

The author of "Supplemental Observations on the Four Books,"<sup>8</sup> says upon this subject:—"It would be better to be without books than to give entire credit to them";<sup>9</sup>—this is the rule for reading ancient books laid down by Mencius himself, and the rule for us after men in reading about what purport to be lost books of his. The seven **Books** we have 'comprehend [the doctrine] of heaven and earth, examine and set forth ten thousand topics, discuss the subjects of benevolence and righteousness, reason and virtue, the nature [of man] and the decrees [of Heaven], misery and happiness.'<sup>10</sup> Brilliantly are these things treated of, in a way far beyond what any disciple of Kung-sun Ch'ow or Wan Chang could have attained to. What is the use of disputing about other matters? Ho Sheh has his 'Expurgated Mencius,' but Mencius cannot be expurgated. Lin Kin-sze has his 'Continuation of Mencius,' but Mencius needs no continuation. I venture to say—*Besides the Seven Books there were no other Works of Mencius.*"

3. On the authorship of the **Works of Mencius**, Sze-ma Ts'een and Chaou K'e are agreed. They say that Mencius composed the seven Books himself, and yet that he did so along with certain of his disciples. The words of the latter are:—"He withdrew from public life, collected and digested the conversations which he had had with his distinguished disciples, Kung-sun Ch'ow, Wan Chang, and others, on the difficulties and doubts which they had expressed, and also compiled himself his deliverances as *ex cathedra*;—and so published the Seven Books of his writings."

This view of the authorship seems to have been first called in question by Han Yu, commonly referred to as "Han, the Duke of Literature," a famous scholar of the eighth century (A.D. 768-824), under the T'ang dynasty, who expressed himself in the following terms:—"The books of Mencius were not published by himself. After his death, his disciples, Wan Chang and Kung-sun Ch'ow, in communication with each other, recorded the words of Mencius."

4. If we wish to adjudicate in the matter, we find that we have a difficult task in hand. One thing is plain,—the book is not the work of many hands like the Confucian Analects. "If we look at the style of the composition," says Choo He, "it is as if the whole were melted together, and not composed by joining piece to piece." This language is too strong, but there is a degree of truth and force in it. No principle of chronology guided the arrangement of the different parts, and a foreigner may be pardoned if now and then the "pearls" seem to him "at random strung"; yet the

collection is characterized by a uniformity of style, and an endeavour in the separate **Books** to preserve a unity of matter. This consideration, however, is not enough to decide the question. Such as the work is, we can conceive it proceeding either from Mencius himself, or from the labours of a few of his disciples engaged on it in concert.

The author of the "Topography of the Four Books"<sup>11</sup> has this argument to show that the works of Mencius are by Mencius himself:—"The Confucian Analects," he says, "were made by the disciples, and therefore they record minutely the appearance and manners of the sage. But the seven **Books** were made by Mencius himself, and therefore we have nothing in them excepting the words and public movements of the philosopher." This peculiarity is certainly consonant with the hypothesis of Mencius' own authorship, and so far may dispose us to adopt it.

On the other hand, as the princes of Mencius' time to whom any reference is made are always mentioned by the honorary epithets conferred on them after their death, it is argued that those at least must have been introduced by his disciples. There are many passages, again, which savour more of a disciple or other narrator than of the philosopher himself. There is, for instance, the commencing sentences of **Book III. Pt I.**:—"When the Duke Wān of T'ang was crown-prince, having to go to Ts'oo, he went by way of Sung, and visited Mencius (lit., *the philosopher Mǎng*). Mencius discoursed to him how the nature of man is good, and when speaking, always made laudatory reference to Yaou and Shun. When the crown-prince was returning from Ts'oo, he again visited Mencius. Mencius said to him, 'Prince, do you doubt my words? The path is one, and only one.'"

5. Perhaps the truth after all is as the thing is stated by Sze-ma Ts'ëen,—that Mencius, *along with some of his disciples*, compiled and composed the **Work**. It would be in their hands and under their guardianship after his death, and they may have made some slight alterations, to prepare it, as we should say, for the press. Yet allowing this, there is nothing to prevent us from accepting the sayings and doings as those of Mencius, guaranteed by himself.

6. It now only remains here that I refer to the reception of Mencius' **Works** among the Classics. We have seen how they were not admitted by Lëw Hin into his catalogue of classical works. Mencius was then only one of the many scholars or philosophers of the orthodox school. The same classification obtains in the books of the Suy and T'ang dynasties; and in fact it was only under the dynasty of Sung that the works of Mencius and the Confucian Analects were authoritatively ranked together. The first explicitly to proclaim this honour as due to our philosopher was Ch'in Chih-chae,<sup>12</sup> whose words are—"Since the time

when Han, the Duke of Literature, delivered his eulogium, 'Confucius handed [the scheme of doctrine] to Mencius, on whose death the line of transmission was interrupted,'<sup>13</sup> the scholars of the empire have all associated Confucius and Mencius together. The **Books of Mencius** are certainly superior to those of Seun and Yang, and others who have followed them. Their productions are not to be spoken of in the same day with his." Choo He adopted the same estimate of Mencius, and by his "Collected Comments" on him and the Analects bound the two sages together in a union which the government of China, in the several dynasties which have succeeded, has with one temporary exception approved and confirmed.

#### Notes

1. See Vol. I., Proleg., pp. 4, 5.
2. See his great work, Bk clxxxiv., upon Mencius.
3. See the same work, Bk clxxiv. pp. 9, 10.
4. In the "Books of the Suy dynasty" (A.D. 589-617). Bk xxxix., we find that there were then in the national Repositories three Works on Mencius,—Chaou K'e's, one by Ch'ing Heuen, and one by Lëw He also a scholar of Han, but probably not earlier than Chaou K'e. The same Works were existing under the T'ang dynasty (624-907);—see the "Books of T'ang," Bk. xlix. By the rise of the Sung dynasty (A.D. 975), however, the two last were both lost. The entries in the Records of Suy and T'ang would seem to prove that Ch'ing Heuen had written on Mencius, but in the sketches of his life which I have consulted,—and that in the "Books of the After Han dynasty" must be the basis of all the rest,—there is no mention made of his having done so.
5. It was to mount Ke that two ancient worthies are said to have withdrawn, when Yaou wished to promote them to honour.
6. These are the well-known E Yin and T'ae-kung Wang, ancestor of the lords of Ts'e.
7. See Vol. I., Proleg., p. 21.
8. See Vol. I., Proleg., larger Work, p. 132.
9. Mencius, VII. Pt II. iii.
10. This is the language of Chaou K'e.
11. See Vol. I., Proleg., larger Work, p. 132.
12. The name and the account I take from the "Supplemental Observations on the Four Books," Art. I. on Mencius. Chih, I apprehend, is a misprint for Che, the individual referred to being probably Ch'in Foo-lëang, a great scholar and officer of the 12th

century, known also by the designations of Keun-keu and Che-chaë.

13. This eulogy of Han Yu is to be found subjoined to the brief introduction in the common editions of Mencius. The whole of the passage there quoted is:—"Yaou handed [the scheme of doctrine] down to Shun; Shun handed it to Yu; Yu to T'ang; T'ang to Wān, Woo, and the Duke of Chow; Wān, Woo, and the Duke of Chow to Confucius; and Confucius to Mencius, on whose death there was no farther transmission of it. In Seun and Yang there are snatches of it, but without a nice discrimination: they talk about it, but without a definite particularity."

### Rufus Suter (essay date 1937)

SOURCE: Suter, Rufus. "A Note about Ingenuousness in the Ethical Philosophy of Mencius." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, vol. 2, no. 1, Mar. 1937, pp. 4-8.

[In the following essay, Suter points out a passage in which Mencius commends "ingenuousness," a trait not "part of the perfect moral character" in earlier Confucian ethics. Chinese characters originally in this essay have been silently removed.]

Two important elements in the Confucian ethical philosophy are filial piety and fraternal love. But there are other factors equally well-known such as "saving one's face," worldly shrewdness, and perhaps the general idea that the moral value of an act is to be measured in terms of its social effects rather than of its individual intrinsic character. We of the west are prone to criticize the Confucian ethic as too much preoccupied with the external form of conduct, as confusing morality with what almost amounts to observance of a kind of ethical ritual. Most westerners, therefore, would not expect to find in Confucian thought such a notion as that under certain circumstances *ingenuousness* may be a virtue and even part of the character of the perfect sage. The point of the present paper is that in the work attributed to Confucius' great expositor, Mencius, a passage occurs which may be interpreted as advocating, or at least as implying a commendation of, ingenuousness.

There is, indeed, much in the Confucian tradition which renders any interpretation suggesting that ingenuousness may be a virtue improbable at the outset. In *The Analects*,<sup>1</sup> for instance, the Duke of Shê says: "Among us here there are those who may be styled upright in their conduct. If their father have stolen a sheep, they will bear witness to the fact." Confucius replies: "Among us, in our part of the country, those who are upright are different from this. The father conceals the misconduct of the son, and the son

conceals the misconduct of the father. Uprightness is to be found in this." Here Confucius may be interpreted as meaning that if a father do something wrong, the son to "save the face" of the parent should act as if he were unaware of the father's error. Even if the father should delegate a misdeed to the son, the son's duty would be to obey, but to obey as if he were innocent, ingenuous; to give the appearance that he was deceived. In reality the father, the neighbors, and the son himself would know that there was no ingenuousness involved. The situation would simply be that filial piety and family pride would require a certain *attitude* on the part of the son, and the maintenance of this attitude would be a part of uprightness.

Again, in *The Mencius* there occurs a passage which illustrates clearly the common notion that the Confucian ethic leaves no place for real ingenuousness. The passage is complicated as it contains a story within a story, and the situations represented are so remote from our western idea of situations illustrative of moral principles that one may find it difficult to follow the reasoning. The substance of the passage, however, is as follows:<sup>2</sup> Wan Chang, who has been asking Mencius questions about the great sage Shun, recalls how Shun's father and younger brother tried treacherously to murder him in order to fall heir to his riches. Afterwards, when the brother, Hsiang, went into Shun's palace, Shun, instead of being dead, was there "on his couch playing on his lute. Hsiang [dissimulating] said, 'I am come simply because I was thinking anxiously about you. At the same time, he blushed deeply. Shun said to him [heaping coals of fire on his head as it were, a form of "saving face" to which we in the west are not strangers], 'There are all my officers:—do you undertake the government of them for me.'" At this point Wan Chang begins to ask the questions important for our purposes: "I do not know whether Shun was ignorant of Hsiang's wishing to kill him." Mencius answers: "How could he be ignorant of that? . . ." The questioner resumes: "In that case, then, did not Shun rejoice hypocritically?" Mencius replies, "No." Then to make clear his answer he launches into the story within a story: "Formerly, some one sent a present of a live fish to Tzū-ch'an of Chêng. Tzū-ch'an ordered his pond-keeper to keep it in the pond, but that officer cooked it, and reported the execution of his commission, saying, 'When I first let it go, it appeared embarrassed. In a little, it seemed to be somewhat at ease, and then it swam away joyfully.' Tzū-ch'an observed, 'It had got into its element!' The pond-keeper then went out and said, 'Who calls Tzū-ch'an a wise man? After I had cooked and eaten the fish, he says,—It had got into its element! it had got into its element! Thus a superior man may be imposed on by what seems to be as it ought to be, but he cannot be entrapped by what is contrary to right principle."

The moral Mencius implies in this parable is that the master deliberately allowed himself to be imposed upon. This, in the Confucian conception, was the dignified attitude to take. He knew that the servant had cooked the fish and had lied to him. He was not entrapped. But there was a large amount of self-satisfaction to be derived from the self-knowledge that he was above noticing petty deceit. If he had let the servant know, moreover, that he was aware of his trickery, the servant would have "lost face," and the master would have lost a servant. Finally, there may have been an element of self-satisfaction in the master's being privately aware that the servant was deceiving himself by supposing that he had deceived his master.

Applying this parable to the question whether Shun was hypocritical, Mencius concludes: "Hsiang came in the way in which the love of his elder brother would have had him come; therefore *Shun* sincerely believed him, and rejoiced. What hypocrisy was there?" In western fables Shun would have been exhibited to greater advantage morally if his own honesty had been so great that he had been unable to believe in Hsiang's duplicity; but here the principle involved is different. Shun and his younger brother were both perfectly aware that Shun knew all that had been transpiring. So Shun was sincere and there was no hypocrisy. His *attitude* was merely the sign that he had risen superior to the occasion.

In view of these two passages, which imply the virtue of a state of mind the antithesis of ingenuousness, that ingenuousness should ever, in the Confucian tradition, have been regarded as part of the perfect moral character, appears, as has been said, highly improbable. The dignity of "saving one's face," and the policy of being "wise as an owl and silent as a snake" so dominates Chinese ethical thought that one might almost be justified in concluding *a priori* that ingenuousness as a moral category has no place in Confucian ideology. But now we come to the passage in *The Mencius* to which we referred at the beginning of the present paper, and it is difficult to interpret it on the usual presupposition to which westerners are given in their treatment of Confucian thought. Ch'ên Chia, a minister in the state of Ch'i, has been trying to console his prince for a serious political blunder. His consolation takes the form of pointing out the fallibility of even one of the greatest of the sages of antiquity. "The duke of Chou,"<sup>3</sup> says Ch'ên, "appointed Kuan-shu to oversee *the heir* of Yin, but Kuan-shu with the power of the Yin State rebelled. If knowing that this would happen [the duke of Chou even so] appointed Kuan-shu, he was deficient in benevolence. If he appointed him, not knowing that it would happen, he was deficient in knowledge. If the duke of Chou was not completely benevolent and wise, how much less can your Majesty be ex-

pected to be so! . . ." This is the background of our passage. Now the passage itself. Ch'ên visits Mencius to discover, among other things, how the duke of Chou, being a sage, could err. After Ch'ên has asked who the duke of Chou was, and after Mencius has answered that he was an eminent sage, Ch'ên continues: "Is it the fact, that he appointed Kuan-shu to oversee the heir of Yin, and that Kuan-shu with the State of Yin rebelled?" "It is." "Did the duke of Chou know that he would rebel, and *purposefully* appoint him to that office?" Mencius says: "He did not know [this is the all important point]." "Then, though a sage, he still fell into error?" Mencius replies with one of the startling, rightabout-faces often characteristic of his argumentative style: "The duke of Chou was the younger brother. Kuan-shu was his elder brother. Was not the error of Chou-kung in accordance with what is right?"

The first reaction to this passage, of course, is to maintain again that the duke of Chou was merely "saving the face" of his family. But if this interpretation be sound, the least one may say is that Chou-kung "saved face" at an inordinantly heavy cost, for as a consequence he was forced into war with the Yin. On the other hand, in this passage Mencius says plainly, "He did not know." A more reasonable interpretation, and one which adheres with complete literalness to the text, would be that here we have a logical development of the idea of fraternal love. The saintly sage, Chou-kung, carried his respect for his elder brother to the point that he actually was deceived by him. Ingenuousness in a younger brother's respect for his elder brother would be, in a sense, the *ne plus ultra* of the development of fraternal love, and fraternal love, along with filial piety, loyalty to the sovereign, etc., is as much a part of the Confucian ethical system as the emphasis on "saving face" and on being a shrewd practical statesman. We may imagine, furthermore, that after the duke of Chou had awakened to Kuan-shu's deception he would have gathered a maximum of self-satisfaction from such considerations as that ingenuousness, after all, affords an inner mental poise, an impregnability, a superiority to troublesome circumstances, which is almost absolute. Sincere ingenuousness is a type of emptiness, of sublime passivity, which was worthy of a great sage.

It may be of interest to note the remarks of the two principal commentators on Mencius about this passage. Chu Hsi<sup>4</sup> refers to the error of the duke of Chou as being "what he could not avoid" rather than as an instance of gullibility; and he draws a parallel between this passage and the one we have discussed in which Shun and Hsiang figure. It should be remembered, however, that Chu Hsi was perhaps more interested in exhibiting a consistency in Mencius than in recovering the original thought of his author. If we consider

the annotation of the earliest of the commentators on Mencius, Chao Ch'í,<sup>5</sup> we shall find a more literal treatment of the text. Chao Ch'í says: "Mencius supposed that although Chou-kung knew Kuan-shu was not virtuous still he need not have known that he would rebel. Chou-kung thought that since he was Kuan-shu's younger brother therefore [Kuan-shu] loved him. Kuan-shu knew that since he was Chou-kung's elder brother therefore [Chou-kung] looked up to him. [It was a case of] family affection. That Chou-kung in this case should have erred, was it not also right?"

#### Notes

1. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*<sup>2</sup>, 1.270.
2. *Op. cit.* 2.347-348.
3. *Op. cit.* 2. 224-225.
4. *Ssü-shu Chi-chu*, *Ssü-pu Pei-yao* ed., *The Mencius*, 2. 21a<sup>3</sup>.
5. *Mêng tzü*, *Ssü-pu Ts'ung-k'an* ed., 4. 11a<sup>8</sup>-11b<sup>1</sup>.

#### Carsun Chang (essay date 1958)

SOURCE: Chang, Carsun. "The Significance of Mencius." *Philosophy East and West*, vol. 8, nos. 1-2, Apr.-July 1958, pp. 37-48.

[In the following essay, Chang argues that Mencius's development of Confucian principles and his willingness to criticize leaders eventually empowered the people.]

#### I

Mencius (372-289 B.C.) is known in China as Confucius' successor who handed down the tradition of the *Tao*. In a certain sense, Mencius is a greater philosopher than Confucius. While Confucius laid the solid groundwork for Confucianism, Mencius clearly defined the principles, penetrated into their meanings more profoundly, and built a more comprehensive system. In the period following Confucius' death, known as the period of the "Warring States," power politics were involved extensively, and the schools of thought had a very sophisticated way of arguing. There was a great need for a philosopher like Mencius. With courage, he criticized the strategists, the diplomats, and the philosophers. Some of the fundamental principles which Mencius gave to the later philosophers are as follows: to take emperors Yao and Shun as philosopher-kings; to assert that human nature is good; to give priority to the mind, whose function is thinking; and to nourish the sentiment of moral supremacy. All these principles were accepted, developed, and practiced in the ensuing dynasties, such as Sung and Ming, and gave much moral

strength to the Chinese people, who at those times underwent great national disasters. Since Mencius exercised a powerful influence on many spheres of Chinese life for a long period of time, he may well be considered a greater philosopher than Confucius. The extent to which an application of Mencius' theories was made in philosophical and practical problems is ample evidence that his theories were determining factors in shaping Chinese national character and thought. The fact that a disciple's work exercised a greater influence than that of his master does not necessarily put his master in a lesser light. So it was with Confucius and Mencius.

It is interesting to note what James Legge, a Western Sinologist and translator of Chinese classics, said about Mencius: "The first twenty-three years of his [Mencius'] life thus synchronized with the last twenty-three of Plato's. Aristotle, Zeno, Epicurus, Demosthenes, and other great men of the West were also his contemporaries. When we place Mencius among them, he can look them in the face. He does not need to hide a diminished head."<sup>1</sup>

Let us now proceed to inquire who Mencius' teacher was. Formerly it was held that Tzū-ssü, the grandson of Confucius, was Mencius' teacher; but this was later found to be incorrect. Supposing Tzū-ssü to have been born in the year when his father, Li, died, he would have to have been 112 years old when Mencius was born. If one supposes that Mencius at the age of twenty found a good teacher, Tzū-ssü would have already been 132 years old. That they stood before each other as master and disciple is, thus, inconceivable. Therefore, Ssü-ma Ch'ien wrote in his book, the *Shih Chi*, that Mencius studied with the disciples of Tzū-ssü. This is supposed to be correct. In Mencius' *Book* [*Mencius*] there is a short sentence referring to his discipleship. He said: "Although I could not be a disciple of Confucius, I have endeavoured to cultivate myself after the example of those whom I appreciated."<sup>2</sup> Another proof that Mencius was acquainted with the school of Tzū-ssü is found in a paragraph in Mencius' *Book* which is nearly identical with a paragraph of the *Chung Yung* (The Proper Mean) which is attributed to Tzū-ssü.

Who Mencius' immediate teacher was is very hard to ascertain. In any case, Mencius' devotion to Confucius is clearly seen from his writings. He said: "From Confucius' time until now a hundred years and more have passed. It is remote considered from the point of time, but very near at hand when considering the sage's residence. So far there is no one to transmit his doctrines. Yea, is there really no one to do so?" Mencius was much inspired by Confucius. Although he had another teacher, Confucius was the teacher in his mind.

Mencius was considered by Chao Ch'i as the man who transmitted the message of Confucius to later generations. Chao Ch'i lived in the Han Dynasty (A.D. 108-201) and was the first commentator on the *Book of Mencius*. Chao Ch'i said: "The seven books we have comprise the whole doctrine of Heaven and Earth and are examinations of thousands of topics of things which exist in the universe."<sup>3</sup> The term "Heaven and Earth"<sup>3</sup> means in ancient China "the universe." The full significance is that, when one discusses the problem of human life or ethics, one should go to the fundamentals, that is, the universe, or, in the terminology of modern Western philosophy, the metaphysical background. Chao Ch'i went on to say that Mencius discussed the subjects of *Jên* (benevolence), *I* (righteousness), *Tao* (reason), *Tê* (virtue), the nature of man, the decrees of Heaven, misery and happiness—and more brilliantly than did his disciples such as Kung-sun Ch'ou or Wan Chang. This last sentence implies that Mencius' *Book* was written by himself. Mencius' treatment of ethics goes to the fundamental question of whether human nature is good or evil; he thus touched off this controversial question. Because Mencius' *Book* covers a very wide field, we must read and interpret it in the light of modern philosophy, including ethics, logic, theory of knowledge, and metaphysics.

Han Yü, who lived in the T'ang Dynasty (768-824) and who fought against Buddhism, an influential religious school of thought at that time, discussed the line of Chinese apostolic succession as follows: "Yao [a sage king of antiquity] transmitted the *Tao* to Shun [another sage king]; Shun transmitted it to Yü, founder of the Hsia Dynasty. Yü transmitted it to the kings Wên and Wu and to the Duke of Chou. The latter three transmitted it to Confucius and the latter transmitted it to Mencius. After Mencius it was no longer transmitted."<sup>4</sup> This so-called transmission of the *Tao* does not mean that it was handed down actually from one person to the other, but that a traditional line of philosophical conviction was followed by the scholars in the different periods, in spite of new developments coming into the main current from time to time. This line was interrupted when Mencius died. No Confucian scholar after Mencius' death created any philosophical system that could be considered equal to the surviving Confucianism.

Undoubtedly Mencius was the philosopher, logician, and dialectician who exercised greater influence on later thinkers than anyone else.

## II

Mencius is the first Confucian follower who built a system based upon the doctrine of ideas. He sees reality in one's own consciousness, not in the phenomenal world. Knowl-

edge, which is necessary for virtue, does not consist in what one sees, hears, tastes, and touches, but in what comes from one's inner mind. Mencius is an idealist, but not in the Platonic sense—that a class-concept should be traced back to the realm of ideas. He sees that the ideal world is based on what ought to be, or what is right. When each man does his duty according to what ought to be, the realm of ideas can be attained. The whole system of Mencius is built upon the function of thinking and his theory of the four virtues.

As a preliminary to the study, a few words about Chinese philosophy in general may be helpful.

As Chinese characters, sentence construction, and way of presenting ideas are so different from those of the Western world, some Europeans think there are many ambiguous terms in Chinese philosophical writings. There are also shiftings in the meanings of Western philosophical terms; there is much ambiguity in Western philosophical terms as well as in Chinese. Yet the Chinese do not find it difficult to understand Western philosophy. When one really applies oneself to Chinese philosophy, and if one reads the terms carefully in their context, one can find the specific meaning or meanings. Throughout the ages, there has been a definite way of interpretation.

Another difficulty is that some Chinese present their ideas in aphorisms and not in systematic treatises. This difficulty, for Western students of Chinese philosophy, is directly attributable to the fact that students of Western Philosophy are accustomed to systematic works like those of Plato, Kant, and Hegel.

Let me use a simple analogy to point out that neither the ambiguity nor the aphorisms in Chinese philosophy should constitute a serious difficulty for Westerners. In painting, a Chinese can draw a portrait with a few strokes, and many Westerners find that these few strokes present a lively picture. If a few strokes are sufficient for a portrait, why cannot a few sentences present a complete idea? Indeed, in making a comparative study of Chinese and Western philosophy, I find some similar fundamental principles which are the foundation of both traditions.

### A. STARTING POINT: THINKING

Mencius is the first Confucian who assigned to "thinking" the vital role of philosophizing. Confucius put "thinking" and "learning" on the same level. He said: "Learning without thought is labor lost; thought without learning is perilous."<sup>5</sup> These sentences mean that, since knowledge is derived from experience and data and from what has



been discovered by others, one should learn in order to enlarge one's own field of knowledge. But by merely learning from others, one's mind may be perplexed and confused, as if there were too many threads in one hand. Confucius also admonished his pupils to think in a more profound way in order to find a system or the fundamental principles. Modifying Confucius in a specific way, Mencius emphasized thinking as the function of the mind. It is no exaggeration to say that Mencius' emphasis on thinking as the function of the mind is as important as Descartes' dictum "*Cogito ergo sum*," which is the starting point of modern Western philosophy. However, it should be pointed out that Mencius did not play such an important role in the East as Descartes did in the West. Nevertheless, if one traces the philosophy of Lu Chiu-yüan of the Sung Dynasty and that of Wang Yang-ming of the Ming Dynasty, one cannot but be persuaded that Mencius' emphasis on "thinking" is the pioneering spirit which eventually produced the idealism of China.

Mencius says: "The senses of hearing and seeing do not think, and are obscured by [external] things. When one thing comes into contact with another, as a matter of course it leads it away. To the mind belongs the office of thinking. By thinking, it gets [the right view of things]; by neglecting to think, it fails to do this. These [the senses and the mind] are what Heaven has given to us. Let a man first stand fast in [the supremacy] of the nobler part of his constitution, and the inferior part will not be able to take it from him. It is simply this which makes the great man."<sup>6</sup> Mencius said repeatedly that the mind should carry out the function of thinking, and that one should not restrict oneself to the senses, which are concerned with seeing, hearing, and tasting. He drew a line of demarcation between the senses and thinking. He maintained that, as the impressions of the external world, which stimulate our senses, change from time to time and are interpreted differently by different persons, these impressions cannot give rise to knowledge. He warned that the senses can only lead one away from the right view of things. A right view of things, he held, comes out of self-conscious virtues only. These virtues, according to him, are benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and knowledge. I want to stress that "knowledge," as contained in Mencius' group of four virtues, is a virtue because it is realized for the sake of the good. It has nothing to do with the Platonic idea of the class concept. However, Plato's philosophy of the good as the highest idea finds its counterpart in Chinese philosophy, which holds that these four virtues constitute the highest good.

According to Mencius, thinking is a self-reflection for the attainment of self-conscious virtues. This may lead us to think that Mencius completely neglects logical thinking.

This is not true. Mencius did not exclude such important items as definition and classification from his system.

This demarcation between senses and thinking is not a feature peculiar to Mencius. It is a necessary way which leads to philosophy. Plato also made this distinction. The following quotation from the *Phaedo* shows the identical views held by Mencius and the Greek philosopher:

What again shall we say of the actual acquirement of knowledge?—is the body, if invited to share in the enquiry, a hinderer or a helper? I mean to say, have sight and hearing any truth in them? Are they not, as the poets are always telling us, inaccurate witnesses? . . . And thought is best, when the mind is gathered into herself and none of these things trouble her—neither sounds nor sights nor pain nor any pleasure,—when she takes leave of the body, and has as little as possible to do with it, when she has no bodily sense or desire, but is aspiring after true being? Certainly—<sup>7</sup>

Again, Plato says:

And he attains to the purest knowledge of them who goes to each with the mind alone, not introducing or intruding in the act of thought sight or any other sense together with reason, but with the very light of the mind in her own clearness searches into the very truth of each; . . . For the body is the source of endless trouble to us by reason of the mere requirement of food; and is liable also to diseases which overtake and impede us in the search after true being: it fills us full of loves, and lusts, and fears, and fancies of all kinds, and endless foolery, and in fact, as men say, takes away from us the power of thinking at all.<sup>8</sup>

Does not the last sentence, ". . . takes away from us the power of thinking." remind us of what Mencius said of the senses leading one away from the right view of things? Indeed, the similarity is so striking that one cannot but notice it. It seems that the idea of sensations and *ratio*, constituting two sources of knowledge, was unknown in ancient China and Greece. Only during the development of modern scientific knowledge have sensations or impressions been recognized as another source of knowledge.

#### B. LOGICAL IDEAS

Among the phenomena under man's observation and examination, there are certain differentiating attributes which are common, respectively, to each of the kinds. How can these attributes be discovered? They are found in the physical world by observation and experiments, whereas ethical principles are found by religious prophets, teachers, and philosophers. Ethical principles cannot be arbitrarily made, because they must be approved by a community or by the majority of a community. Since they must be approved, there must be a basis upon which mankind can agree. The agreement is embodied in concepts, natural

laws, conventions, or institutions. With regard to moral principles, unanimous agreement cannot be reached as easily as is possible in the case of principles guiding natural phenomena. Yet some sort of an assent must be indicated when most of the members of a community observe the same moral principles.

Mencius names these two kinds of laws underlying social and natural phenomena “righteousness” and “principles.” In modern terminology, “righteousness” means laws of moral obligation, and “principles” means laws governing physical objects and social phenomena. Righteousness and principles are found, according to Mencius on the basis of common approval and common disapproval. What do the words “approval and disapproval” mean? They do not mean merely an act of approving or disapproving. They are concretized in language, sciences, or institutions, which are the basis of human society. Specifically speaking, common approval is the means of arriving at concepts.

In the following remarks Mencius constantly uses the term “kind.” This shows that he attached great importance to it:

Thus all things which are the same in kind are like to one another;—why should we doubt in regard to man, as if he were a solitary exception to this? The sage and we are the same in kind.

In accordance with this the scholar Lung said, “If a man make hempen sandals without knowing [the size of people’s] feet, [yet] I know that he will not make [them like] baskets.” Sandals are all like one another, because all men’s feet are like one another.

So with the mouth and flavors;—all mouths have the same relishes. Yi-ya [only] apprehended before me what my mouth relishes. Suppose that his mouth in his relish for flavors differed from that of other men, as is the case with dogs or horses which are not the same in kind with us, why should all men be found following Yi-ya in their relishes? In the matter of tastes the whole empire models itself after Yi-ya; that is, the mouths of all men are like one another.

And so also it is with the ear. In the matter of sounds, the whole empire models itself after the music-master K’uang; that is, the ears of all men are like one another.

And so also it is with the eye. In the case of Tsu Tu, there is no man but would recognize that he was beautiful. Any one who would not recognize the beauty of Tsu Tu must have no eyes.

Therefore I say,—Men’s mouths agree in having the same relishes; their ears agree in enjoying the same sounds; their eyes agree in recognizing the same beauty:—shall their minds alone be without that which they similarly approve? What is it, then, of which they similarly approve? It is, I say, the principles [of our nature], and the determination of righteousness. The sages only apprehended before me that of which my mind approves along with other men. Therefore the principles of our nature and the determinations of

righteousness [are] agreeable to my mind, just as the flesh of grass- and grain-fed animals is agreeable to my mouth.<sup>9</sup>

At first glance, this passage may appear as a collection of rather obvious, common-sense remarks. But when one reads it carefully as a student of philosophy, one finds that it implies the logical theories of classification, definition, and objective reference. These should be analyzed and explained.

Let me begin with substituting the word “class” for “kind.” Legge’s translation should be changed as follows: “Thus all things which are in the same ‘class’ are like to one another.” Mencius elsewhere uses the same word “class” in another context:

When a man’s finger is not like those of other people, he knows to feel dissatisfied, but if his mind be not like that of other people, he does not know to feel dissatisfaction. This is called—Ignorance of the relative [importance of things].<sup>10</sup>

What Mencius meant by this is clear. The finger, as a part of the body is not the most important part of man, whereas the mind, as the spring of thinking, is the most important. This distinction between classes—physical and spiritual—is, according to Mencius, an important issue.

The following is another illustration of Mencius’ emphasis on classification.

The unicorn as one of the quadrupeds, the phoenix as one of the birds, the Taishan as one among the mounds and ant-hills, the rivers and seas among the rain-pools, each belongs to a class. So the sages are members of the same class as the rest of mankind.<sup>11</sup>

In the paragraph quoted previously, regarding the making of sandals as different from a basket, the meaning is obvious. The sandal is a kind of footwear, while a basket is used for carrying things. Their uses put them into different classes. So the makers know what their attributes are, and do not confuse them in the making.

Indeed, the emphasis laid by Mencius on different kinds of things can be taken as an indication that the idea of a so-called Tree of Porphyry was also known in ancient China. Mencius’ concept of man as one capable of perceiving the ideas of righteousness and principles is closely akin to the definition of man as a rational animal in Western philosophy. The Tree of Porphyry, which is the basis of philosophizing, is indeed common to East and West. Even though a Chinese text-book on logic is lacking, the ideas of term, division, classification, and definition are used by Chinese scholars also.

In connection with kind or class, the common practice of dividing natural objects into inanimate things, plants,

animals, and man furnishes the basis on which a definition is formulated, for, obviously *per genus et differentiam* is nothing but a by-product of the Tree of Porphyry.

Let us now find out what is the foundation of Mencius' moral law. In the quotation given above, Mencius pointed out that men's taste, hearing, and sight are in agreement with the objects of desire. He then turned to the subject of mind, asking the rhetorical question, "... shall their minds alone be without that which they similarly approve?" The words "similarly approve" obviously embrace two processes: first, each individual makes a subjective mental act of approving; second, a group of persons give their common approval. That to which the majority of men agree is a moral law, or a reality which the mind grasps or interprets by its act of judgment. In other words, Mencius holds the view that a law of moral obligation or a law of physical phenomena is not a subjective opinion; it is judgment agreed upon by a majority of people. Indeed, when a certain idea prevails in a culture, it can be assumed that there is common assent. This common assent is the foundation of moral and natural law.

Thus logical ideas played their role in Mencius' philosophy. It has been pointed out that it is a fallacy to assert that a logical or an epistemological background is lacking in Chinese philosophy. It is true that no book like Aristotle's *Organon* existed in ancient China. Nonetheless, logical ideas were existent.

### C. MENCIUS' THEORY OF MIND

Mencius' approach to the problem of the mind is from the standpoint of values, rather than from that of facts. He, like Confucius, Mo Tzū, and Lao Tzū, was a teacher-philosopher whose writings aimed at raising the personality of his students in particular and mankind in general. Thus, he and the others used ethical studies to raise the moral life of the people of their day. They also spoke on such issues as policy-making and how a king or emperor ought to govern his country. The argument against governing for the sake of territorial expansion and war was that rulers who adhered to such policy failed to observe the principle of righteousness, or ethical values. In Mencius' time the line of demarcation between fact-finding, which is the function of the scientist, and policy-shaping, which is the work of the statesman, can hardly be expected to have existed.

Mencius' starting point is that man is a rational being. He arrived at this conclusion after classifying all objects among natural phenomena as inanimate things, plants, animals, and men. The common characteristics, or *differentiae*, upon which he based his classification are that inanimate things are materials having no life; that plants grow but

cannot move; that animals live, move, and sense, but have no moral knowledge; that men are the only living beings who can distinguish between right and wrong. Mencius says that man differs from animals only by a small margin. This "small margin" means that man has knowledge and moral sense. His emphasis on this can be seen in the following quotation:

When I say all men have a mind which cannot bear [to see the sufferings of] others, my meaning may be illustrated thus:—even nowadays, if men suddenly see a child about to fall into a well, they will without exception experience a feeling of alarm and distress. [They will feel so] not as a ground on which they may gain the favor of the child's parents, nor as a ground on which they will find the praise of their neighbors and of friends, nor from a dislike to the reputation of [having been unmoved by] such a thing.

From this case we may perceive that the feeling of commiseration is essential to man, that the feeling of shame and dislike . . . modesty and complaisance is essential to man, and that the feeling of approving and disapproving is essential to man.

This feeling of commiseration is the principle of benevolence. The feeling of shame and dislike is the principle of righteousness. The feeling of modesty and complaisance is the principle of propriety. The feeling of approving and disapproving is the principle of knowledge.

Men have these four principles just as they have their four limbs. When men, having these four principles, yet say of themselves that they cannot [develop them], they play the thief with themselves, and he who says of his prince that he cannot [develop them], plays the thief with his prince.

Since all men have these four principles in themselves, let them know to give all their development and completion, and the issue will be like that of a fire which has begun to burn, or that of a spring, which has begun to find vent. Let them have their complete development, and they will suffice to love and protect all within the four seas. Let them be denied that development, and they will not suffice for a man to serve his parents with.<sup>12</sup>

If we follow the Chinese text literally, we will see that Mencius' presentation of the idea of man as a rational being is written in strong language. Thus, the first few sentences of the above quotation can be rendered into English exactly as: "Without the feeling of commiseration, he is not a man; without the feeling of shame and dislike, he is not a man; without the feeling of modesty, he is not a man; without the feeling of approving and disapproving, he is not a man." These sentences leave no doubt in the reader's mind of what Mencius considers as a man's essential qualities *qua* man. Elsewhere Mencius repeats the same idea in a slightly different form:

The feeling of commiseration belongs to all men; so does that of shame and dislike; and that of reverence and

respect; and that of approving and disapproving. The feeling of commiseration [implies the principle of] benevolence; that of shame and dislike, the principle of righteousness; that of reverence and respect, the principle of propriety; that of approving and disapproving, the principle of knowledge. Benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and knowledge are not infused into us from without. We are certainly furnished with them. [And a different view] is simply from want of reflection. Hence it is said: "Seek and you will find them. Neglect and you will lose them"—men differ from one another in regard to them;—some as much again as others, some five times as much, and some to an incalculable amount:—it is because they cannot carry out fully their [natural] powers.<sup>13</sup>

These quotations clearly show that Mencius does not study man as a biological or sociological being, but as a moral being.

Tai Chên, a philologist and philosopher of the middle of the Manchu Dynasty, did not agree with Mencius' rigoristic way of looking at man as purely a rational being. In his study of man, he included desires, emotions, and instincts. He gave emphasis to Mencius' words about men's taste, hearing, and sight, followed by the rhetorical question in regard to the mind:

[Men's] mouths agree in having the same relishes; their ears agree in enjoying the same sounds; their eyes agree in recognizing the same beauty;—shall their minds alone be without that which they similarly approve?<sup>14</sup>

Tai Chên, in interpreting this paragraph, maintains that Mencius places the mind on the same level as the senses.

This, however, is not so if one reads Mencius' writings carefully. We should see that Mencius laid more stress on the rightness or wrongness of an act, on what ought to be, or on the invisible spring of will or motive. There is a great similarity between his theory and Kant's Categorical Imperative—what is right in the will is good. In his insistence on what is good in the will, he was opposed to utilitarianism, or the theory that what is useful is right, as Mo Tzū advocated. He saw what is good as being in the will, so he disregarded what is advantageous or profitable in the consequences. The well-known quotation from Mencius (cited above) about the observers' alarm and distress when they see a child about to fall into a well is incontrovertible evidence that Mencius' emphasis is on the moral feeling which prompts men's actions. Why, then, does one save a child from falling into the water? One does so because one has a natural feeling for what one ought to do. This moral feeling, as it is described, is also akin to what was held by the British moralists of the seventeenth century, and to what is held today by A. C. Ewing.<sup>15</sup>

Mencius further maintains that conscience is the well-spring whence certain rules or dictates of duty arise, and

which enables one to distinguish the right from the wrong. He says:

The ability, possessed by men without having been acquired by learning is their intuitive ability [*liang-nêng*], and the knowledge possessed by them without the exercise of thought is their intuitive knowledge [*liang-chih*].

Children carried in the arms all know to love their parents, and when they are grown [a little], they all know to love their elder brothers.

Filial affection for parents is [the working of] benevolence. Respect for elders is [the working of] righteousness. There is no other reason [for these feelings];—they belong to all under heaven.<sup>16</sup>

The question as to whether intuition alone is sufficient or whether knowledge and experience are necessary in order to distinguish right and wrong is controversial in Chinese philosophy as in Western philosophy. Philosophers such as Chu Hsi and others hold that the dictates of conscience alone are not sufficient and experience and learning must supplement it. Wang Yang-ming, on the other hand, believes that intuitive knowledge provides a criterion of right and wrong. Wang says:

*Liang-chih* is what is intelligent, clear, and distinct in the sense of Heavenly reason.<sup>17</sup>

*Liang-chih*, whether of an ordinary man or of a sage, is the same.<sup>18</sup>

*Liang-chih* is as bright as a mirror. Nothing that is reflected in it can escape it.<sup>19</sup>

Wang says in a letter to Lu Yüan-ching:

*Liang-chih* exists always. If you do not take care to preserve it, you will lose it. In itself it is bright and clear, despite ignorance and blindness. If you do not know enough to keep it clean, it will become beclouded, but though it may thus be clouded for a long time, it nonetheless is essentially brilliant, limpid, and distinct.<sup>20</sup>

Whether Mencius and Wang are in agreement when they speak of *liang-chih* is a problem. Wang's theory that the mind is reason differs somewhat in nuance of meaning from Mencius' theory of intuitive knowledge, which is possessed by men without the exercise of thought. If Mencius' theory is to mean that judgment on right or wrong is *a priori* and immediate without depending upon outside knowledge, it is different from Wang's stress on reason.

Nevertheless, intuitionism is a common background for Mencius, Lu Chiu-yüan, and Wang Yang-ming. They all uphold the intuitive faculty and maintain that no supplementary knowledge is necessary in order to know what ought to be, or what is right or wrong.

This discussion between the intuitionists and the empiricists or utilitarians is not found only in ancient China. It

continues now in England where the tradition of empiricism is deeply rooted. Such is the controversy between Prichard and A. C. Ewing, the intuitionists, on the one hand, and Moore, the utilitarian, on the other. This illustrates the fact that such problems are indeed perennial and common to the philosophy of the East and the West. A re-examination of Mencius' theory may be a contribution to the better understanding of ethical principles both in the East and in the West.

## Notes

1. James Legge, *The Life and Works of Mencius* (London: Trübner & Co., 1875), p. 16.
2. *Book of Mencius*, Bk. IV, Part II, Chap. XXII, in James Legge, trans., *The Four Books* (Shanghai: The Chinese Book Company, n.d.), p. 261.
3. Chao Chi, *Mêng-tsu-Chêng-I*, Book I (Shanghai: Chung-hua Book Company, 1936), p. 7.
4. This eulogy of Han Yü is to be found in his essay "Yuan Tao" ("Inquiry of Tao").
5. Confucius, *Analects*, Bk. II, Chap. XV, in James Legge, trans., *The Four Books* (Shanghai: The Chinese Book Company, n.d.), p. 748.
6. *Book of Mencius*, Bk. VI, Pt. I, Chap. XV.2, *ibid.*, pp. 884-885.
7. *Phaedo* in B. Jowett, *The Works of Plato*, Vol. II (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), pp. 203-204.
8. *Phaedo*, in *ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 205.
9. *Mencius*, Bk. VI, Pt. I, Chap. VII, in Legge, *op. cit.*, pp. 865-868.
10. *Ibid.*, Bk. VI, Pt. I, Chap. XII.2, p. 880.
11. *Ibid.*, Bk. II, Pt. I, Chap. II.28. The translation, this writer's own, appears to be clearer than Legge's (*op. cit.*, p. 539).
12. *Ibid.*, Bk. II, Pt. I, Chap. VI.3-5, pp. 549-552.
13. *Ibid.*, Bk. VI, Pt. I, Chap. VI.7, pp. 861-862.
14. *Ibid.*, Bk. VI, Pt. II, Chap. VII.8, p. 867.
15. *The Definition of the Good* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1947).
16. *Mencius*, Bk. VII, Pt. I, Chap. XV.1-3, in Legge, *op. cit.*, pp. 943-944.
17. Wang Yang-ming, *Ch'uan Hsi-lu* ("Collected Works"), Ssu-pu pei-yao ed. (Chung-hua: Chung-hua Book Co., n.d.), Bk. II, p. 24.

18. *Ibid.*, Bk. II, p. i, "Letter to Lu Yuan-ching."

19. *Ibid.*, Bk. II, p. 26.

20. *Ibid.*, Bk. II, p. 17.

## Kung-chuan Hsiao (essay date 1979)

SOURCE: Hsiao, Kung-chuan. "Mencius and Hsün Tzu." *A History of Chinese Political Thought. Volume One: From the Beginnings to the Sixth Century A.D.*, by Hsiao, translated by F. W. Mote, Princeton UP, 1979, pp. 143-213.

[In the following essay, Hsiao details Mencius's and Hsün Tzu's roles in expanding Confucian theories. Chinese characters originally in this essay have been silently removed.]

## SECTION ONE

## THE LIVES AND THE TIMES OF MENCIUS AND HSÜN TZU

The *Analects* records that Confucius' teachings were of four divisions [or subject-classes]<sup>1</sup> and the *Han Fei Tzu* states that "the *ju* learning had divided into eight branches"; the *Shih Chi* also has said that the Confucian school "had seventy-seven followers who received his instruction and became deeply versed in it."<sup>2</sup> Something of the flourishing condition of the Confucian thought and learning can be learned from these statements. However, not everyone who underwent training in consequence of which he was able to find employment in government necessarily also founded an independent line of teachings that could become prominent in its own right, and even those who did write books or establish their own theories were not all successful in having these transmitted to later ages. Among Confucius' later followers, of those whose political thought merits consideration as a distinct intellectual position and for which there are documentary remains that attest it, we have only the two figures, Mencius and Hsün Tzu.<sup>3</sup>

Mencius and Hsün Tzu both were transmitters of the Confucian teachings. Because the historical environments in which they found themselves were different from that of Confucius, the content of their thought also evidences some slight changes and differences. Confucius lived in the last years of the Spring and Autumn Era; Mencius and Hsün Tzu lived in the later part of the Warring States Period. The institutions and the values of the feudal world in the former time still partially existed, had not yet wholly vanished; but by the latter age they had been eradicated without leaving any lingering traces. The *Shih Chi* writes, of the background of Mencius' times: "During this time, the State of Ch'in, employing Lord Shang

[eminent proponent of Legalist theories and methods; see below, Chapter Seven], enriched the state and strengthened its military power. The States of Ch'u and Wei employing Wu Ch'i" [professional minister who served both states, emphasizing laws and strict methods; see below, footnote 104], defeated their weaker neighbors in warfare. Kings Wei and Hsüan in the State of Ch'i, employed the followers of Sun Tzu and T'ien Chi [military theorists and strategists], and all the feudal princes looked eastward to pay court to Ch'i. The whole world was concerned primarily with joining the vertical alliance or associating with the horizontal alliance, regarding attacks and field campaigns as the most worthy undertakings. Yet Mencius was setting forth the virtues of the Sage Emperors Yao and Shun and of the Three Dynasties of Antiquity. Thus it was that he could not get along with the persons [in power] whom he encountered, so he retired and, with men like Wan Chang, devoted himself to explaining the *Odes* and *Documents*, and setting forth the ideas of Confucius; and thus he wrote the *Mencius* in seven books."<sup>4</sup>

Hsün Tzu's environment was similar to this. The difference between the two lay simply in the fact that the earlier rivalry between Ch'i and Chin for seizure of dominant power among the states had given way by the later time to one in which Chao had displaced the power of Ch'i, and Ch'in had developed even greater strength and influence, preparing for the time, now near at hand, when it would annex the other six states. [This sentence is somewhat paraphrased in translation.] The precise dates of the birth and death of both Mencius and Hsün Tzu still remain unverified today. The events of their lives, too, have been preserved only in bare outline.

Meng K'o [Mencius is a latinization based on his surname, Meng; his given name is K'o, also spelled K'e] was a man of the State of Tsou, who studied under a follower of Tzu-ssu, [i.e., K'ung Chi, Confucius' grandson, and one of the principal transmitters of the Confucian teachings]. If we accept the findings of yeh in his *Meng Tzu ssu k'ao*, Mencius was born in the Seventeenth year of King Ai [of Chou] and died in the Twelfth or the Thirteenth year of King Nan [the last Chou King].<sup>5</sup> Throughout his whole life he travelled to the States of Sung, Hsüeh, T'eng, Lu, Liang [Wei], and Ch'i, his reputation ever growing, and his way of life ever more opulent. "The carriages in his train numbered several dozens, and his followers numbered several hundred, as he travelled about living off one after another of the feudal princes." [Cf. *Mencius*, III/ii/4; Legge, pp. 269-70.] Not only Yen Hui and Yuan Hsien [two of Confucius' best disciples, noted both for their retiring behavior and for their poverty] would not have been able [to approach close enough] so much as to glimpse him; even Confucius with

his single cart drawn by two horses presented an appearance that is by no means in a class with Mencius. P'eng Keng wondered if Mencius were not too extravagant;<sup>6</sup> and this doubt was in truth not without some ground. However, though Mencius' fame grew to great proportions, his actual accomplishments in government were quite meager. During the reign of King Hsüan he served as a minister [*ch'ing*] in the State of Ch'i, receiving an emolument as great as ten thousand *chung*,<sup>7</sup> far greater in its prestige and prominence than the office of Minister of Crime in Lu that Confucius held. [The interpretation of this amount is difficult; see note in Legge, *Mencius*, "Prolegomena," p. 28.] Yet in the end his doctrines of benevolence and righteousness were unavailing; they did not change the current emphasis on strengthening and enriching the state. After a short time he resigned his office and left Ch'i, and thereafter probably never again held office.

Hsün K'uang's courtesy name was Ch'ing. He was a man of the State of Chao. Wang Chung [1745-1794] has concluded that Hsün Tzu lived roughly between the Seventeenth year of King Nan and the Ninth year of the First Emperor<sup>8</sup> [298-238 B.C.], which seems to be close to the truth. As a youth, he went to study at Chi-hsia [the great academy maintained by the Dukes of Ch'i], and on one occasion discussed the problem of safety and danger in international affairs with the chief minister of Ch'i.<sup>9</sup> Finding no employment at the court of Ch'i, however, he left during the reign of King Min [312-282 B.C.] of Ch'i and went to the State of Ch'u, where he became the magistrate of Lan-ling.<sup>10</sup> In addition he appears to have visited the State of Yen, where he failed to be appointed to office.<sup>11</sup> During the reign of King Hsiang [281-264 B.C.], he again lived for a time in Ch'i, and at Chi-hsia "was the most eminent senior teacher."<sup>12</sup> After that he again left Ch'i, visited the State of Ch'in, and returned to his native Chao. While in Ch'in he replied to King Chao's question about the usefulness of the Confucian teachings, and discussed the political measures of Ch'in with the Marquis of Ying, on which occasions he greatly stressed the doctrines of filial and fraternal submission, of righteousness and of good faith.<sup>13</sup> [The Marquis of Ying was the title borne by the political strategist Fan Chü, also read Fan Sui, who served as Chief Minister, *hsiang*, in the State of Ch'in at this time.] In the State of Chao he held the office of Chief Minister [*shang ch'ing*], and joined with the Lord of Lin-wu in submitting proposals on military affairs to King Hsiao-ch'eng.<sup>14</sup> If the *Shih Chi* is reliable in recording that his death and burial both took place at Lan-ling, then it would seem that, in his last years, he must have again taken up residence in Ch'u.

No more than twenty or thirty years after Hsün Tzu's death, the First Emperor completed his unification of the

empire.<sup>15</sup> Although the doctrines to which Hsün Tzu adhered all his life were not always in complete conformity with those of Confucius and Mencius, nonetheless, from the evidence of them, and that of his desire to employ the teachings about the rites and righteousness with which to modify the methods of government, removing their use of brute force and deceit, and in his insistent drumming away at the theme, consistently maintaining his principles, he is quite worthy of being regarded as a forceful contributor to the later Confucian school. Yet Hsün Tzu lived just on the eve of the establishment of the authoritarian empire. He travelled about through all the states during his entire life, from early manhood to old age. "The rulers were kept apart and would not be seen; worthy men were estranged and not granted office."<sup>16</sup> He was not so successful as were his followers Han Fei and Li Ssu in having his doctrines carried out,<sup>17</sup> or in serving in a chief ministerial position. So, in the frustrating circumstances that beset his life, he was no different from Confucius and Mencius.

## SECTION TWO

### THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PEOPLE

Confucius centered his discussions of government on benevolence or *jen* as its primary element. Mencius accepted this doctrine and further developed it into his theories of "the benevolent mind" *jen hsin* and "benevolent government" *jen cheng*, which he subsequently worked out fully and in great detail. The point of origin of the benevolent mind is in the fundamental goodness of human nature. Mencius believed that the four virtues—benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom—all came into being as extensions and developments of every human being's innate sense of commiseration, of shame, of respect, and of right and wrong.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, "All men can be Yaos and Shuns,"<sup>19</sup> and the benevolent mind is something common to all men.<sup>20</sup> Sages and worthies are different from other men in their ability to nourish and expand the goodness of their original natures. The superior man differs from the small and mean man in his ability to enlarge the scope of that which he "cannot endure" [*pu jen*, "cannot endure the sufferings of others"; "compassion"]. When the benevolent mind develops and manifests itself in actions, that becomes "the realization in deeds of one's kindness of heart."<sup>21</sup> A benevolent government is one that, by applying the mind that cannot bear [the sufferings of others], succeeds in realizing in deeds that kindness of the heart. On a smaller scale it can be achieved in one state; on a larger scale it can extend throughout the world. It commences in being affectionate to one's parents, and reaches its limits in being kind to creatures.<sup>22</sup> All of these pronouncements are in fact based squarely on Confucius. They are more detailed in

their expression, but in no sense do they differ in their basic meaning.

The benevolent government must have its concrete forms through which to be practiced. Mencius' statements on this would all seem to be more or less summed up under the headings: to teach and to nourish. Moreover, his theory of nurturing the people is especially penetrating, and quite precisely delineated; there is nothing comparable to it in all the pre-Ch'in philosophies [i.e., in all the philosophies of the Golden Age of Chinese philosophy, sixth to third centuries B.C., prior to the unification of the Empire under the Ch'in dynasty in 221 B.C.]. Throughout the Seven Books of the *Mencius*, Mencius focuses his concern on enriching the people's livelihood, decreasing taxes and imposts, bringing wars to an end, and correcting boundaries.<sup>23</sup> In addition to these, Mencius also proposed the idea that [the ruler] should "let the people share the same pleasures as his own." His reply to the question put to him in the Snow Palace by King Hsüan of Ch'i was: "When a ruler rejoices in the joy of his people, they also rejoice in his joy; when he grieves in the sorrow of his people, they also grieve at his sorrow. A common bond of joy will pervade the kingdom; a common bond of sorrow will do the same."<sup>24</sup> His meaning is set forth here with remarkable clarity and aptness, profound and far-reaching in its import; nothing Confucius ever said, in fact, matches it. To eat well and live in comfort and peace are things that all men enjoy. People would not live in earth-floored huts and under straw roofs unless compelled to do so; since that would be contrary to human nature, it definitely should not be done. [Mo Tzu and other early writers ascribe such austerities to Yao and other sages of antiquity.] But if the ruler were capable of applying the governmental technique of carrying out in deeds the kindness of one's heart, the whole nation would overflow with joy and the ultimate limits of benevolent government could be achieved.

Mencius, placing so much stress on the people's livelihood, consequently was extremely harsh in condemning the princes and ministers of his own time who were guilty of the failure to nourish the people fully, never willing to forgive them on this count. For example, he condemned King Hui of Liang, saying that he was guilty of "leading on beasts to devour the people"; and to Duke Mu of Tsou he said that "the superiors in your State have been negligent, and cruel to their inferiors." He denounced those given to warfare, saying that they should "suffer the highest punishment," and he accused the promoters of the policies of strengthening and enriching the state of being what the ancients called "robbers of the people."<sup>25</sup> The *Documents* contains the phrase: "The people are the root of a country"<sup>26</sup> [the following line is: "The root firm, the country is tranquil," Legge,

p. 158]; certainly Mencius was the one who most ably expounded and illuminated the significance of this concept.

On the essentials of his concept of nourishing the people, Mencius tirelessly reiterated and expanded his views. But he usually treated the subject of teaching the people as something subsidiary to it, and set that forth only in its larger outlines. Therefore, replying to King Hui of Liang's question about how to wipe out the disgrace of Chin [i.e. Liang] having been defeated, Mencius said: "being sparing in the use of punishments and fines, and making the taxes and levies light, so causing that the fields shall be plowed deep, and the weeding of them be carefully attended to, and that the strong-bodied, during their days of leisure, shall cultivate their filial piety, fraternal respectfulness, sincerity and truthfulness, serving thereby at home their fathers and elder brothers, and abroad their elders and superiors. . . ."27 [If he did thus, Mencius assured the king, his people, without proper arms, would be more than a match for the legions of enemy states.] When Duke Wen of T'eng asked him about the proper way of governing a country, after discussing landholding, taxes, and imposts, Mencius said to him: "Establish *hsiang*, *hsü*, *hsüeh* and *hsiao* [four traditional categories of schools; see above, Chapter Two, p. 184] for the instruction of the people," and "The object of them all is to illustrate the human relations."<sup>28</sup> Discussions of the meaning of education throughout the whole Seven Books of the *Mencius* go no further than just this. Compared with Confucius' attitude that good faith [between ruler and people] is fundamental, while food is merely the last item in importance, we see here a very apparent discrepancy in emphasis. [This refers to the ranking, in their importance to the well-being of the state, of faith, weapons, and food; see *Analects*, xii/7, and Chapter Two above, note 64.]

Seeking an explanation of this, one encounters two facts that seem to be relevant: First, Mencius appears to have been heavily influenced by the idea that only when food and clothing are adequately supplied can one meaningfully maintain distinctions between honor and disgrace [This alludes to a passage in the *Kuan Tzu*, I, "Mu Min," which has been translated: "When garment and food suffice for their needs, they will distinguish between honor and shame." Lewis Maverick, *The Kuan-Tzu*, p. 31], recognizing therein that an abundant material life is a prerequisite condition for morality. Thus he said: "The Way [i.e., *Tao*, which here might also be translated "ethical orientation"] of the people is this:—if they have a constant livelihood, they will have constant hearts; if they have not a constant livelihood, they have not constant hearts. If they have not constant hearts, there is nothing they will not do in the way of self-abandonment, of moral deflection, of depravity, and

of wild license." He also said: "... an intelligent ruler will regulate the livelihood of the people, so as to make sure that, for those above them, they shall have sufficient wherewith to serve their parents, and, for those below them, sufficient wherewith to support their wives and children; that in good years they shall always be abundantly satisfied and in bad years they shall escape the danger of perishing. After this he may urge them, and they will proceed to what is good, for in this case the people will follow after with ease. Nowadays the livelihood of the people is so regulated, that, above, they have not sufficient wherewith to serve their parents, and, below, they have not sufficient wherewith to support their wives and children. Notwithstanding good years, their lives are continually embittered, and, in bad years, they do not escape perishing. In such circumstances they only try to save themselves from death, and are afraid they will not succeed. What leisure have they to cultivate propriety and righteousness?"<sup>29</sup>

Second, Mencius once said: "... never was there a time when the sufferings of the people from tyrannical government were more intense than the present."<sup>30</sup> We may refer to the slaughter of populations in warfare as one proof of his statement. The "Liu kuo piao" or "Table of Events in the Period of the Warring States," *ch.* 15, in the *Shih Chi* records that, in the Fifth year of King Hsien [363 B.C.] at the battle between the forces of Ch'in and Wei at Shih-men, sixty thousand heads were taken; in the Fourth year of King Shen-ching [316 B.C.] when Ch'in defeated Chao and Han, eighty thousand heads were taken; in the Third year of King Nan [311 B.C.] when Ch'in attacked the armies of Ch'u, eighty thousand heads were taken; and in the Eighth year [306 B.C.] when Ch'in captured the stronghold at Yi-yang, eighty thousand heads were taken. All these events took place during Mencius' lifetime.<sup>31</sup> Although the numbers of heads cut off may not be entirely reliable, yet when compared with the accounts of warfare in the Spring and Autumn Period as the *Tso Chuan* records them, one truly has the feeling that the earlier age was better than this one. So Mencius said: "When contentions about territory are the ground on which they fight, they slaughter men until the fields are filled with them. When some struggle for a city is the ground on which they fight, they slaughter men until the city is filled with them."<sup>32</sup> And indeed, these words are neither forced nor without foundation in fact. Mencius, appealing to the compassion of the human heart, wanted to overcome the faults of the tyrannical government of his time. Thus he repeatedly directed his remarks to the distress of the common people, and from this produced his theory of the need to "protect the people," *pao min*. In this he was undoubtedly much affected by the influences of his own age; it does not signify in him any conscious desire on his part to alter the teachings of Confucius.



We can go a step further and say that, although Mencius was stimulated by his historical environment to advocate policies of regulating agricultural production to assure abundance for the people,<sup>33</sup> he made no compromise with the prevailing current of the time that would have led him to accept its utilitarianism [*kung-li*]. For, proceeding from his theory of the basic goodness of human nature, Mencius was not merely concerned with the results of actions; he also stressed simultaneously their motivation. Thus on his first meeting with King Hui of Liang, he said: "Why must your Majesty use that word 'profit' [*li*]?" And when he heard that Sung K'eng hoped to dissuade the rulers of Ch'in and Ch'u from going to war on the grounds that it would be unprofitable to them to do so, Mencius was quick to reply: "Master [your aim is great], but your argument is not good."<sup>34</sup> [Sung K'eng was a philosopher of the time whose ideas seem somewhat Mohist; see below, Chapter Four, Section Seven.] Indeed, profiting the country should be an urgent duty, and forestalling a war is a most noble activity. In terms of the results, the ideas of enriching the people and stopping wars, ideas about which Mencius customarily talked so much, were not far removed from the objectives of King Hui of Liang and Sung K'eng. Yet Mencius condemned both of them because both talked about the "profit" of their proposed actions. Their policies did not spring from the compassion of the benevolent mind, but rather contributed to cold-blooded selfishness. When this fault is extended to its limits, it must bring about the ruler's selfishness with respect to his own state, the individual's selfishness with respect to his own person, and a struggle between those above and those below for selfish advantage, to the peril of the nation. If, on the other hand, one pursues the opposite course to achieve the same ends [of benefiting the state and ending wars], applying the mind that cannot bear the sufferings of others to devising a compassionate way of governing, then one gains benefits without having sought profit for its own sake.<sup>35</sup> When this is compared with the conscious pursuit of profit, which can only bring about its opposite through the harmful consequences that must ensue, the relative merits of the two courses are incommensurable.

Since nourishing the people is to be regarded as the first principle of government, Mencius had only to proceed one step further to arrive at his theory of the importance of the people [*min kuei lun*]. We must take note of the facts that during Mencius' lifetime the state of Wei and Ch'i were contesting for the role of hegemon, while the power of the State of Ch'in was just beginning to wax great. [*Pa*, or "hegemon," is often somewhat more formally translated "Lord Protector," or, in Legge, "Presiding chief," and "chief among the Princes."] The state was becoming stron-

ger and the ruler more majestic; the first buds of authoritarianism were beginning to put forth leaves. The followers of Lord Shang and of Shen Pu-hai were just coming into positions as chief ministers of state, and were vigorously promoting theories of the necessity for heavy regulations [over the people] and increased dignity of the ruler. The prevailing current of the time certainly favored augmenting the importance of the ruler and diminishing that of the people. Yet Mencius forcefully countered all the other opinions, and openly proclaimed to the world: "The people are the most important element in a nation; the spirits of the land and grain are next; the sovereign is the lightest. Therefore to gain the peasantry is the way to become sovereign [*T'ien-tzu*, "The Son of Heaven"]; to gain the sovereign is the way to become a Prince of a State [*chu-hou*, a feudal lord]; to gain the Prince of a State is the way to become a Great Officer. When a Prince endangers the altars of the spirits of the land and grain, he is changed, and another is appointed in his place. [The "Spirits of the land and grain," *she-chi*, were symbolic of the national survival.] When the sacrificial victims have been perfect, the millet in its vessels all pure, and the sacrifices offered at their proper seasons, if yet there ensue drought, or the waters overflow, the spirits of the land and grain are changed, and others appointed in their place."<sup>36</sup> Here the ruler is seen as gaining his position from the peasantry, and the feudal princes as well as the altars of the state as subject to removal and replacement. The only thing in a state that continues forever and that cannot be moved or displaced is the people. Herein Mencius looks upon the people not only as the objective toward which government is directed, but also as the chief element of the state.

Such ideas expressed by him were not only beyond the comprehension of the average person of his own time; they were also beyond anything that Confucius had set forth in his discourses. For, according to Confucius, "The people may be made to follow a path of action, but they may not be made to understand it."<sup>37</sup> His statement implies a certain slighting of the importance of the people. Moreover, Confucius' ideal was that of the ruler who carries benevolence into practice, from the nearer first, and ultimately extends it also to those far away; that further tends toward the acceptance of the ruler and the people as one entity. Mencius first hints at the idea of the ruler and the people being in opposition, and makes most explicit the view that the people are the masters and the ruler is their servant, and that the people were the essence [*t'i*] and the state merely the function [*yung*].

The *Mencius* states this in the clearest possible terms, for example: "Mencius said to King Hsüan of Ch'i, 'Suppose that one of your majesty's ministers were to entrust his wife

and children to the care of his friend, while he himself went into Ch'u to travel, and that, on his return, he should find that the friend had let his wife and children suffer from cold and hunger;—how ought he to deal with him?' The King said, 'He should cast him off.' Mencius proceeded, 'Suppose that the chief criminal judge could not regulate the officers under him, how would you deal with him?' The King said, 'Dismiss him.' Mencius again said, 'If within the four borders of your kingdom there is not good government, what is to be done?' The King looked to the right and left, and spoke of other matters." This clearly implies that the ruler has duties of his office similar to those of all the other officials of state, and that those who fail in these duties should be dismissed.<sup>38</sup> And, again, Mencius replied to King Hsüan of Ch'i's question about King T'ang's having driven out the tyrant Chieh and King Wu's having punished the tyrant Chou, saying: "He who outrages the benevolence proper to his nature is called a robber; he who outrages righteousness is called a ruffian. The robber and the ruffian we call a mere fellow. I have heard of the cutting off of the fellow Chou, but I have not heard of the putting a sovereign to death, in his case."<sup>39</sup> [His examples refer to the military campaigns that led to the downfall of the Hsia and Shang dynasties, and their displacement by the Shang and Chou dynasties; in these cases the tyrant last rulers were deposed, banished, or killed.] This clearly expresses the view that it is proper to kill a tyrannical ruler.

Mencius regarded the people as important; hence he attached extreme importance to the people's opinions, and felt that the people's acceptance or repudiation should be the ultimate standard for determining a change of political power, or the adoption or abandonment of any item of governmental policy. To gain the peasantry is the way to become a sovereign, and those who lose the people's hearts lose thereby the empire.<sup>40</sup> Yao, Shun, Yü, and T'ang, in gaining the empire did so variously—through the succession being decided by merit, or through the succession passing to the son and heir, or through abdicating voluntarily in favor of a chosen successor, or through military force and punishment of the former ruler. In all these cases, though "granted by Heaven" the succession in fact depended on "the people's voluntary acceptance."<sup>41</sup>

To explain this in modern terminology, we should say Mencius believed that the ultimate sovereignty lay with the people. Therefore, not solely in times of dynastic changeover could the people indicate the choice of a successor by resisting or accepting him, but also in ordinary times the major policies of government should reflect popular opinion. For example, Mencius admonished King Hsüan of Ch'i, when he sought to depart from procedures

and promote men on the basis of talent and virtue [regardless of social rank], "When all the people say, 'This is a man of talents and virtue' . . ." then only should he examine further into the case, and [if appropriate,] appoint him. And in deciding criminal cases, it must be a case of: "When the people all say, 'This man deserves death,' . . . only then can he examine the case further and [if necessary] put him to death."<sup>42</sup> This kind of government by "Consulting the grass and firewood-gatherers" [an expression used by a Great Officer of early Chou times, in the Ode "Pan," *Shih Ching*, "Ta-ya," Legge, pp. 499-504, where it is described as "a saying of the ancients" about the proper conduct of government; hence it tends to lend support to the view that the Mencian theory of government had ancient precedents], although perhaps a heritage from antiquity<sup>43</sup> and not something invented by Mencius, is nonetheless something that was developed and proclaimed abroad only by Mencius.

In addition, Mencius, in placing authority with the people, thereby recognized that the government had the absolute duty of nourishing the people and maintaining peace and stability in the country, while the people did not have any absolute duty of obedience to the government. If the government should fail in its responsibilities, then the people need not be loyal to it. Mencius replied to the question of Duke Mu of Tsou: "The superiors in your State have been negligent, and cruel to their inferiors"; in this situation the people could "pay him back" by not loving their ruler and superiors and not dying for their officers. "What proceeds [from you,] will return to you again";<sup>44</sup> injury will be recompensed by injury. ["Injury," *yüan*, is Legge's translation of the word in the famous passage, *Analecets*, xiv/36, see Legge, p. 288; Waley, p. 189, translates it "resentment."] The ruler's relation to the people becomes in the last analysis one of equality. [That is, possessing the right to respond in kind to the ruler's treatment of themselves, the people stand, in this way, on the same footing with him.]

The doctrine that it is the people who are important and the ruler unimportant, it should be noted, was in fact already established before the time of Mencius. There are, for example, instances like that of Chi Liang [in the year 705 B.C.], who stopped the Marquis of Sui from pursuing the armies of Ch'u [and included in his arguments the] comment: "When the ruler thinks only of benefiting the people, that is loyal loving of them." Or the occasion when Duke Wen of Chu consulted the oracle about changing his capital to the city of Yi, remarking: "My appointment [from heaven to be Duke of Chu] is for the nourishing of the people." And there is that incident in which the Musicmaster K'uang was

asked by the Marquis of Chin [in 558 B.C.] if the people of Wei had not done a bad thing in expelling their ruler, and he replied: "Now, the ruler is the host of the spirits, and the hope of the people. If he make the life of the people to be straitened, and the spirits to want their sacrifices, then the hope of the people is cut off, and the altars are without a host;—of what use is he, and what should they do but send him away?"<sup>45</sup> And similarly, P'an-keng proclaimed to the people of Yin "... of old time my royal predecessors cherished every one and above everything a respectful care of the people..."<sup>46</sup> [P'an-keng was a king of Yin traditionally said to have reigned in the middle of the fourteenth century B.C.], and the passage in the "Great Declaration," the "T'ai-shih," about heaven seeing and hearing as the people see and hear puts the origins of this concept still farther back into antiquity. [The *Documents* "T'ai-shih," part ii, 7; Legge, p. 292; the "T'ai-shih" dates from the earliest years of Chou history.] However, despite Confucius' sage-like stature, he had expressed such ideas as "the people may be made to follow" and "there will be no discussions [of government policy] among the common people."<sup>47</sup>

From this, it is clearly evident, the ancient concept that the people were of primary importance had, by Mencius' time, long since been submerged and lost sight of, and had virtually ceased to be a continuing element of current learning. Mencius' contribution lay not in having created this doctrine through his own original intellectual activity, but in having again brought into prominence a doctrine that had dropped out of sight, and having done so in the late Chou era of dictatorial rulers and tyrannical governments. In consequence of this, Mencius' political thought became for all future time the protest directed precisely against the evils of tyranny. Although the conditions of his age prevented his thought from having been accepted and practiced by the rulers of his own time, throughout the succeeding two thousand years, every time conditions deteriorated and the age became disorderly and violent, Mencius' ideas experienced a new revival, in a kind of mutual interplay with the anarchist thought of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu. Hence, in terms of his influence, the Confucian learning of Mencius was not merely distinct in some ways from that of Hsün Tzu, but also was quite different in certain respects from the teachings of Confucius himself. This is because Mencius adopted the point of view of the people in discussing government, whereas Confucius and Hsün Tzu tended more toward the viewpoint of the sovereign.

Nonetheless, Mencius' theory of the importance of the people differed from modern democracy; the two should not be confused. In simplest terms, democratic thought must contain all the three concepts of "for the people,"

"of the people," and "by the people." For, not only must the people be the objective toward which government is directed, and the chief element of the state, but they must also necessarily have the right voluntarily to participate in the authority of government. Weighed in this balance, Mencius' "importance of the people" merely commences with the idea of "for the people," and proceeds toward that of "of the people." Both the principle of "by the people," and the institutions necessary to it, were things of which he had never heard. Therefore, in the thought of Mencius, the opinion of the people was capable only of passive manifestation, while the political authority was to be wholly exercised by the class that "worked with their minds." It was necessary to wait for heaven's agent to appear before the tyrannical sovereign could be punished.<sup>48</sup> Thus the people, other than adopting the passive resistance as expressed in not loving their ruler and superiors and not dying for their officers, had no further right to overthrow tyrannous government through rebellious action. All these aspects of Mencius' thought reflect the limitations imposed by the contemporary environment. When we note that in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries theories favoring violent death to tyrants were still rampant,<sup>49</sup> and that not until the eighteenth century and later did the theory and the institutions of popular rule begin to be developed and become widespread, then we can look back at Mencius, who advocated the importance of the people and the relative insignificance of the ruler already in the fourth century B.C., and conclude that one may "find no flaw in him" there. [Cf. *Analects* VIII/21.]

Mencius, proceeding from his basic tenet of the importance of the people, went on to discuss the responsibilities in office of the servitor-officials, and concluded that they were the public servants of the nation, bearing the sovereign's charge to nourish the people, and not the private retainers of the sovereign himself. Thus he told the governor of P'ing-lu that, if he could not fulfill his responsibilities, he should resign. In answer to the question of King Hsüan of Ch'i about high ministers who are noble and are relatives of the prince, he replied: "If the prince have great faults, they ought to remonstrate with him, and if he do not listen to them after they have done so again and again, they ought to dethrone him." To his question about high officers of a different surname from the prince, Mencius said: "If the prince has faults, they ought to remonstrate with him; and if he do not listen to them after they have done this again and again, they ought to leave the State."<sup>50</sup> This, while adding more extensive exposition, is not fundamentally different from the purport of Confucius' [definition of the great minister as one who] "serves his prince according to what is right, [and when he finds he cannot do so, retires, *Analects*, xi/23/3; Legge, p. 245]. But we can go further in

this comparison. Confucius' attitude in his statement [that one should maintain] "The full observance of the rules of propriety in serving one's prince . . ." is one of respectful humility. [*Mencius*, III/18; Legge, p. 161.] Mencius, on the other hand, raised to a higher level the position of the servitor, establishing the ideal of "the servitor who cannot be summoned," and further holding up age and virtue to counter the noble rank of the court.<sup>51</sup> Consequently, between ruler and servitor there existed the basis for honor and dignity of each. The servitor could judge the noble-mindedness or meanness of his ruler's treatment of him and adjust his repayment of that treatment accordingly. Grace and injury were clearly distinguished; one could come into service or retire from it freely and easily.<sup>52</sup>

The theory developed subsequently in the authoritarian age that the loyal servitor would not serve another ruler [other than one belonging to the dynasty, or surname, which he first served] was something of which Mencius in no case could have approved. Although in this too he shared the same stand as Confucius, Confucius' ideal was one of a ruler who acted in the capacity of a teacher, whereas Mencius wanted to be the ruler's teacher. Confucius hoped that the superior man would gain rank and status in recognition of his virtue, whereas Mencius wanted him to use his virtue to resist the prerogatives of status. These differences between the two philosophers are also no doubt to be explained as consequences of their times. The late Chou practice of maintaining scholars and honoring men of talent and ability was inaugurated at Hsi-ho in the State of Wei [Duke Wen of Wei, last quarter of fifth century, B.C., was famous for his patronage of scholars from all over China] and reached its most flourishing development at the Ch'hsia [Academy] in the State of Ch'i. [See above, Chapter Three, Section One, where Hsün Tzu's association with the Academy is discussed. These developments were post-Confucian and pre-Mencian.] Confucius did not live to see either of these developments. Moreover, with Confucius' ideal of the superior man who possessed both virtue and status clearly impossible of attainment, it was most natural that Mencius, caught up in the currents of the Warring States Era, further developed that ideal into the theory that virtue could serve as a counter to status.<sup>53</sup>

We may also at this point discuss Mencius' views on the issue of whether or not the individual should serve in government. The book *Mencius* contains expressions of three distinct attitudes toward this. (One) Mencius praised Confucius as "the one among the sages who acted according to the time." ["*Sheng chih shih che*"; *Mencius*, v/ii/1/5. Legge, p. 372, translates this difficult phrase using a word

coined for the occasion, "the timeous one," meaning, "that Confucius did at every *time* what the circumstances of it required."] This was because Confucius always judged whether or not he would be listened to in deciding whether to carry his Way into practice or to withdraw into concealment. When he could take office he did so; when it was better to give up office he did so. In this he differed both from the standard of "purity" [*ch'ing*] upheld by Po-yi [the recluse who could not serve the new Chou out of loyalty to the old Shang, and starved in the wilds, even though he recognized the legitimacy of the new dynasty] and from the "sense of duty" of Yi-yin. [Yi-yin felt a duty, *jen*, to serve the ruler, for he felt the charge to serve nobly and well was the heaviest duty on everyone who was prepared for office, and he would thus accommodate himself to the conditions of office, though without compromising his principles. "*Jen*" here is not the same word *jen* as that translated elsewhere as "benevolence," nor is it the same as that in the phrase "*pu jen*"—"unable to bear."] It was all the more different from Hui of Liu-hsia, who was "wanting in self-respect." [Hui of Liu-hsia was honest and upright, but by serving any kind of a prince he endangered his principles.]<sup>54</sup> Hence Confucius alone was regarded by Mencius as worthy of being the model for his own behavior.

(Two) Mencius at times abandoned this view, and admitted the individual's duty to serve. For example, he replied to the question Chou Hsiao asked about serving in government by saying: "The Record says, 'If Confucius was three months without being employed by some ruler, he looked anxious and unhappy. . . .' Kung-ming Yi said, 'Among the ancients, if an officer was three months unemployed by a ruler, he was consoled with.'" Mencius explained these lines saying: "The loss of his place to an officer is like the loss of his State to a prince," and: "An officer's being in office is like the plowing of a husbandman."<sup>55</sup>

(Three) However, the attitude that Mencius repeatedly stressed and that seems to be that which he tended to regard the most seriously, is of cultivating the self for the sake of one's personal ethical attainment. Carrying the Way into practice and achieving merit thereby, on the contrary, was but the last duty incumbent upon one. Thus, in one place he says: "Shun would have regarded abandoning the kingdom as throwing away a worn-out sandal." And in another: "Wide territory and a numerous people are desired by the superior man, but what he delights in is not here. To stand in the center of the kingdom, and tranquilize the people within the four seas;—the superior man delights in this, but the highest enjoyment of his nature is not here."<sup>56</sup> The attitude exposed in these statements differs from that of Confucius, both in the latter's "knowing that

it's no use, but keeping on doing it," and in his "unwillingness to set aside the duties that should be observed between sovereign and minister."<sup>57</sup>

If we attempt to ascertain why Mencius frequently varied his statements on this subject, the explanation seems to lie in the fact that each of his statements was made in response to a specific situation, that each has its particular significance [in relation to that], and that the different statements do not necessarily conflict with each other. Those which emulate the attitude of Confucius derive from Confucius' basic doctrines about the benevolent mind leading naturally to benevolent government, and were apparently addressed to the problems of governing an age when hereditary ministerships were already extinct [and when the decision about under what conditions a man might serve had become more subjective]. His statements that the officers' being employed in office resembles the husbandman's ploughing, suggesting that service in government is a responsibility that could not be abdicated, apparently bear on the situation in earlier antiquity, when clan-chief hereditary ministers and aristocrats with hereditary clan privileges alone enjoyed the right to serve in government, and bore exclusive responsibility for the maintenance of the state. When, on the other hand, he said that the empire could be looked upon as a worn-out sandal, he recognized the fact that, while the hereditary ministerships could not be restored, yet persons who held high rank often were not suited to it and that, rather than lower one's purpose and humble one's person, it would be better [uncompromisingly, if out of office] to honor virtue and find delight in righteousness. This attitude seems to be directed specifically against the practice, quite prevalent by the Warring States Age, of wandering about, discoursing [amorally] on political theories in search of material gain.

Mencius' purpose, then, in promoting self-cultivation, was to urge that by such achievement one might yet make one's mark in the world. His was thus a different objective from that of the recluses [who also stressed self-cultivation but] who preferred to follow the "noble and solitary path." For when one [by self-cultivation] secured emolument of office he could [with honor] give up the labor of husbandry,<sup>58</sup>—one could even receive the highest emolument of office, and still need have no position or duties.<sup>59</sup> This also displays practices common by the Period of the Six States [i.e., the Warring States Period], and of which Confucius could never have imagined. Even though Mencius himself said that he regarded it a shameful thing for a mean fellow to monopolize a market and become wealthy thereby,<sup>60</sup> at the same time he would have a hard time totally escaping the condemnation directed at the philosopher T'ien P'ien

for "refusing to hold office" [while gaining great wealth irresponsibly].<sup>61</sup>

### SECTION THREE

#### "STABILITY IN UNITY"

King Hsiang of Liang asked how the kingdom could be settled, and Mencius replied: "It will be settled by being united under one sway" [i.e., *ting yü i*, or "stabilized in unity"].<sup>62</sup> This is one of the most significant differences between the political thought of Confucius and Mencius, and it must be discussed in somewhat fuller fashion. We have already stated in Chapter Two that Confucius' idea in rectifying names and in following the Chou was to improve and also to restore feudal institutions, with the condition that Chou political authority must continue to be acknowledged. By the time of Mencius, Chou had further declined and was on the verge of annihilation, while the various feudal princes were growing ever stronger. "The lands within the four seas include nine states, each as large as a thousand *li* square" [*Mencius*, 1/17/17; cf. Legge, p. 146; Mencius emphasizes the great power and size of the few remaining states]; of these, Ch'u, Wei, Ch'i, and Ch'in had become especially large states, each having the power to try to conquer the whole world by force. For this reason, Confucius' insistence on respecting the primacy of the Chou no longer held any real meaning. Mencius had made penetrating observation of the changes transforming his world, and he was urgently concerned to bring relief to the suffering people. He lodged his hope not in a restoration of Chou dynasty power, but in the conclusive emergence of a new king. What he referred to as "settling the kingdom by its being united under one sway" is an expression of this hope.

Although Confucius "elegantly handed down the doctrines of Kings Wen and Wu" and "dreamed that he saw the Duke of Chou," his references to King Wu's conquest of the kingdom are few indeed. [The Chou *t'ien-hsia* may be variously translated "the world" and "the kingdom."] Yet he bestowed his most extreme expressions of approval on T'ai-po for having thrice declined the kingdom when offered to him, though the people had no chance to praise him for it [because they could not know the details of it], and on King Wen, who possessed two-thirds of the world and yet used it to "serve the Yin dynasty."<sup>63</sup> He praised both men as "having reached the highest point of virtue." Although this is, to be sure, the attitude that a Yin descendant might be expected to have held, it also shows that Confucius' political thought tended toward the recognition of established authority. He did not approve of the Chou house's seizure of the kingdom, yet he approved of their governing the kingdom.

Mencius, when appearing before King Hsüan of Ch'i and King Hui of Liang,<sup>64</sup> frequently discussed Kings T'ang and Wu [the martial conquerors who established the Shang and Chou dynasties]. With regard to T'ang, Mencius said he started from a small state of only seventy *li* in size, used virtue and practiced benevolence, carried out his campaign to execute [Heaven's] justice [the euphemism used for the military conquest by Heaven's appointed agent] throughout the four quarters of the realms, and "exercised his government throughout the kingdom." Of King Wu, Mencius said that he "by one display of his anger, gave repose to all the people of the kingdom" and that, when he punished Yin and executed justice on the tyrant King Chou, all the common people were happy.<sup>65</sup> Throughout the *Mencius* the citations of King Wen are especially numerous. When we examine the reasons for his being praised there, we find that it is not because he served the Yin dynasty and reached the highest point of virtue in so doing, for which Confucius singled him out, but rather because he started with a small state one hundred *li* in size, practiced benevolence, and consequently came to govern the whole kingdom.<sup>66</sup> King Wen's great achievement, therefore, is not different from that of Kings T'ang and Wu. Here we have one evidence that Mencius did not feel obligated to the Chou dynasty, but hoped for the rise of a new king. Mencius went about, accepting the support of one after another of the feudal princes, and constantly urging them to practice kingly government. At that time the kings of Wei and Ch'i were engaged in a struggle to see which would become the chief among the princes. The struggle was just at its most intense in these years, and apparently Mencius followed it with greatest attention. Consequently he urged the essence of his thought upon King Hui of Liang [i.e., Wei]; Mencius urged him to believe that kingly government could be established even in a small state of only one hundred *li*, and that the benevolent ruler will have no opponent who can stand up to him. Even King Hsiang [who succeeded King Hui in Wei in 319 B.C., and], who "didn't have the appearance of a sovereign" [I/i/6; Legge, p. 136], was introduced to the theory of stabilizing the world by unifying it. This indicates that Mencius hoped Liang [i.e., the State of Wei] would gain control of the whole realm. When talking to King Hsüan of Ch'i [about how to attain the royal sway], he said: "The love and protection of the people; with this there is no power that can prevent a ruler from attaining it." He urged the king to model himself on Kings Wen and Wu, who "by one display of their anger, gave repose to all the people of the kingdom," and set forth for him the principles of King Wen's government in the [ancient] State of Ch'i.<sup>67</sup> Back and forth he went over the details of this principle, displaying his thought in most complete and explicit fashion. This shows that Mencius hoped [King Hsüan's State

of] Ch'i would accomplish the unification. Finding his models in King T'ang the Perfectionist and in King Wen, he firmly believed that: "With a territory that is only a hundred *li* square, it is possible to attain to the royal dignity." Hence, even before the ruler of a state representing an accumulation of weaknesses, like that of Sung, Mencius still urged that the government of King T'ang be applied, telling him that no one in the world would dare be his enemy if he did so, and that the great States of Ch'i and Ch'u were nothing to be afraid of. Even to the ruler of a tiny state like T'eng, Mencius still "always made laudatory references to Yao and Shun," and spoke to its Duke about taking King Wen as his teacher.<sup>68</sup> These passages show that he even had hopes that Sung or T'eng might gain mastery of the world! These are further proof that Mencius did not acknowledge the Chou dynasty, and that he hoped for a new king to emerge.

The differences between Confucius and Mencius can also be seen in their attitudes toward kingly government [*wang cheng*] and power government [*pa cheng*. The *pa* were hegemonies who achieved their positions by reason of their real power; hence the term came to stand for government by force instead of government by the Confucian kingly ideal of moral suasion]. Although Confucius said: "When bad government prevails in the empire, ceremonies, music, and punitive military expeditions proceed from the princes" [*Analects*, xvi/2/1; Legge, p. 310]; yet he had high praise for the achievements of Duke Huan [of Ch'i] and [his chief minister], Kuan Tzu. [Duke Huan, 683-642 B.C., was the first of the *pa*, or hegemonies.] It was Mencius who first so venerated the kingly way and denounced the rule of force that he would say: "There were none of the disciples of Confucius who spoke about the affairs of Dukes Huan and Wen."<sup>69</sup> [Duke Wen of Chin, 634-627 B.C., was the second of the great *pa* of the Spring and Autumn Era.] The function of their "government by hegemon," at that time when the feudal institutions were already in a process of dissolution but had not yet collapsed, was to support the Son of Heaven in imposing his commands on the feudal lords, thereby maintaining some order in the midst of threatening chaos. But by the time when the heads of the seven warring states were all struggling for supremacy, support of the Son of Heaven was already pointless, and enforcing his commands on the feudal princes was out of the question. Even had Dukes Huan and Wen reappeared at this time, they would not have been able to convene again a meeting of all the feudal rulers, observing all the old proprieties. [Paraphrasing the original, which says literally to convene "a meeting with jade and silk, official head gear and court robes," referring to the old meetings of the feudal princes at which the earlier *pa* had presided in the name of the Chou

Kings.] Hence Confucius' attitude was different from that of Mencius, and in fact the attitude of each reflected the historical environments of their times. Moreover, as Mencius saw it, force was both an unworthy alternative and an uncertain means of success, while the kingly way was both nearer the ideal, and easier for success. Therefore he said: "He who, using force, makes a pretence to benevolence, is the leader of the princes [i.e., is the *pa*]. A leader of the princes requires a large kingdom. He who, using virtue, practices benevolence is the sovereign of the kingdom [i.e., is the *wang*]. To become the sovereign of the kingdom, a prince need not wait for a large kingdom." [11/1/3/1; Legge, p. 196.] And he also said: "... never was there a time farther removed than the present from the rise of a true sovereign; never was there a time when the sufferings of the people from tyrannical government were more intense than the present. The hungry readily partake of any food, and the thirsty of any drink."<sup>70</sup> This shows clearly why Mencius felt compelled to hammer away at the theme of benevolence and righteousness whenever he had the ear of any ruler of his time, not because he really wanted to submerge the personal ambitions of such sovereigns to master the world, but rather because he wanted precisely to teach them how to avoid the difficult course and follow the easier one in hastening the day when they would achieve their great ambitions. The sad thing about it all is that the benevolent government that Mencius imagined to have been employed by Kings T'ang and Wu was not adopted by these rulers, while his "stability in unification" ideal was in fact implemented by "tyrannous Ch'in." He succeeded merely in leaving behind a theoretical problem of kingly government versus power government to serve as the subject of debate among Confucians ever after.

In the Sung period Chu Hsi and Ch'en Liang exchanged a correspondence on the subject running to tens of thousands of words, the crux of their argument being the [highly abstract] problem of distinguishing between Heaven's principles and man's desires,<sup>71</sup> which ignores the fact that Mencius' doctrines honoring the kingly way and denouncing rule by force had real meaning both as history and as political theory. Their discussion indeed displays the error of not having known how to read their *Mencius*.

If the discussions and the conclusions drawn above are not seriously wrong, then Mencius' denunciation of rule by force was meant to honor the king and hasten the success of his unification. However, the one he honored was not the collapsing Chou king. It was to be a new king who had not as yet emerged, and the unification whose success he hoped to hasten was not the authoritarian one of the Ch'in dynasty, but a pre-Ch'in unification of the feudal world type. In brief, Mencius' intent was to help establish a new political

authority that would restore the old political institutions. His sentiments of lingering regard for feudal government, and his advocacy of supporting and preserving feudal government, were in both cases more or less identical with those of Confucius. The two differed only with respect to the courses they laid down for pursuing these objectives. Confucius wanted to preserve the Chou house in order to restore feudalism, while Mencius had the hope that, after a change of dynasty and under a new ruling house, the world would again experience a glorious age when "ceremonies, music, and punitive military expeditions proceed from the Son of Heaven." Hence, in terms of his views on political institutions, Mencius also displays a tendency toward archaism.

Mencius' institutional return-to-the-past can be demonstrated by reference to his comments on taking the ancient kings as models. Mencius profoundly believed that the institutions established by the kings and sages of antiquity were perfect, and should serve as models to all time. All rulers of later ages must accept them as their own standard. Therefore he said: "Virtue alone is not sufficient for the exercise of government; laws alone cannot carry themselves into practice." And further, "It is said in the *Book of Odes*,

Without transgression, without forgetfulness,  
Following the ancient statutes.

Never has anyone fallen into error, who followed the laws of the ancient kings."<sup>72</sup> Examination shows that of the methods of the ancient kings that Mencius praised, the three principal ones apparently are the well-field [system of land tenure], hereditary emolument of office, and the *hsiang-hsü* schools. All these institutions Mencius believed to have been in practice throughout all the Three Dynasties of Antiquity [i.e., Hsia, Shang, and Chou]; he was not one with Confucius in having special reverence for the Institutes of Chou. For example, Mencius believed that the agricultural tax of one-tenth of production had been a method devised by Yao and Shun—which had then been carried into practice through the Hsia, Shang, and Chou periods. The well-field system, Mencius thought, had had its origins in the Yin [Shang] "seventy *mou* allotment, and the system of mutual aid." [The *mou* is a unit of land measure, in modern times roughly one-sixth of an English acre.] The Chou rulers had slightly altered it, enacting "the hundred *mou* allotment, and the share system." But none of these, he felt, repudiated the principle of the one-tenth tax. Mencius also had been known to urge the rulers of his time to take King Wen as their teacher. The plan of government practiced [by King Wen] in [his ancient] State of Ch'i, as Mencius referred to it, was: "The husbandman cultivated for the government one-ninth of the land; the descendants of

officers were salaried; at the passes and in the markets, strangers were inspected but goods were not taxed; there were no prohibitions respecting the ponds and wiers; the wives and children of criminals were not involved in their guilt." In discussing educational institutions he said: "Establish *hsiang*, *hsü*, *hsüeh*, and *hsiao*—all those educational institutions—for the instruction of the people. [Four types of schools; see above, Chapter Three, Section Two, p. 271 and Chapter Two, Section Four, p. 184.] The name *hsiang* indicates nourishing as its object; *hsiao* indicates teaching; and *hsü* indicates archery. By the Hsia dynasty the name *hsiao* was used; by the Yin, that of *hsü*; and by the Chou, that of *hsiang*. As to the *hsüeh*, they belonged to all three dynasties, and by that name. The object of them all is to illustrate human relations."<sup>73</sup> In all the Seven Books of the *Mencius* the discussions by Mencius that are in any way relevant to institutions in no case go beyond the scope of these few items. And it is the well-field system and that of hereditary salaries to which Mencius seems to have granted special importance. Hence, in talking with King Hsüan [of Ch'i], he told him that what is called an ancient kingdom is one that has "ministers sprung from families that have been noted in it for generations." And to Duke Wen [of T'eng] he said that benevolent government found its first step in "laying down the boundaries" [i.e., boundaries of the fields, in the well-field system], while "As to the system of hereditary salaries, that is already observed in T'eng." The well-field system and that of hereditary salaries were main elements of the feudal institutions; thus Mencius' program for stability through unity was not a forerunner's announcement anticipating the coming unification under the First Emperor of Ch'in; rather, it was a long look back at the feudal world. Of this there cannot be the slightest doubt. If the ruler of Liang or of Ch'i had been able to put his ideas into practice and gain mastery of the world thereby, then the royal tours of inspection, the appearances at court of the feudal lords, the congratulatory announcements and bestowals of royal rewards, the punitive campaigns and executions of the kings' punishments,<sup>74</sup> might even have reappeared long after the Way of the Chou had fallen into disuse.

However we may still have two kinds of questions about the foregoing. Why is it that: (1) Confucius exclusively "followed the Chou" while Mencius spoke very generally about the ancient kings; and (2) Confucius established the doctrine of gaining official position through the possession of virtue, whereas Mencius set up the idea that "the descendants of officers of government should be salaried"? Let us seek first the explanation of the former.

In the preceding chapter we have already discussed Confucius' reasons for following the Chou. Confucius was

closer to antiquity; in his time not only were the records still in existence, but the traditions of Kings Wen and Wu were still carried on. The Chou dynasty's institutions were still impressively accessible for study and corroboration. Even though the Chou royal house still carried on its political powers more in name than in fact, still there was no unmistakable evidence that it was doomed to destruction. Confucius followed the Chou, apparently much influenced by such historical facts. Mencius was farther away from that antiquity, having lived through the final stage of the Chou dynasty's collapse. When we note his reply to Peikung Yi's question about the dignities and emoluments of the Chou court: "The particulars of that arrangement cannot be learned,"<sup>75</sup> we can correctly infer that by Mencius' time the Institutes of Chou were already no longer adequately attested, in that similar to those of Hsia and Yin [in the time of Confucius]. What Confucius praised as the "complete and elegant regulations" [of Chou] had become things of which Mencius could no longer gain full knowledge. Thus, even if Mencius had wished to follow the Chou, this was something that conditions would have precluded; hence he found it expedient to relinquish the Institutes of Chou and talk more broadly about the ancient kings. His desire was that the various regulations and institutions of Yao and Shun and the Three Dynasties, as he idealized these, could be made to serve as the prototype of the new state that the King of Ch'i or of Liang would bring into being through rebellion against the present one. And we might go further at this point to ask how Mencius, who could not even learn the particulars of the Chou institutions, was able to attest so fully the details of the government of Yao and Shun and the Three Dynasties. Mencius said: "It would be better to be without the *Book of History* than to give entire credence to it."<sup>76</sup> It is evident that what he called the methods [*fa*] of the former kings were no more than the general outlines of some ancient institutions to which he added ideal elements of his own creation; they were thus mixed and amalgamated formulations, not necessarily entirely based upon historical foundations. We note that Confucius, in discussing the rites of the Three Dynasties, indicated that each had done its own adding and subtracting, perpetuating some features and discarding others; Mencius, on the other hand, in establishing the institutions intended to stabilize the Warring States world through a new unification, looked upon Yao and Shun and Kings Wen and Wu as the eternally valid standard that could always serve to instruct later ages in correct methods. This discrepancy between the two philosophers results from the earlier man's having a greater regard for historical facts, whereas the later one was more subjective. It does not result from their having different basic attitudes toward the issue of protecting and preserving feudal government as such.



Likewise, Mencius' reasons for advocating hereditary salaries for officials should also be sought in the historical environment of the Warring States Period. With the degeneration and relaxation of clan-law society, the rulers as well as the leading officials of the various feudal states had gradually come to represent the old established clans less and less. For commoners to rival the fame of princes and feudal lords, and to achieve the highest positions as ministers and premiers, was becoming commonplace. The worst aspect of this situation, the tendency for it to engender an unprincipled race for the spoils of success, was rapidly becoming its dominant characteristic. High officials in public service no longer identified themselves with a particular ruler [in loyal constancy], and their policy formulations often were nothing more than unprincipled deceptions. At the worst, this led to the misfortunes of ever more widespread warfare and a cruelly ravaged populace, and, at the least, it entailed a lust for power and a struggle for high position that brought personal disasters and the destruction of families. Su Ch'in and Chang Yi [two famous strategy specialists of the time] promoted their policies of vertical alliance versus horizontal entente, while wandering from state to state serving as chief ministers; they are most representative of the "opportunistic elements" of that age. [See *Shih Chi*, chs. 69 and 70.] These persons were contemporaries of Mencius, and he undoubtedly knew of them or came into contact with them. Confucius had regretted that the hereditary ministers were so seldom men of virtue, and hence, in order to correct that weakness, had established his doctrine that rank and position should be achieved through virtue. But the commoner ministers and premiers also in many cases went the same way; they too displayed the long-standing fault of possessing high position though lacking virtue, to which they added the social insecurity attendant upon their unrestrained pursuit of wealth and power.<sup>77</sup> This, in truth, was a situation that Confucius had not anticipated. And thus Mencius wanted to reinstitute the old system of families having a tradition of public service through successive generations, and the associated system of hereditary salaries.

When we note that Mencius, in discussing the defect of the state that lacked such hereditary officials, said: "Those whom you advanced yesterday are gone today, and you do not know it" [said to King Hsüan of Ch'i; *Mencius*, I/ii/7/1; Legge, p. 165], it becomes very obvious that his purpose was to focus on the evil of men like Su Ch'in and Chang Yi, who characteristically were "in the service of Ch'in at dawn, and in the service of Ch'u by sunset." For, in the recruitment and employment of men, talent and virtue are unquestionably the ideal standards to be observed. But if it becomes impossible to maintain the respect for virtue,

then, as Mencius saw it, it would be better to maintain the hereditary principle as an aspect of ritual propriety. "Even if it did not guarantee talent and ability, it at least assured the maintenance of law and system,"<sup>78</sup> and it avoided the danger of leading society into confusion and disorder.

#### SECTION FOUR

##### ALTERNATING ORDER AND CHAOS

Confucius had said: "Chou had the advantage of viewing the two past dynasties. How complete and elegant are its regulations." [*Analects*, III/14; Legge, p. 160.] The import of this is an indirect suggestion that the regulations and institutions of Kings Wen and Wu were the result of political progress. And even though he said that "we can foretell what the successors of Chou will be like, even supposing they do not appear till a hundred generations from now" [meaning that institutional change would be very gradual; see *Analects*, II/23; Waley, p. 93], Confucius nonetheless spoke of institutions in terms of selectively perpetuating or discarding their main features. He probably did not believe that, after the refined age of the Chou, it would ever be possible to revert to the cruder and simpler usages of Hsia and [Shang-] Yin. But in Mencius, since he regarded the ways of the ancient kings as immutable standards for all time, and since he further invented a theory of history as "alternating order and chaos," Confucius' hint at political progress was obscured or even obliterated. The consequence was that a theory of cyclic political changes came to be the most compelling thesis present throughout the subsequent two thousand years. This, together with the importance of the people and the concept of stability through unification, also constitutes an important contribution of Mencius, and as such merits some further discussion.

Mencius' view that order and chaos alternate was set forth in response to his disciple Kung-tu's question about whether or not Mencius was fond of disputing. [His answer was: "I am not fond of disputing, but I am compelled to do it." Then he went on to discuss his view of history, showing that the disorders of his own age forced upon him the duty of refuting bad doctrines being spread abroad by others. *Mencius*, III/ii/9/1; Legge, p. 279.] In part, he said: "A long time has elapsed since this world of men received its being, and there has been along its history, now a period of good order, and now a period of confusion. In the time of Yao, the waters, flowing out of their channels, inundated the Middle Kingdom. Snakes and dragons occupied it, and the people had no place where they could settle themselves. In the low ground they made nests for themselves on the trees or raised platforms, and in the high ground they made caves. It is said in the *Documents*, 'The waters in their wild course warned

me.' Those 'waters in their wild course' were the waters of the great inundation." This represented one period of chaos. "Shun employed Yü to reduce the waters to order. Yü dug open their obstructed channels and conducted them to the sea. He drove away the snakes and dragons and forced them into the grassy marshes. On this, the waters pursued their course through the country, even the waters of the Chiang, the Huai, the Ho, and the Han; and the dangers and obstructions that they had occasioned were removed. The birds and beasts that had injured the people also disappeared; and after this men found the plains available for them, and occupied them." This was to be one period of order. "After the deaths of Yao and Shun, the principles that marked the sages fell into decay. Oppressive sovereigns arose one after another, pulling down houses to make ponds and lakes, so that the people knew not where they could rest in quiet. They threw fields out of cultivation to form gardens and parks, so that the people could not get clothes and food. Afterwards, corrupt speaking and oppressive deeds became more rife; gardens and parks, ponds and lakes, thickets and marshes, became more numerous, and birds and beasts swarmed. By the time of the tyrant Chou, the kingdom was again in a state of great confusion." This constituted another period of chaos. "The Duke of Chou assisted King Wu, and destroyed the tyrant King Chou. He smote Yen, and after three years put its sovereign to death. He drove Fei-lien into a corner by the sea, and slew him. The states that he extinguished amounted to fifty. He drove away also the tigers, leopards, rhinoceroses, and elephants;—and all the people was greatly delighted." This became another period of order. "Again the world fell into decay, and principles faded away. Perverse speakings and oppressive deeds waxed rife again. There were instances of ministers who murdered their sovereigns, and of sons who murdered their fathers."<sup>79</sup> This was a new age of chaos.

The cycle of alternating order and chaos is indeed not something manifest only in the history of the Three Dynasties; it has consistently characterized the two thousand years of imperial history, starting with the Ch'in and Han dynasties as well. This thesis of Mencius in truth embodies a sound observation. However, inasmuch as Mencius regarded the ways devised by the ancient kings as the acme of human social principle, and also said if one does good, among his descendants in after generations there would be one who would attain the royal dignity,<sup>80</sup> then Yao and Shun, Yü and T'ang, Wen and Wu, all had the benefit simultaneously of the most perfect of sage-ordained institutions and perfect records for good accomplishments, why was it that they could not maintain a long-lasting era of order and peace? Although Confucius said nothing specifically directed to this question, it can be inferred

from the content of his thought that "heaven's will" might possibly have been his reply. [Confucius used the expression "*t'ien ming*," translatable in some contexts as "The Mandate of Heaven"; in some others it is often called "fate," although in that sense it remains a difficult concept to express in English. See Chan, *Source Book*, pp. 78-79, "comment."] Even though Confucius did not talk about the Way of heaven [*t'ien tao*], yet it appears that he had a firm belief in heaven's will. Thus he said: "Heaven produced the virtue that is in me," and: "If heaven had wished to let this cause of truth perish. . . ."<sup>81</sup> Mencius was being true to this same idea when he said: "My not finding in the prince of Lu a ruler who would confide in me, and put my counsels into practice, is from heaven." Again, he said: "But heaven does not yet wish that the kingdom should enjoy tranquility and good order. If it wished this, who is there beside me to bring it about?"<sup>82</sup> In discussing fate, however, Confucius apparently limited its application to the personal successes and failures of individuals. Mencius, on the other hand, employs it when discussing changes in the sphere of political authority. For example, Kings Yao and Shun selected their successors on the basis of worthiness, while Yü named his son his successor. Mencius explained all these events in terms of heaven's intention, saying: "When heaven gave the kingdom to the worthiest, it was given to the worthiest. When heaven gave it to the son of the preceding sovereign, it was given to the son."<sup>83</sup> Although "Heaven sees according as my people see . . .," and the people's will thus was in actual practice to be the ultimate standard of political authority, yet in theory heaven's will unquestionably remained the highest arbiter of the affairs of all creatures. This view also is something that Mencius had not himself devised, but had in fact drawn from ancient doctrines. More than one passage in the *Documents* has the same purport as these sayings of Mencius. For example, Tsu-chi instructs the king with the words: "Heaven reflects the [mind of] the ordinary people." [Tsu-chi was a worthy minister of King Wu-ting of Shang-Yin, whose traditional dates place his reign in the middle of the thirteenth century B.C.] The proclamation made by the Duke of Shao [a brother of King Wu of Chou, active in the affairs of the dynasty at its beginning] says: "August Heaven, the Supreme ruler above, has changed his decree in favor of our [Chou] ruler." And King Ch'eng, in his address to the officers of the "Numerous Regions" [of his newly-conquered realm], said: "Heaven at this time sought a true lord for the people."<sup>84</sup> [King Ch'eng was the son of King Wu of Chou, and his successor.] Moreover, the line that Mencius quoted about heaven hearing and seeing as the people hear and see, also is from "The Great Declaration," or "T'ai-shih," in the *Documents*. [Legge, *Documents Shoo King*, p. 292. In

the foregoing section, the language of the Legge translation of the *Documents* has been consistently altered to suit the context in which quoted passages appear. However, Legge's predilection for seeing the Chinese *t'ien*, "heaven" as a kind of *Old Testament* Jehovah cannot be totally eradicated; moreover, the necessity to specify person and number, and other requirements of English grammar, further contribute to distortion of meaning in translation.]

"The Master seldom spoke about . . . the appointments of heaven." [*Analects* ix/1, speaking of Confucius; following Legge's translation, p. 216, of the word *ming* in this context; Waley, p. 138, translates it simply as "fate."] He did not discuss such things as apparitions and spirits at all, and alongside his respect for heaven he reveals a degree of skepticism. In the case of Mencius, however, the element of religious belief is somewhat stronger. When we note that Hsün Tzu in denouncing the theorists of the Five Elements and of mysterious spiritual forces, included Tzu-ssu and Mencius among his examples,<sup>85</sup> we can readily bring something of this to mind. Reverencing heaven and worshipping spirits, establishing religious practices directed toward the incomprehensible ways of spiritual forces—these were all things common to the society of antiquity. They are what the *Li Chi*, ch. 29, "Piao Chi," refers to in saying: "Under the Yin dynasty, they honored Spiritual Beings [and led the people on to serve them . . . etc.]" [Following Legge, *Li Ki*, Vol. 2, p. 342.] Hsün Tzu's comments [about Mencius] are certainly not without foundation in fact. Hence, too, it can be said that, in so frequently turning to the subject of heaven's will, Mencius displays but another aspect of the archaism of his thought and simultaneously of not adhering to the Way of the Chou.<sup>86</sup>

Mencius also presents a theory of a five-hundred-year cycle of order and chaos, something that the records of the past had not conveyed to him, and that may well be of his own creation. In answer to Ch'ung Yü's question he replied: "It is a rule that a true sovereign should arise in the course of five hundred years, and that during that time there should be men illustrious in their generation." And, on another occasion, he brought forward historical facts to corroborate this view, saying: "From Yao and Shun down to T'ang were five hundred years and more. As to Yü and Kao Yao, they saw those earliest sages, and so knew their doctrines, while T'ang heard their doctrines as transmitted, and so knew them. From T'ang to King Wen were five hundred years and more. As to Yi Yin and Lai Chu, they saw T'ang and knew his doctrines, while King Wen heard them as transmitted, and so knew them. From King Wen to Confucius were five hundred years and more. As to T'ai-kung Wang and San Yi-sheng, they saw King Wen and so

knew his doctrines, while Confucius heard them as transmitted, and so knew them."<sup>87</sup> This clearly is talking about alternations of order and chaos as a complete, orderly, and definitely fixed cyclic movement. Calculating this movement according to the number of years in a cycle, one can know the ups and downs of a hundred generations in advance, so that one can forestall mistakes. The reason why Mencius so confidently took "bringing peace and order into the world" as his responsibility, and vigorously urged others to "protect the people and in that way become the true sovereign" was precisely because he already nourished in his breast the faith that this cyclic movement was due to bring about an age of order. He knew all too well that seven hundred or more years had elapsed since King Wen, and that the reckoned time was overdue, but that the conditions of the time were appropriate to such a development. [Cf. note 86.] Although Mencius' view in this instance is not wholly in harmony with historical fact, it nonetheless constitutes a most fascinating philosophy of history. The Sung period philosopher Shao Yung [1011-1077] with his system of "cyclic convergence in the cosmic epicycles"<sup>88</sup> must in truth credit Mencius as his distant forerunner.

#### SECTION FIVE

##### *Li* (THE RITES)

Confucius' discourses on politics established his two major tenets—the practice of benevolence and the rectification of names. The former was greatly augmented through the efforts of Mencius; the latter was given its more complete and thorough working out by Hsün Tzu. Were we to state that all of the theorizing about the rites [*li*] of the pre-Ch'in era was drawn together and brought to the fullest development in Hsün Tzu, we would be essentially correct.

The *Li Chi*, ch. 29, "Piao Chi," states: "Under the Chou dynasty, they honored the ceremonial usages [*li*], and set a high value on bestowing [favours]." [Legge, *Li Ki*, Vol. II, p. 342.] Both Confucius and Hsün Tzu, in their statements on the rites, thus followed the way of the Chou; they were not in this respect opening the way to a basically new philosophical view. An examination of the ancient texts makes it evident that discussions of the rites by men of the Spring and Autumn Period embody two different conceptions, one broader and one narrower. In the narrower one, the word *li* denotes the forms of ceremonial acts and their accouterments [which Legge translates "deportment"], while in the broader usage it indicates all regulations and institutions [which Legge translates "propriety"]. Under the Fifth year of Duke Chao [536 B.C.] the *Tso Chuan* records: "The Duke went to Chin; and from his reception in the suburbs to the presentation of gifts at his departure, he did not fail in any

point of ceremony [*li*]. The Marquis of Chin said to Ju Shu-ch'i, 'Is not the Marquis of Lu good at propriety [*li*]?' . . ." He replied: "That was deportment [*yi*] . . . and should not be called propriety. Propriety is that by which [a ruler] maintains his state, carries out his governmental orders, and does not lose his people."<sup>89</sup> This points out the distinction between the two meanings of *li* in the clearest and simplest fashion. That to which the Confucians attached great importance and which they sought to develop and clarify is the broader conception of the rites; they did not restrict themselves to the narrower subject of capping and marriage rites, burial and sacrificial ceremonial, bowing and deferring, greeting and entertaining, and other such formal usages.<sup>90</sup> Hsün Tzu's political thought has its base in this broader sense of *li*; this he combined with his theory that human nature is evil, and from the two he produced an extensive development of his own thought.

Hsün Tzu advanced the view that human nature is evil; among the Confucians of the pre-Ch'in era, this is an original view and a most extraordinary one. Confucius had said: "By nature, men are nearly alike; by practice, they get to be wide apart." [*Analects*, xvii/2; Legge, p. 318.] This clearly displays the opinion that in their native endowment men are without any difference as to good or evil nature, and that the worthy and the unworthy are the products of environmental influences. He also said: "There are only the wise of the highest class and the stupid of the lowest class who cannot be changed." [*Analects*, xvii/3; Legge, p. 318.] This acknowledges, however, that human nature is of different qualities, some higher and some lower, some of which are difficult to transform despite all moulding influences. Mencius went on to create the theory that human nature is good, levelling this difference between the higher and lower quality of human nature by saying: "All men may be Yaos and Shuns." [i.e., sages representing the perfection of all human qualities; *Mencius*, vi/ii/1; Legge, p. 424.] This doctrine goes beyond the scope encompassed by Confucius' views.

Subsequently, Hsün Tzu attacked Mencius precisely to refute this view, but at the same time he also expressed ideas that do not conform to those of Confucius. In his essay, *ch.* 23, "Hsing O," i.e., "That the Nature is Evil," he states: "The nature of man is evil; his good qualities are artificial." [They are "artificial" in the sense that they are acquired training, accomplished through the laudable artifice of human civilization, and not as an expression of the innate human character. This chapter of the *Hsün Tzu* is translated by Legge, *Mencius*, Prolegomena, pp. 79-88; Dubs, pp. 301-17; Watson pp. 157-71; and Chan, *Source Book*, pp. 128-35. See also Fung/Bodde, Vol. 1, pp. 297-99.] For Hsün Tzu believed that man from birth is fond of

personal gain, anxious to avoid everything unpleasant, and addicted to the desires of ear and eye, of sound and color. If these predilections are allowed to grow naturally and are not subjected to restraints and controls, they will lead him to contentions and robberies, violence and injuries, and excessive and disorderly conduct of all kinds; and a social life of "rectitude, order, and good government" would be impossible to achieve. Once such a theory of man's evil nature is established, then without much detailed analysis it is obvious that the rites and usages of propriety become indispensable. His *ch.* 19, "Treatise on Rites," says: "What is the origin of the rites? Men are born with desires. When they do not get what they desire, they must seek means of obtaining it. When this seeking is without standard, measured, and distinct limits, then it can produce only contention. Contention leads to disorder, and disorder to exhaustion [of material resources]. The former kings hated this disorder, hence devised rites [*li*] and righteousness [*yi*] to maintain the necessary distinctions, to nurture people's [proper] desires, and to assure the supply of things that people seek." [*Yi* here is a different word from that translated above as "deportment." The translation "righteousness" is retained here for consistency, to show the continuity and development of the word through Confucius and Mencius. It is also often translated "justice," a term that may suggest some of the codification of standards for its application, toward which Hsün Tzu's thought inclined. For a somewhat different translation of these lines, see Watson, *Hsün Tzu*, p. 89, where *li-yi* is taken as one noun meaning "ritual principles."] "For bending came into existence because there was crooked wood; the carpenter's square and ruler came into existence because things are not straight; and the authority to rule is instituted and propriety [the rites] and righteousness are made clear because man's nature is evil." [*Hsün Tzu*, *ch.* 23, Chan, *Source Book*, p. 132; cf. Watson, pp. 163-64.] This makes most clearly manifest that what Hsün Tzu referred to as the rites was the good but bitter medicine for the evil nature of mankind, and at the same time was the basic condition for man's social life. One advocating the goodness of human nature would logically have to favor the unrestrained expression of that nature; thus Mencius emphasized benevolence [*jen*]. One avowing that human nature is evil would be constrained to teach the regulation of that nature; thus Hsün Tzu stressed the rites [*li*]. In both cases, these characteristics are determined by theoretical and logical necessity; each was able to expand and round out his theory, making a complete philosophical system of it.

There is, however, one point of which we should take careful note: Hsün Tzu developed his theory of *li* as

something by which desire is to be limited and restricted, not by which people shall abolish desire. The real objective of the rites was to employ the method of restricting men's desires in order to permit the needs of material existence to be satisfied as generously as possible for all mankind. Although as a method this bordered on the negative, its results were manifestly positive. Hsün Tzu had clearly acknowledged the principle that "human life is impossible without the social group," that people must be cooperative and effect a division of labor before they can hope to survive. Since man's nature is evil, however, there inevitably arise in the life of the social group two serious difficulties: The one is that, when the individual's rights are not definitely fixed, he will struggle to gain greater material well-being; the other is that, when the individual's duties are not clearly fixed, he will become indolent in his work. The only means of solving these difficulties is to devise *li*, which make clear the social distinctions, so that everyone's rights and duties are both definite and universally known.<sup>91</sup> Then society will be orderly and stable, and people will be prosperous and happy.

As Hsün Tzu set forth his ideal of government by *li*: "Virtue must be commensurate with position, position must be commensurate with emolument, and emolument must be commensurate with the uses [it provides for]." "At court there must be none whose positions were gained fortuitously; among the people there must be none whose livelihood is gained fortuitously."<sup>92</sup> "Thus when a man of benevolence is at the top, the farmers will exert their strength to make the most from their fields, the merchants will exert their circumspection to make the most from their wealth, the various craftsmen will all employ their arts to make the most from their vessels and tools; and from the scholars and great officers all the way up through the dukes and marquises, there shall be none who do not use benevolence and a generous spirit, knowledge and ability to achieve the utmost in their official capacities. This is what is called the absolute equity [*chih p'ing*]. Then even in the case of the one whose income is the revenues of the whole empire [i.e., the Son of Heaven], that is not excessive; and even those who are mere door-keepers and guest-greeters, gate-guards and night-watchmen, will not feel themselves to be deprived. Hence the saying: 'Uneven and yet uniform, crooked and yet conforming, different and yet made one'—thus the human relationships."<sup>93</sup> [Hsün Tzu introduces an old saying to describe the individual diversities harmonized and ordered under one set of comprehensive principles.] In this society of "absolute equity," men would not be led to pursue desires that could not be gratified; wealth and material goods would be regulated, and made obtainable. Such goods would be weighed and calculated

to satisfy needs and desires; "those two [goods and desires] should sustain each other and increase." Therefore he said: "It is the rites that nurture."<sup>94</sup>

The ultimate purpose of the rites is to nurture. [I.e., *yang*; Dubs translates this "to educate and nourish." Confucius declared that to nourish was the first task of government; see, Chapter Two, Section Four, p. 109 above. Mencius also attached great importance to it; see, Chapter Three, Section Two, p. 153 above.] Therefore the *Hsün Tzu* discusses the matter of enriching the state in great detail and with an intensity that equals and at times even surpasses Mencius. The principles that he advanced for insuring the state's material sufficiency embody the two aspects: "Regulate consumption through the rites, and keep the people in plenty through administrative measures."<sup>95</sup> And what he refers to as keeping the people in plenty through administrative measures does not go beyond "lightly taxing plowed fields and open lands, making uniform the imposts collected at customs barriers and markets, lessening the numbers of merchants and traders, only rarely bringing about the need for labor corvee, and never encroaching on the seasonal demands of agriculture." These are all fairly close to the ideas of Mencius.

The most striking departure in his thought from issues marked out by Mencius undoubtedly is his theory concerning the circulation of money and goods. Hsün Tzu erected the ideal of economic cooperation, encouraging exchange of all the world's products, so that, using what one has, one could acquire whatever one lacks, effecting thereby a mutual supplying of needs. "For men of the marshlands then will have sufficient timber, and men of the mountains sufficient fish. Farmers need neither chop and cut, nor work as potters, nor smelt ores to have sufficient implements to use. Craftsmen and traders need not till the fields to have sufficient cereal grains." In consequence, "all within the four seas can be like one family," and all the people can obtain the wherewithall of their nurture, and enjoy contentment.<sup>96</sup> We should note even more particularly that, despite his pessimistic view of human nature, he was optimistic about economic life. Hsün Tzu believed that a policy of guaranteeing plenty to the people could cause unlimited growth of material production. Therefore the crux of the problem of enriching the state lay not in lowering demands but in expanding supply. The sage in instituting rites should weigh and calculate goods in order to give men what they desire. And such desire is a motive force for production, so the regulation of consumption through the rites should cease whenever possible. If constantly and repeatedly damaged, the motive to produce eventually will disappear. Even [an austere policy] "like something scorched, like something burned" [Hsün Tzu so described the austerity of Mo

Tzu's doctrines],<sup>97</sup> would be unavailing in bringing the world to a condition of plenty and, on the contrary, contained within it the danger of hastening the trend toward impoverishment and dearth. This concept, which Hsün Tzu up-held, has points of great similarity to the ideas of some modern Western thinkers. It is not only very different from those of the Mohists [Hsün Tzu presents his economic ideas as a refutation of those], but also displays considerable advance over Mencius' ideal of making the cereal grains as plentiful as water and fire. [*Mencius*, vii/i/23/3; Legge, pp. 462-63.]

The purpose of the rites, then, is to nurture; the means of bringing this about is to "fix distinctions" [*pieh*]. These distinctions are what he refers to as: "Noble and humble status have their rankings, elder and younger maintain their disparity, the richer and the poorer, and persons of greater and lesser importance, all have what is appropriate to them."<sup>98</sup> The concrete manifestations of these distinctions are all the state's institutions establishing the differences of rank and degree. Hence he says: "The rites put wealth and goods to their uses, mark outwardly noble and humble status, by [effecting variations in] abundance and paucity create differences, and by greater elaborateness or diminished simplicity achieve what is appropriate."<sup>99</sup> Once the institutions based on the rites are achieved in practice, people will then be content with their lot; belligerence and disorder, dissolute and slothful conduct, will have no further cause to arise. Such a state can be achieved solely by applying distinctions to vary sameness, by replacing equality with differentiation, by substituting restraint for freedom. However, the distinctions derived from the rites, and the inequalities of these distinctions, are not arrived at wilfully or arbitrarily; they must be determined wholly in accordance with the concerned individuals' character and ability. *Ch.* 9, "Wang chih," says: "Those who lack virtue shall not be ennobled, those who lack ability shall not be given office, those without merit shall not be rewarded, and those without guilt shall not be punished. At court there must be none whose positions were gained fortuitously; among the people there must be none whose livelihood is gained fortuitously." [See also Dubs, *The Works of Hsüntze*, pp. 131-32, for another translation.] And it also says: "Though a man be the descendant of princes, nobles, knights, or great officers, if he cannot be subservient to the rites and to righteousness, he should become a commoner. And though a man may be the descendant of commoners, if he accumulates refinement and learning, and exemplifies them in his person and in his deeds, having the capacity to be ruled by the rites and by righteousness, then he should become a chief minister, knight, or great officer." The tenor of this is very high-minded, and the principle involved is very reasonable; within the inequality of it there is an

implicit element of equality. It is heir to the Confucian ideal of position through virtue, and it helped create the new Ch'in-Han era of chief ministers and great officials who came from the ranks of the commoners. As compared with Mencius' advocacy of hereditary emolument, Hsün Tzu here displays a greater ability to escape the lingering influences from the feudal world and to advance toward the new social order.

That the thought and learning of Hsün Tzu belong to the age just before the dawn of the authoritarian world-empire is further evident in his attitude of reverence for the ruler. Mencius, in his theory that the people are of prime importance and the ruler relatively unimportant, was indeed—when viewed against the background of the prevailing tendencies of the Warring States Period—open to the charge of "living in the present age yet going back to the way of antiquity." [This critical phrase is attributed to Confucius; see *The Doctrine of the Mean*, xxviii/1; Legge, p. 423.] Confucius did not slight the importance of the ruler, but, on the other hand, neither did he make any statements explicitly affirming the ruler's absolute powers.<sup>100</sup> When it comes to Hsün Tzu, the idea of the elevation of the ruler is vigorously proclaimed and supported. In *ch.* 8, "Ju hsiao," it says: "The Confucians model their doctrines on the Former Kings, magnify the rites and righteousness, are circumspect as ministers and as sons, and honor their superiors to the fullest extent." [Dubs, *The Works of Hsüntze*, pp. 93-94, offers a slightly different translation.] This implies that the elevation of the ruler is one of the important aspects of Confucian doctrine. *Ch.* 14, "Chih shih" says: "The ruler is the eminence of the state; the father is the eminence of the family. Single eminence results in order, double in chaos." This is not significantly different from the old idea that "heaven does not have two suns." [*Mencius*, vi/i/4/1; Legge, p. 352, where this is credited to Confucius. The same line also appears several times in the *Li Chi*; one example is quoted in note 99.] In the *ch.* 18, "Cheng lun," he states: "The Son of Heaven is one whose power and position are high to the extreme—he is without a peer in the world. . . . He assumes his southward-facing position, giving audience to the world-empire, and there are none among the world's living men who are not stirred and made submissive, transformed so that they conform to his will. In all the empire there are then no scholar-officers who conceal themselves away; there are no good men who are neglected and lost. All that is one with him is right, and all that diverges is wrong." [See also Dubs, *The Works of Hsüntze*, p. 198.] The purport of this is remarkably close to the ideas of the Legalist school, and strikingly different from the doctrines of Mencius. To draw some inferences about Hsün Tzu's reasons for believing in the exaltation of the ruler, we can find one such reason in environmental

conditions, and three belonging to the realm of theory. To comment first on the environmental factor, Mencius and Hsün Tzu both lived in the age of large states and of rulers who occupied positions of awe and power. Mencius elaborated on antique ideas in order to resist this trend; Hsün Tzu accepted the condition of the age in order to establish his theories. The environments of the two were more or less the same, but the response of the two to their environment was very different.

In terms of the content of their thought, Hsün Tzu focused upon the rites with a view to emphasizing the differences of noble and humble status, to stressing the distinctions between superiors and inferiors, and to differentiating between ruler and servitor, as the essentials of the matter. If he did not elevate the ruler, it would then be impossible to gain the functioning of these distinctions. Therefore there could not be two [competing] rulers, for his power and effectiveness depended on his being alone in eminence. This point is an obvious one. *Ch.* 9, “Wang chih,” says: “If the social distinctions are equalized, then there will not be enough to go around. If powers are shared evenly, then there can be no unity. If the masses are all uniform, they cannot then be directed.” And further: “That two persons of noble status cannot serve each other and two persons of humble status cannot direct each other, is simply in the nature of things.” [i.e., “*t’ien shu*,” or “the inherent nature of things”; this expression is sometimes translated less naturalistically, i.e., “heaven-ordained principle.” Dubs, *Works of Hsüntze*, p. 124, translates it “—this is a law of nature.”] The purport of this passage is abundantly clear. So much for the first of Hsün Tzu’s theoretical necessities for the exaltation of the ruler.

The ruler occupies a position of extreme importance in Hsün Tzu’s thought-system. In one place Hsün Tzu has said: “Heaven and earth constitute the beginning from which comes life. The rites and righteousness constitute the beginning from which comes order. The ruler constitutes the beginning from which come the rites and righteousness.” And further: “It is the ruler whose skills bring into being the social group.”<sup>101</sup> “The strength of all the ‘hundred clans’ needs [the ruler] in order to accomplish anything; the social group composed of all the ‘hundred clans’ need him in order to be harmonious; the wealth and goods of all the ‘hundred clans’ depends upon him in order to be accumulated; the situation of all the ‘hundred clans’ depends on him in order to be secure; the life-span of all the persons of the ‘hundred clans’ depends on him in order to reach high longevity.”<sup>102</sup> [“*Po hsing*” or “the hundred clans” originally meant the upper strata of society, which alone had surnames; during the Chou period it came to mean “the people” as clan institutions and the posses-

sion of surnames came to include the whole society. In the *Hsün Tzu* the broader meaning is usually more appropriate.] “Now suppose we try to remove the authority of the ruler, and be without the reforming influences of the rites and of righteousness; suppose we try to remove the order gained through laws and governmental measures and to be without the restraining influences of punishments. Let us then stand by and observe how the people of the world would treat each other. In this situation, the strong would do injury to the weak and despoil them; the many would inflict violence on the few and tear them to shreds; the world would be plunged into chaos and destruction in the shortest time.”<sup>103</sup> Thus governmental organization depends on the ruler of sage-like wisdom in order to come into existence, and political life also depends on a perpetuating monarchical institution for its continuing existence. The issue of order versus chaos is bound up with one man, so the honor and glory accruing to him must be of another kind than that which might attach to the broad masses of men. Herein lies the second of Hsün Tzu’s theoretical necessities for the exaltation of the ruler.

Furthermore: “The ruler of men is the essential agency for controlling the allotments and assignments [*fen*, in society].”<sup>104</sup> Therefore it follows that the ruler’s responsibilities of office are to determine clearly the powers and duties of all the servitors and common people of the entire nation and to supervise them in these. Should the ruler occupy something less than the most elevated of positions, and possess less than the greatest authority, then his important responsibilities would be difficult of execution. And this is an additional reason for Hsün Tzu’s elevation of the ruler.

Because of these several reasons, Hsün Tzu somewhat altered the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, and drew closer to those of Shen Pu-hai and Han Fei [as representatives of Legalism]. Confucians of the T’ang and Sung dynasties regarded Mencius as the heir to the orthodox line of Confucian thought, and designated Hsün Tzu’s theories a “minor blemish” [*Hsiao tz’u*]. When one considers his two tenets, that human nature is evil, and that the ruler should be exalted, there is indeed a basis for such criticism. But we can carry this still a step further. For in the benevolence-based political thought of Confucius and Mencius, despite an all-pervading consistency between personal ethics and political life, the inner and the outer lives could still be separated. When the *Tao* prevails, come forth; when the *Tao* is lacking, then withdraw into concealment. [*Analects*, VIII/13/2.] When able to achieve prominence and success, extend benefits to all; when frustrated by ill-fortune, then cultivate one’s own person. [*Mencius*, VII/i/9/6.] Even when the world was enveloped in general disorder, one could still flee the world’s demands and be a

man of noble worth in private and seclusion. Thus beyond political life the individual could still maintain his personal ethical life. Hsün Tzu wanted, through the ruler's and the elite's ritual forms [*li*] and concept of righteousness [*yi*], to overcome the predilection for evil inherent in man's nature. If the ruler were deficient in *Tao*, violence and disorder would be the consequence. In such circumstances of life-and-death urgency for all, could the individual stand aside in the deluded hope of maintaining his own perfection? Therefore, before good government is established there is no possibility of cultivating the self; and beyond political life there can be no area of personal ethical life. Although Hsün Tzu did not explicitly affirm that the individual has an absolute political duty, he in fact implies something like the Legalists' views about the importance of the state as compared with the relative unimportance of the individual. History records that Han Fei Tzu and Li Ssu both studied under Hsün Tzu, and it is precisely in those aspects of his thought which diverge from the Confucian tradition that he can be regarded as a predecessor of the Legalist school.<sup>105</sup>

Nonetheless, in his exaltation of the ruler, Hsün Tzu still clearly displays fundamental points of difference from the Legalists. The Legalists lean toward the concept of the ruler as the principal element of government, whereas Hsün Tzu did not abandon the ideal that the people are of paramount importance. For Hsün Tzu's principal reason for elevating the ruler was that the ruler had important responsibilities and duties. In modern terminology the ruler was, in Hsün Tzu's conception of him, a high and mighty, majestic and dignified, public servant; he was by no means the possessor of the vast earth and the masses of its people. Whenever he failed to fulfill responsibilities incumbent upon him, by the nature of his office [*t'ien chih*] he thereby lost his lofty majesty, and he could be dethroned or could be executed. Hsün Tzu has stated that "It is not for the sake of the ruler that heaven brings forth the people. Rather, it is for the sake of the people that heaven establishes the ruler." And, further: "When a servitor slays his ruler, or an inferior assassinates his superior, surrenders his ruler's cities to the enemy, violates his obligation of loyal service, and fails to serve faithfully unto death, there is no other cause than that the ruler has brought it upon himself by misgovernment." And also: "The one to whom the world voluntarily turns is to be called a king; if the world rejects him, it is called the demise [of the state]. Thus Chieh and Chou were not really the possessors of kingdoms, and T'ang and Wu were not guilty of regicide."<sup>106</sup> [The former were bad last rulers of the Hsia and Shang dynasties, who no longer deserved their thrones; the latter were the glorious founders of the succeeding Shang and Chou dynasties, who killed and succeeded Kings Chieh and Chou.] The meaning of these passages

is the same as Mencius' statement about "cutting off a common fellow." [Mencius' way of referring to the death of the tyrant King Chou; see Section Two of this chapter, and footnote 38.] They constitute full proof that Hsün Tzu is correctly to be regarded as an important further development within the Confucian tradition.

#### SECTION SIX

##### *THE METHODS OF GOVERNING AND THE MEN WHO GOVERN*

Hsün Tzu's theories, at certain points, come very close to those of the Legalists, as has been briefly indicated in the preceding section. The boundary line separating rites [*li*] from law [*fa*] is a delicate and by no means easily distinguished one that defies too ready a definition. Just as the rites, so too has law [*fa*] both narrower and broader meanings. The narrower meaning of it is that of articulated regulations governing the conduct of lawsuits and the adjudication of cases. In its broader definition it includes the institutions by which government is constituted and civil order maintained. If we examine the issue with reference solely to the narrower definition, the distinction between the rites and the law is an obvious one, but if we take the broader definitions of both, the two may be readily confused. We may note that in feudal clan-law society, all relationships derived from personal factors; institutions therefore gave prime importance to the rites. Capping, marriage, mourning and sacrifice, the rural archery contests and wine-drinking ceremonies, court audiences, ceremonial visits and offerings, and all of the written regulations for these, were in themselves adequate to maintain social order and ensure a well-governed society. Then when the clan-law system degenerated, the relationships deriving from the personal element gradually gave way to those deriving from place and status, and those in control of governments were compelled to establish new policies that "gave honor and privilege to the nobly placed" [*kuei kuei*] and that replaced the older ones that "treated relatives with familial regard" [*ch'in ch'in*]. But the old names of the rites had long been in use, and were not always abandoned and displaced as this transition occurred. Thus the newly developing institutions might still utilize the terminology associated with the old rites, though their content gradually became more broadly inclusive than formerly, and their meaning came to be merged with that of law in the broader sense.<sup>107</sup> Hsün Tzu's ideas about governing through the rites also apparently manifest this transition period trend. Thus he stressed *li* but not as the purest Confucian would; he ventured close to Legalism, yet did not end up in the same camp with Shen Pu-hai and Lord Shang.

In his elevation of the ruler, Hsün Tzu acknowledged "the one who sat facing the south and gave audience to



the problems of government” [the Son of Heaven] to be the single pivot on which the issue of order or chaos in the state was balanced. This certainly is a concept that is not present in the older *li*. For in the earlier times when clan-law reigned supreme, the nobles and hereditary ministers had the privilege of participation in government, the great clans could not be affronted, and the ruler could not arrogate powers to himself alone. Here Hsün Tzu’s alteration of the ancient institutions is clearly evident. When we examine his statements describing the content of the rites, we find the antique and the contemporary meanings of them juxtaposed and intermixed;<sup>108</sup> and in the ideas set forth throughout the thirty-two essays [comprising *The Hsün Tzu*] the contemporary meaning seems to predominate. Thus, in terms of the whole, it is chiefly the new meaning that he is concerned to explain and uphold. And if we speak generally, in terms of the whole body of thought, the focus of Hsün Tzu’s concern is not the ancient rites of the feudal world; rather, it is the “methods of governing” [*chih fa*] in which the old and the new are combined. [The word “*fa*,” although designating the polar opposite from *li*, or institutions based on ritual propriety, also contains the idea of “regular methods,” and in some places must be translated “method” instead of “law.”] Here we shall take up a few of the more important aspects of this and discuss them briefly.

One: The method of employing persons. Hsün Tzu felt that the ruler should possess full authority, yet could not rule by himself. He must have “persons possessing his full confidence in intimate attendance” in order to “see afar and gather in all that influences the people”; and he must have chief ministers and advisors to serve as “essential aids,” persons who would be “adequate to the task of making his will known and resolving undecided matters in distant places” to be dispatched to the courts of the neighboring feudal lords.<sup>109</sup> In this way, both at the court and in the provinces, in external relations and in domestic affairs, the right personnel would be available, and the ruler could achieve good government without undue labor and toil. Hsün Tzu clearly had a profound belief in the division of labor between ruler and servitor, each having his own duties and responsibilities. The superior’s meddling with the inferior, or the inferior’s encroaching upon the superior, were both to be avoided. The various officials each had their specific offices and functions, and the ruler, on the other hand, showed his competence in assigning specific functions to these officials.” “For should one person now try to administer to the whole realm, he might persist for a long time but would still be unable to accomplish all the tasks of governing. So he has others act in his behalf. Whether in the whole realm or in the single state of a feudal ruler, if the ruler insists on doing all himself before he can

be satisfied, then he will merely be subjecting himself to the greatest possible toil, and drudgery, and wasted pains.” But if the ruler is capable of “judging good qualities and deputing the able and so bestowing office”; if he can command his “scholars and great officers to assume separate duties and administer, establish his state on the rulers of the feudal principalities, each with its territory and its responsibilities, with the Three Dukes in command of the Marches and submitting their advice, then the ruler can well fold his hands and relax.”<sup>110</sup>

The essence of Hsün Tzu’s discussions on appointing people to office can be summed up in a few statements. In *ch.* 12, “Chün Tao,” he says: “The way (*tao*) of selecting men is to assess them according to the *li* [rites, propriety]; the rule [*fa*] for employing men is to restrict them according to [a system of] ranks. Keep them within the boundaries of propriety as they take action to achieve righteous government; evaluate them according to their actual achievement as they consider alternatives to adopt or reject. As time passes by, compare their accumulated merit and promote them accordingly. Then the inferior ones will not reach exalted positions; the light will not be expected to counter-balance the heavy; the stupid will not direct the intelligent. And thus in all circumstances there will be no serious errors.”

However, in the above passage, where it states that “the inferior ones will not reach exalted positions,” it means that there is a system of ranks and steps within the officialdom indicative of merit in office. That is not to say that within the highest ranks there should be no men of humble background, or that office and emolument should be hereditary. For what Hsün Tzu advocated was the destruction of the powerful great clans in favor of a civil bureaucracy in which the standard should be that of individual talent and ability. Thus he said: “Even though a man be the son or grandson of a prince, duke, knight, or great officer, if he cannot be classed as a man of propriety and righteousness, then he is to be counted a commoner. Even though a man be the son or grandson of a commoner, if he has acquired learning, and observes right behavior, and can be classed as a man of propriety and righteousness, then he should be counted as one of the chief ministers, knights or great officers.” [See above, p. 320.] This is precisely the opposite of the hereditary emolument system; its purport is abundantly clear and no further comment is needed. So we may note that Hsün Tzu’s chief principle in granting office to a person is that an open system must be established in order to avoid misuse of position for private ends. And the references in the foregoing passage to “assessing according to *li*, restricting according to ranks,” and “evaluating their actual accomplishments and promoting them according to merit,” are all extensions of that idea. For the private ends that can be

served by giving persons office are in most cases those of the ruler himself. Therefore the establishment of open or public institutions of office was intended to forestall the ruler's private dealings. Hsün Tzu has discussed the calamities caused by permitting private interests to prevail. "An enlightened ruler may give gold, gems, and valuables to someone to whom he is personally attached and wishes to show personal affection; he should never grant him office and rank, nor assign him government functions to perform. Why is that? Because it is not in his own interest or that of the recipient. If the latter is incompetent and the ruler employs him, then the ruler is muddle-headed. If the servitor is incompetent, and he makes pretence of competence, then the servitor is treacherous. When the ruler overhead is muddle-headed and the servitor is treacherous, the end is at hand; that is the way of the great disaster."<sup>111</sup>

The essential features of Hsün Tzu's rules for employing persons are more or less complete in the foregoing. We should remember that, by the end of the Warring States Period, the hereditary chief ministership was already a vanished institution; yet the person of ability still had no certain path to office. At the lower level the roaming political advisors were establishing the pattern of quick rise to high office. Men like Su Ch'in and Chang Yi are the most prominent examples of the type. [They were famous "smooth talking" political strategists who manipulated the power alliances of the late fourth century. See above, p. 302.] On the top, rulers were increasing their arbitrary power, elevating favorites and favoring sycophants. Such examples as a Tsang Ts'ang's stopping his ruler [from going to call on Mencius; *Mencius*, i/ii/16; Legge, pp. 177-79. Tsang Ts'ang was of the house that had earned Confucius' criticism in an earlier age, see, *Analects*, xiv/15; Legge, p. 281], and a Tzu-chih receiving the throne [of Yen; the muddle-headed King K'uai, reigned 319-311 B.C., who tried to abdicate in favor of his sycophant minister, Tzu-chih] all illustrate what happened when such favorites were employed. Hsün Tzu's rules for employing persons must have been aimed at this kind of practice, in the hope of correcting its evils.

Two: The method of exhorting and prohibiting. In this area Hsün Tzu had relatively little to say that was new. In *ch.* 24, "Chün-tzu," he says: "In antiquity, punishment did not exceed the crime, and noble rank did not exceed its recipient's virtues. Hence there are cases of executing a father and appointing the son to office, or of executing an elder brother and having the younger brother as one's servitor. Punishments and penalties were not in excess of the crime, while rank and rewards were not in excess of the recipient's virtues. Clearly and distinctly each person was advanced according to his loyalty and devotion. In this way those

who did good deeds were exhorted to continue, and those who did evil were stopped. Punishments and penalties were used with extreme infrequency, yet the respect for authority was everywhere present. Governmental regulations were abundantly clear, and they were made effective as if by magic." What Hsün Tzu advocated, by and large, did not go beyond the scope of the Confucian school's stress on cautious use of punishments;<sup>112</sup> it is unnecessary to extend this discussion.

Three: The method of rectifying names. His *ch.* 22, "Cheng Ming," says: "When sage-kings instituted names, the names were fixed and actualities distinguished. The sage-kings' principles were carried out and their wills understood. Then the people were carefully led and unified. Therefore, the practice of splitting terms and arbitrarily creating names to confuse correct names, thus causing much doubt in people's minds and bringing about much litigation, was called great wickedness. It was a crime that was punished like private manufacturing of credentials and measurements, and therefore the people dared not rely on strange terms created to confuse correct names. Hence the people were honest. Being honest, they were easily employed. Being easily employed, they achieved results. Since the people dared not rely on strange terms created to confuse correct names, they singlemindedly followed the law and carefully obeyed orders. In this way, the traces of their accomplishments spread. The spreading of traces and the achievement of results are the highest point of good government. This is the result of careful abiding by the conventional meaning of names." And he says further: "Thus the people can be easily united in the Way [*Tao*], although they cannot be given all the reasons for things. Hence the wise ruler deals with the people by authority and guides them on the Way; he orders things by his decrees, explains things by his proclamations, and restrains them by punishments. Thus his people are turned into the Way as by magic. Why should he use dialectic?"<sup>113</sup> Confucius had said that "commoners do not discuss public affairs" and that they "cannot be made to understand." [*Analects*, xvi/2; Waley, p. 204, and viii/9; Waley, p. 134.] The essential foundations of Hsün Tzu's rectification of names is thus derived from Confucius. However, Confucius took benevolence and love as the basis of all government. Hence even though he was somewhat scornful of the people's intelligence, no one practicing his manner of government would fail to maintain a benevolent despotism. Hsün Tzu strung together the concepts of the rectification of names, of the evil nature of man, and of government according to the rites, and lost something of Confucius' warm-hearted and generous-spirited doctrine. Li Ssu took these concepts and applied them in office as the First Emperor's chief minister, further adding to and developing them so that they could

take form in the policy of “distinguishing black from white and fixing a single standard.” [Quoting *Shih Chi*, ch. 6, “Basic Annals of the Ch’in dynasty,” where the First Emperor’s absolute and arbitrary policies are described.] Thus we can see that Hsün Tzu’s rectification of names and Li Ssu’s keeping the people ignorant are not far apart. Moreover, this is not the only place wherein we can see that Hsün Tzu was not purely Confucian.

Mencius too had on some occasions taken upon himself the duty of defending the doctrines of the former sages, yet where Mencius felt compelled “to oppose Yang Chu and Mo Tzu, and . . . drive away their licentious expressions” [*Mencius*, iii/ii/10; Legge, p. 283], he was merely setting his own voice against those of opponents, and for it he had been somewhat derisively labelled a disputatious person. When we examine carefully his responses to the Kings of Ch’i and Liang we cannot find that he ever revealed any intent to use the arm of the state to put an end to “perverse teachings.” Though Mencius was courageous in rushing to the defense of the Way, he never failed to display what in the West is considered to be the enlightened attitude that pits theory against theory, attacks discourse with discourse. To come to Hsün Tzu, in setting up for the rulers the methods of rectifying names and prohibiting fallacies, it is not too much to say that he was in a sense the initiator of a development that was to have evil consequences [literally, “was as the person who first made burial figurines”; cf. *Mencius*, i/i/4/6; Legge, p. 133], in the subsequent burning of the books by the First Emperor. His actual intent may have been no different from that of Mencius, but the methods he was willing to employ were indeed different!

Nevertheless, in urgently promoting his methods of governing, despite some impurity of content, Hsün Tzu looked solely to the Sage Kings of the ancient Three Dynasties, and sought his models there. Confucius said of himself that he followed the Chou; he repudiated those who, living in the present, would go back to outworn ways of antiquity. [See *Chung Yung* 28/1; Legge, *Doctrine of the Mean*, p. 423.] Hsün Tzu, taking up this point, developed his theories about “emulating the later kings.” He wrote: “If one would observe the traces of the Sage Kings [the text has “former kings,” amended here to agree with standard editions], he might best do so where they are most clear. The later kings are so. Those later kings were the rulers of the whole realm [*t’ien hsia*]. To abandon these later kings and talk about earlier antiquity is to be compared with abandoning one’s own ruler and serving someone else’s.”<sup>114</sup> Mencius extolled “the sages [by whom] the human relations are perfectly exhibited,” and urged people to imitate the former kings. [*Mencius*, iv/i/2/1; Legge, p. 292.] Hsün Tzu also said: “One who speaks of flavors will cite Yi-ya, and one who

speaks of sounds will cite Master K’uang. [Two gentlemen mentioned in the *Spring and Autumn Annals* as experts on cooking and music, respectively. Mencius also cited them in a somewhat similar passage; see *Mencius*, vi/i/7/5 and 6; Legge, pp. 405-06.] One who speaks of good government will cite the Three Kings [of antiquity; the founders of the Three Dynasties, including the founder of the Chou dynasty]. Since the Three Kings have already prescribed laws and standards and instituted rites and music, and transmitted these, if one were to fail to employ them, and were to change to others of his own making, how different would that be from altering the recipes of Yi-ya and changing the pitches of Master K’uang?”<sup>115</sup> It would appear from this that, in discussing institutions, Hsün Tzu was not far different from Confucius and Mencius.

If we were to ask wherein the methods he would employ are different, the answer would be in two parts: One: As we attempt to distinguish the discrepancies in Confucius’ and Hsün Tzu’s governing methods, we should focus on their content, and should not merely observe their terminology. Hsün Tzu said: “From among the Five Emperors [of very early antiquity, prior to the Chou dynasty], no governmental institutions have been passed down to us. . . . Some of the institutions of the Great Yü and King T’ang have been transmitted, but they are not so ascertainable as those of the Chou,” as if those [still later Chou] institutions of King Wu, the Duke of Chou, were indeed so clear and accessible to reference, and there were points of difference between them and those of the earlier kings. But in discussing the thought of Mencius we have already pointed out that insofar as possible, the feudal lords had by that time made away with the records of the Chou court relevant to the regulations about dignities and emoluments. [See above, p. 300; also, *Mencius*, v/ii/2/1-2 and ff.; Legge, p. 373. Mencius says the later feudal princes did so to conceal the extent of their own usurpations.] From this we can deduce that the bamboo tablet records of the time of Kings Wen and Wu [by Mencius’ time] were long since fragmentary and incomplete. Hsün Tzu lived still later than Mencius, so there can be no doubt that he was even less able to set his eyes on the complete *Institutes of Chou*. Hence what he refers to as the “clear traces of the later kings” need not, in fact, be taken literally. Hsün Tzu said: “If you want to know about earlier ages, then examine the Chou ways; if you want to know the Chou ways then examine the rulers whom they honored.”<sup>116</sup> The import of this is more or less evident. Nonetheless, what Hsün Tzu knew as the “later kings” certainly were [still more recent. historical rulers, and] not what Confucius had in mind when he referred to Kings Wen and Wu [as “later kings”]. Two: We can find still further evidence in the examples Hsün Tzu gives of the methods of governing. In the several foregoing discussions

of various methods of governing, we have already discussed those points which were at variance with antique institutions and antique principles. And Hsün Tzu said: "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."<sup>117</sup> Despite this, the content of his methods of ruling shows in many places the admixture of elements of Warring States Period provenance. Hence in his self-proclaimed "reviving antiquity," Hsün Tzu violated his own prohibition against "using names to confuse realities," and his proclamation that he was "reviving antiquity" is not sufficient to prove that he really did follow Confucius' models.

Hsün Tzu's theories truly do show points of continuity with the spirit of Confucius, but these are notably not to be found in his discussions of the methods of governing; rather, they are to be found in his corollary emphasis on the persons who should do the governing. In short, Hsün Tzu's political thought held law to be non-essential, and regarded the human element as basic. Thus, where he seems close to Shen Pu-hai and Lord Shang [i.e., representatives of the origins of Legalist theory], it is in those more superficial things; but in the essentials of his system he is quite in line with Confucius and Mencius.

In his statements on the men who should do the governing, Hsün Tzu is most explicit in his essay *ch.* 12, "Chün Tao," or, "The Way of the Ruler." His views take as their starting point the idea that with the right men government flourishes, but without the right men government decays and ceases [paraphrasing the *Doctrine of the Mean*, xx/2; see Legge, p. 405], and he develops this theme further. His statement begins: "There are chaos-producing rulers but there are no [innately] chaotic states; there are order-inducing men but there are no [of themselves] order-inducing methods of governing. Yi's [i.e., the great mythological archer of antiquity] methods have not been lost, but Yi's do not score bullseyes in every generation; Yü's [the great legendary King Yü, founder of the Hsia dynasty, whose mastery of hydraulic engineering won him the throne] methods are still preserved, but the Hsia dynasty does not reign on, generation after generation. Thus we can say that methods and laws cannot stand by themselves; precedents cannot realize themselves in practice. Get the right men and the methods can be employed; lose the right men and all is lost. For the methods are the beginnings of government, but the superior man is the source of the methods. Therefore, when one has superior men, even though the fixed methods [or laws] be incomplete, there will be sufficient

[resource] to extend [to all needs]. Without superior men, however, even though the methods [or laws] are complete, they will not be employed with judgment; and they will not be adjusted to changing conditions, and this will be enough to cause chaos." We may note that in this discussion, Hsün Tzu seems to have dual and complementary meanings. The one is that laws alone are incapable of being effective, and the second is that the superior man is enough to carry on government. In his *ch.* 9, "Wang Chih," he says: "For if there be laws and methods but [men enforcing them] do not discuss and revise them, then matters for which they do not provide will certainly be left untended. When there be duties and offices but incumbents are not thoroughly understanding men, then whatever the office fails to provide for will fall into neglect. [Watson's translation, p. 35, is slightly different, as is Dubs's; p. 123.] And "Chün Tao" says further: "Matching the halves of tallies and separating the parts of a contract are things done to insure good faith. If the ruler lusts for power and engages in plotting, then his ministers and officials, and deceiving, scheming people, will take advantage of that fact, so that cheating will ensue. Drawing lots and casting for shares are done to be fair to all [the precise identification of this means of drawing lots is uncertain, but the general meaning of the passage is clear]: If the ruler plays false for his own selfish ends, then his ministers and officials will take advantage of that fact, and, in consequence, inequity will ensue. Balance-weights and scales are used to achieve even measure: If the ruler is given to upsetting the balance, then then his ministers and officials will take advantage of this and peril will ensue. Pecks and bushels and grain measures are used to obtain accuracy: If the ruler pursues personal advantage, then his ministers and officials will take advantage of this, and debasement will ensue. There will be generous taking and parsimonious giving, and unlimited exactions on the people. Therefore, it is evident that implements and devices are but the trappings of good government, not the source of good government." These passages all are to make clear the idea that laws and methods cannot function of themselves.

Again in *Chün Tao*, Hsün Tzu says further: "Someone asked about the administration of the state. I replied, 'I know something about the cultivation of one's person; I am not informed about the administration of the state. The ruler may be likened to the standard, and the people, its shadow.'" And "If the ruler is devoted to propriety and righteousness, honors the worthy and employs the able, and is free of the pursuit of personal advantage, then his assistants will also practice unselfishness and self-effacement wholeheartedly. They will be wholly loyal and trustworthy, and will diligently carry out their roles as servitors. In such

circumstances, then, even among the humble people there will be good faith even without matching tallies and separating of the parts of a contract. There will be fairness without drawing lots and casting shares. There will be even measure without using balance-weights and scales. And, there would be accuracy without using pecks and bushels and measures of grain. In that way, rewards will not need to be used and the people will yet be persuaded [to be upright]; penalties will not need to be used and the people will yet be compliant. The offices of government will not need to toil, yet things will be orderly. Governing will not need to become burdensome, yet customs will nonetheless be admirable." This passage displays the idea that the superior man is sufficient resource with which to accomplish good government.

All the foregoing statements are quite compatible with the thought of Confucius, and they are more than adequate to manifest the fundamental difference between Hsün Tzu and the Legalists: The Legalists lodged the authoritarian power of the ruler within trappings and devices [of office], whereas Hsün Tzu wanted the personal stature of the ruler to be manifested above and beyond the legal institutions of government.<sup>118</sup> The former lay sole stress on the methods of governing, whereas the latter seeks governors to put into practice the methods of governing. Hsün Tzu's is a theory of government concurrently of men and of laws and methods, and in truth it is directly heir to the teachings of Confucius,<sup>119</sup> not some new creation of Hsün Tzu's. Nonetheless, we cannot suppress a certain feeling about this issue. Confucius and Mencius emphasized the morality of the ruler and deemphasized his power, whereas Shen Pu-hai and Lord Shang emphasized the ruler's power and did not heed the issue of his morality. Hsün Tzu was concerned with both. Drawing all the elements together and retaining all the good features [of both], his theory would seem to achieve the best possible solution. When we examine the facts, however, we find that the rulers of his time, or at least those that he may have encountered, included: in the State of Ch'i, Kings Wei, Hsüan, and Min; in the State of Yen, Prince Tzu-k'uai; in the State of Ch'u, King Ch'ing-hsiang; in the State of Chao, King Hsiao-ch'eng; and in Ch'in, King Chao-hsiang. Among this collection of rulers there was not one who could serve as the basis for Hsün Tzu's ideal of the ruler of men. And in the period from Ch'in and Han and thereafter, Confucians distorting their school's teachings appropriated Hsün Tzu's idea about the exaltation of the ruler, added to it the ideal concept of who should govern men, and with that flattered rulers, venerating [emperors] to the highest limits. This current grew and spread to the point where rulers who might be incompetent, muddle-headed, violent tyrants not only came to wield the most enormous powers but also bore the most extravagantly flattering of

titles and descriptions. Such confusing of realities with names contributed to subsequent harm of no insignificant degree. Even though this was something Hsün Tzu had no way of foreseeing, his theoretical formulation was faulty to begin with, as this line of reasoning indicates. In this respect he was inferior to Confucius and Mencius, who placed their dominant emphasis on the ruler's virtues, hoping to overcome some of the shortcomings of the feudal order, or even to Shen Pu-hai and Lord Shang in their sole reliance on laws and methods whereby possibly to forestall some of authoritarianism's evils. In the more than two thousand years that followed, if we were to seek even the quality of government that Hsün Tzu saw when he visited the [authoritarian] State of Ch'in, we would not find many eras when government could even measure up to that.<sup>120</sup> Thus we might say that Hsün Tzu, in seeking to preserve both ideals, in fact destroyed both of them.

#### SECTION SEVEN

##### *THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN HEAVEN AND MAN*

In the China of the Spring and Autumn Period there still persisted some remnants of the ancient religious practices honoring gods and spirits. The examples of superstitious belief recorded in the *Tso Chuan* are by no means rare. A typical case is that of King Ch'eng of Ch'u, commenting on the fate of the fugitive Prince Ch'ung-erh of Chin, saying: "When Heaven intends to prosper a man, who can stop him?" And another is that of Wang-sun Man, replying to the King of Ch'u's [grossly inappropriate] question about the [royal Chou] tripods with the comment: "Though the virtue of Chou is decayed, the decree of Heaven has not yet changed."<sup>121</sup> These are examples of the belief that the rise and fall of states was determined by the Will of Heaven. A further example is found in Shih Wen-po's statement to the Marquis of Chin, explaining a solar eclipse: "When there is not good government in a state, and good men are not employed, it brings reproof to itself from the calamity of the sun and moon." And Duke Min of Sung, replying to the Duke of Lu's messenger who brought condolences on the flood in Sung, said: "I must confess my want of reverence, for which heaven has sent down this plague."<sup>122</sup> These are examples of the belief that natural calamities were caused by bad government. In a further example, King Hui of Chou asked a certain Kuo, "the Historiographer of the Interior," why a spirit had descended in the region called Hsin, eliciting the reply: "When a state is about to flourish, intelligent Spirits descend in it, to survey its virtue. When it is going to perish, Spirits also descend in it, to behold its wickedness. Thus there have been instances of states flourishing from Spirits appearing, and also of states perishing. . . ."<sup>123</sup> This is an example of the belief that ghosts and spirits portend by

their actions the rise and decline of states. Other examples, like the ghosts of P'eng-sheng [*Tso Chuan*, Eighth year of Duke Chuang; Legge, p. 82] and Po-yu [cf. Seventh year of Duke Chao; Legge, p. 618; cf. Chan, *Source Book*, p. 12, for this and similar anecdotes, also, p. 445, below,] or prodigies like the talking stone [cf. Eighth year of Duke Chao; Legge, p. 622] and the duelling snakes [cf. Fourteenth year of Duke Chuang; Legge, p. 92] and such extraordinary events would be all the more difficult to cite fully. But this is enough to demonstrate that right down to the late Chou, the practices referred to in the statement "the Yin people honor spirits" [*Li Chi*, ch. 32, "Piao Chi," paragraph 19] were still not wholly eradicated. The Chou people, on the other hand, were said to "serve spirits and reverence gods, but keep aloof from them" [*Li Chi*, ch. 32, "Piao Chi," paragraph 11], and the influence of the Chou policies and doctrines [in lessening the role of the irrational] seems to have been of some significance. In the Spring and Autumn Period there occasionally appeared some individuals capable of casting off superstition. Tzu-ch'an of the State of Cheng refused to believe in spirits. When Pei-tso told him that a certain comet portended a conflagration, he replied: "The way of heaven is distant, while the way of man is near. We cannot reach to the former; what means have we of knowing it?"<sup>124</sup> His statement is quite penetrating and perceptive. Although Confucius' attitude was not so thoroughgoing as Tzu-ch'an's, yet from his reply to Tzu-lu's question about serving spirits, "While you are not able to serve men, how can you serve their spirits," and from his reply to Fan Ch'ih's question about what constitutes wisdom, "... while respecting spiritual beings, to keep aloof from them..."<sup>125</sup>—from these it is perfectly clear that in this Confucius accepted the Way of the Chou people. But as a Sung descendant Confucius may not have totally cast off those teachings of the Yin people's which stressed veneration of the spirits.<sup>126</sup> If the *Doctrine of the Mean* was written by [Confucius' grandson] Tzu-ssu, then the various places in it where it speaks of ghosts and spirits,<sup>127</sup> if not representing the "true mind" [*hsin fa*,"] of the Confucian school, still might possibly reflect the grandfather's and his grandson's family tradition. Mencius spoke much about heaven's will; his thought at this point also seems somewhat close to the views of antiquity. Coming to Hsün Tzu, we note that he spoke exhaustively about the distinction between heaven and man, wholly adopting the Chou doctrine, and looking in the direction of Tzu-ch'an, thus opposing Tzu-ssu and Mencius.

Hsün Tzu argued most forcefully that the will of heaven, [or of nature, i.e., *t'ien ming*, the same term that as a specific political concept, is translated "The Mandate of Heaven"], calamities and freakish phenomena bore no relationship to government and human affairs; his expositions of this are

extremely clear and vigorous. In ch. 17, "T'ien lun," he says: "Nature [*t'ien*, heaven] operates with constant regularity. It does not exist for the sake of [sage-emperor] Yao nor does it cease to exist because of [wicked king] Chieh." And further: "Are order and chaos due to heaven? I say: the sun, the moon, the stars, planets, and auspicious periods of the calendar were the same in the time of [sage-king] Yü as in that of [wicked king] Chieh. Yet Yü brought about order while Chieh brought about chaos. Order and chaos are not due to heaven." [The two quotations follow Chan, *Source Book*, pp. 116, 118. See also Fung/Bodde, p. 285.] That is, since order and chaos are not the will of heaven, it can only be that heaven and man do not intervene in each other's affairs. "Man has his government" [*Hsün Tzu*, ch. 17, Chan, *Source Book*, p. 117]; his whole attention is devoted to this. Man's orderings can overcome heaven [or nature]; he has no reason for concern or fear. "If the foundations of living (i.e., agriculture and sericulture) are strengthened and are economically used, then nature cannot bring impoverishment. If people's nourishment is sufficient and their labor in keeping with the seasons, then nature cannot inflict sickness. If the Way is cultivated without deviation, then nature cannot cause misfortune. Therefore flood and drought cannot cause a famine, extreme cold or heat cannot cause illness, and evil spiritual beings cannot cause misfortune." Thus Hsün Tzu says: "... one who understands the distinctive functions of heaven and man may be called a perfect man," and further, "The Sage, however, does not seek to know heaven." [All three passages follow, with minor changes, the translation of Chan, *Source Book*, pp. 117-18. Chan uses "Nature" interchangeably with "Heaven" for *t'ien*; all other translators merely use "Heaven." Here we use "heaven," "nature," etc.]

Hsün Tzu went a step further and explained why calamities and unusual phenomena need not give rise to fear, in terms that are fully reasonable and realistic, capable of dispelling obsessions and correcting fallacious thinking. He created exchanges of questions and answers [one of which] follows: "When stars fall or trees make a [strange] noise, all people in the state are afraid and ask 'Why?' I reply: There is no need to ask why. These are changes of heaven and earth, the transformation of *Yin* and *Yang*, and rare occurrences. It is all right to marvel at them, but wrong to fear them. For there has been no age that has not had the experiences of eclipses of the sun and moon, unreasonable rain or wind, or occasional appearances of strange stars. If the ruler is enlightened and the government peaceful, even if all these things happen at the same time, they would do no harm. If the ruler is unenlightened and the government follows a dangerous course, even if not a single one of them occurs, it would do no good." [Translation slightly

modified from Chan, *Source Book*, p. 120.] However, we should note especially that Hsün Tzu's sole interest was in dispelling superstition; he was not seeking to alter customs and practices. Hence his statement: "When people pray for rain, it rains. Why? I say: There is no need to ask why. It is the same as when it rains when no one prays for it. When people try to save the sun or moon from being eclipsed, or when they pray for rain in a drought, or when they decide an important affair only after divination, they do so not because they believe they will get what they are after, but to use them as ornament [*wen*] to governmental measures. Hence the ruler intends them to be an ornament, but the common people think they are supernatural. It is good fortune to regard them as ornamental but it is evil fortune to regard them as supernatural."<sup>128</sup> [Translation is that of Chan, *Source Book*, p. 121; see also his "Comment" there.]

Beliefs involving the will of heaven, spiritual beings, and the like are deeply imbedded in men's minds. Even a sage like Confucius was unable wholly to escape their compelling force. For Hsün Tzu to have been able to elaborate on the ideas of Tzu-ch'an and develop from them a political view that denied fate and negated spiritual forces, demands that we acknowledge him as a great and bold figure. The unfortunate thing is that established customs are very difficult to get rid of. His words did not, in fact, gain a major following, and in Hsün Tzu's lifetime the followers of Tsou Yen [d. ca. 240 B.C.] were achieving conspicuous successes with the kings of the time by employing their theories about the Five Agents [or Elements] and the Heavenly Cycles. Subsequently, during the Han dynasty, men like Tung Chung-shu and Han Ying further promoted the ideas about the correlative interaction of heaven and man. In that time also, men like Yi Feng and Ching Fang were making even more extended use of theories about the *Yin* and the *Yang*, and the relationship between governmental affairs and the occurrences of calamities and prodigies. During the reign of the Han Emperors Yuan and Ch'eng [48-7 B.C.] there also flourished a movement employing the "River Chart" and the "Prognostication Texts." [I.e., *ho-t'u* and *ch'an-shu*; see Fung/Bodde, especially Vol. II, p. 88 ff.] These things all represent abstruse, fantastic, groundless, or eccentric developments, beyond explicit description. Compared with pre-Ch'in theories, these [Han and later] developments appear still more excessive and extreme. Subsequently, there appeared Wang Yen, who defied ghosts, and Huan T'an, who repudiated the prognostication texts. [See Chapter Eleven, Section One, below, on the late-third-century thinker Wang Yen, and Chapter Nine, Section Five, below, on the early-first-century thinker Huan T'an.] These also were attempts to eradicate superstition; they are worthy of being designated heirs to Hsün Tzu's long-since discontinued line of thought, and, in their solitary but note-

worthy achievements, they again display some resemblance to Hsün Tzu's earlier example.

Yet one area of doubt about this issue persists. Prior to the Spring and Autumn Era in China, the ruler was not an authoritarian despot. Clearly, there were certain limitations upon the employment of the ruler's authority. Among the restricting influences, the aristocracy and the hereditary ministerships, the powerful retainers and the great clans, all imposed direct limitations on the ruler's power. Beyond those, there were indirect limitations in the support or opposition of the common people, the concept of the bestowal and withdrawal of the Heavenly Mandate, the rewards and penalties stemming from spiritual beings, the auspicious or inauspicious portents of the diviners.<sup>129</sup> The theories about the will of heaven and about the basic importance of the people developed by Mohists, Confucians, *Yin-Yang* thinkers, and the other schools had the function of placing implicit restrictions upon the ruler's power. Although the Legalists rejected these devices altogether, nonetheless a certain type of limitation is provided by their own ideal: "The law is something that the ruler and his servitors must jointly maintain." Theories of Han dynasty thinkers about the Five Agents, calamities, and prodigies in fact were heir to the ancient learning, and had as their purpose to limit the ruler; it would seem impossible to deny that altogether. Now, as we observe, Hsün Tzu repudiated the will of heaven, and demolished the superstitious beliefs in calamities and curious phenomena. In so much as this represented an attack on one of the important theoretical means by which the ancients had limited the ruler, and at the same time his thought lacked anything analogous to Shen Pu-hai's and Han Fei's unequivocal laws and respect for the integrity of institutions [with which to limit imperial whim], there must be some serious flaw in his thought that was destined to have undesirable effects in later times. Yet whether he was right or wrong, a constructive or a negative force, is a most difficult question.

We might suggest the following explanation: If we wish to assess the strengths and weaknesses of Hsün Tzu's thought, it would seem that we should first discuss the actual effectiveness of concepts like that of the will of heaven, and of portents revealed through calamities and unnatural phenomena. We must note that when a government establishes religious observances of the ways of spiritual beings, that may indeed achieve a temporary effectiveness. Yet when practiced over a long time, the rulers will ultimately see through the device, and it then will have lost all its original effectiveness. The events of the Han period offer ample evidence that this is indeed so. Such evidence would include the Emperor Wen's issuing a decree blaming himself on the occasion of a solar eclipse,<sup>130</sup> and the Emperor Ai's

issuing a decree dismissing his chief minister on the occasion of some natural disturbances.<sup>131</sup> Tung Chung-shu remonstrated with the Emperor Wu, using the phrase “Heaven and man respond to each other,”<sup>132</sup> and Wang Mang listed a series of auspicious omens to support his usurpation of the Han throne.<sup>133</sup> Pan Piao used the theory of the Destiny of Kings to intimidate Wei Hsiao,<sup>134</sup> and Kung-sun Shu used references to the River Chart and Prognostication Texts in support of his seizure of the Province of Shu. [All the foregoing are events of Han history displaying cynical use of the device of heavenly portents to justify political action.] Thereafter, in the Wei and Chin and Six Dynasties periods there was no usurpation or illicit seizure that did not use the doctrine of the Heavenly Mandate as an elaborate cover. The ancient faith in the awe-inspiring heavenly might was totally dissipated, but this was not all: The misappropriation of the Heavenly Mandate doctrine to facilitate usurpations, regicides, violence, and brutality may well be taken to prove that the doctrine—which Hsün Tzu had attacked, hoping to eradicate it—may not in fact have had any constructive political value anyway. Therefore in all fairness we may conclude that Hsün Tzu’s “Discourse on Heaven” probably did not cost his civilization anything, even though it also does not appear to have gained much for it. [Paraphrasing the original loosely.<sup>135</sup> On the term “T’ien lun,” “Discourses on Nature, or Heaven,” this also is the name of *ch.* 17 of the *Hsün Tzu*, translated by Chan, *Source Book*, pp. 116-24, as “On Nature,” and by others, e.g., Watson, *Hsün Tzu*, pp. 77-89, as “A Discussion of Heaven.”]

## Notes

1. Square brackets indicate that the words enclosed were added by the translator.
2. *Analects*, xi, “Hsien chin” “Distinguished for their achievement in virtuous principles and practice, there were Yen Yuan, Min Tzu-ch’ien, Jan Po-niu, and Chung-kung. In language and speaking there were Tsai Wo and Tzu-kung. In affairs of government, there were Jan Yu and Chi Lu. In the study of literature, there were Tzu-yu and Tzu-hsia. [These are the “four divisions” of Confucius’ teachings. Modified from Legge, pp. 237-38.] The *Han Fei Tzu*, *ch.* 50, “Hsien hsüeh”: “Since the death of Confucius, there have appeared the School of Tzu-chang, the School of Tzu-ssu, the School of the Yen Clan, the School of the Meng Clan, the School of the Ch’i-tiao Clan, the School of the Chung Liang Clan, the School of the Sun Clan, and the School of the Yo-cheng Clan. [These led to the “eight branches” of the School. W. K. Liao translation, *Han Fei Tzu*, Vol. 2, p. 298.]
3. The *Han Shu*, *ch.* 30, “Journal of Literature” under the heading “Ju chia” [“Confucian School”] includes such writings as: *Tzu-ssu*, twenty-three chapters (*p’ien*); *Tseng Tzu*, eighteen chapters; *Ch’i-tiao Tzu*, thirteen chapters; *Mi Tzu* [also read “*Fu Tzu*”], sixteen chapters, etc. Except for the *Mencius* and the *Hsün Tzu*, none of these is extant, except that the teachings of Tzu-ssu may perhaps be evident in the “Chung-yung,” *ch.* 28, and the “Piao chi,” *ch.* 29, of the *Li Chi*, and Tseng Tzu’s teachings may likewise be evident in the “Tseng Tzu li-shih,” the “Pen hsiao,” and other such sections of the *Ta-tai Li Chi*. Even if all the views of Han period persons about the transmission of the canon by the disciples were wholly reliable, they still would provide insufficient evidence to reconstruct the thought of the seventy disciples.
4. *Shih Chi*, *ch.* 74, “Meng, Hsün lieh chuan.” Refer also to the “Introduction” and to footnote 11 of Chapter One of the present work. [The passage cited is also translated in Fung/Bodde, Vol. 1, p. 107.]
5. These dates would correspond with the years 385-303 or 302 B.C. of the Western calendar. The old view is that he was born in the Fourth year of King Lieh and died in the Twentieth year of King Nan (372-289 B.C.); see Ch’eng Fu-hsin, *Meng Tzu nien-p’u*. In addition, reference may be made to: Yen Jo-chü, *Meng Tzu sheng-tsu-nien-yüeh k’ao*; Ti Tzu-ch’i, *Meng Tzu pien-nien*; Jen Chao-lin, *Meng Tzu shih-shih-lüeh* (in *Hsin-chai shih chung*); Lin Ch’un-p’u, *K’ung Meng nien-piao*; *Meng Tzu lieh-chuan tsuan* (in *Chu-po Shan-fang shih-wu chung*); Ts’ui Shu, *Meng Tzu shih-shih lu*; Wei Yuan, *Meng Tzu nien piao k’ao* (in *Ku-wei-t’ang wai-chi*), etc.
6. *Mencius*, “T’eng wen-kung,” Part II [III/ii/4; Legge, p. 269].
7. Wang Chung’s *Ching-yi hsin-chih chi* states that Mencius “. . . occupied the position of guest-teacher and was respected for his knowledge of the Way.” Ts’ui Shu’s *Meng Tzu shih-shih-lu* [see footnote 5 above] states: “Mencius held the office of minister [*ch’ing*] in the State of Ch’i, that is, he served as a guest-minister (*k’e ch’ing*), and as such was not the same as those who held office and bore responsibility for official duties.” Ti Tzu-ch’i’s *Meng Tzu pien-nien*



- [see footnote 4 above] states: "When Mencius was in the State of Ch'i he first served as a guest-teacher; therefore he received the Duke's gift of subsistence income, but did not receive a salary of office. Subsequently he served as a minister, and received a salary of one hundred thousand [chung] of grain."
8. Wang Chung's *Hsün Tzu nien-piao* (in *Shü-hsueh nei-wai p'ien*). This corresponds to the years 298-238 B.C. of the Western calendar. Ch'ien Mu's *Hsien Ch'in chu-tzu hsi-nien k'ao-pien*, Section 103, states that Hsün Ch'ing was born before the Thirtieth year of the Chou King Hsien (i.e., before 340 B.C. by the Western calendar); this significantly supplements Wang's view. Also, the problem of Hsün Tzu's teacher and the line of transmission that he represented has never been established by scholarship. Liang Ch'i-ch'ao's view (in *Ju-chia che-hsüeh*) that Hsün Tzu's learning stems from the line of transmission through [Confucius' disciples] Yu Tzu [i.e., Jan-ch'iu] and Tzu-yu [i.e., Yen Yen] and Tzu-hsia [i.e., Pu Shang] may be inadequately supported by facts, particularly in view of the fact that Hsün Tzu, in his essay, *ch. 6*, "Fei shih-erh tzu," i.e., "Denunciation of the Twelve Philosophers" classes Tzu-kung [i.e., Chung-kung, or Jan Yung] together with Confucius himself, and denounces Tzu-chang, Tzu-hsia, and Tzu-yu as unworthy Confucians.
  9. For his conversation with the chief minister of Ch'i, see *Hsün Tzu ch. 16*, "Ch'iang kuo p'ien." In brief, he said that when Ch'u (lying on Ch'i's south and east), Yen (to the north), and Wei (to the west) plotted together, "Ch'i would be certain to be broken up into quarters," and that only by cultivating the rites and deferring to men of loyalty and trust could the country become firm in itself. As to Hsün Tzu's first coming to Chi-hsia, there are two versions of the account, the one that he was fifty at the time, and the other that he was fifteen. The former is recorded in the *Shih Chi*, *ch. 74*, "Meng, Hsün lieh chuan," and in Liu Hsiang, *Sun Ch'ing shu lu hsü*. The latter stems from Ying Shao's *Feng-su t'ung*, *ch. 7*, "Ch'iuung t'ung p'ien."
  10. His reason for leaving Ch'i and going to Ch'u has traditionally been explained in two ways: that he was slandered, and that the State of Ch'i was imperiled. His biography in *ch. 74* of the *Shih Chi* says: "Someone in the State of Ch'i slandered Hsün Ch'ing; at any rate Hsün Ch'ing went to Ch'u, where the Lord of Ch'un-shen made him magistrate of Lan-ling." [This more or less follows Dubs' translation of the *Shih Chi* biography, in his *Hsüntze, the Moulder of Ancient Confucianism*, pp. 26-28.] The accounts in the *Feng su-t'ung* and Liu Hsiang's [*Sun Ch'ing shu lu*] *Hsü* say roughly the same thing. The chapter "Lun Ju" in Huan K'uan's *Yen-t'ieh lun* says: "King Min of Ch'i struggled vigorously to carry on [Ch'i's success in war] for a second generation [following the successes of his father, King Hsüan] . . . and sought glory incessantly. The common people could bear no more. [Adding two characters missing from the quoted passage.] All the scholars remonstrated, but were not heeded, so they all scattered. Shen Tao and Chieh Tzu departed; T'ien P'ien went to the State of Hsüeh; and Sun [i.e., Hsün] Ch'ing went to the State of Ch'u." If Hsün Tzu went to Ch'u in the last year of King Min's reign [282 B.C.] then he must have been about fifty-six years old before the year 284 B.C. In the year 262 B.C., the Lord of Ch'un-shen was chief minister to King K'ao-lieh of Ch'u. By that year Hsün Tzu would have to have been nearly eighty years of age. Ch'ien Mu, in his *Hsien Ch'in chu-tzu hsi-nien k'ao-pien*, number 140, observes that the *Shih Chi* account is in error.
  11. *Han Fei Tzu*, *ch. 38*, "Nan san," "King K'uai of Yen held Tzu-chih to be a worthy counsellor, and rejected Hsün Ch'ing; as a consequence he was murdered and became the butt of the world's scorn." [Tzu-chih was the inept prime minister to the muddle-headed King K'uai; between them their policies brought about the destruction of Yen by Ch'i. This passage appears on pages 179-80 of W. K. Liao's translation of *Han Fei Tzu*; the translation here departs from that.] Ch'i's war against Yen took place in the year 314 B.C. If Hsün Tzu did indeed visit Yen, it must have been in his youth when he was living in Ch'i.
  12. The accounts in the *Shih Chi* and in Liu Hsiang's [*Sun Ch'ing shu lu*] *Hsü* agree on this, except that they do not say that he went again to Ch'i. This follows Ch'ien Mu's view; see his *Hsien Ch'in chu-tzu hsi-nien k'ao pien*, number 143.
  13. See *Hsün Tzu*, *ch. 8*, "Ju hsiao," and *ch. 16*, "Ch'iang kuo."
  14. *Chan kuo ts'e*, "Ch'u ts'e, 4," Sun [Hsün] Tzu left and went to the State of Chao; in Chao he was made a Chief Minister." [Hsün Tzu's name is variously written Sun in many early works; "Chief Minister" does not mean an actual premier, but a minister accorded the highest honor and dignity.] Chapter Seven of the *Feng su t'ung* says that while Hsün Tzu was in office as magistrate of Lan-ling, someone slandered him, so "The Lord of Ch'un-shen dismissed him. Sun [Hsün]

- Ch'ing went to the State of Chao, and accepted an appointment to office in the State of Ch'in." *Hsün Tzu*, ch. 15, "Yi ping p'ien," records Hsün Tzu's proposals made together with the Lord of Lin-wu before King Hsiao-ch'eng of Chao. King Hsiao-ch'eng reigned between the years 265 and 245 B.C., when Hsün Tzu's age may have been over eighty.
15. Ch'ien Mu regards as unreliable the lines in ch. 18, "Hui hsüeh pien," in the *Yen T'ieh lun*, which say: "Li Ssu held the prime ministership in Ch'in [from 221 B.C.] because the First Emperor relied on him, and no other minister could be compared with him. Because of it, Hsün Ch'ing refused to eat [and died]." Instead, he tentatively concludes that Hsün Tzu died about the second year of the First Emperor's reign. [I.e., 244 B.C.] See *Hsien Ch'in chu-tzu hsi-nien k'ao pien*, number 156.
  16. See, *Hsün Tzu*, ch. 32, "Yao wen p'ien." The preceding passage is: "Sun Ch'ing [i.e., Hsün Tzu], pressed by the chaotic conditions of his time, tended to rely on harsh punishments. There had long been no worthy overlords, and ahead lay only the tyrannical State of Ch'in. Propriety and righteousness were not observed, moral suasion through teaching could not be realized, the benevolent suffered. The world was dark and foreboding."
  17. The *Shih Chi*, ch. 63, "Lao, Chuang, Shen, Han lieh chuan" says: "[Han] Fei and Li Ssu both studied under Hsün Ch'ing; ch. 87, "Li Ssu lieh chuan" states: "[Li Ssu] became a student of Hsün Ch'ing in the study of the methods of emperors and kings."
  18. *Mencius*, "Kao Tzu," Part I; Mencius, replying to Kung-tu Tzu's question about human nature, says: "The feeling of commiseration belongs to all men; so does that of shame and dislike; and that of reverence and respect, and that of right and wrong. The feeling of commiseration springs from benevolence [*jen*]; that of shame and dislike from righteousness [*yi*]; that of reverence and respect from propriety [*li*]; and that of right and wrong from wisdom [*chih*]. [Modified from Legge, *Mencius*, vi/6/7, p. 402.] Also, in "Kung-sun Ch'ou," Part I: "Mencius said, 'All men have a mind that cannot bear to see the sufferings of others. The ancient kings had this commiserating mind, and as a matter of course they had a commiserating government. When with a commiserating mind was practiced a commiserating government, to rule the kingdom was as easy a matter as to make something roll around in the palm of one's hand.'" He also said: "The commiserating mind is the beginning of benevolence. The shamed and revulsed mind is the beginning of righteousness. The humble and deferring mind is the beginning of propriety. And the mind that distinguishes right from wrong is the beginning of wisdom. . . . Since all men have these four beginnings in themselves, let them know how to give them all their development and completion. It is like a fire starting to burn, or a spring starting to flow." [*Mencius*, ii/6/1-2 and 7, wording considerably modified from Legge, pp. 201 and 203. With the extension of its meaning, the word "*li*" or "ritual" often, as here, must be translated "propriety," or "a sense of the ritually, or socially, appropriate." Note that the word "*jen*," below, in the term "*pu jen*" or "compassion" bears no relation to "*jen*" or "benevolence."]
  19. "Kao Tzu," Part II, "Chiao of Ts'ao asked Mencius, saying, 'It is said, "All men may be Yaos and Shuns." Is it so?' Mencius replied, 'It is.'" It should be noted [in contrast], that on the subject of man's nature, Confucius: ". . . will not tell us anything at all." [*Analects*, v/12; Waley, p. 110.] The few incidentally relevant passages in the *Analects*, such as: ". . . the very stupidest . . . cannot change" [*Analects*, xvii/3, Waley, p. 209]; and, "to those who are below mediocrity, the highest subjects cannot be announced" [*Analects*, vi/19; Legge, p. 191]; or the statement that "By nature, men are nearly alike; by practice, they get wide apart" [*Analects*, xvii/2; Legge, p. 318]—all these vary somewhat from Mencius' theory of the goodness of human nature.
  20. "Kao Tzu," Part I, Mencius said: "Benevolence [*jen*] is man's mind." [*Mencius*, vi/1/1/1; Legge, p. 414.]
  21. In *The Mencius*, I, "Liang Hui-wang," Part I, Mencius says to King Hsün of Ch'i, "Treat with the reverence due to age the elders in your own family, so that the elders in the families of others shall be similarly treated; treat with the kindness due to youth the young in your own family, so that the young in the families of others shall be similarly treated. Do this, and the kingdom may be made to go around in your palm. It is said in the *Book of Odes*: 'His example affected his wife. It reached to his brothers, and both his family and his State were governed by it.' The language shows how King Wen simply took his kindly heart, and exercised it toward those parties. Therefore, a prince's carrying out his kindness of heart will suffice for the love and protection of all within the four seas. And if he does not carry it out, he will not be able to protect his wife and children. The way in which the ancients came greatly to surpass other men was no other than this: Simply they knew well how to carry out, so as to

- affect others, what they themselves did.” [*Mencius*, *i/i* 7/12; modified from Legge, pp. 143-44.]
22. *The Mencius*, VII, “Chin hsin,” Part I, “[The superior man is] . . . affectionate to his parents, and lovingly disposed to people generally. He is lovingly disposed to people generally, and kind to creatures.” [*Mencius*, VII/*i*/45; Legge, p. 476.]
23. The essentials of Mencius’ view on enriching the people’s livelihood can be seen in *The Mencius*, I, “Liang Hui-wang,” Part I, in his remarks addressed to King Hui. He said, in part: “If the seasons of husbandry are not interfered with [i.e., if the government does not divert the peasants from their essential agricultural labors at these seasons of the year when they must devote their full energy to them], the grain will be more than can be eaten. If close nets are not allowed in the pools and ponds, the fishes and turtles will be more than can be consumed. If axes and bills enter the hills and forests only at the proper time, the wood will be more than can be used. When the grain and fish and turtles are more than can be eaten, and there is more wood than can be used, this enables the people to nourish their living and mourn for their dead, without any dissatisfactions or regrets. This condition in which the people nourish their living and bury their dead, without any dissatisfactions or regrets, is the first step toward kingly government. Let mulberry trees be planted about the homesteads in the five *mou* of land allotted for the dwelling [one *mou* was about one-sixth of an acre] and persons of fifty years of age may be clothed with silk. In keeping fowls, pigs, dogs, and swine, let not their times of breeding be neglected, and persons of seventy years may eat flesh. Let there not be taken away the time that is proper for the cultivation of the farm with its one hundred *mou*, and the family of several mouths that is supported by it shall not suffer from hunger.” [*Mencius*, *i/i*/3/3-4, modified slightly from Legge, pp. 130-31.] His views on light taxation are briefly set forth in “T’eng Wen-kung,” Part II, where he speaks of “Levying taxes of one-tenth only, and doing away with the duties charged at the customs barriers and in the markets” [*Mencius*, III/*ii*/8/1; modified slightly from Legge, p. 278]. Also, in “Chin hsin,” Part II: “There are the exactions of hempen cloth and silk, of grain, and of personal service. The prince demands but one of these at a time, deferring the other two” [*Mencius*, VII/*ii*/26/1, modified slightly from Legge, p. 491]. Also, in “Kung-sun Ch’ou,” Part I: “[The ruler should] . . . in the market place of his capital, levy a ground rent on the shops,

but not tax the goods, or, enforce the proper regulations but not even levy a ground rent. . . . At his frontier passes, there should be an inspection of persons, but no taxes charged. . . . He should require the farmers to give their mutual aid to cultivate the public field, and exact no other taxes from them”; and “From the shop-keepers in his market place he should not exact the fine of the individual idler, or of the hamlet’s quota of cloth” [*Mencius*, II/*i*/5/1-5, modified slightly from Legge, pp. 199-200; who found the meaning obscure; see his note, p. 200. Cf. the translation of passages concerning the economy, including this one, in Dobson, *Mencius*, pp. 178 ff.]. However, Mencius rejected Po Kuei’s suggestion that he should levy a tax of only one-twentieth; see “Kao Tzu,” Part II [VI/*ii*/10/1; Legge, pp. 441-42]. On the subject of stopping wars, see “Kao Tzu,” Part II, where Mencius tells Shen Tzu that the State of Lu is already larger than one hundred *li* square, which was its original size and says: “Though by a single battle you should subdue Ch’i, and get possession of Nan-yang, the thing ought not to be done.” [*Mencius*, VI/*ii*/8; Legge, pp. 438-30.] There is also the example in “Liang Hui-wang,” Part II, where Mencius urges Duke Wen of T’eng to model his actions on those of King T’ai, who left the area of Pin, adopting a policy of non-resistance to the *Ti* barbarians [who were continually attacking it; *i/ii*/14, Legge, p. 174].

Other examples illustrating these points are numerous; it is not necessary to cite all of them.

On the matter of correcting the boundaries, see “T’eng Wen-kung,” Part I, “Now, the first thing toward a benevolent government is to lay down the boundaries. . . . I would ask you, in the remoter districts, observing the nine-squares division, to reserve one division to be cultivated on the system of mutual aid, and in the more central parts of the kingdom, to make the people pay for themselves a tenth part of their produce.” And, “a square *li* covers nine squares of land [more literally, “A square *li* makes one well-field,” or *ching*, i.e.], which nine squares contain nine hundred *mou*. The central square is the public field, and eight families, each having its private hundred *mou*, cultivate in common the public field.”

24. “Liang Hui-wang,” Part II [*Mencius*, *i/ii*/4/3; slightly modified from Legge, p. 158]. The tone of the comments is the same in three other relevant passages: in the same chapter, where Mencius answers Chung Pao’s question about King Hui’s love of music [*i/ii*/1/1]; where King Hsüan of Ch’i asks Mencius about

- the size of King Wen's palace park [i/ii/2]; and in "Liang Hui-wang," Part I, where Mencius responded to King Hui's question asked at the edge of the pond [i/i/2].
25. See, respectively, "Liang Hui-wang," Part I [i/i/4; Legge, pp. 132-34]; Part II [i/ii/12/2; Legge, p. 173]; "Li Lou," Part I [iv/i/14/3; Legge, p. 305]; and "Kao Tzu," Part II [vi/ii/9/1; Legge, p. 440]. [All of the above quotations are slightly modified from Legge's wording of the same passages.]
  26. [*Shang Shu* or *Documents*], "Documents of Hsia," "Wu tzu chih ko" [Legge, p. 158].
  27. "Liang Hui-wang," Part I [*Mencius*, i/i/5/3; Legge, p. 135].
  28. "T'eng Wen-kung," Part I [*Mencius*, iii/i/3/10; Legge, p. 242].
  29. See, respectively, "Teng Wen-kung," Part I [iii/i/3/3; modified from Legge, pp. 239-40]; and "Liang Hui-wang," Part I [i/i/7/21-22; modified slightly from Legge, p. 148].
  30. "Kung-sun Ch'ou," Part I [ii/i/2/11; Legge, p. 184].
  31. When, in the Twenty-second year of King Nan [292 B.C.], Po Chi [commanding the armies of Ch'in] defeated the State of Han and took two hundred and forty thousand heads, Mencius was dead, so he did not know of this occasion. [Figures for battle casualties for this period were recorded as "heads cut off"; whether to take the phrase literally has been much debated by scholars.]
  32. "Li Lou," Part I [iv/i/14/2; Legge, p. 305].
  33. "Chin hsin," Part I, "Mencius said, Let it be seen to that their fields of grain and hemp are well cultivated, and make the taxes on them light; so the people may be made rich. Let it be seen to that the people use their resources of food seasonably, and expend their wealth only on the prescribed ceremonies; so their wealth will be more than can be consumed. The people cannot live without water and fire, yet if you knock at a man's door in the dusk of the evening and ask for water and fire, there is no man who will not give them, such is the abundance of these things. A sage governs the kingdom so as to cause pulse and grain to be as abundant as water and fire. When pulse and grain are as abundant as water and fire, where shall there be found a man who is not a benevolent *jen* person?" [vii/i/23; modified slightly from Legge, pp. 462-630.] This passage displays an apparent heavy emphasis on production. In that sense it is somewhat at variance with Confucius, who said [of the ruler of the state] "... He is not concerned lest his people should be poor, but only lest what they have should be ill-apportioned," displaying a heavy emphasis on the problem of distribution. [Cf. Chapter Two, p. 110 and note 63.]
  34. See, respectively, "Liang Hui-wang," Part I [i/i/1/3; Legge, p. 126], and "Kao Tzu," Part II [vi/ii/4; Legge, pp. 428-29].
  35. Mencius, speaking to King Hui of Liang, said: "There never has been a benevolent man who neglected his parents. There never has been a righteous man who gave only secondary consideration to his sovereign." [i/i/1/5; modified from Legge, p. 127.]
  36. "Chin hsin," Part II [vii/ii/14; Legge, pp. 483-84].
  37. *Analects*, "T'ai-po," Book 8 [viii/9; Legge, p. 211].
  38. "Liang Hui-wang," Part II [i/ii/6; Legge, pp. 164-65]. Mencius, discussing the arrangement of dignities and emoluments of the Chou court, said: "The Son of Heaven constituted one dignity; the dukes one; the marquises one; the earls one; the viscounts and the barons each one of equal rank, altogether making five degrees of rank. The Ruler again constituted one dignity; the Chief Minister one; the Great Officer one; the Scholars of the First Class one; those of the middle class one; and those of the lowest class one, altogether making six degrees of dignity." See, "Wan Chang," Part II [v/ii/2/3; modified from Legge, p. 373]. This also manifests the idea that the ruler and his servitors were of one class of person, and is quite different from the concept of the authoritarian age, when ruler and servitor came to be separated by a vast gulf.
  39. "Liang Hui-wang," Part II [i/ii/8/3; Legge, p. 167].
  40. "Li Lou," Part I, "Mencius said, 'Chieh and Chou's losing the throne, arose from their losing the people; [Chieh and Chou were the infamous tyrannical rulers whose reigns ended the Hsia and Shang-Yin dynasties, respectively] and to lose the people means to lose their hearts. There is a way to get the kingdom: get the people and the kingdom is gotten. There is a way to get the people: get their hearts and the people are gotten. There is a way to get their hearts: it is simply to collect for them what they like, and not to lay on them what they dislike.'" [*Mencius*, iv/i/9/1; Legge, pp. 299-300.]
  41. In "Wan Chang," Part I, Mencius, discussing the Sage Emperors Shun and Yü quotes from "The Great Declaration" ["T'ai Shih"] the lines: "Heaven sees as my

- people see; Heaven hears as my people hear.” [The translation here follows Legge, *Shoo King*, or *Documents*, p. 292, instead of Legge’s *Mencius*, v/i/5/8, p. 357.] The import of this is roughly that of “*vox populi vox dei*.” Also relevant in this connection is the passage in “Liang Hui-wang,” Part II, where Mencius discusses what the State of Ch’i should do, having invaded and punished the State of Yen, and says: “If the people of Yen will be pleased with your taking possession of it, then do so. If the people of Yen will not be pleased with your taking possession of it, then do not do so.” [*Mencius*, i/ii/10/3; Legge, p. 169.]
42. “Liang Hui-wang,” Part II [*Mencius*, i/ii/7/3-5; Legge, pp. 165-66].
43. The *Chou Li* [ch. 9, “Ch’iu-kuan ssu-k’ou,” 5, *incipit*,] “Hsiao ssu-k’ou”: “The first is to consult [the people] in times of national peril; the second is to consult on the occasion of transferring the capital; the third is to consult on the matter of [an unclear] royal succession.” This institution of consulting the people was still occasionally employed in the Spring and Autumn Period, but by that time it was no longer common. Examples are recorded as follows: *Tso Chuan*, Thirty-first year of Duke Hsiang [541 B.C.], “A man of Cheng rambled into a village school, and fell discoursing about the conduct of the government. . . .” Tzu-ch’an [the chief minister of Cheng, on being advised to destroy the schools to prevent their becoming hotbeds of criticism] replied: “. . . I will do what they approve of, and I will alter what they condemn—they are my teachers.” [Legge, *Ch’un Ts’ew*, pp. 565-66, paragraph 3.] In the Twenty-fourth year of Duke Chao [517 B.C.], at the time of the troubles in connection with Prince Chao, the late King’s son. [In the royal Chou domain, the emissary of Chin, “. . . Shih-po] took his position by the Kan-Ts’ai gate, and questioned a great multitude of the people [about what to do].” [Modified from Legge, p. 702, paragraph 2.] In the Eighth year of Duke Ting [501 B.C.], when Duke Ling of Wei, about to revolt against the State of Chin, gave audience to the people, he asked them: “If Wei revolt from Chin, and Chin five times attack us, how would you bear the distress? They all replied, ‘Though it should five times attack us, we should still be able to fight.’ So he said ‘Then let us revolt.’” [This passage shows some typographical errors; the punctuation has been corrected by moving the quotation marks. Otherwise it is translated as it appears, thereby differing in wording but not in meaning from the version given in Legge, pp. 767 and 769, paragraph 10.] In the First year of Duke Ai [494 B.C.], it tells that when the forces of Wu invaded the State of Ch’u, the Marquis of Wu summoned Duke Huai of Ch’en to join him in the conquest, and “Duke Huai assembled the people of his state to ask their opinion, and said, ‘Let those who wish to side with Ch’u go to the right, and those who wish to side with Wu go to the left.’” Refer also to *Kuo Yü*, ch. 1, “Chou Yü,” the comment on King Li [reign 877-827 B.C.], who sought out and executed his critics among the people; and, under the Twenty-seventh year of Duke Chao [514 B.C.] in the *Tso Chuan*, where it discusses the actions of the chief minister of Ch’u, Yin Tzu-ch’ang, who killed dissenters in the effort to stop their criticisms of his government. [Legge, p. 723, paragraph 2.]
44. “Liang Hui-wang,” Part II [*Mencius*, i/ii/12/2-3; Legge, pp. 173-74].
45. See, respectively: *Tso Chuan*, Sixth year of Duke Huan [Legge, p. 48]; Thirteenth year of Duke Wen [Legge, p. 264]; and Fourteenth year of Duke Hsiang [Legge, p. 466]. Refer also to *Kuo Yü*, ch. 4, “Lu Yü,” where the murder of Duke Li of Chin by the people of Chin is discussed.
46. *Shang Shu* [*Documents*], “The Documents of Shang,” “P’an Keng,” Part II [Legge, *Shoo King*, p. 234].
47. *Analects*: “T’ai-po,” Book 8 [viii/9, Legge, p. 211]; and “Chi-shih” Book 16 [xvi/2/3, Legge, p. 310].
48. “Those who labor with their minds govern others; those who labor with their strength are governed by others.” [*Mencius*, iii/i/4/6; Legge, pp. 249-50]; see, “T’eng Wen-kung,” Part I [iii/i/4/4-5], where words are spoken by Mencius to Ch’en Hsiang. See also, in the same chapter, where Mencius replies to Pi Chan: “If there were no superior men, there would be none to rule the rude men. If there were no rude men, there would be none to provide the sustenance of the superior men.” [iii/i/3/14, modified slightly from Legge, p. 244.] It is evident from these passages that Mencius had no concept of political equality. For the term “heaven’s agent,” *t’ien li* see “Kung-sun Ch’ou,” Part II [ii/ii/8/2; Legge, p. 223, and note, p. 201; Dobson, p. 24, translates it: “He who is appointed by Heaven to do so.”]
49. Among the more prominent of these are: Duplessis-Mornay (?), *Vindiciae contra Tyrannos* (1579); Juan Mariana (1536-1624), *De rege et regis institutione*.
50. See, respectively, “Kung-sun Ch’ou,” Part II [ii/ii/4; Legge, pp. 217-18] and “Wan Chang,” Part II [v/ii/9; Legge, pp. 392-93].

51. "Kung-sun Ch'ou," Part II, Mencius, speaking to Ching Tzu, says: "In this world there are three things universally acknowledged to be honorable. Noble rank is one of them; age is one of them; virtue is one of them. In the court, noble rank holds the first place of the three; in villages, age holds the first place; and for helping one's generation and presiding over the people, the other two are not equal to virtue. How can [the King of Ch'i], possessing only one of these, presume to despise one who possesses the other two?" [*Mencius*, II/II/2/6; modified from Legge, pp. 213-14.]
52. "Wan Chang," Part II, Mencius replied to the question of Wan Chang about the scholar who does not go to see the princes, saying: "The Son of Heaven would not summon a teacher. How much less should a prince do so!" [V/II/7/3; modified from Legge, p. 388; the following passage is from the same chapter, Legge, p. 389.] He also cites the case of Tzu-ssu, who was displeased at the Duke's suggestion that he was a friend of Duke Mou, and who said: "With regard to our stations, you are sovereign and I am servitor. How can I presume to be on terms of friendship with my sovereign? With regard to our virtue, you ought to make me your master. How can you be on terms of friendship with me?" And in the "Li Lou," Part II, "Mencius said to King Hsüan of Ch'i, 'When the prince regards his ministers as his hands and feet, his ministers regard their prince as their belly and heart. When he regards them as his dogs and horses, they regard him as any other man. When he regards them as the earth or the grass, they regard him as a robber and an enemy.'" In the "Kao Tzu," Part II, Mencius replies to Ch'en Tzu's question about the principles that determined when [the wise men of antiquity] took office, saying: "There were three cases in which they accepted office, and three in which they left it," and the general purport of it all is that the conditions for taking office are that the servitor must be able to carry the Way into practice, and that the rites must be properly observed. [*Mencius*, VI/II/14; Legge, pp. 445-46.] In the "Wan Chang," Part II, where Mencius says of Confucius that he took office when "the practice of his doctrines was likely," or "when his reception was proper" or "when he was supported by the state," his intention is the same as in the foregoing examples. [*Mencius*, V/II/4/6; Legge, pp. 382-83.]
53. However Mencius' view already existed in the Spring and Autumn Period. Refer to the *Tso Chuan*, under the Twenty-fifth year of Duke Hsiang [547 B.C.], where it narrates that Yen Ying refused to commit suicide at the time his Duke Chuang of Ch'i was murdered and explained his stand, saying: "Is it the business of the ruler of the people merely to be above them? The altars of the State should be his chief care. Is it the business of the minister of a ruler merely to be concerned about his support? The nourishment of the altars should be his object. Therefore when a ruler dies or goes into exile for the altars, the minister should die or go into exile with him. If he dies or goes into exile for his seeking his own ends, who, excepting his private associates, would presume to bear the consequences with him?" [Legge, p. 514. Duke Chuang was murdered as a consequence of his licentious behavior, in the boudoir belonging to the beautiful wife of one of his chief officers.]
54. See, respectively, "Wan Chang," Part II [*Mencius*, V/II/1/5; Legge, pp. 371-72] and "Kung-sun Ch'ou," Part I [II/I/9; Legge, pp. 206-08]. In "Chin hsin," Part I, Mencius tells Sung Kou-chien: "When the men of antiquity realized their wishes, benefits were conferred by them on the people. [The Chinese phrase is "*te chih*," "to realize their ambitions," by implication, to have successful careers in office.] If they did not realize their wishes, they cultivated their personal character, and became illustrious in the world. If poor, they attended to their own virtue in solitude; if advanced to dignity, they made the whole kingdom virtuous as well." [*Mencius*, VII/I/9/6; Legge, p. 453.] This passage further develops the same meaning. There is also the passage in "Kao Tzu," Part I, "The men of antiquity cultivated their nobility of Heaven [i.e., their natural or innate capacity to be noble men] and the nobility of man [i.e., high social status] came to them in its train." [VI/I/16/2; Legge, p. 419.] This also matches very well the idea of Confucius' words that "... learning may incidentally lead to high pay." [*Analects*, xv/31; the context of this passage leads Waley, whose version is used here, to add the word "incidentally." Out of context, as it is usually quoted, it suggests the opposite idea.]
55. "T'eng Wen-kung," Part II [III/II/3; Legge, pp. 266-67].
56. Both quotations are to be found in "Chin hsin," Part I [VII/I/35/6; Legge, p. 470, and VII/I/21/1-2; Legge, p. 459].
57. See, respectively, *Analects*, "Hsien wen," Book XIV [XIV/41] and "Wei-tzu," Book XVIII [XVIII/7; Legge, p. 336]. However, Confucius also now and then is found to be in agreement with the attitude Mencius

- later upheld. For example, in “Hsien chin,” Book xi, where he has his disciples tell their ambitions, he does not comment approvingly on the ambitions of Tzu-lu, Jan-yu, and Kung-hsi Ch’ih to govern the state. He approves only of Tseng Tien’s “. . . I would wash in the Yi River, enjoy the breeze among the rain altars, and return home singing.” [*Analects*, xi/25; Legge, pp. 246-49.]
58. “Chin hsin,” Part I [viii/i/32; Legge, pp. 467-68]. Refer also to “T’eng Wen-kung,” Part II, “For the scholar to perform no service and receive support notwithstanding [is improper].” [iii/ii/4/2; modified from Legge, p. 269.]
59. “Kung-sun Ch’ou,” Part II, Mencius here says of himself that while he was a guest-teacher in the State of Ch’i and being supported by the state: “. . . I am in charge of no Office; on me devolves no duty of speaking out my opinion.” [ii/ii/5/5; Legge, p. 219.]
60. “Kung-sun Ch’ou,” Part II [ii/ii/10/9-7; Legge, pp. 226-28]; Mencius says this to Ch’en Tzu about his declining the one hundred thousand *chung* emolument offered him by the King of Ch’i.
61. *Chan-kuo ts’e*, ch. 11, “Ch’i ts’e,” no. 4, “A man of Ch’i on meeting T’ien P’ien said, ‘I have heard that your noble doctrine is that you plan not to take office and are willing to perform hard labor.’ T’ien P’ien said, ‘What then have you heard?’ The man replied, ‘I have heard about the daughter of a neighbor.’ T’ien P’ien said, ‘What is said of her?’ He replied, ‘My neighbor’s daughter plans not to marry. She is now thirty years old, and she has seven children. If she doesn’t want to marry, it is of course all right for her not to marry but this is more excessive than if she were married. Now you plan not to take office. Yet you draw an income for your support amounting to a thousand *chung* and you maintain a hundred retainers. For you not to take office is all right in itself, but this is more excessive than if you were in office.’ Master T’ien said nothing and left.” This ridicules the scholars of the Chi-hsia Academy who “were all granted titles and honors equivalent to the chief great officers, but they did not govern and just engaged in discourse.” (*Shih Chi*, ch. 46, “T’ien Ch’i shih chia.”) Although Mencius may never have gone to Chi-hsia (Ch’ien Mu, *Hsien Ch’in chu-tzu hsi-nien k’ao-pien*, number 76), yet in his becoming very wealthy without having taken office, he is somewhat the same as Master T’ien.
62. “Liang Hui-wang,” Part I [*Mencius*, i/i/6/2; Legge, p. 136].
63. *Analects*, “T’ ai-po,” Book viii [viii/i; Legge, p. 207, and viii/20/4; Legge, p. 215]. The Chu Hsi commentary says: “In view of his virtue, at the time of the transition from Shang to Chou, T’ ai-po certainly could have assembled all of the feudal lords at his court, and taken over the kingdom. But he cast it aside and would not take it; further he concealed all traces of his actions. From this can be known how extreme and complete was his virtue! His heart was [as loyal as] the hearts of Po Yi and Shu Ch’i when they grasped [King Wu’s] bridle [to restrain him from engaging in the campaign against Shang], and the affair itself was one of still greater distress. Thus it fully warranted Confucius’ deeply moved sigh, and his expression of great praise and admiration.” Chu also quotes Fan [unidentified]: “King Wen’s virtue was enough to warrant his displacing the Shang dynasty. Heaven approved of him and the people all turned to him. But he did not take the kingdom. Instead, he submissively served it; therein he achieved the highest point of virtue. Confucius, following his words about King Wu, then continues on to the subject of King Wen’s virtue, and praised both him and T’ ai-po as having reached the highest point of virtue; his intent is subtly profound.”
64. “Liang Hui-wang,” Part II [*Mencius*, i/ii/8; Legge, p. 167; etc.]; “Kung-sun Ch’ou,” Part I [ii/i/3/1; Legge, p. 196]; and “T’eng Wen-kung,” Part II [iii/ii/5; Legge, pp. 273-74].
65. “Liang Hui-wang,” Part II [*Mencius*, i/ii/11/1; Legge, p. 170 and i/ii/3/7; Legge, pp. 156-57]; “T’eng Wen-kung,” Part II [iii/ii/9/6; Legge, p. 281].
66. “Li Lou,” Part I [*Mencius*, iv/i/7/4-6; Legge, pp. 297-98]; “Kung-sun Ch’ou,” Part I [ii/i/1/8; Legge, pp. 182-83]; “Liang Hui-wang,” Part II [i/ii/3/6; Legge, p. 156, and i/ii/5/3; Legge, pp. 161-62, and i/ii/10/3; Legge, p. 169].
67. For these passages, see “Liang Hui-wang,” Parts I and II [i/i/7/3; Legge, p. 138; i/ii/3/5 and 7; Legge, pp. 156 and 157; i/ii/5/3; Legge, pp. 161-62]. In “Kung-sun Ch’ou,” Part II [ii/ii/22/5], Mencius, after leaving Ch’i, said: “If the king were to use me, would it bring about merely the happiness of the people of Ch’i? All the people of the whole kingdom [i.e., “world”] would be made happy!” [Legge, p. 231] His meaning is here made quite clear.
68. See, respectively, “T’eng Wen-kung,” Part I and Part II. [iii/i/1-2-4; Legge, pp. 234 and 235; iii/ii/5/7; Legge, p. 274.] Also, Mencius said to Duke Wen

- of T'eng, "The *Book of Odes* says 'Although Chou was an old country, it received a new destiny.' That is said with reference to King Wen. If you will but practice those same things with vigour, you also can by them make new your kingdom." [*Mencius*, III/i/3/12; modified from Legge, p. 243; cf. Dobson, *Mencius*, p. 198, and note 1.32.] When Mencius urged people to "Take King Wen as their teacher," he always had this thought in mind.
69. "Liang Hui-wang," Part I [I/i/7/2]. Mencius did not always have the same standard in mind in discussing the distinction between kingly government and rule by force. Sometimes it depended on whether the manifestations of benevolence and righteousness were true or false: ("Chin hsin," Part I "[Benevolence and righteousness] were natural to Yao and Shun. T'ang and Wu made them their own. The five chiefs of the princes [*pa*] feigned them." [VII/i/30/i; Legge, p. 466.] This became the authority for the distinction between the kingly government and rule by force based on the working of the mind, which was maintained by Sung dynasty Neo-Confucian rationalist philosophers.) Sometimes the standard was that of the opposite methods of effecting action: ("Kung-sun Ch'ou," Part I, "He who, using force, makes a pretence to benevolence is the leader of the princes" [*pa*], and "He who, using virtue, practices benevolence is the sovereign [*wang*] of the kingdom.") [II/i/3/i; Legge, p. 196.] Sometimes it depended on the status of the person who was carrying it out: ("Kao Tzu," Part II, "The sovereign commands punishment but does not inflict it; the princes inflict punishment but do not command it." [VI/ii/7/2; modified from Legge, p. 436.]
70. "Kung-sun Ch'ou," Part I [*Mencius*, II/i/1/11; Legge, p. 184].
71. *Chu-tzu wen-chi* ["The Collected Works of Chu Hsi"], "Ta Ch'en T'ung-fu shu" ("Three Letters) [in reply to Ch'en Liang"]; and *Lung-ch'uan wen-chi* ["Collected Writings of Ch'en Liang"], "Chia-ch'en ta Chu Yüan-hui pi shu" ["A Reply to Chu Hsi's Private Letter, 1184"], and "Yü Chu Yuan-hui shu, yu shu" ["A Letter to Chu Hsi, and a Further Letter"] (Spring, 1185). [Chu Hsi's letters to Ch'en Liang are translated in part and discussed in Fung/Bodde, Vol. II, pp. 563-66.]
72. "Li Lou," Part I [*Mencius*, IV/i/1/3-4; Legge, p. 289].
73. See, respectively, "Kao Tzu," Part II [VI/ii/10/7; Legge, p. 442], where Mencius is speaking to Pai Kuei; "T'eng Wen-kung," Part I [III/i/3/6, Legge, pp. 240-41], speaking to Duke Wen; and "Liang Hui-wang," Part II [I/ii/5/3; Legge, pp. 161-62], where Mencius is addressing King Hsüan.
74. "Kao Tzu," Part II, "Mencius said, 'The five chiefs of the princes [*pa*] were sinners against the three kings.' '... When the sovereign visited the princes, it was called "a tour of inspection." When the princes attended at the court of the sovereign, it was called "giving a report of office." It was a custom in the spring to examine the plowing and supply any deficiency of seed; and in autumn to examine the reaping, and assist where there was a deficiency of the crop. When the sovereign entered the boundary of a state, if the new ground was being reclaimed, and the old fields well cultivated; if the old were nourished and the worthy honored; and if men of distinguished talents were placed in office: then the prince was rewarded—rewarded with an addition to his territory. On the other hand, if, on entering a state the ground was found left wild or overrun with weeds; if the old were neglected and the worthy unhonored, and if the offices were filled with hard tax-gatherers: then the prince was reprimanded. If a prince once omitted his attendance at court, he was punished by degradation of rank; if he did so a second time, he was deprived of a portion of his territory; if he did so a third time, the royal forces were set in motion, and he was removed from his government. Thus the sovereign commanded the punishment, but did not himself inflict it, while the princes inflicted the punishment, but did not command it. The five chiefs, however, dragged the princes to punish other princes; and hence I say they were sinners against the three kings.'" [*Mencius*, VI/ii/7/1-2; Legge, pp. 435-37.] This expands and develops Confucius' theory that "When good government prevails in the empire, ceremonies, music, and primitive military expeditions proceed from the son of Heaven." [*Analects*, XVI/2/1; Legge, p. 310.]
75. "Wan Chang," Part II [V/ii/2/1-2; Legge, p. 373].
76. "Chin-hsin," Part II [VII/ii/3/1; Legge, p. 479].
77. "T'eng Wen-kung," Part II, "Ching Ch'un said to Mencius 'Are not Kung-sun Yen and Chang Yi really great men? [These men were wandering scholars of the day, famous for their skill in involving the princes of the time in trouble-making schemes.] Let them once be angry, and all the princes are afraid. Let them live quietly, and the flames of trouble are extinguished throughout the kingdom.' [Mencius replied: 'How can such be great men?'" He goes on



- to define the great man as one of high ethical principles. III/ii/2/1-2; Legge, pp. 264-65.] Mencius denounced their practices as “the way of wives and concubines,” [i.e., the way of women.]
78. Here the phrase [of the T’ang statesman] Han Yü is borrowed from his “Tui Yü wen,” where he discusses the Sage Emperor Yü’s having passed the throne on to his son [thereby establishing the principle of hereditary succession instead of that of succession to the most worthy man, by which latter principle Yü himself had come to the throne].
79. “T’eng Wen-kung,” Part II [III/ii/9/2-7; modified slightly from Legge, pp. 279-81].
80. “Liang Hui-wang,” Part II, addressed to Duke Wen of T’eng [I/ii/14/3; Legge, p. 175].
81. The *Analects*, “Shu erh,” Book Seven [VII/22; Legge, p. 202] and “Tzu han,” Book Nine [IX/5/3; Legge, p. 218]. Also, in “Hsien wen,” Book Fourteen, Confucius refers to the issue of whether the Way will prevail or will perish as “a matter of fate.” [XIV/38/2, Waley, pp. 189-90, where “ming” is translated “heaven’s will.”] In “Chi-shih,” Book XVI, he says that “the superior man stands in awe of heaven’s will.” [XVI/8; Legge, p. 313, translates *t’ien ming* here as “the ordinances of Heaven”; Waley, p. 206, as “the will of Heaven”; Chan, *Source Book*, p. 45, as “the Mandate of Heaven.”]
82. “Liang Hui-wang,” Part II, speaking to Yüeh-cheng Tzu [I/ii/16/3; Legge, p. 179]; and “Kung-sun Ch’ou,” Part II, speaking to Ch’ung Yü [II/ii/14/5; Legge, p. 232].
83. “Wan Chang,” Part I [V/i/6/1; Legge, p. 358].
84. See, respectively [*Documents*, Legge, *Shoo King*], “The Documents of Shang,” “Kao-tsung t’ung-jih,” paragraph 3 [modified from Legge, p. 264]; and “The Documents of Chou,” “Shao Kao,” paragraph 9 [modified from Legge, p. 425]; and “To fang,” paragraph 6 [modified from Legge, p. 497]. The appendix to Liang Ch’i-ch’ao’s *Hsien Ch’in cheng-chih ssu-hsiang shih*, containing many passages from the *Shang Shu* mentioning the “Will of Heaven” *t’ien ming*, makes most convenient reference to these, and may be read in this connection. [Liang’s book has been published in an English translation, albeit of inadequate quality, by L. T. Ch’en, under the title *History of Chinese Political Thought during the Early Tsin Period*, London, 1930.]
85. *Hsiün Tzu*, ch. 6, “Fei shih-erh tzu.” For a more detailed discussion of this, see Section Seven of this chapter.
86. The “Piao Chi” further says: “Under the Chou dynasty, they honored the ceremonial usages [*li*], and set a high value on bestowing [favours]; they served the manes and respected Spiritual Beings, yet keeping them at a distance.” [Legge, *Li Ki*, Vol. 2, p. 342.] In the light of this, Confucius’ “Respecting Spiritual Beings, but keeping aloof from them” [*Analects*, VI/20, Legge, p. 191], was also a matter of following the Chou.
87. See, respectively “Kung-sun Ch’ou,” Part II [*Mencius*, II/ii/13/3; Legge, p. 232] and “Chin hsin,” Part II [VII/ii/38/1-3; Legge, pp. 501-02]. “Kung-sun Ch’ou,” Part II, further says: “From the commencement of the Chou dynasty till now, more than seven hundred years have elapsed. Judging numerically, the date is past. Examining the character of the present time, we might expect the rise of such individuals in it.” [Legge, p. 232.]
88. Shao Yung, *Huang chi ching-shih shu* [translated in part in Chan, *Source Book*, pp. 484-94]. However, Shao Yung was deeply influenced by Taoism, and his ideas are not drawn exclusively from Mencius. We should note also that Confucius believed in the will of heaven [or, fate], but he had no theory of a five-hundred-year cyclic reappearance of order. Hence he said: “If good men were to govern a country in succession for a hundred years, they would be able to transform the violently bad, and dispense with capital punishments. . . . If a truly royal ruler were to arise, it would still require a generation, and then virtue would prevail.” *Analects*, “Tzu-lu,” Book XIII [XIII/11-12; Legge, p. 267].
89. Refer also to *Tso Chuan*, Twenty-third year of Duke Chuang, “. . . the Duke went to Ch’i to see [the service at] the altar to the Spirits of the Land. This was contrary to propriety [*li*]. Ts’ao Kuei remonstrated with him, saying, ‘This cannot be. Propriety is that by which the people are rectified [*cheng min*]. Hence there are meetings of the princes at the royal court, to inculcate the duties severally incumbent on the high and low, and to lay down the amount of contributions which are to be severally made. There are court visits, to rectify the true position of the different ranks of nobility, and to arrange the precedence of older and younger. There are punitive expeditions to punish those who are not in accord [with these rules of propriety].’” [Modified from Legge, p. 105.] See also the

- Kuo Yü*, ch. 4, “Lu Yü,” Part I, where the wording differs slightly. “*Cheng min*,” here is to be taken in the sense of “*cheng min*” [“rectify the people”]. In the *Li Chi* the broader sense of the *li* is set forth in great detail; the relevant passages cannot all be quoted here.
90. Yet the Confucians also were thoroughly familiar with the minutiae of ceremonial forms, as one can know from reading the accounts of these in the *Yi Li* and the *Li Chi*. Confucius himself was noted as a man who knew the rites. *Mo Tzu*, ch. 39, “Fei Ju,” says that the Confucian: “Elaborates the ceremonials and music to make man extravagant.” [Modified slightly from Y. P. Mei, *Motze*, p. 212.] These examples show that indeed the Confucians also maintained the ritual proprieties. Confucius’ contribution lay in his broadening the scope of the rites and deepening their significance, so that they became the essential means for rectifying the people and governing the state. It was in this attitude toward the *li* that he said: “Ritual, ritual! Does it mean no more than presents of jade and silk?” [*Analects*, xvii/11; Waley, p. 212.]
91. Ch. 10, “Fu kuo,” i.e., “The Rich Country”: “People desire and hate the same things. Their desires are many but things are few. Since they are few, there will inevitably be strife. What a hundred workmen accomplish contributes to nourishing each individual. Yet an able person cannot be skilled in more than one line; one man cannot simultaneously perform two functions. If people leave their positions and do not serve each other, there will be poverty; if the masses [comprising the whole social group] are without social divisions, there will be strife. Poverty is an affliction, strife a calamity. To eliminate affliction and avert calamity, there is no method so good as clarifying social distinctions, thereby causing people to form a social group. . . . Work is what people dislike; gain and profit is what they like. When duties of office and the tasks of the occupations lack the distinctions, in such a situation people will find it difficult to carry on their work, and will be beset by strife over the profit and gain therefrom. . . . Therefore wise men have introduced social distinctions.” [Modified from Dubs, *Works of Hsüntze*, pp. 152-53.]
92. *Ibid.*
93. Ch. 4, “Jung ju,” i.e., “Glory and Shame.”
94. Ch. 19, “Li Lun,” i.e., “Treatise on Rites.” Hsün Tzu at times judges whether a government has achieved order or chaos according to whether or not the people are properly nurtured. For example, ch. 11, “Wang-pa,” “King, or Hegemon,” says “Men’s feelings are such that the eye desires the limit of color and the ear desires the limit of sound, the mouth desires the limit of flavor, the nose desires the limit of fragrance, and the mind desires the limit of ease. These five limits [of possible satisfaction] are things that man’s feelings demand he should not forego. The means exist whereby to sustain these five limits. But if the means are not provided, then the five limits cannot be realized. A state of ten thousand chariots [measuring the resources of a country by the size of its army] can be said to be broad and vast, rich and abundant. Add to [such resources] the principle by which government is made firm, and it is possible then to be peaceful and happy, with no troubles or sorrows. And then the means for sustaining the five limits can be said to be complete. So it is said: ‘All happiness is defined as being born in a well-ordered state. Grief and anxiety can be defined as being born in a chaotic state.’” The *Li Chi* also repeatedly develops the idea that the rites are in basic accord with man’s feelings and nature. For example, in ch. 30, “Fang Chi,” it says: “The rites, complying with men’s feelings provide regulatory patterns, thereby setting bounds for the people.” In ch. 9, “Li yün,” it says: “The rites accord with Heaven’s seasons, are supplied by earth’s abundance, follow the ways of the dead and the spirits, accord with men’s hearts, and bring order to all things.” And ch. 49, “Sang-fu ssu-chih,” states: “The general outlines of the rites are that they embody the conditions of heaven and earth, are modeled upon the four seasons, observe the standard of *Yin* and *Yang*, and comply with human nature and feelings; thus they are called *li* [the rites].” One should note that throughout all of the chapters of the *Li Chi* [in the versions] of both the elder and the younger Tai [Tai Te and his nephew Tai Sheng, who edited versions of the *Li Chi* during the Han period], there is to be found great similarity to the content of Hsün Tzu’s writings. No doubt portions [of the *Li Chi* as it took form in Han times] are derived from the system of thought of Hsün Tzu’s school.
95. Ch. 10, “Fu kuo.”
96. Ch. 9, “Wang chih,” or “Kingly Ordinances.” Note that Hsün Tzu looked upon society as an organization based on division of labor and on cooperation. The import of this is rather close to Mencius’ denunciation of Hsü Hsing’s ideal of a society in which all the members engage in agricultural production together. However, Mencius did not develop this line of his thought extensively or in detail.

97. *Hsün Tzu*, ch. 10, "Fu kuo": "Mo Tzu, whether master of the whole empire or merely ruler of a single state, would grimly enforce the wearing of coarse clothing and the eating of bad food. People would be sad and music would be banned. In this way [people] become deprived. Deprived people cannot satisfy their desires. When desires cannot be satisfied, the system of rewards for merit cannot be made effective. Mo Tzu, whether master of the whole empire or merely ruler of a single state, would dispense with apprenticeship [of trainees following an official in government] and would eliminate offices and ranks. Those in high positions would have to engage in toil and drudgery, having to share in the same kind of work as the masses, and equal with them in the rewards gained. In such a situation there would be no awe of the superior, and without awe the penal regulations could not be enforced. When rewards are not effective there would be no means by which the worthy can be advanced for merit. When penal regulations are not enforced there would be no means by which the perverse can be effectively restrained. There would be no way to judge the capable and the incompetent, and give [the former] office. In such circumstances all things would lose their proper balance; and the process of events would go awry. Above, there would be confusion of heaven's seasons; below, there would be confusion of earth's provenance; in between [among men], there would be a failure of peoples' harmonious relations. The realm would be in suffering, as if burned and scorched. Even though Mo Tzu were to wear the coarsest clothing and tie a rope around his waist for a belt, nibble at rough grains, and drink only water, it could scarcely avail. For the foundations would have been undercut, the source would have been exhausted, and the whole world would become as if parched."
98. Ch. 19, "Li lun" and ch. 10, "Fu kuo" both contain this passage. [The translation of the passage in the former, Dubs, p. 214, has not been used; cf. also, Watson, *Hsün Tzu*, p. 90.]
99. Ch. 19, "Li lun." [Dubs' translation, p. 226, has not been used, but is perhaps also a justifiable rendering; cf. also, Watson, p. 96.] The *Li Chi*, ch. 30, "Fang chi," also says: "The Master said, 'It is by the rules of ceremony that what is doubtful is displayed, and what is minute is distinguished, so that they may serve as dykes for the people. Thus it is that there are the grades of the noble and the mean, the distinctions of dress, the different places at court; and so the people [are taught to] give place to one another.'" [Legge, Vol. II, p. 285; see his note on page 284 on "dykes."] Also ch. 10, "Li ch'i," which discusses the ritual institutions in considerable detail, can also be referred to here.
100. However, the *Li Chi*, ch. 30, "Fang chi," states: "The Master said, 'There are not two suns in the sky, nor two kings in a territory, nor two masters in a family, nor two superiors of equal honor; and the people are shown how the distinctions between ruler and subject should be maintained. [Legge, *Li Ki*, Vol. II, p. 285.] This is merely to manifest the idea that the ruler's position is a supremely exalted one; it does not necessarily mean that the ruler's power is absolute. That distinction should be clearly noted."
101. Ch. 9, "Wang chih" [see also Dubs, p. 137, especially note 2].
102. Ch. 10, "Fu kuo."
103. Ch. 23, "Hsing o" [modified slightly from Dubs, p. 308].
104. Ch. 10, "Fu kuo."
105. It should be noted that before Hsün Tzu there were two persons among the Confucian school, i.e., Wu Ch'i [d. 381 B.C.] and Li K'e [fl. fourth century B.C.] whose thought was close to that of the Legalists. It is unfortunate that their works are not extant and their theories cannot be studied in detail. Moreover, though Hsün Tzu stressed the state, he by no means denied the necessity for the ethical cultivation of the self; refer in this connection to *The Hsün Tzu*, ch. 2, "Hsiu Shen," and ch. 3, "Pu kou." Yet it can be said that Hsün Tzu tended toward the encouragement of hypocrisy in maintaining the semblance of virtue. For example in ch. 4, "Jung ju," he says: "Filial and fraternal piety spring from vigorous attention to the control of one's own conduct, alacrity in responding punctiliously and cautiously in all one's affairs, and not daring to indulge in carelessness or disrespect. It is in this way that the ordinary man insures that he will dress warmly and eat his fill, to preserve life and extend longevity, and to evade corporal punishment and death."
106. See respectively, ch. 27, "Ta lüeh," ch. 10, "Fu kuo," and ch. 18, "Cheng lun." [For the latter, refer Dubs, p. 105.] Also, ch. 9, "Wang chih": "When the horses are fearful of the carriage-traces the master [*chün-tzu*] cannot ride in safety; when the common people are fearful of government the prince [*chün-tzu*] cannot be secure in his position. When horses fear the carriage

- traces, nothing serves so well as to calm them; when the common people fear government nothing serves so well as to favor them. Select worthy and able [for office], appoint the sincere and attentive, promote the filial and fraternal piety, take in orphans and widows, assist the poor and deprived, and in this way the common people can be made to feel secure in their government. When the common people feel secure in government the prince then can be secure in his position. There is a traditional saying that: 'The prince [*chiin*] is a boat; the common people are the water. The water can sustain the boat; the water can overturn the boat.' This is what is meant. [Cf. Watson's *Hsün Tzu*, pp. 36-37, for a slightly different translation of this passage.] And *ch.* 11, "Wang pa," discussing the tyrannous ruler, says: "The people despise him like the plague-ridden, hate him like a demon. Their constant desire is to find an opportunity that will allow them to band together, trample on him, drive him out."
107. The book known as the *Chou Li* is not regarded by modern scholars as being directly descriptive of early Chou institutions (e.g., Ch'ien Li, in his *Tung-shu tu-shu-chi*). Hence it is thought that it was gradually added to and altered, becoming the book we know today, having been composed by persons of the Warring States Period who based it only loosely on ancient institutions (Ch'ien Mu, "Chou kuan chu-tso shih-tai k'ao," based on [the eminent scholar of the later Han period] Ho Hsiu; see, *Yen-ching hsüeh-pao*, number 11). Thus its content would be precisely representative of just this metamorphosis. Be that as it may, even if the *Chou Li* was composed at the end of the Chou period, the tendency evident in it to transform the rites *li* into laws *fa* goes back perhaps to the beginning of Chou. For it is probable that Chou feudalism was itself a development marking a kind of transformation from the pure clan-law system of the Shang people's tribal organization.
108. For example, the *ch.* 19, "Li lun," except for the opening section, in general sets forth the antique concept, while *ch.* 11, "Wang pa," and *ch.* 10, "Fu kuo," and other chapters in large part embody the new ideas.
109. *Hsun Tzū*, *ch.* 12 "Chün tao," i.e., "The Way of the Ruler." Hsün Tzu also divided human talent into three ranks: 1. The talent appropriate to local officials and minor staff personnel; 2. The talent appropriate to Great Officers and court officials; 3. The talent appropriate to chief ministers and advisors to the ruler.
110. *Ch.* 11, "Wang pa."
111. *Ch.* 12, "Chün tao."
112. In *ch.* 18, "Cheng lun," Hsün Tzu argues that in antiquity there had existed no symbolic punishments. [I.e., "*hsiang hsing*," described as the punishment of wearing garments indicative of the crime, to humiliate the criminal, or otherwise marking him in public as an offender. Whether such a system really existed in antiquity was much debated throughout later history.] He says, in part: "The basis of corporal punishment is that it prohibits violence and causes the despicable to be despised; and it is a preventive against what might otherwise come to pass." He also says: "For it can be said that ennoblement and rank, official status and appointment, rewards and good fortune, punishments and penalties, all are compensation reflecting the circumstances from which they derive." This seems to go beyond anything said by Confucius and Mencius.
113. [The translation of the first quoted passage follows Chan, *Source Book*, p. 124; the second follows Bodde, *Fung/Bodde*, Vol. 1, p. 311.] The same Chapter [22] also says: "'It is no disgrace to be insulted'; 'the sage does not love himself'; 'to kill a robber is not to kill a man'; and says that "these are examples of the fallacy of so using names as to confuse names." It also cites: "'Mountains are on the same level as marshes'; 'The desires seek to be few'; 'Tender meat adds nothing to sweet taste, and the great bell adds nothing to music'; commenting that "These are examples of the fallacy of using actualities to confuse names." And of: "'*Fei-erh-yeh*,' '*ying-yu-niu*'; 'a [white] horse is not a horse'" that "These are examples of the fallacy of so using names as to confuse actualities." [The six untranslated words, like the other propositions discussed, are cited from the paradoxes of the sophists. Most scholars believe these six words to have been garbled in transmission because no reasonable translation of them seems possible. For a discussion of Hsün Tzu on sophistry, see *Fung/Bodde*, Vol. 1, pp. 308-11.] These three taken together are called the "Three Fallacies" [*san huo*] and he wanted to forbid them all. That is to say, Hsün Tzu would have attached the crime of confusing the names on the followers of Sung K'eng, of Chuang Tzu, of Mo Tzu, and of Kung-sun Lung and of all the schools of thought except the Confucian, and would have had the state use its laws and regulations to prohibit them. [Translations cited above follow Chan, *Source Book*, p. 127.]
114. *Ch.* 5, "Fei hsiang." [also translated in *Fung/Bodde*, p. 282.]
115. *Ch.* 27, "Ta Lüeh."

116. *Ch. 5*, “Fei hsiang.” The annotation of Yang Liang [a ninth-century annotator of the text of the *Hsün Tzu*] states: “This refers to their [i.e., the Chou people’s] own rulers.” [Cf. Fung/Bodde, p. 282, where the passage is translated in a different sense.]
117. *Ch. 9*, “Wang chih.” [Following the translation of Watson, p. 42.]
118. *Ch. 18*, “Cheng lun,” says: “The common run of sophists say: ‘The way of the ruler benefits from secrecy.’ This is not so: the ruler is the guide of the people; the superior is the model for the inferior. They must listen for the guide and respond, watch their model and react. If the guide is silent, the people have no way of responding; if the model is concealed, then the inferior has no way of reacting to it. With no responding and no reacting, superior and inferior have nothing wherein they are mutually dependent, and that would be the same as if there were no superior. Of all inauspicious portents, that would be the most serious.”
119. See, the last paragraph of Section Five, Chapter Two, above.
120. *Ch. 16*, “Ch’iang kuo,” or “Strengthening the State,” says: “The Duke of Ying [Fan Chü, Chief Minister in Ch’in when Hsün Tzu visited that state], asked Hsün Tzu, ‘what have you observed since coming into the State of Ch’in?’ Hsün Tzu replied: ‘It is favored by topography, with firm natural defenses, and has fine hills and forests, streams and valleys. Its natural endowment provides many benefits. This is the excellence of its situation. Coming within its borders, I have observed its ways and customs. Its common people live simply; the sounds of their music display no tendencies toward the licentious. Their dress is not fanciful. They are greatly in awe of the officials and are obedient. They are as the people of antiquity. And coming to the towns with their government offices, [I note that] the staffs of officials are decorous and respectful; there are none among them who are not reverential and temperate, earnest and sincere, loyal, trustworthy and not rude. They are as the officials of antiquity. Entering the capital, I have observed the scholars and great officers on leaving their own gates and entering the offices of government, and on emerging from the offices of government to enter again into their own homes. They were involved in no private matters; they are not partisan and cabalistic; they do not form cliques or factions. Dignified in manner, none among them are not intelligent and understanding and equitable in their actions. They are as the scholars and great officers of antiquity. Observing the court, [I note that] in the administering and judging of government business, all matters are disposed of readily and quietly, as if there were no governmental business there at all. It is like a royal court of antiquity. . . . And yet, there is something frightening about it. [You have] exhaustively combined all the methods and devices into one [system], yet when all of this [imposing array] is weighed in the balance of the [True] King’s capacity and fame, then it is gravely apparent that he comes far from equaling it.’ [That is to say, the ruler is not up to the demands of the complex system within which he functions. Hsün Tzu goes on to comment that the reason the person and personality of the ruler fail to assume their proper role is that there are no Confucian advisors to the throne in Ch’in.]
121. See, respectively, Twenty-third year of Duke Hsi [636 B.C.; Legge, p. 187] and Third year of Duke Hsüan [605 B.C.; Legge, p. 293].
122. See, respectively, Seventh year of Duke Chao [534 B.C.; Legge, p. 617] and Eleventh year of Duke Chuang [682 B.C.; Legge, p. 88].
123. See, Thirty-second year of Duke Chuang [661 B.C.; Legge, p. 120]. This also is found in the *Kuo Yü, ch. 1*, “Chou yü, Part one,” where the wording differs slightly.
124. *Tso Chuan*, Eighteenth year of Duke Chao [523 B.C.; Legge, p. 671]. See also in the Nineteenth year where Tzu-ch’an refuses sacrifices to a dragon [Legge, p. 675]. The import is more or less the same.
125. See *Analects*, respectively, Book xi, “Hsien chin” [xi/11; Legge, p. 240] and Book vi, “Yung yeh” [vi/20; Legge, p. 191].
126. Confucius’ faith in the Will of Heaven has already been pointed out in footnote 87 of this chapter.
127. *The Doctrine of the Mean*, Ch. xvi, “The Master said, ‘How abundantly do spiritual beings display the powers that belong to them! We look for them, but do not see them; we listen to, but do not hear them; yet they enter into all things, and there is nothing without them . . .’” [Legge, p. 397]; Ch. xxiv: “It is characteristic of the most entire sincerity to be able to foreknow. When a nation or family is about to flourish, there are sure to be happy omens; and when it is about to perish, there are sure to be unlucky omens. *Such events are* seen in the milfoil and tortoise, and effect the movements of the four limbs. When calamity or happiness is about to come, the good shall certainly be foreknown by him, and the evil also.

Therefore the individual possessed of the most complete sincerity is like a spirit." [Legge, pp. 417-18]; Ch. xxix/4. "His [the ruler's] presenting himself with *his institutions* before spiritual beings without any doubts arising about them, shows that he knows Heaven." [Legge, p. 426.]

We should note that in the *Analects* it states: "The Master never talked of prodigies, feats of strength, disorders or spirits (vii/20) [Waley, p. 127; Waley's original note: "Disorders of nature; such as snow in summer, owls hooting by day, or the like"]; "The Master seldom spoke of profit or fate or Goodness" (ix/1) [Waley, p. 138]; and [Confucius' disciple] Tzu-kung also said of him, [of] "our Master's views . . . about man's nature and the ways of Heaven he will not tell us anything at all" (v/12) [Waley, p. 110]; Confucius apparently taught his disciples [as seen in the *Analects*] according to the Way of the Chou, and transmitted the Way of the Yin people [as seen in the *Doctrine of the Mean*] as a family teaching only.

128. In the opening passage of *ch. 5*, "Fei hsiang," i.e., "Against Physiognomers," Hsün Tzu says: "Physiognomers did not exist among the ancients; learned men made no mention of them. In antiquity there was a man called Ku-pu Tzu-ch'ing, and in recent times there is T'ang Chü of the State of Liang; they physiognomize people by the shape and form, color and appearance, of their facial features and know from that their good luck or bad, the fore signs of ill or happy fortune. It is common practice in our times to praise them. But among the ancients there was no such thing; learned men made no mention of it. Thus we may say that doing physiognomy by the facial features is not as worthwhile as talking about the inner man, and judging the inner man is not to be compared with choosing the [proper] methods. Features cannot prevail over the inner man, and the inner man cannot prevail over the [proper] methods. When the methods are upright, the inner man complies with them. In such a case, if the inner man and his methods are good, even if the physiognomy is inauspicious, that cannot prevent him from being a superior man. And if the inner man and his methods are evil, even though his physiognomy be good, that cannot prevent him from being a petty man. What the superior man regards as auspicious, the petty man considers to be inauspicious." This is another example of Hsün Tzu's rejection of common practice.
129. The *Book of Documents*, "Hung Fan," i.e., "The Great Plan" [discussing how the ruler resolves doubts], says: "If you have any doubt about important matters,

consult with your own conscience [four characters added to the passage as quoted], consult with your ministers and officers, consult with the common people, and consult the tortoise shells and stalks. If you, the tortoise shells, the stalks, the ministers and officers, and the common people all agree, this is called a great concord. There will be welfare to your own person and prosperity to your descendants. The result will be auspicious. If you, the tortoise shells, and the stalks agree, but the ministers and officers and the common people oppose, the result will be auspicious. If the ministers and officers, the tortoise shells, and the stalks agree, but you and the common people oppose, the result will be auspicious. If the common people, the tortoise shells, and the stalks agree but you and the ministers and the officers oppose, the result will be auspicious. If you and the tortoise shells agree but the stalks, ministers and officers, and the common people oppose, the internal operations will be auspicious but external operations will be unlucky. If both the tortoise shells and the stalks oppose the views of men, inactivity will be auspicious but active operations will be unlucky." [Chan, *Source Book*, p. 10; see also Legge, pp. 337-38.] This shows that the ruler did not make arbitrary decisions by himself alone.

130. *Han Shu*, *ch. 4*, "Basic Annals of the Emperor Wen." [See Dubs' translation, Volume One; see also Watson, *Shih Chi*, Vol. 1, pp. 351-52; and de Bary, *Sources*, p. 229.]
131. *Han Shu*, *ch. 81*, "Biography of K'ung Kuang."
132. *Ibid.*, *ch. 56*, "Biography of shu."
133. *Ibid.*, *ch. 99*, "Biography of Wang Mang." [Translated in de Bary, *Sources*, pp. 196-98.]
134. *Ibid.*, *ch. 100*, Part One. [Translated in part in de Bary, *Sources*, pp. 192-97.]
135. *Hou Han Shu*, *ch. 43*, "Biography of Kung-sun Shu."

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#### Lee H. Yearley (essay date 1990)

SOURCE: Yearley, Lee H. "Conclusion." *Mencius and Aquinas: Theories of Virtue and Conceptions of Courage*, State U of New York P, 1990, pp. 169-203.

[In the following essay, Yearley summarizes the substantial differences between Mencius's Confucianism and Thomas Aquinas's Christianity.]

My final chapter covers two related subjects. I review succinctly (in Sections I-III) the more striking, and possibly disturbing, results of this inquiry; in that review I also provide a more abstract explanation than previously given of how and why I proceeded as I did. I then, in the bulk of the chapter (Sections IV-VI), discuss the theoretical question of how we can best do the comparative philosophy of human flourishings. I argue for a general method, but draw my examples from the analyses in this book.

I begin, then, by reviewing those results of the comparisons that, I think, left us in a perplexing situation. We found either raw dissimilarities or thin resemblances between many of Aquinas and Mencius's ideas, and yet we saw real resemblances between their theories of virtue and accounts of some specific virtues. I explain this situation by examining the three different types of theories—primary, practical, and secondary—that operate in these, as well as most other, thinkers. If we distinguish among the character and products of these theories, we can understand why real resemblances appear in some areas and dissimilarities or thin resemblances in others.

I then turn to a more general discussion of how best to undertake the comparative philosophy of human flourishings. I argue that we can utilize features of Aquinas's approach, provided that we realize his aims and ours differ substantially and that we need to examine both his successes and his failures to understand the problems and the possibilities in his approach. I then examine carefully the most important feature, for us, of Aquinas's approach: those performances that arise from analyzing and utilizing analogical expressions, especially those in which we construct and relate focal and secondary terms. This pursuit of the similar in the different and the different in the similar rests on the operations of the analogical imagination. I end by examining those operations and arguing that we must use imaginative capacities to successfully do a fully comparative philosophy of human flourishings. Let us turn, then, to our first subject.

#### I. DISSIMILARITIES AND THIN RESEMBLANCES BETWEEN MENCIUS AND AQUINAS

The general perspectives, abstract ideas, overall approaches, and cultural contexts evident in Mencius and Aquinas usually differ substantially.<sup>1</sup> Marked contrasts appear in the general perspectives within which they work. Mencius's Confucianism, for instance, is as striking an example of a locative religion as is Aquinas's Christianity of an open



religion. Moreover, Aquinas's cosmology represents in paradigmatic form that kind of theism in which a deity creates and preserves the world but remains fundamentally distinct from it. Mencius's cosmology, in contrast, is organismic or even "familial": all elements are intimately interconnected; they are what they are only through their relationships with other elements and their place in the whole.

Evident contrasts also appear when we look at many of the more fundamental, abstract conceptions in each thinker. No equivalent to Mencius's notion of psychophysical energy that can be numinous (*ch'i*) exists in Aquinas, and Aquinas's idea of grace (*gratia*) appears to resemble no concept in Mencius. Indeed, these two notions seem to make sense only within each thinker's more general framework. Mencius's psychophysical energy requires an organismic framework as clearly as Aquinas's grace requires a theistic one.

Furthermore, the very way Mencius and Aquinas develop and analyze their general perspectives and abstract conceptions differ considerably. Mencius employs a technical vocabulary, makes distinctions, and prosecutes arguments. Such analytic procedures and tools, however, are peripheral parts of his approach. In contrast, they are at the heart of Aquinas's approach. Indeed, Mencius seems not to share Aquinas's belief in the significance of either the process of analysis or its results. The process of self-cultivation that, for Mencius, leads to proper understanding and growth is too delicate, too subtly balanced an enterprise to be well-served by emphasizing such analysis.

Finally, the ways of life, the cultural contexts, that each works within obviously differ greatly. Conventional social rules and roles are considerably more important to Mencius than to Aquinas, for example, and familial relationships are less significant for Aquinas than for Mencius. Even their respective notions of a thinker's social role often differ strikingly. Both do think they are articulating a true position and therefore must defend it against various false views. Mencius, however, usually battles fiercely against opposed views. Aquinas sees his task (except in a few cases) as harmonizing positions that, he thinks, are only apparently opposed or different. Moreover, Mencius spends considerable time and effort trying to persuade rulers. Aquinas at times deals with those in political power, but they are hardly the focus of action and thought for him that they are for Mencius.

Striking differences in Mencius and Aquinas's overall perspectives, abstract conceptions, general approaches, and cultural contexts, then, are evident. Resemblances, of course, also are present in some areas. Many of them, however, are *real but thin*; that is, the resemblances are

rather insignificant. They appear in an area that is so narrowly circumscribed or at a level that is so abstract that they provide us neither textured nor extensive materials on which to work.

Mencius and Aquinas's treatment of the role of injunctions, for instance, shows clear similarities. Each thinks that humans are bound by unconditional negative obligations, such as that one ought not take innocent life without compelling reasons. They even would agree on some areas in which these obligations operate; for example, no ruler should allow people to starve to satisfy his own desire for better food or drink. Nevertheless, significant differences appear between them when we turn from these clear cases and ask how each would understand the meanings of key words; that is, how each would decide who is an "innocent," or even a "person," and what constitutes a compelling reason. Mencius and Aquinas's differing answers to such questions arise from divergences between their general frameworks and cultural contexts.

Even more important, both Mencius and Aquinas think that injunctions cover only a few kinds of cases. Neither thinks directives arising from injunctions apply to many areas of life that are extraordinarily important to full human flourishing. That is, they differentiate sharply between the realms of injunctions and virtues, and they believe that despite the importance of injunctions, the realm of virtues contains most of what is critical. Whatever resemblances between them may be present in the realm of injunctions, then, much that is crucial remains untouched.

The subject of human nature's abstract characteristics shows us another, different kind of real but still thin resemblance. Both thinkers agree humans have a given nature; both believe capacities that may or may not be actualized define it; and both think a higher power, in some fashion, is responsible for its character. When we examine their more textured accounts, however, substantial disagreements appear. For example, their ideas differ about how the higher power acted on that nature or now acts on it. Similarly, they differ on the question of how fragile are a human being's natural capacities and what exactly must occur if these capacities are to be actualized.

If we look at general frameworks, abstract conceptions, analytic approaches, and cultural contexts, we see substantial differences between Mencius and Aquinas. Real and noteworthy resemblances also are present, but they often are only thin ones. We seem, then, to be left with a situation in which we possess either thin accounts of real similarities or thick accounts of dissimilarities. Indeed, some aspects of their accounts of virtue and virtues reflect this dichotomy.

A few similarities in Aquinas and Mencius's theories of virtue are real but thin; for example, their notion that capacities exist that can develop over time into actualities or virtues. This similarity is real, and it does differentiate them from proponents of a discovery model who believe people can uncover a transhuman actualization that will completely inform their characters. But the similarity also is thin. A more detailed examination shows noteworthy distinctions between their respective understandings of how sturdy are the capacities, what is involved in actualizing them, and how prone people are to fail.

Similarly, when we examine their respective thick accounts of actual virtues we sometimes see only differences. Aquinas presents many different kinds of virtues, but Mencius presents scarcely any. More important, few of Mencius and Aquinas's virtues seem clearly to correspond, and those that do often show dissimilarities when we examine them more closely and place them correctly within each thinker's structure. Mencius's benevolence (*jen*), for instance, seems to resemble Aquinas's benevolence (*benevolentia*), but the virtue is central to Mencius and peripheral to Aquinas. In fact, charity (*caritas*) often functions for Aquinas in the way that benevolence (*jen*) functions for Mencius, and charity differs substantially from benevolence.

Other, even more general differences also seem to be evident when we examine their textured treatments of virtues. The significance of religious virtues in Aquinas in contrast to their seeming insignificance in Mencius is a notable one. Another notable difference is the close tie of virtue to social roles in Mencius in contrast to the relative unimportance of that link in Aquinas. Moreover, both these features of their accounts affect not only their examination of almost every virtue but also their establishment and defense of the priorities among all virtues.

Given all this, little seems to remain of my brave claims about the productive relationships that would arise if we focused on virtue in the comparative philosophy of religious flourishings. We seem to be left with only the unhappy dilemma I described in the first chapter. On the one hand, examinations of the realm of injunctions produce real but rather unilluminating resemblances. On the other hand, examinations of ways of life produce textured accounts that usually are characterized by complex differences.

## II. REAL RESEMBLANCES IN MENCIUS AND AQUINAS'S UNDERSTANDING OF VIRTUE

I do think that in comparing Mencius and Aquinas's ideas about virtue and virtues we found more than just thin but real resemblances at the more theoretical level and textured but diverse dissimilarities at the level of more concrete

descriptions. Indeed, I think we found a complicated set of interactions that show us how comparisons like this involve us in creating similarities within differences and differences within similarities. Let me begin with a review of some of the results of the lengthy discussions in earlier chapters, as it sets the needed background. I will again examine Mencius and Aquinas's more theoretical analysis of virtue and then turn to their accounts of concrete virtues.

Before undertaking this review, however, one general observation is in order. The examination, I think, shows the importance of working with the details of each thinker's accounts. A comparative philosophy of human flourishing that deals with sophisticated thinkers works best when we focus on specific subjects and textured presentations. General, comparative accounts of thinkers or traditions have their place, of course, and any comparative enterprise also must treat the general background. Nevertheless, adequate and illuminating comparisons normally will appear only if we include a careful examination of details.

The following example can illustrate my point well. Aquinas and Mencius seem to connect virtue and social role in very different ways. The link between the two is much closer for Mencius than for Aquinas, and that leads Mencius to make judgments with which Aquinas would disagree; for example, when Mencius validates the actions of a gamekeeper who risks death rather than respond to a ritually improper summons. Nevertheless, in their more detailed analyses both thinkers use the idea of semblances of virtue in ways that must make us hesitant about drawing any uncomplicated distinction between them. Mencius's ideas about the village honest man (*hsiang yüan*) display his understanding of the problems with any simple relationship between role and virtue. Similarly, Aquinas's account of some cases, such as that of a judge's responsibilities, shows that he believes virtue and role can be intimately linked. We may find, then, that apparently clear differences are much less clear than they seemed when we turn to each thinker's detailed, textured accounts; we therefore must focus on such accounts when we make comparisons. With that in mind, let us turn to the main subject.

When we examine Mencius and Aquinas's theories of virtue we saw some striking resemblances, especially in the conceptions of the self that underlie both theories. They develop similar positions on the character and interaction of practical reason, the emotions, and dispositions. Moreover, each thinker also focuses on the ideas of semblances and expansions of virtues, and they employ these ideas in ways that often produce similar results. Both, for instance, identify semblances of courage and expand courage into the religious realm, and they do so in ways that

generate revealing resemblances. Real and textured resemblances, then, characterize significant parts of Mencius and Aquinas's theories of virtue, conceptions of the self, and ideas about semblances and expansions of virtue.<sup>2</sup>

Matters are somewhat more complicated when we attempt to establish productive relationships between the two thinkers at a more concrete level. Closer analyses may uncover important differences in cases in which similarities seemed clear, as with the virtue of benevolence. Similarly, a more subtle and imaginative account may uncover resemblances that were overlooked initially. Closer investigation showed us, for example, that despite the apparently obvious absence in Mencius of any virtues that correspond to either Aquinas's theological virtues or his supernatural virtue of patience, significant similarities are present. Indeed, highlighting those similarities cast a most interesting light on Mencius and also allowed us to see Aquinas in a new way.<sup>3</sup>

Detailed analyses can be carried out with any virtue, of course, but I have treated with the necessary care only the virtue of courage. ("Practical reason" also was examined extensively, but focusing on how it informs courage meant that significant aspects of it were discussed only briefly.) Mencius and Aquinas both agreed that courage was of crucial importance to human fulfillment, and their understanding of the virtue's abstract structure also showed striking similarities. Moreover, their accounts of the character and significance of courage's semblances resembled each other in broad outline and sometimes in specific detail. Finally, their treatment of the religious aspects of courage, a prominent part of their expansions of courage, displayed significant resemblances on the subjects of the character of fully perfected courage and of the role of appropriate endurance.<sup>4</sup>

In summary, then, we find real and textured resemblances between Mencius and Aquinas's understanding of both the conception of virtue and the virtue of courage. (Furthermore, as we will discuss more fully later, comparing them deepened our understanding of each thinker and led us toward some normative conclusions.) Their understanding of virtues shows similarities missing almost completely when we focus on their general perspectives, abstract ideas, overall approaches, or cultural contexts.

Especially striking is that resemblances evident in their accounts of virtues and virtue fail to appear in their accounts of many more abstract topics. This difference, I think, raises an important question about the status of each thinker's culturally given conceptual vocabulary, especially the most theoretical of the concepts they use. Similarities rarely

are evident here. But resemblances appear when Mencius and Aquinas focus on more concrete issues, aim at a relatively "neutral" description of an agent's state, and operate with a less technical vocabulary than they have at their command.

This situation leads me to query whether each thinker's more theoretical ideas and conceptual apparatus always serve them well, at least when they deal with virtues. Both thinkers may point to phenomena, ideas, and values that can be better grasped and explained, at least by us, with notions that differ from the ones that they themselves present. This remains true even if we understand these matters far better by having worked through their explication of them and by having taken seriously their more abstract distinctions, especially those that relate most closely to their explications of virtue.

I will analyze this issue and examine its implications in several ways. I will argue, in the book's last sections, that utilizing a comparative method that relies on the analogical imagination helps us both to deal with it and, most important, to engage in a truly productive comparative philosophy of religious flourishings. Before undertaking this more general inquiry, however, I want to examine the problem more directly. I will do so by focusing on the relationship between ideas of a more theoretical or abstract character and those that seem more to reflect common sense. I already have briefly discussed this subject at several places where we needed to untangle the relationships among different kinds of theory to understand and compare our two thinkers. The topic is important enough, however, that we need to examine more closely both the general subject and how an understanding of it affects our comparison of Mencius and Aquinas.

### III. PRIMARY, PRACTICAL, AND SECONDARY THEORIES IN THE COMPARATIVE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGIOUS FLOURISHINGS

One influential and productive way to formulate the relationship of more abstract ideas and ideas that seem to reflect common sense appears in the work of the anthropologist Robin Horton. He distinguishes between the terms and structures of what he calls *primary* and *secondary theories*—Horton's own correction of his earlier distinction between "everyday discourse" and "theoretical discourse." Horton's analysis, and the controversy it has generated, usually focuses on the explanation of natural or material phenomena. The discussion, then, often centers on the character of scientific understanding or even, more narrowly, on the nature of medical understanding. Nevertheless, Horton's framework is helpful.<sup>5</sup>

*Primary theories* are marvelously efficient in helping people to explain, predict, and control most normal situations. These theories will not vary much from culture to culture, although some features of them will be more or less well developed in any particular culture. An agricultural culture whose people live in tropical lowlands and a herding culture whose people live in the mountains will share the ideas and practices that result from their primary theories about, say, the characteristics of heavy objects or the common changes in seasons. Their differing situations, however, also will lead people in the respective cultures to have more developed primary theories in some areas than in others; for example, about the long-term effects of excessive rain and heat on the growth of grain or about the way cloud formations signal sudden, severe shifts in weather.

Primary theories underlie people's ability to cope with the normal problems the world presents. The explanations they provide allow people to predict, plan, and thereby often control important aspects of life. Moreover, they usually appear to be obviously truthful to people within the culture and even to many outside it. These theories can then be said to have a universal character; that is, they often speak in one voice, they are similar in nature and content.

*Secondary theories*, in contrast, usually vary enormously from culture to culture. They can be said to have an equivocal character; that is, they speak in various voices, they are dissimilar in nature and content. Indeed, they usually appear to almost all people, even those within the culture, to be a mixture of the familiar and the strange. The origin and function of these theories helps to explain aspects of their character. People build secondary theories from primary theories to explain distinctive, peculiar, or distressing occurrences. They develop ideas about a realm of powers or class of beings, like benevolent spirits, that clearly differ from evident phenomena to explain or interpret those extraordinary, or even normal, matters that primary theories cannot deal with adequately. A mysterious outbreak of disease or a person's extraordinary capacity to cure, for example, could be phenomena that would lead people to produce secondary theories.

Human beings try to explain, predict, and control events in all areas of life. Distinguishing between primary and secondary theories helps us, as interpreters, to understand the different ways in which these enterprises operate. (This is especially important when the subject is "natural" occurrences; when human flourishing is the subject, as we will see, things become considerably more complicated.) The distinction between the two kinds of theories helps us sort out different aspects of Mencius and Aquinas's accounts. This, in turn, allows us to understand more clearly why we

may find resemblances, analogical predications, in treatments of virtue and only thin resemblances or differences, equivocal predications, in other areas.

Certain of Mencius and Aquinas's important ideas are firmly anchored in secondary theory; for example, psychophysical energy (*ch'i*) or grace (*gratia*). These ideas rely on conceptions of a realm of power or beings that obviously differs from what is clearly evident, and they help to explain both normal and abnormal situations. Other of their ideas fit easily into primary theory; for example, their most rudimentary notions about simple human desires to nourish and sexually express one's self, or to avoid those life-threatening objects that induce fear.

These latter ideas, however, take on a more complicated conceptual form as soon as either thinker begins to examine them closely. When Aquinas discusses with care the subject of simple human desires, for example, he distinguishes between impulse and contending appetites; and when Mencius discusses it he distinguishes between attention (*ssu*) and invariant reactions. An even more pronounced change occurs when either thinker reflects on which objects of desire bring real satisfaction. Raw fear about life-threatening objects or powerful movements toward sexual expression no longer are seen as implacable, unrefinable parts of human character. That is, their understanding of the interaction of reason, emotions, and dispositions leads them to argue for a very different picture of what can and should motivate people than appears in their most simple primary theories. Both thinkers, then, produce theoretical accounts that differ from primary theories about basic human desires or fears, and yet they do so without expressing those accounts in terms, like *ch'i* or grace, that are most evidently parts of their secondary theories.

These kinds of theoretical accounts lead me to suggest that Mencius and Aquinas (and most other sophisticated thinkers about human flourishing) utilize not two but three kinds of theories. Indeed, when human flourishing is the subject, the most important level of theorizing often fits between what Horton calls *primary* and *secondary* theories. People who theorize on human flourishing work on the materials produced by primary theories—for example, simple human drives and fears—and they often can link their theorizing with those ideas full-fledged secondary theories produce, like *ch'i* and grace. That is, they aim at a more conceptually precise ordering of human experience than does primary theory; but they stay far closer to the particular, often murky, phenomena that make up much of human life than does secondary theory. Practitioners of this kind of theory will use concepts, even technical terms of art. But they aim to order the often confusing tumult of

human experience to generate those forms of understanding that will better guide appreciation and action.

I label this third kind of theory *practical theory*, as the aim is to explain human activities to guide people's practices, and therefore lead them to a more complete flourishing. (This kind of theorizing resembles, in important ways, the approach to "action" [*praxis*] that Aristotle utilizes in his ethical works when he attempts to preserve but order appearances.<sup>6</sup>) A simple example illustrates important features of this kind of theorizing. An untutored eye watching a basketball game sees only ten bodies rushing about on a confined court and attempting to put a ball in a basket. Little more than chaos punctuated by whistles and cheers is observed. An eye tutored by ideas found in the practical theory that surrounds basketball, however, sees something different. Knowing what a pick-and-roll is, understanding what a double team is, recognizing the difference between a zone defense and a man-to-man defense, a different picture emerges of what is happening. The terms of art, and the theory of which they are a part, enable tutored observers to see form and pattern where before they saw only chaotic interaction. They also allow observers to understand who is playing well and who badly, and may even allow them—as coaches, players, or bettors—to be more successful than they would otherwise have been. Practical theory, then, generates a form of explanation, prediction, and control.

Basketball is a game, of course, and it possesses firm characteristics that life does not have. The analogy to the panoply of matters involved in human flourishing, then, is imperfect. Game-like phenomena, however, are significant parts of the virtuous life, as MacIntyre and others have argued, and they give us important information about how best to understand and live that life.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, and even more important, the example of a game can be misleading insofar as it concerns only the ordering of sense impressions, the data of observation.

Mencius and Aquinas's practical theory aims to order sense impressions. But the phenomena they work on as practical theorists also includes beliefs, interpretations, and the language of texts thought to be sacred. All these sources are critical for practical theory, and the need to use them illustrates how this kind of theory sits between primary and secondary theory. When they theorize about simple, observable data they come very close to primary theory. When they theorize about phenomena revealed in beliefs or sacred language they come close to secondary theory.

The connection to secondary theory is especially close, then, when ethical and religious phenomena are the subject, but differences between the two kinds of theorizing

can be illustrated with the help of an example. Both thinkers examine closely the important, to them, phenomenon of empowerment, the state of being able to do easily and well what before could be done only haltingly or badly. This phenomenon is central to the discourses they use, appears in figures and texts they respond to, and also seems to have been a crucial part of their own experiences. Their secondary theory aims to capture it with notions such as, the link of righteousness (*yi*) and the flood-like *ch'i* in Mencius, and the differences between normal patience and the infused virtue of patience, or courage and the Gift of Courage, in Aquinas.

But they also examine the phenomenon in their practical theory, often either without the terms found in their secondary theory or in a way that allows us to distinguish their uses of those terms and the phenomenon they examine. These accounts enabled us to portray, for example, the operation of perfected courage or an attitude like patience in each thinker without constantly referring to the terms in their secondary theories. That is, we could examine those operations and attitudes without also focusing on their more theoretical treatments of conceptions like Heaven, fate, God, and infused virtues. This, in turn, enabled us to produce a comparison that would have been impossible had the terms of their secondary theory been central. Focusing on their practical theories, then, allowed us to compare them in ways we otherwise could not have.<sup>8</sup>

This approach also contains a danger, however: we can overlook not only the importance of their secondary theories but also the religious meaning that appears in these theories. The temptation to flatten their accounts, to exorcise from them those striking religious claims that often ill fit our normal presuppositions, is always present. The only real protection against this temptation, as with many other intellectual temptations, is easy to state and difficult to do. We need to remain constantly vigilant, always to be aware that succumbing to this temptation is possible. We must continue to highlight the importance of the phenomenon of empowerment, for example, even though we work with their practical not their secondary theories.

As I will investigate later, I think the best way we can give a concrete form to that vigilance is always to highlight the role of analogical predication in their practical theorizing. We need here to examine another issue, however: the question of whether either thinker usually is well-served when the subject is virtue by the ideas and terminology present in his secondary theory. All thinkers are liable to hypostatize or even reify ideas. They can make abstractions about mysterious realities into substantial entities that seem to be better understood than they possible can be. With the greatest

thinkers this usually occurs only when they operate at less than their full power; their more clumsy followers (which too often unfortunately include us), however, can be veritable adepts at it. Aquinas and especially Mencius, at their best, are acutely aware of this problem. A kind of agnosticism, as discussed, informs their use of secondary theories. It rests on their acute sense of the mystery and complexity of the sacred, their beliefs that some ideas may create fictional and damaging realities, and their notions about the limitations of human understanding and the need to remain content with them and thus at peace with one's humanity.<sup>9</sup>

As interpreters of Mencius and Aquinas we must always remain aware of this strand in their thought and the truth contained in it. We always must take seriously their secondary theories and yet also realize how their practical theories may contain a more adequate, if also vaguer, picture than these theories, especially when virtues are the subject. Their secondary theories, at times, may hinder their more subtle analyses of human flourishing, just as they also may hinder the possible comparisons between them that we can make.

Practical theory is crucial, then, to Mencius and Aquinas's account of human flourishing. Fitting between simple primary theory and full-fledged secondary theory, it differs from but relates closely, sometimes very closely, to each. We often have concentrated on their practical theories, and this focus has allowed us to make comparisons that are analogical in character. It enables us to steer between the similarity or univocity we find in their primary theories and the differences or equivocity we often find in their secondary theory.

The concept of dispositions, a part of practical theories, provides us with an especially good illustration of how our comparative process operated. (The concept itself, of course, always is liable to being hypostatized and we must remember that dispositions are not substantial somethings; I cannot possess two of a particular kind nor give one to another person.) The practical theory of which the idea of dispositions is a part is considerably more prominent in Aquinas's account than it is in Mencius's account. Indeed, the idea is central to Aquinas's theory but seems hardly to appear in Mencius theory; it fits within a practical theory that Aquinas develops and Mencius implies but never develops. When we recognize this fact and see its implications, we can make comparisons that we otherwise might miss, see new features in each thinker, and pursue important constructive goals.

Nevertheless, the judgment that Mencius possesses but never develops this aspect of his practical theory does seem questionable. Judgments of this kind always will be controversial, and we must proceed with extreme care

whenever we argue that aspects of a practical theory are developed by one thinker and only implicit in another. Such judgments, however, also can lead us to some of our most productive inquiries and formulations. For example, utilizing Aquinas's idea that dispositions have different forms enabled me to specify more clearly Mencius's position on semblances of virtue. Moreover, my desire to explain how a notion of dispositions could, and even should, operate in Mencius's practical theory led me to distinguish between development and discovery models of human nature. That distinction, in turn, helped me to formulate in clear fashion an important general point in Mencius: his denial that virtues simply can be discovered and his affirmation that they can and must be developed.

Finally, Mencius's nuanced account of aspects of the process of self-cultivation, as well as his profound, reasoned disquiet about some kinds of invariant responses, provided me with rich materials with which to test the adequacy of ideas in Aquinas's more developed practical theory. That testing also bore fruit in the constructive part of the enterprise. It led me, for example, to develop those distinctions among dispositional responses that provide, I think, a richer account of the idea. The results of the constructive enterprise, in turn, illuminated both strengths and weaknesses in Aquinas's practical theory, deepened the understanding of each figure, and enabled me to develop a more nuanced comparison between them.<sup>10</sup>

The example of dispositions, I think, shows that if we focus on Mencius and Aquinas's practical theories productive comparisons arise. With their secondary theories we may see only dissimilarities or real but thin resemblances. With their practical theories, however, we can probe real and illuminating relationships. This focus also helps us understand better each thinker and the traditions they represent, as well as to develop a more adequate constructive position on the character of virtue and virtues.

Recognizing the existence and importance of thinkers' practical theories, then, is of great importance to the comparative philosophy of human flourishings that focuses on different thinkers' ideas of virtue. Other elements also are critical to the successful execution of this enterprise, of course, and I now want to consider them. My approach up to now (despite a few prominent exceptions) has been to make actual comparisons and let illustrations of method or observations about it appear in that context. In the book's remaining sections, however, I will focus on general issues about method.

Models for doing comparative work are many. But I think we find ideas that point toward a productive model for the

comparative philosophy of human flourishings in what initially may appear to be a very odd place: Aquinas's idea that virtues have parts and, most important, his ideas about analogical expressions. Roughly similar ideas and approaches are present in Neo-Confucianism and other traditions and may also even be present, in inchoate form, in Mencius. I will begin with Aquinas's ideas, however, because they are clearest to me, and we have already examined features of them.<sup>11</sup>

In beginning with Aquinas I am not claiming that any traditional approach to the problem of comparing virtues can provide us, as moderns, with a fully satisfactory method. I do think, nevertheless, that we find extremely useful ideas in Aquinas. Moreover, examining them both links us to an important tradition and shows us how we differ from it. In the next section, then, I examine the productiveness and limitations of Aquinas's model. In the final two sections, I move considerably beyond Aquinas's ideas and consider those general features that should inform our approach to the comparative philosophy of human flourishings.

#### IV. PROBLEMS AND POSSIBILITIES IN AQUINAS'S MODEL FOR COMPARING APPARENTLY DIFFERENT IDEAS OF VIRTUE

Aquinas responds to and attempts to synthesize an astonishingly diverse group of thinkers; for example, classical Greek philosophers, neo-Platonic theologians, Roman ethicists, and biblical writers who in turn draw on various strands of Ancient Near Eastern religions. He aims to harmonize their different lists of virtues, perspectives on virtue, and understandings of particular virtues. The attempt rests on his presumption that (with at least most features of these different discourses) he can sympathetically appreciate them in their own terms and yet recast them in a way that produces a synthetic whole. This presumption differs considerably from a common modern presumption. Most sophisticated moderns think that apparently different discourses, grounded in evidently different cultures, cannot be harmonized unless someone simply imposes a categorical scheme drawn from one discourse.

Some contemporary thinkers, perhaps most notably Alasdair MacIntyre, have criticized this modern presumption. For them any healthy tradition contains diverse, often conflicting ideals and, most important, has powerful ways to adjudicate conflicts of all sorts. They argue that the tendency of modern thinkers to focus on unbridgeable kinds of diversity arises from a failure in understanding. They fail to grasp the force of the claim that a few vital traditions have within them resources and procedures that allow great thinkers to harmonize apparently divergent positions.

Thinkers in such vital traditions, it is argued, can meet the challenges that diversity presents. They can incorporate different positions in a way that preserves the critical insights or formulations of those positions and also resolves internal problems in them and fills their lacunae.<sup>12</sup>

We must take seriously the notion that thinkers in vital traditions can call on powerful resources and procedures. Nevertheless, we still have good reason to be suspicious about attempts like that of Aquinas's. Few moderns share either Aquinas's ideas about the world's evidently rational structure or his exact theological beliefs. Both these features of his thought underlie his aspiration to harmonize apparently different discourses, and they help to generate his sanguineness about the success of his endeavor. Moreover, almost no sophisticated modern shares the ahistorical perspective and insensitivity to the social location of ideas that provides another critical motivational and intellectual support for Aquinas's attempt.

We do not, and should not, share some of the beliefs and presumptions that animate Aquinas. Nevertheless, we also must be careful not to oversimplify the ideas that support his enterprise. I discussed aspects of this issue earlier, but three points bear repeating. First, we must be wary of conflating two matters that Aquinas was usually careful to distinguish. One is the "fact" of a separate, rational ontological order; the other is the problems that plague any human being's full or clear knowledge of its character. Second, we must be careful not to overstate Aquinas's lack of historical and cultural understanding. His treatment of the Old Law, for instance, sometimes shows a keen if embryonic historical and cultural sense. Finally, we must remember that many of the apparent disharmonies Aquinas faces appear in texts, and the differences in content and point of view are clearly evident. Written traditions have replaced oral traditions in Aquinas's world; the subtle hidden transformations produced by oral traditions cannot ease his task. Neither the failures bound up with the fragile mechanisms of human memory nor the desires produced by the human need to harmonize for Aquinas, can smooth over the changes and differences in his culture's history. Indeed, Aquinas faces Augustinians in his own day who insist that sharp breaks and divisions characterize the West's history, that, for instance, pagan virtues at best are splendid vices.<sup>13</sup>

Aquinas's attempt to harmonize different lists of virtues, perspectives on virtue, and treatments of specific virtues, then, is a difficult task and not a simple exercise. Most important here, it rests largely on his utilization of two related ideas. The first is that a virtue can have parts. The second is that the analysis of analogical expressions underlies any attempt to harmonize or even compare

apparently different virtues. With both ideas we see procedures and structures that, I think, can be of great help in the comparative philosophy of human flourishings.

Nevertheless, Aquinas normally uses both of these ideas to harmonize apparently divergent notions. I, in contrast, will use them to make comparisons, to find both similarities and differences. Aquinas, then, usually aims to find similarities or to create a structure in which parts relate to one another in a hierarchical fashion. I, on the other hand, may use the same ideas and procedures to identify both differences and similarities; indeed, I may use them to query some of Aquinas's own conclusions.

Aquinas's ideas about analogical expressions are without question the more significant and basic of the two ideas, and examining them will be my main concern. The idea that virtues have parts, however, also can play a key role in comparative analyses, and therefore I need to consider it. The idea was discussed at length earlier, and here I need only to review it quickly, focusing on how it can help us to compare different thinkers' ideas on virtues.<sup>14</sup> Aquinas argues that a virtue can have three parts. First are the qualities, the component parts, that help shape a single virtue's action; for example, memory and foresight in prudence. Second are those distinct virtues, allied virtues, that share the essential characteristic of the primary virtue but fail to express it fully, even if they may express other qualities of the primary virtue more fully than it does; for example, the wit to judge when exceptions to rules are needed (*gnome*). Third are those separable and substantially different activities of a virtue, the types of a virtue, that appear when the virtue operates in distinct spheres of life; for example, military and political prudence.

Aquinas uses these ideas to organize into one systematically articulated whole the panoply of virtues and ideas about specific virtues that he inherits. Augustinian ideas about patience, for example, can be seen as component or allied parts of courage, even though courage largely is defined in Aristotelian terms; Cicero and Aristotle's different accounts of magnanimity can be "synthesized" and fitted into courage's hierarchical structure. I need not review here my discussion of the insights and distortions that appear in Aquinas's accounts of particular virtues.

What is important is seeing how the general notion allows us to compare accounts of virtue that seem to have little in common. In comparing Mencius and Aquinas's different lists of virtues and different formulations of possibly similar virtues, I faced one problem constantly. Given the apparent differences in their accounts, I had to find a way to relate systematically the range of possible activities a single

virtue might cover, the various actions and dispositions with which it is concerned. Mencius, for example, never analyzes courage in the way Aquinas does. However, he does examine a variety of admirable qualities, such as the character of true self-esteem or of a proper attitude toward fate, that we can see as parts of courage. We can relate Mencius's ideas on the proper approach to fate to Aquinas's ideas on patience and Mencius's ideas on appropriate self-esteem to Aquinas's ideas on magnanimity, vanity, and pusillanimity. Mencius, then, may seem to lack an account that is prominent in Aquinas. But utilizing the idea that virtues have parts allows me, as discussed at length, to compare productively the two thinkers' accounts and establish systematic relationships that preserve both similarities and differences.<sup>15</sup>

The same situation also was evident when I started from a virtue in Mencius that appears to resemble no virtue in Aquinas; for example, Mencius's ideas on yielding and its consummation in the virtue of propriety (*li*). If we look in Aquinas for allied virtues of Mencius's propriety, however, we find various candidates. One candidate, for instance, are all those related virtues that cover relationships in which people incur unfulfillable debts, such as in their relationships to their parents. Moreover, what Aquinas calls social virtues, a significant group of qualities for him, also can be seen as component parts of Mencius's propriety. The notion that virtues have parts provides, then, a conceptual structure that helps to establish relationships among various qualities or virtues. It allows us to both make comparisons between the two thinkers and highlight features of each thinker that we might otherwise miss.<sup>16</sup>

The idea that virtues have parts, as well as most other aspects of Aquinas's attempt to harmonize different thinkers' ideas on virtues, rests on one major foundation: the theoretical procedures or performances involved in the analysis of analogical predication. In the final two sections, I develop the general implications of these procedures. I also examined earlier how Aquinas employs them in his analysis of specific virtues and in his development of expansions and semblances of virtue. Here, however, I want to focus on a few especially revealing instances of how Aquinas utilizes analogical analyses at precisely these places where he seems to face contrasting formulations. His aim is to harmonize not compare. Nevertheless, evaluating his successes and failures helps us to understand better his approach and to see how we can both use his method and must change it.<sup>17</sup>

Let us start with two brief examples that illuminate well how Aquinas operates and the problems and possibilities in his approach. At one place, Aquinas accepts Augustine's



definition of virtue (the definition was actually Peter of Poitiers'), which contains prominently the idea that "God works [virtue] in us without us." Aquinas is deeply committed to the principle that grace does not replace nature, as the definition claims, but rather presupposes and perfects it. He, however, can utilize the definition by unraveling the contexts to which different features of the definition respond, the senses of efficacy it employs, and the aspects of virtue with which it is concerned. At another place, Aquinas accepts Aristotle's notion that courage concerns primarily death in warfare. Aquinas is fully aware that an important distinction exists between facing possible death in actual battle to protect the city-state and facing possible death in martyrdom to serve God. But he can accept the notion by widening the normal meanings of both death and warfare. In both cases, Aquinas's synthetic efforts rest on his attempt to specify how apparent differences can include similarities, and apparent similarities, differences. He works, then, by attending to the analogical character of key terms, to the contexts in which their focal and secondary meanings operate, and to how they can be systematically related.<sup>18</sup>

The analysis he gives in each example contains problems, of course, but the problems are of different sorts and magnitudes. The definition of virtue fits within Aquinas's general perspective only if we overlook its rather clear meaning and see it as a statement about God's role in the ultimate causation of all virtues. Similarly, Aquinas's analysis does not correspond exactly to Aristotle's. But that analysis can be said to follow faithfully, even to develop, the implications of Aristotle's account. In the first case, then, we can say that, at best, Aquinas's use of analogy allows him to establish minimum grounds for comparison, even if it fails to bring the harmonization of views he seeks. In the second case, his use of analogy generates real and revealing resemblances.

Other examples show us still other facets of the problems and possibilities that accompany Aquinas's employment of the procedures involved in examining analogical expressions. Many of the most illuminating examples appear when Aquinas attempts to relate St. Paul and Aristotle, probably the two most important and most evidently dissimilar figures to whom he responds. (Indeed, the two discourses on virtue I have been comparing in this book appear, at times, to differ no more than the discourses of those two thinkers.) Aquinas's success in bringing them together, however, often is remarkable, even startling. Aristotle's magnanimous man, for instance, is confident about his excellence and distant from most other people. He hardly seems to be a good candidate to harmonize, or even compare, with St. Paul's ideal person, a person who exemplifies

humility and service to others. Aquinas's analysis shows us, nevertheless, some striking similarities.<sup>19</sup>

Despite this, we are still unconvinced by aspects of Aquinas's account. We see strains between Aristotle's magnanimity and St. Paul's humility that Aquinas either fails to highlight or slides over too easily. In other instances, moreover, we may see more than just strains. Aquinas's Aristotelian reading, for example, of St. Paul's statement in Romans about his inability to do the good he desires and avoid the bad he wants to avoid, especially at first glance, probably would convince few people. Recognizing such strains or failures is instructive. These recognitions help us see those places where real differences in perspective make impossible the kind of harmonization that Aquinas pursues. In accepting such instruction, we must remember, however, that Aquinas himself does believe that some views cannot be harmonized. He often underlines, for example, the differences between Stoic and Christian views on the role of emotions in the perfected person. Nevertheless, Aquinas usually aims to harmonize, and we must remain alert to those cases where his account fails or is less than fully convincing. The attempt to harmonize that fails can reveal much of importance to us as comparativists.<sup>20</sup>

Even more revealing, however, can be the recognition that what initially appeared to be a complete failure may in fact be a partial success. In such cases, we see how the process Aquinas employs can uncover relationships, and thus make possible comparisons, that seemed to be inconceivable. Aquinas, for instance, highlights the analogical character of terms like *magnanimity* and *humility* when he compares St. Paul and Aristotle's ideals. That helps us both to see how some notion of a higher good must be revered by the magnanimous man and recognize how self-confidence and a sense of personal nobility may not only fit with humility but even be a necessary part of it. We, then, correctly may see strains that Aquinas did not. But his enterprise also can help us recognize similarities within differences that we missed.

Examining the strains, failures, and partial successes in Aquinas's procedures also leads us to understand another significant matter. They provide us with good examples of how Aquinas's desire to harmonize and not just compare leads him to engage imperfectly in those philosophical performances that inform the analysis of analogical predication. His analysis of Aristotle and St. Paul's positions on the failure to act as one wants to act illustrates this point well. (I examined this point from another perspective, one that stressed tensions in his thought, when I discussed Aquinas's understanding of why humans fail to become virtuous.) If we use Aquinas's own ideas about grace's

instrumentality in a way he did not, we can say that Aquinas ought not simply posit a similarity between Aristotle's modified acceptance of the idea that to know the good is to do the good and Paul's rejection of that idea. Rather, he should have presented a similarity within a difference or a difference within a similarity. By focusing on the analogical character of terms like *will*, *knowledge*, and *ability* and by relating the different notions of causation (and perhaps even levels of being) to which the analogical predications refer, he could have related the two apparently disparate thinkers even if he could not harmonize them. That is, a more thoroughgoing use of Aquinas's own procedures shows how they can allow us to make comparisons we otherwise would have been unable to make, even if they cannot produce the similarities that Aquinas aimed to produce.<sup>21</sup>

When examining virtues, Aquinas almost always analyzes analogical expressions with one of two goals in mind. He aims either to uncover similarities or to build a structure in which parts relate to each other in a hierarchical fashion. Aquinas, then, usually is too ready to focus on the similarity aspect of the similarity in difference that constitutes analogy. This leads him, at times, to fail to highlight significant distinctions, to overlook subtle differences, and to establish imperfectly the bases for comparison, if not similarity, present.

Nevertheless, recognizing Aquinas's startling successes, evaluating why successes or failures occur, and seeing how apparent failures can be reworked into partial successes shows us the remarkable productivity of his approach. His ideas about analogical predication and the analytic procedures it spawns, I think, point toward an excellent way to do the comparative philosophy of human flourishings. Let us turn from our examination of Aquinas to a general discussion of the main features of that process.

#### V. ANALOGICAL EXPRESSION, FOCAL AND SECONDARY TERMS, AND THE COMPARATIVE PHILOSOPHY OF HUMAN EXCELLENCES

I believe we need to approach comparative studies through those performances that arise from examining and using analogical expressions. Through analyzing the ordered relationships among analogical terms we can preserve both clarity and textured diversity, and thereby fully articulate similarities in differences and differences in similarities. We, then, can uncover resemblances among distinct phenomena at the cost of neither variety nor similarity.<sup>22</sup>

The fact that this approach involves ongoing operations, continuing performances, is extremely important. It does not rest on applying a static structure or a fixed theory to

material, and therefore it cannot produce the desired results as would a mechanical implement. Some comparative methods resemble such mechanical implements, and all are liable to being used in that way. That is, they can be used in a way that resembles the use of a machine to turn raw material into the desired result. This approach, in contrast, involves utilizing imaginative processes, subtle skills, and other personal qualities or excellences. Indeed, as I will discuss in the final section, the character of these qualities and the justification for their results can be difficult to specify with all the precision that some people might demand and all would hope possible.

My main business in this section is to examine this approach or method, using examples from my analysis and concentrating on the construction and relation of focal and secondary meanings. Before doing this, however, we need to see how it utilizes but differs from two related approaches. An approach based on analogy steers between the poles represented by approaches to comparative studies that rest on the primacy of either the *univocal* or the *equivocal*, speaking with a single voice and producing only similarities or speaking with many voices and producing only differences. On the one side is the claim to almost complete adequacy characteristic of univocal predication. A Freudian study that focuses only on the Oedipal complex or a theological study that focuses only on the idea of compassion can exemplify this approach. In comparative studies, this procedure sacrifices variety and thins out the thickness of the specific phenomena studied. On the other side is the claim to almost complete diversity characteristic of equivocal predication. Proponents of this position aim to explicate richly textured particulars that stand in relationships defined by contrast or even incommensurability. An anthropological study that focuses on the distinctiveness of a preliterate culture or a theologically informed analysis that explicates a single religion's supposedly unique message can exemplify this approach.

To my mind, neither the equivocal option nor the univocal option, used alone, provides a satisfactory basis for comparative studies of virtue or probably for any illuminating cross-cultural studies. The former option, equivocality, makes such studies virtually impossible. Without some common reference, we cannot even know what to contrast much less compare. The latter option, univocity, can help us clarify significant, common features, but it also produces a uniformity, often a deadening uniformity, that leaves little room for actual comparison and usually presents us with abstract, untextured ideas.

The ideas of equivocal and univocal predication have important roles to play in establishing comparisons. They

should function, however, as adjuncts to, or even aspects of, the examination of analogical predications. That is, candidates for equivocal and univocal predication always will appear when we compare. These candidates must be respected and examined closely because they help us establish the appropriate context in which to do comparisons. Candidates for equivocity will appear whenever we compare significantly different figures or cultures. Psychophysical energy (*ch'i*) in Mencius and God (*Deus*) in Aquinas, especially when they appear as parts of secondary theories, are good examples of such candidates. We may find minimal grounds for comparison with these and other candidates. But we must always keep in mind just how minimal, and how tenuous, are those grounds; some comparisons are best described as being not quite equivocal. Indeed, if such notions are absolutely central to the subjects investigated, we may not be able to find real similarities in differences and differences in similarities. If, however, they only help define the context within which other elements are present, we can productively compare those other elements. We, nevertheless, must continue to refer back to the equivocal features of the context, and they always ought to generate in us both caution and tentativeness. The comparison of Mencius and Aquinas's ideas on the operation of perfected courage and the character of religious endurance, I think, illustrates how to proceed in such a situation.<sup>23</sup>

Candidates for univocity also will appear in any comparison. Indeed, some singleness of voice or reference must underlie any comparison. Most such candidates, however, fall into the category of what I earlier called *real but thin resemblances*, such as the ones that appear in the realm of injunctions. Common characteristics are present, but to focus only on them is to overlook significant kinds of diversity and texture. A notion of ethical obligation appears in both Mencius and Aquinas, but it is embedded in extremely different cultural contexts and relates to, or even allies with, significantly different kinds of ideas.

Recognizing candidates for equivocal and univocal predication is important. But even more important is dealing well with these candidates. With candidates for equivocity, we must pursue possible relationships but not overlook differences. Most important, we must decide just how deeply, and in just what ways, they affect the comparisons on which we focus. When virtue is the subject, the distinction between secondary and practical theories often informs these decisions in a critical way. (I argued earlier, for example, that neither *ch'i* nor *Deus*, as conceptual parts of the respective secondary theories, is that central when we focus on most aspects of Aquinas and Mencius's practical theories.) With candidates for univocity, we must remember that they undergird any comparisons we make

and yet they usually produce only thin and often finally unrevealing results.

Our main focus, however, always should be on skillfully employing the processes involved in analogical predication. Most notable is the process of articulating ordered similarities in differences. By means of this process we can "solve" or, more accurately, carefully and continually work through one of the most central and vexing problems in comparative studies: the choice of which categories to employ when we do comparisons and how best to use them. The notion that analogical terms have systematically related focal and secondary meaning gives us a productive approach to that problem.

The business of identifying and relating focal and secondary terms almost always is a difficult one. People will argue about whether the meanings are systematically connected or even truly related; that is, they will argue about whether we really have not analogy but ambiguity or even equivocity. Many will agree that the notion of "health" belongs in a distinctive, focal way to the idea of a human being, and that healthy food refers to a cause of human health and healthy urine to a sign of human health. Other notions, however, will generate substantial disagreements. For example, some will argue that "love," even if defined as an activity of persons, either has no evident focal meaning or that its various uses show no evident relationships. What, they will ask, relates my love of my wife, my children, my country, Shakespeare, and good wine. Which of them can we legitimately call focal and which secondary, and on what grounds?

Perhaps the basic problem I faced in this study is how to develop focal and secondary meanings when I dealt with discourses that are as different as my twentieth-century English, Mencius's fourth-century-B.C.E. Chinese, and Aquinas's thirteenth-century-C.E. Latin. The problem is a substantial one, but I think good reasons exist for my *initially* deriving the focal meaning of most key terms from contemporary English usage; that is, from my understanding of the terms. I must *adjust* those chosen focal terms as the comparison proceeds, as I will discuss. But let me note first why I made such an initial choice and what implications follow from it.

I am most familiar with the idiosyncrasies and nuances of contemporary English, my home discourse. It is the discourse the intricacies of which I have come to appreciate through using it and through the work of those philosophers and theologians I have read most consistently and carefully. Moreover, most of my readers will best understand it, as their experience resembles mine. Choosing it,

however, does have one inevitable and important consequence for my comparative studies. My focal terms, at least initially, almost always will be closer to Aquinas's terminology than to Mencius's terminology. Were I a native speaker of Chinese, and especially were I writing for other native speakers of Chinese, the reverse would be true. I would have just as good reasons to derive my focal meanings from ideas, for example, like psychophysical energy (*ch'i*) or heart-mind (*hsin*). In that case my initial focal terms would be closer to Mencius than to Aquinas.<sup>24</sup>

I think that I have excellent reasons initially to select my focal meanings from the discourse with which I and my readers feel most at home. Nevertheless, dangers, and even grave temptations, accompany the selection. They are unavoidable, but a self-consciousness about their character increases my vigilance, extends my sympathies, and improves my analyses. The most critical of them will be my first topic of discussion, and then, using material from this book, I can examine the general character of the process of analyzing focal and secondary meanings.

The choice of focal terms from a home discourse may be reasonable, but people who are unclear about the processes involved in analogical predication can see in it a simple imposition of categories. In fact, many of the difficulties that arise when comparativeness from different cultures or even subcultures interact (either talk with each other or read each other's works) occur because the focal terms utilized normally are drawn from the comparativist's home discourse. In the most damaging situations, this leads one group of people to think another group of people are just imposing alien categories on their culture. Conversely, the other group may think the first group's ideas exhibit naiveté, cultural chauvinism, or even unreflective superstition. The opposing groups then may label the offending categories or focal terms in ways that just deepen rancor or misunderstanding. Labels like unsophisticated or imperialistic may be used. *Ch'i* is declared an example of primitive science; grace, an example of Western colonialism.

The situation can begin to look like the interchange, much beloved by some analytic philosophers, in *Through the Looking Glass*, between Alice and Humpty Dumpty. Humpty Dumpty says:

"There's glory for you."

"I don't know what you mean by 'glory,' Alice said.

Humpty Dumpty smiled contemptuously. "Of course you don't—till I tell you. I meant 'there's a nice knock-down argument for you!'"

"But glory doesn't mean 'a nice knock-down argument,'" Alice objected.

"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more or less."

"The question is," said Alice, "whether you *can* make words mean so many different things."

"The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master—that's all."<sup>25</sup>

Humpty Dumpty thinks that meanings always are or must be legislated, and that such legislation depends on who has power. This notion may be philosophically confused when we discuss some linguistic forms and many linguistic forms within a commonly held discourse. But it clearly has considerable bite when we discuss interchanges where substantial cultural differences are evident and at issue. Who has the power to set focal terms may seem to be the crucial question.

Recognizing this can lead some people to a gentler, more irenic but still unsatisfactory posture. They, in conversation or writing, either will keep a respectful distance or allow a panoply of undiscussed focal terms to be used. Either strategy, in practice, purchases peace at the price of substantial intellectual interchange. Moreover, each posture resembles one that relies on either equivocal or univocal predication and therefore suffers from the problems that accompany such a reliance. The latter posture, allowing a panoply of terms to be used, resembles a position that assumes equivocal predication is the best for which we can hope; and the former posture, maintaining a respectful distance, often relies on accepting univocal predications. Neither helps move forward the comparative enterprise or produce more productive conversations among people from different cultures.

All these difficulties are exacerbated by historical circumstances beyond anyone's control, difficulties that make painfully relevant Humpty Dumpty's question about which is to be master. Our common history has features that we overlook at our peril; for example, the presence of colonial and anti-colonial movements in the recent past and the rise in the West of a particular kind of critical reflectiveness that has been venerated by many and excoriated by some. Even if these obstacles were not present, however, we would still face significant difficulties. The intellectual and personal problems involved in such intercultural exchanges are both too numerous and too complicated to allow us to hope for any easy solution.

Despite this, I think that specific intellectual problems (and even some of the other problems) can be ameliorated by a

better understanding of how the processes of analogical predication work. Especially important is grasping how they rely on the use of systematically related focal and secondary meanings. We must recognize that focal terms will, for good reasons, initially be drawn from the interpreter's home discourse, as noted. More important, we also must understand that analysis based on these processes will *modify* the chosen focal terms, will *facilitate comparisons*, and will involve a *constructive* or normative dimension. Grasping the dynamic character of this process, then, allows us better to see how comparisons (and ideally conversations) between different ideas, cultures, and peoples can be produced. Furthermore, it also helps us recognize that such processes have constructive implications. Examples drawn from preceding chapters can illustrate well, I think, the crucial features of the process.

My use of the ideas of dispositions and of practical reason illustrates how comparative analysis may *modify* substantially the chosen focal terms. The term disposition does differ from the *habitus* of Aquinas, but it surely fits more easily into Aquinas's conceptual world than into Mencius's in which no evident equivalent can be found. Despite this, as discussed earlier, the idea of dispositions enables us to comprehend more fully a range of notions in Mencius and grasp more firmly his theory of virtue. Moreover, understanding Mencius's reasoned disquiet about some kinds of automatic reactions led me to reformulate constructively the idea of dispositions and distinguish among intelligent dispositions, habits, propensities, and invariant reactions. That normative reformulation, in turn, both established new focal and secondary meanings for the term and led me to see Aquinas's ideas in a new light.<sup>26</sup>

The development of the idea of practical reason may show even more clearly how examining Mencius's ideas affects the analysis of a focal term drawn initially from contemporary English usage. My constructive development of the idea owes much to my study of Mencius's intelligent awareness (*chih*). Furthermore, utilizing Mencius's ideas to develop focal and secondary meanings also led me to see more vividly how the contemporary idea of practical reason differs from Aquinas's practical wisdom (*prudentia*). Mencius's notion of *chih*, then, helped to shape my constructive enterprise, informed my interpretation of Aquinas's ideas, and allowed me to see how both thinkers resemble and differ from many contemporary understandings of practical reason.<sup>27</sup>

Another example, my analysis of courage, illustrates how establishing focal and secondary meanings helps to *facilitate comparisons*. Almost all agree that courage is both a general human virtue and a significant term in the Confucian

tradition. Courage, however, has received considerably more theoretical analysis in Western thought than in Chinese thought, and this fact, as discussed, might reveal something important about the role of the martial spirit, or the warrior ideal, in the two cultures. In any event, Mencius and Aquinas's treatments of courage surely differ. Courage is one of Aquinas's four cardinal virtues and receives a complex, extended analysis by him. Courage neither receives an extended analysis by Mencius nor functions as one of his four central virtues. My response to this problem clarifies, I think, how the use of this method can facilitate the comparisons we make.

I initially set courage's focal meaning through Western analyses, including the one found in Aquinas. I then used the idea of secondary meanings (and even parts of courage) to interpret Mencius's account, and this enabled me to relate to courage qualities such as having an appropriate attitude to self-esteem and fate. The process of comparative analysis, however, did not stop at that point. Mencius's treatment reveals important things about both courage and Aquinas's analysis. Mencius does not focus as centrally on courage as Aquinas and can be said to separate out its various aspects more clearly. Most notably, he highlights that transformation of courage from a martial to a general and religiously important virtue that also is present but less evident in Aquinas. When we see how Mencius extends courage into the religious realm and focuses unremittingly on semblances of courage, we can understand courage more fully and also better grasp important features of Aquinas's account. Moreover, utilizing the complex and extensive analysis of courage in Aquinas enables us, in turn, to probe even further into Mencius's account.<sup>28</sup>

Using the processes involved in the analysis of analogical predications to compare these two accounts of courage enabled me to reach several goals. Although it initially seemed that, at best, only minimal grounds for comparison were present, I found I could compare them in illuminating ways. Moreover, comparing them also helped me to see more clearly important features in each thinker's account. Finally, the whole process led me to construct a more adequate account of the notion of courage. These examples (dispositions and practical reason, on the one hand, and courage, on the other hand), then, illustrate how developing and relating focal and secondary terms helps us do comparative studies of virtue.

Moreover, reviewing those examples also highlights one facet of the process about which I have said little so far. A *constructive* or normative dimension appears when I rework my initial focal meanings in light of those materials that inform my comparison. A kind of constructive,

theoretical inquiry, then, occurs when I develop focal meanings. The comparativist works both with a contemporary understanding of ideas and with that understanding of ideas provided by the figures being compared.

The comparativist, as each of these three examples shows, aims to give a true account. The account arises, however, not just from reflection on one's own language, ideas, and experience, as is the case with much modern Western philosophy. It also arises from reflection on the language, ideas, and experience of those thinkers from different cultures with whom one deals. Comparative philosophers of religions may not examine (usually for reasons arising from considerations about space and genre) all the problems they would were they attempting only to present a convincing theoretical argument. They aim to produce a true account, nevertheless, and to use materials from traditions and thinkers that may differ substantially from their own. An approach based on the idea of analogical expressions, and thus of focal and secondary meanings, has constructive implications, then, and a normative dimension.

This approach also provides tools to steer between the poles represented by perspectives that rely on simple univocity or equivocity. As discussed earlier, we must both utilize and mediate between each of these perspectives. Doing this, however, is very difficult. (Indeed, another normative feature of this kind of inquiry, as discussed, involves developing the virtues that enable us to do it well.) To pursue the ideal of working with similarities in differences and differences in similarities is to attempt a taxing balancing act. Practitioners of this approach always face the danger of slipping, easily and almost imperceptibly, toward one of the poles between which they attempt to negotiate.

Manifold reasons underlie the tendency to move toward untextured uniformities or sheer diversity. The reasons will vary from person to person, from discipline to discipline, from culture to culture, and from historical period to historical period. I will focus, in the next section, on how the tendency arises from questions that many moderns have about the sensibleness of embracing a procedure that relies on imaginative processes. Let me note briefly here, however, two other contemporary sources of the pressure to abandon the activities involved in the analysis of analogical predication.

We all face intense pressures today to see cross-cultural studies in terms of the sheer diversity of equivocity. Such pressures, in the intellectual world, usually arise from the social sciences or the more radical forms of humanistic hermeneutics, and often they also are accompanied by a

powerful political agenda. These pressures normally are reinforced by most people's legitimate desires both to depict those cultural experiences that often were neglected in standard accounts and to depict them in terms that reflect their distinctive characters. The pressures may be abating somewhat, as it has become clearer that to focus on radical diversity makes impossible not only comparative studies but even most studies of any culture that differs from one's own or the purportedly dominant culture. Nevertheless, the pull of equivocity remains strong for both intellectual and social reasons.

Subtle pressures also exist to move comparative studies toward the easy likeness of mere commonality, toward an overly facile harmony or an even more deadening uniformity. Some proponents of such a move produce only popular accounts, and they seem to have little extensive knowledge of traditions other than the ones to which they belong. More effective are the pressures that arise from people in another group, with not only deeply held religious commitments but also the concomitant, and commendable, desire to refuse to divide the world into those who are saved and those who are not.

All can sympathize with the desire to reject simple divisions into those who flourish religiously and those who do not. Nevertheless, few sophisticated students of religion would argue, for reasons noted earlier, that a univocal approach can operate well in comparative studies generally or in the comparative philosophy of religions more particularly. A variant of a univocal approach, one that concentrates on specific religious experiences or, perhaps, formulations of the sacred might possibly work. I remain hesitant about even it, however, especially if the focus is on abstract metaphysical formulations. Comparisons of those formulations, as discussed earlier, usually are unable to produce textured resemblances, and such comparisons often fail to deal seriously enough with differences in secondary theories.<sup>29</sup>

Most important to us is another reason for the tendency of many modern Western intellectuals and some traditional scholars, from various cultures, to reject the analogical and embrace instead either the univocal or the equivocal approach to comparative studies. This reason rests on an uneasiness about, or even positive distrust of, those imaginative processes that underlie a procedure that focuses on analogical predications. Let us, then, consider the role of imagination in the comparative philosophy of human flourishings. This topic is an especially propitious one with which to end, as it also allows us to consider several other significant, general issues.

VI. THE ANALOGICAL IMAGINATION AND  
THE COMPARATIVE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGIONS

The specification of analogies is in significant part a product of the imagination. The ability to spot the similar in the dissimilar and the dissimilar in the similar are marks of the imagination. Moreover, most of the capacities that allow us to develop the ramifications of those insights rest in the imagination. We can clarify the form of these imaginative processes, it is true; we even can show how they relate to and resemble common rational processes. But they remain imaginative processes.

Western scholars, especially hard-headed Western scholars, often are wary about following imaginative processes. At the least, they are wary about relying on them too much. That wariness remains even if the idea of imagination is purged of many of its more dramatic Romantic connotations and even if the wary scholars are not wed to an overly simple model of humanistic inquiry. This dissatisfaction also appears, if in a different guise, with many scholars from cultures outside the West who represent modes of scholarship that are traditional in their culture. (In some fields these traditional modes of scholarship, of course, also have deeply influenced Western scholars.) Although I will focus here only on Western scholars, the analysis given, *mutatis mutandis*, is applicable to these traditional scholars. Indeed, when problems arise in intercultural understanding, and even conversations, issues about the role of the imagination often are crucial.<sup>30</sup>

The dissatisfaction of Western scholars with relying on the imagination often rests on their judgments about how best to understand the vocation of modern humanistic scholarship. Especially important are their judgments about what canons of verification should operate. Recent years have seen the emergence of serious disagreements about how best to justify interpretations or adjudicate among different interpretations. Questions about whether the notion of truth or reference has a place in truly humanistic scholarship often have been a central issue, and the appropriate role of the imagination often has been a significant topic. Many features of these disagreements represent a modern version of that age-old battle in the West (which can be traced to Plato but has taken different forms at different times) between the poets and the philosophers. More traditional scholars often assume both the mantle and the arguments of the philosophers. Their hesitations about a reliance on the imagination, then, often are grounded in beliefs about the character of intellectual inquiry and even the ethical ends it must serve. These beliefs, and the deep commitments they generate, are both understandable and commendable.

Despite this, I think it clear that comparative studies of human flourishings must engage in a process that necessarily involves us in a form of imagining, in the utilization of the analogical imagination. To say we must use the imagination is not also to say that standards dissolve; it is not to join forces with some of the more radical forms of humanistic scholarship. Imaginative processes involves standards for judging interpretations and rules that can be followed well or badly. The possibility of error remains, and (as I will discuss) theories about why errors arise can be constructed.

Nevertheless, the processes involved are imaginative ones. They depend, for example, on the interpreter's sensibilities, they may evoke rather than demonstrate, and they produce inventions. The operations of the imagination, then, are rule-governed and liable to specifiable forms of error, but they produce personally formed, evocative kinds of invention. Moreover, these inventions have the power to give a new form to our experiences. The imaginative redescription produced challenges our normal experience of the contemporary world in which we live and the often distant worlds we study.

We ought not underestimate the disturbing challenges such imaginative redescriptions can generate for our understanding both of our own world and of the worlds of those people we try to understand. Mencius and Aquinas came to look very differently to me as my comparative analysis proceeded. Such a process can be distressing, especially as one's scholarly identity in part, is linked to having a correct understanding of specific figures or cultures. Even more distressing, my understanding of human excellence, and even of those abstract categories (like dispositions) that I used was changed or called in question as I proceeded. Perhaps, I thought, I was bound more by my culture than I had previously believed, say, in my sense that practical rationality must involve calculation or my idea that courage must involve at least some martial aspect. Perhaps I had unknowingly domesticated both Aquinas and Mencius's ideas about why transhuman forces are needed if human excellence is to be achieved. The constructive drive to make sense out of what arises from the comparative process, and therefore also to reformulate my own normative ideas, became a necessary part of the whole enterprise. But it often was a disturbing and even painful process.

The presence of such challenges to one's understanding of both one's self and others can make very appealing the safe harbor presented by either univocal or equivocal formulations. This appeal helps to explain the liability we all have to slip back into those more comfortable kinds of rational operations, where either just similarities or just differences

are highlighted. When similarities are highlighted, no real challenges appear. When differences are highlighted, the challenges that appear are too remote to be real confrontations, they are so alien that we understand we cannot really engage them and still remain ourselves. The new constitutions of experience that the analogical imagination produces can be distressing, then, and we may avoid them for that reason. They involve us in the process of making alien the familiar, they force us to become explorers in our homeland, and this is an extremely difficult process. They also give us a gift of inestimable value, however. We can see ourselves and what we study in a new light or even in a series of new and changing lights.<sup>31</sup>

The light produced, however, is one that we ourselves cast, and some people may find that recognition difficult to accept. The recognition need not raise substantial problems when the constructive side of the project is being prosecuted, unless one accepts a position in which theoreticians add nothing to the inquiries they make. My desire to produce a better account of a concept by using both my own culturally informed notions and those found in Aquinas and Mencius necessarily involves me centrally in the process. But the recognition understandably makes people uneasy when the project is to produce an accurate comparison of Mencius and Aquinas's ideas. Nevertheless, if we use the analogical imagination, the locus of comparison must exist in the scholar's mind and not in the objects studied. That fact, the reasons for it, and implications of it must be accepted.

Mencius and Aquinas neither knew each other nor read each other's work. Moreover, neither thinker probably could even have imagined the genre or much of the contents of the other thinker's work. Indeed, when representatives of each thinker's ideas finally did meet, they often found grasping the other position extremely difficult; problems about the choice of focal terms were legion, for example. That is, the misunderstandings between early Catholic missionaries and Confucians were sometimes comic, and occasionally tragic, even though Neo-Confucianism contains more similarities to Catholic Christianity than does classical Confucianism.<sup>32</sup>

Furthermore, even if Mencius and Aquinas had met their accounts would differ from what occurs when we as comparativists bring them together. In examining Aquinas's procedure for harmonizing divergent views, for example, we saw that his procedures (although helpful to us) aim not at comparisons but at similarities or hierarchical harmonies. The results of his endeavor would differ substantially from the results of our attempt to analyze, compare, or even harmonize the diversity that appears when thinkers come from substantially different cultures. Unlike what

either Mencius or Aquinas would do, for instance, I recognize radical differences in their respective secondary theories and therefore focused on their practical theories.

To stress that the locus of comparison exists in the scholar's mind, of course, is not to argue that we ought not attend closely to the objects studied. Indeed, we must always try to understand each thinker both initially, and as we proceed, in his own terms. This enterprise helps us avoid the possible distortions the comparative enterprise may introduce. Nevertheless, the very idea of understanding each thinker "in his own terms" is transmuted, and even productively challenged, by the process of comparison. The construction of focal and secondary terms, for instance, affects deeply the terminology used to describe and analyze a thinker.

Close attention to the actual texture of each thinker is crucial, but we must never forget that the comparison itself is an imaginative construction. As comparativists we manipulate the different and the common as we work. We choose which to highlight and which to neglect, and we choose when to relate them. We must work from similarities, else we will establish only contrasts or perhaps even incommensurabilities. But even then our work is anamorphic not homologous. The similarities always are just resemblances; they live in and usually are deeply formed by sharply divergent contexts. We must also pursue differences, however, if the comparisons are to be more than just tautological exercises. If they are to be interesting, revealing, and therefore also inevitably problematic, differences must be highlighted. Neither the equivocal nor the univocal can be neglected; to focus on the analogical is to work constantly with each and between both of them.

Whitehead once said that in any sophisticated philosophy virtually all the same elements would be found; differences could be explained by which elements were in the foreground and which in the background. Taken as a comment about the character of a tradition, the statement can be seen as an exaggeration in the direction of truth. (As his famous phrase puts it, Western philosophy is a series of footnotes to Plato.) In fact, traditions are traditions just because some version of his statement is true.

When we look at thinkers from markedly different cultures, however, Whitehead's notion can be extremely misleading. The image of similar elements that can be found in either the foreground or background fails to fit, unless we define the elements at a level of abstraction so general that it conveys little of importance. With truly different cultures the questions people think important to ask, the issues they think they must solve, or the concepts and secondary theories they believe they must utilize can all differ radically.



Indeed, the fundamental character of these differences is what leads me to argue that the analogical imagination must be used in the comparative philosophy of religions.

We must use our imagination, then, to examine and construct analogies, to set and reset focal and secondary meanings, and to articulate their relationships. Some may hope that the mind's imaginative capacities manifest a power that unveils deeper, universal truths about the world, truths accessible only if those capacities are activated by that power. This hope draws on sophisticated, and controversial, Romantic ideas about the imagination's character and usefulness. My reliance on, and hope for, the analogical imagination is considerably more modest. Nevertheless, I think it represents a shaping, ordering power that can enable an interpreter to see inner relationships that bind and even unify what appears only to diverge.

I see such imaginings as encompassing a variety of activities in which we suppose that some state of affairs is present. We assume, entertain, consider, and even toy with or pretend that certain constructions of experience are true. These "supposings" display sophisticated intellectual abilities and often are difficult to undertake and maintain. They are difficult to entertain because they often are at war with our ever-present inclination to idolatry. Especially opposed to them is that kind of idolatry in which we attempt to understand and control our environment by means of ideas made in our own image. To entertain such supposings, then, we must overcome a disposition to control and make habitable our world, and this takes considerable flexibility and courage.

These "supposings" also manifest a very sophisticated set of mental operations. They include, for example, a variety of intellectual skills. An especially noteworthy one is the ability to suspend normal ways of conceiving one's self and subject matter to create a new picture of the world with which to live. Processes like this are common in the writing or reading of literature and in the producing or viewing of art. They also have more common forms, however, some of which are crucial to the ethical life. My desire or need to understand other people in order to help, befriend, or work with them often involves utilizing this skill. I must be able to grasp why someone would act or react in a way that differs markedly from how I would act or react. The way to achieve such understanding often rests on my ability to suspend most of my normal notions of how I, and even others I know, normally operate. I can then imaginatively produce and inhabit another world.

With comparative studies, the impetus for these imaginative activities arises from many different sources and takes

many different forms. In some cases, the impetus resembles that present in the common situations just noted; that is, we realize that we cannot really fathom why the people we study act or react as they do. We recognize, for example, that we just do not understand why a thinker continues to insist that all humans must have the capacity to perfect themselves despite all the evidence he marshalls against the idea. At other times, the impetus arises from the observations, challenges, and suggestions of the community of people with whom we talk and read. A colleague or article leads us to realize, for instance, that a thinker believes adherence to roles is far more important than we had thought the thinker did.

In still others cases, the impetus appears with the inchoate but pressing need we feel to put vague ideas into the ordered form that analogical analyses demand. In some such situations, we self-consciously and laboriously examine and test our supposings to give them an appropriate structure. At other times, however, the order seems to force itself on us by crystallizations of our knowledge of, and sense for, the thinkers studied. These crystallizations arise from powers and in ways that we only dimly understand. They also lead us to consider how mysterious and often crucial are those processes that have led many to speak of muses and some of unconscious processes.

At times, often a discouragingly large number of times, we are led to recognize that our supposings are simply wrong. The notion of matter or even energy, for instance, just cannot be the focal meaning of which psychophysical energy (*ch'i*) is a secondary meaning, nor can Mencius's Heaven (*T'ien*) be directly related to Aquinas's God. Imaginings of the sort I describe are compatible with most kinds of skepticism about the results of our imaginings. That is, the products of these imaginings can be checked and then corrected or discarded. We come to see, after further reflection, that a formulation just leaves out too much of importance or is couched in language that can mislead. We become convinced, after more study, that a key text just will not support a certain supposing. (At times, I found myself returning over and over again, finally with sinking feelings, to texts in both Mencius and Aquinas that challenged and then destroyed some of my more treasured supposings.) Then, with help, on cool reflection, or on further study, we can spot and explain the errors that appear in our own and other people's imaginative work.

Often, however, we do not just find error. Nor are we normally led to treat the problems that arise from such imaginings as simply failed assertions or bad hypotheses. In examining these cases we employ other standards of judgment. (These cases arose for me most often when I dealt

with comparisons of particular virtues in Mencius and Aquinas or aspects of their underlying theories of virtue.) We use a set of evaluative terms, I think, that also occur when we judge the operations of the imagination in other realms, realms as different as sophisticated literature and the play of children. We will say, for instance, that the imaginative constructions are deft or clumsy, appear banal or exciting, are superficial or deep, show flair or remain pedestrian, or are brilliantly inane or solidly provocative.

Criteria like these are slippery. Identifying and explaining exactly why one rather than another quality applies to the comparison can be difficult. In the most complicated cases, our judgments even resemble those we make when we examine the differing interpretations that appear in considering the climactic moments of great works of literature; for example, when we ask whether Captain Vere's judgment on Billy Budd was cruel or just, or whether Gabriel's final state in Joyce's "The Dead" is one of paralysis or of compassionate union.

Moreover, we also realize the aptness of the judgments made from such criteria rests finally on the sensibilities of the observer. We find operating here, then, a version of the "good person criterion," in either its Aristotelian or Confucian forms. The flourishing person provides us with the ultimate criterion for deciding what characterizes human flourishing in all specific situations. (Judgments about the activities of the analogical imagination, however, do resemble aesthetic judgments even more closely than the ethical judgments on which the traditional account focuses.) All these judgments rest on an idea that is clearly circular, but, I think, the circle is not a vicious one. Rather, it is a benign or even virtuous one. It rests, as discussed, on the presumption that how one knows depends on what one knows; that imprecision characterizes some subjects; and that therefore some judgments can be made only by those who have a sympathetic grasp of the subject. Using this criterion, I will finally discount the views of someone who thinks Shakespeare's late comedies are superficial, clumsy, or boring, after intense discussion of the plays. Similarly, after a corresponding conversation, I will discount the views of someone who makes comments like that about illuminating products of the analogical imagination. Such judgments need not end the interchange. I finally may be persuaded that what seemed deep was superficial or vice versa. But the grounds for making such judgments (assuming no simple error exists) will remain criteria that fit within the world of imaginings.<sup>33</sup>

To emphasize the significance of the operations of the analogical imagination when we compare ideals of religious flourishing is not to remove such work from criticisms that

arise say, from historical, philological, or textual studies. Nor is it to say that where imagination reigns, conversation ends. But it is to recognize that these comparisons are imaginative constructions that revolve around an interpreter's creation of similarities in differences and differences in similarities. Such constructions involve overcoming our inclinations to idolatry, and they utilize subtle intellectual skills. Moreover, they have their own criteria, their own kinds of sophistication or lack of sophistication.

I hope that little in my exposition of Mencius and Aquinas is simply in error, that my comparisons satisfy the criteria imaginative constructions are judged by, and that this work can involve me and others in further inquiries and conversations. More important, I hope this book illustrates, both in results and in approach, the significance of doing that kind of comparative philosophy of religions in which we compare views of human flourishing or excellence.

My inquiry produced, I believe, three related but different results. First, and most obviously, it generated illuminating interpretative descriptions of each figure and the various relationships between them. Second, it generated some constructive conclusions about theories of virtue and analyses of particular virtues. Third, it showed how comparing thinkers who spring from different cultures is itself an important activity, and one that contains its own flourishing and stunted forms.

The last two results, perhaps particularly the last one, have the most general applicability and therefore may be the most important. We must develop those abilities that allow us to compare different visions of the world, and we must engage in the normative analysis that such comparisons involve if we are to thrive, or perhaps even survive, in the present world. We live in a world where we often find radically diverse ideals of human flourishing. Some of these ideals differ as markedly from our own as do the ideals that appear in Mencius and Aquinas. To meet the challenges and opportunities of our new situation, I think, we must want to engage in activities that resemble what I do in my comparison of Mencius and Aquinas. Moreover, and more important, we must be able to carry out that enterprise as well as we can. My whole inquiry rests, then, on the belief that we need a particular set of intellectual skills and virtues to do the comparative philosophy of human flourishings and that acquiring them is critical if we are to meet the personal and social challenges we all face.

#### Notes

1. Many of these differences are noted briefly in preceding chapters, but three earlier articles of mine

- examine aspects of them at length: see Yearley 1982, 1983a, and 1985c.
2. For accounts of their theories of virtue see Chapter 3, especially Sections II through VI; for resemblances in their conceptions of the self see Sections VIII and IX. For their ideas on semblances of virtue and expansions of virtues, see Chapter 1, Section V, Chapter 3, Sections V and VI, and Chapter 4, Sections V, VII and IX.
  3. Examinations of this topic appear in Chapter 2, Section IV, and Chapter 4, Section IX.
  4. See the treatment of courage, for example, in Chapter 4, Sections III, VI, VIII, and IX; on practical reason see Chapter 3, Section VIII.
  5. See Horton 1982, especially pp. 216-217, 227-238; Horton's revision of his formulations owes much to M. Hesse's work. The article discusses his earlier work and the subsequent controversy.
  6. For Aristotle's general approach, see, for example, *N.E.* 1094b13-1095a11, 1095b1-14, and 1145b3-9. Also note, however, those places at which this approach is modified by what I called the *good person criterion*; for example, 1168a25-1169b2 and 1179a33-1180a6. Contemporary thinkers like Gadamer 1986, of course, have developed aspects of this approach and applied it to a wide range of areas, and the differences between practical theory and Aristotle's approach, I think, will become clear as we analyze practical theory's character.
  7. See MacIntyre 1984a, pp. 187-191, and McClendon 1986, pp. 162-177.
  8. See Chapter 2, Section V and Chapter 4, Sections IX and especially VIII; also note in Chapter 3, Section VII the role of practical and secondary theories in the explanation of failures to be virtuous.
  9. See, for example, my discussion in Chapter 2, Section I, Chapter 3, Sections IV and V, and Chapter 4, Section IX.
  10. For the discussion of how Mencius does not develop the idea of disposition, see the end of Section VI of Chapter 3. For the discussion of development and discovery models, see Section II and V of the third chapter. For the constructive analysis of dispositions, see Chapter 3, Section IX; for the idea of dispositions and Mencius, see, for example, Chapter 3, Sections II, IV, and VII.
  11. With Mencius, for example, note his account of Confucianism's relationship to Mohism and Yang Chu, as discussed at various places, and the kinds of analysis he uses in treating, say, the expression of the four virtues through familial relationships. (Incidentally, the way in which other synthetic traditions, for example, Vedanta, deal with apparent differences is, I think, a very productive area of inquiry.)
  12. See the treatment in MacIntyre 1988, for example, pp. 164-208, 401-403. MacIntyre emphasizes the importance of J. H. Newman's work on this topic; on Newman, also see Yearley 1978.
  13. I discussed these issues in, for example, Chapter 2, Section I, and Chapter 3, Section V. On the distinction between oral and literary traditions, see the use made of Watt and Goody's work by Horton 1982, pp. 206, 250-256.  
  
On Aquinas's historical understanding, see, for example, how he treats the case of the kid boiled in his mother's milk (2-1.102.6.4) and note Bourke's analysis of his historical sense in volume 29 of the *Summa Theologiae* 1964 ff., pp. xviii ff. On the general question of Aquinas's differences from moderns, see Lonergan 1985, pp. 35-54.
  14. See the discussion in Chapter 2, Section III.
  15. See the discussion in Chapter 4, Sections VI and IX.
  16. See Chapter 2, Section V.
  17. See the discussion especially in Chapter 3, Sections I and VI, and Chapter 4, Sections III and V. Also see note 5 of Chapter 3 for references to the immense literature on Aquinas's idea of analogy. I am especially indebted to Burrell's work (1973, 1979) and his emphasis on how Aquinas does not present a doctrine or theory of analogy but a philosophical activity or performance; see, for example, 1979, pp. 55-67. Also note Farrer's (1972, pp. 69-81) evocative discussion of the need to extend the idea beyond its traditional uses, and Tracy's (1981) examination, for example, pp. 405-456.
  18. For the definition of virtue see 1-2.55.4; for the analysis of death, see Chapter 4, especially Section IV but also Section III.
  19. For a good example of his treatment of this aspect of magnanimity, see 2-2.129.3. For Aristotle's treatment of magnanimity, see *N.E.* Book 4, Chapter 3.  
  
Aquinas, as noted earlier, never analyzes fully the idea that some virtues cannot be harmonized in a

- single life; for example, the virtues needed for decent citizenship and for revolutionary life. Nevertheless, aspects of his overall perspective seem to allow for this possibility as we see in his treatment of different religious vocations and practices.
20. For the reading of St. Paul, see 2-1.10.3; also note the treatment of incontinence at 2-2.156. For an example of Aristotle's treatment, see *N.E.* 1145b8-1148b14. On the issue of Stoic views of the emotions, see 2-1.59.2 and 3.
  21. As discussed in Chapter 3, Section VII, there are significant questions about the coherence of Aquinas's own utilization of a modified version of the principle that to know the good is to do the good.
  22. I am much indebted to Tracy's (1981) work on the idea of the analogical imagination, but I use that idea in what follows for purposes that often differ from his; for example, my focus is less theological and I do not highlight the notion of participation and critique. (Also note W. Lynch's work on this idea, although he focuses on literature and often employs a very traditional Thomistic metaphysics; see 1960, pp. 118-193, especially 136-160.) As noted earlier, Burrell's work (1973, 1979) on analogical expression also has helped me greatly, although I will use it here for purposes that often differ from those on which he focuses.
  23. See especially Sections VIII and IX in Chapter 4.
  24. People, of course, can work between different languages; see, for example, Shun's (1986) use of modern Western ideas and Cua's use of *ching ch'üan*, the doctrine of the normal and the exigent (1978, pp. 72-76). Also note the issue of how choices of focal terms create hierarchies but hierarchies that shift as the criteria employed change; see my treatment of this subject in Aquinas in Chapter 2, Section III.
  25. See L. Carroll 1971, p. 163 (the passage is from Chapter 6 of *Through the Looking Glass*). Pitcher's (1971) article in the volume illustrates how philosophers have used this passage; see pp. 395-398.
  26. I examined the secondary uses of the idea in the third section of this chapter; see Chapter 3, Section IX for a more extended discussion and note 10 of this chapter for further references. For an analysis of how disposition differs from the *habitus* of Aquinas, and the terms related to it, see Kenny's discussion in volume 22 of the *Summa Theologiae* 1964 ff. Other distinctions between Aquinas's language and contemporary language are discussed by D'Arcy in the introductions to volumes 19 and 20.
  27. See especially the discussions in Chapter 3, Sections IV, V, and VIII.
  28. See Chapter 4, especially Sections I, VI, VIII, and IX.
  29. The most sophisticated analyses, about which I know, of problems in approaches based on radical diversity appear in the articles in Hollis and Lukes 1982; also note Davidson 1985. The contemporary treatment of mysticism by virtually all sophisticated scholars exemplifies, I think, how almost all agree that simple univocal predication is inadequate.
  30. My use of the idea of "imagination" relates to some of Aquinas's uses, but I am not here employing it in the more technical senses that he does when he draws on Aristotle's *De Anima*. For a critical evaluation of Aquinas's ideas, see Kenny 1980, pp. 77-79; for an evocative presentation of some of its more general implications, see White 1961, pp. 125-157, especially 142.  
  
The role of the imagination in literature, philosophy, and Christian theology, of course, has been much discussed. Little, however, has been done with its role in comparative religion; for work in that area from which I have learned much, see Smith 1982. Also note Ryle's still evocative comments on the various activities that fit under the idea of imagination, see 1949, pp. 245-279; and see Lovibond 1983, especially pp. 190-200. Finally, Yearley 1990b sets out a general context within which to place the intellectual excellence that is imagination.
  31. Wittgenstein, among others, writes powerfully about the difficulties of this kind of exploration; see, for example, *Philosophical Investigations* 1968, No. 206. See the earlier discussion of real and notional confrontations in Chapter 1, Section I, noting note 10.
  32. Early Roman Catholic responses, especially Ricci's have been examined at length, but also note Gernet's (1986) depiction of Chinese responses to the first Catholics they met; those encounters were between Neo-Confucians and Roman Catholics. Legge's introduction to his translation of Mencius, pp. 56-73, also contains, as noted earlier (see Chapter 3, Section VII), a fascinating example of a later contact.
  33. See note 26 in Chapter 3 and the discussion surrounding it for a brief examination, with textual references, of the good person criterion.

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**D. C. Lau (essay date 1993)**

SOURCE: Lau, D. C. "Meng tzu (Mencius)." *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*, edited by Michael Loewe, The Society for the Study of Early China and the Institute of East Asian Studies, U of California, Berkeley, 1993, pp. 331-35.

[In the following essay, Lau surveys commentary on the Mencius and provides a bibliography of modern editions and translations of the text. Chinese characters originally in this essay have been silently removed.]

## 1. THE DATE OF MENG K'Ō

The *Meng tzu* is a collection of the sayings of Meng K'ŏ (Mencius) and the conversations that he had with the leaders of the states, his other contemporaries and his disciples. Unmistakable evidence in *chüan* 1 shows that he must have travelled to the states of Liang, Ch'i and Lu around 320 B.C. As king Hui of Liang addressed Meng K'ŏ as 'sou' (literally 'old man'), he could not have been a young man at the time when he saw him; it is evident that in *chüan* 1 of the received collection, at least, we have the mature views of this philosopher.

In the earliest account of Meng K'ŏ (*Shih chi* 74, pp. 2343f.) it is said that he received instruction from a follower of Tzu ssu, a grandson of Confucius; from what we know of his teachings it is probably true that Meng K'ŏ studied with someone in his school.

## 2. AUTHENTICITY AND EXTENT OF THE WORK

Two points may be noted regarding the entry for the *Meng tzu* in *Han shu* 30, p. 1725, which reads '*Meng tzu*; 11 *p'ien*,' i.e. (a) no commentaries are mentioned; and (b) the work is described as consisting of 11 *p'ien*.

According to the preface (*T'i tz'u*) of Chao Ch'i (d. 201), the posts of academician (*po shih*) were established in the time of Han Wen ti (reigned 180-157 B.C.) for the *Lun yü*, *Hsiao ching*, *Meng tzu* and *Erh ya* (for Chao Ch'i's statement, see p. 4 of the preface, in the *Kambun taikai* edition). It would thus seem to be unlikely that by the time when *Han shu* 30 was being compiled there was still no commentary to the *Meng tzu*. Although the *Sung shih* (205, p. 5172) includes an entry for *Ssu chu Meng tzu* in 14 *chüan*, Chu I-tsun (1629-1709) considered this to be a later fabrication (see *Ching i k'ao*, *chüan* 232, 1a; *SPPY* ed.). Be this as it may, it may be noted that Yang Hsiung (53 B.C.-A.D. 18) figures among the four commentators in this work; there is some evidence in the *Fang yen* to show that Yang Hsiung was interested in glosses to the *Meng tzu*. In a chapter of the *Lun heng* entitled *Tz'u Meng*, Wang Ch'ung (27-c. 100) raises objections to a number of passages in the *Meng tzu*.

The earliest extant commentary to the *Meng tzu* is that of Chao Ch'i, who was married to a niece of Ma Jung (79-166) and was an older contemporary of Cheng Hsüan (127-200). The text which he transmitted is noteworthy for two reasons. First, it stands out, among classical writings, for its soundness; and secondly, at the time of Chao Ch'i the *Meng tzu* consisted of 7 *p'ien* of 'inner' documents or books (*shu*), and 4 *p'ien* of 'outer' documents; together these make up the 11 *p'ien* as listed in *Han shu* 30, p. 1725. In his preface,

Chao Ch'i states that he excised the outer books from the work, as 'these books, lacking in width and depth, bear no resemblance to the inner books and are likely to be the spurious work of a later age rather than the authentic work of Meng tzu.' The seven 'inner' books, perhaps because of their length, were each divided into two parts, thus together amounting to the 14 books listed as *chüan*, in the *Sung shih* 205, pp. 5171, 5173-5174; the arrangement into 14 *chüan* persists in most editions. The *Chiu T'ang shu* (47, p. 2024), *Hsin T'ang shu* (59, p. 1510) and Fujiwara Sukeyo's list include copies in either 14 or 7 *chüan*.

The question therefore arises of whether Chao Ch'i was justified in his excision of the 'outer' books, and in this connection it is only possible to conjecture. There are today two collections of sayings of Mencius which, while being quoted in various works, are not to be found in the received text; these are by Li T'iao-yüan (1734-1803) and Ma Kuo-han (1794-1857) respectively. For those works that preceded Chao Ch'i or were contemporary with him, there are no more than a dozen quotations; and what is of greater importance, none of these are significant in content. Of the 180 quotations from the *Meng tzu* in the *T'ai p'ing yü lan*, of 983, only 4 are not to be found in the received text. Even if these were all to have been derived from the 'outer' books, this would only show that there was little there that was worthy of quotation; if they had all come from the 'inner' books, this would suggest that the received text is basically sound.

## 3. COMMENTARIES

The *Meng tzu* was not included in the canon of classical writings until the Sung period. It has however attracted a considerable body of writings, of which only a few can be mentioned here.

The various scholars who were in general contemporaries of Chao Ch'i and wrote commentaries on the *Meng tzu* included Cheng Hsüan, Kao Yu (c. 168-212) and Liu Hsi (c. 200); quotations from their writings are included in Ma Kuo-han's *Yü han shan fang chi i shu*. Lu Te-ming (556-627) did not include the *Meng tzu* among the books which he treated, and attempts to fill this gap by Chang I (d. 783) in his *Meng tzu yin i* and Ting Kung-chu (759-822) in his *Meng tzu shou yin* are no longer extant; a few citations from these works survive in the *Meng tzu yin i* of Sun Shih (962-1033). The extant standard sub-commentary (*shu*) to Chao Ch'i's work is also said to have been written by Sun Shih, but according to Chu Hsi (1130-1200) this had been written by a person known to Ts'ai Yüan-ting (1135-98); he criticised it on the grounds that it was not what was to be expected of a *shu*, being more concerned with Chao Ch'i's

explanations than with the *Meng tzu*. The best known of the many commentaries by Neo-Confucian scholars is Chu Hsi's own *Meng tzu chi chu*, written in 1177; this remained the authoritative commentary on the *Meng tzu* until the revival of classical learning in the Ch'ing period.

As part of the attempt by the Ch'ing scholars to write new sub-commentaries that would replace those of the T'ang and Sung periods, Chiao Hsün (1763-1820) spent his last three years writing the *Meng tzu cheng i*, but the transcription of the final draft of this work was not quite finished when he died. As a philologist, Chiao Hsün was bound to differ in his interpretation from that of Chao Ch'i; of some importance is the fact that as a philosopher he was greatly influenced by Tai Chen (1724-77), whose re-interpretation of the thought of Mencius seems to be contrary to the spirit of Confucian philosophy.

There are variant readings for the *Meng tzu*, as there are for other works; for these, see (i) *Shichi kei Mōshi kōbun* by Yamai Konron (Kanae; d. 1728), with a supplement by Ogyū Hokkei (Bukkan), published in 1731 (available in the *Ts'ung shu chi ch'eng* series); and (ii) Juan Yüan (1764-1849) *Meng tzu chiao k'an chi* (1806).

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Abbreviations

- ICS *The ICS Ancient Chinese Text Concordance Series: Hsien Ch'in liang Han ku chi chu tzu so yin ts'ung k'an*, ed. D. C. Lau and Chen Fong Ching; The Chinese University of Hong Kong Institute of Chinese Studies; Hong Kong: the Commercial Press, 1992-; responsibility for textual notes with D. C. Lau, as editor.
- Legge (A) Annotated texts and translations: James Legge, *The Chinese Classics*; vols. I-III Hong Kong: at the author's, and London: Trübner and Co., 1861-65; vols. IV-V Hong Kong: Lane Crawford, and London: Trübner and Co., 1871-72; 2nd edition, revised, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1893-94; reprinted variously. (B) Translations without Chinese text: in F. Max Müller (ed.), *Sacred Books of the East*; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879-91, under the sub-title 'Sacred Books of China' (a): *The texts of Confucianism*; (b) *The texts of Taoism*; rpt. Delhi: Varanasi, and Patna: Motilal Banarsidas, 1966.
- SPPY *Ssu pu pei yao*

David S. Nivison (essay date 1996)

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[In the following excerpt, Nivison critiques the logic of Mencius's ethical and moral philosophy, posing questions of the Mencius while also defending the philosopher's arguments using evidence from his text. Chinese characters originally in this essay have been silently removed.]

7.5 A LIMITED DEFENSE OF MENCIUS

Can Mencius be taken seriously in all of this? Or if not in all of it, in some of it? I shall raise three problems for Mencius, and discuss possible solutions to each.

7.5.1 DEONTOLOGY OR CONSEQUENTIALISM?

Is Mencius (in passages such as 1A1 [Mencius 1A], 1A7, and 6B4) in the logically unlovely situation of offering a utilitarian (consequentialist) argument for a deontological commitment to morality for its own sake?<sup>1</sup> It will not suffice to say of such arguments, "This criticism is unfair, because Mencius was simply trying to get rulers to behave better in an age when they were doing all sorts of terrible

things." Such a defense doesn't touch the question whether Mencius's argument is *coherent*.

So suppose I am persuaded for some ulterior reason (e.g., my own political interest) that it would be best for me to "extend my compassion" in the full-blooded sense of both refocusing it on a new object *and* doing a compassionate act for that new object, and doing this out of compassion. Mencius appears not to see inappropriateness or incongruence in having such an ulterior motive for "extending." After all, he is arguing to get King Xuan to "extend his compassion" because that is the way to become a real king: "One who extends his compassion can take care of all people in the world; one who does not cannot even take care of his own family" (1A7.12). Perhaps Mencius perceives that although

1. Doing A from motive C.  
—where A is a compassionate act and C is a focused feeling of compassion—is not the same as
2. Doing A from motive O.  
—where O is my bloodless feeling that I ought to do A—nonetheless in
3. (Doing A from motive C) from motive S.  
—where S is my desire for political success, I am after all still doing.

(1)

I find this unlovely, but Mencius often engages in this kind of persuasion when talking to eminent persons.

But it does seem that motive S, the desire for political success, and motive C, disinterested compassion, must coalesce so that the former fatally infects the latter if I am to do it now, at once<sup>2</sup>—that is, if Mencius has remained close enough to Mohism to think of using a capacity to be moved (or to act-with-motivation) as really being simply like lifting one's arm.

There is, it seems to me, an analysis that removes the incoherence from Mencius's *argument* in 1A7. In fact, I can offer three.

Solution 1

Mencius's hierarchic picture of the self requires a hierarchy in the languages of moral analysis for one accepting it:

- Level 1: I ought to *do* A because it's simply *right* to do so.
- Level 2: I ought to be *motivated* by morality because this will have good *consequences*.



(And perhaps the levels go on.) This is *not* to offer two *overlapping*—and so possibly conflicting—reasons for *doing A*, one deontological and one consequentialist. It is not required here that I even be *aware*, when *doing A*, of the consequentialist argument for being *motivated* in a certain way in general. And even if I were, we have to take “good consequences” at level 2 in a sense that would conflict at most with “it’s simply *right*” if this expression were to be used *in the language of level 2*, which it is not.

#### Solution 2

If you feel there’s an element of hocus-pocus somewhere in the foregoing argument, here is another: Mencius argues—with King Hui, and with King Xuan—that the king should govern benevolently (and let us agree that “benevolently”—rather than “‘benevolently’”—means “moved by genuine compassion”)—and that a reason, or *the* reason, for doing so is that in this way he will *wàng*—become a real king. But what Mencius means in saying this—in fact what he *says* in 1A7—is that the king really already has the virtue or *de* necessary and sufficient for being a “real king,” if he will just use it. But of course, as everybody knew, it is a ruler’s *duty* to govern with *de*, if he has the *de* to use; and being a “real king” just *is* doing that. Of course, this being a real king is going to involve being a *successful* ruler, bringing peace and order to the world; but *that* is a ruler’s duty too: it is only in that way that a ruler can bring the greatest benefit to the people.

So, Mencius is not urging his kinglets to be good to their people in order to succeed in the general military-political competition. He is urging them to govern compassionately—i.e., to govern with *de*—because that just is a ruler’s *duty*, and the way, the only way, for him to realize the *ideal* of true “kingship.” Of course Mencius knows that a ruler becoming “a real king” will involve becoming “king in fact,” i.e., beating his rivals, and he knows his royal hosts will understand this. But at the time of these conversations (320-318 B.C.) the notion of several different local “kings” having equal legitimacy was scarcely two decades old, and still had only a precarious existence at the level of interstate diplomacy. Within the context of a “royal” audience, a “king” had no rivals; there were only other lords who had not yet accepted the king’s rightful authority. Mencius had to talk according to these rules if he were to talk at all.

So the incoherence of Mencius’s position is not in his argument. It is concentrated entirely in the semantic ambiguity of the word *wàng*, “be king.” And this is an ambiguity for which he is not responsible. It is simply given in the politics of his time.

#### Solution 3

Even if parts of the *Mengzi* do suggest a sort of extreme Mohist position, there are indications, even in 1A7 itself, that Mencius is less of a “voluntarist” than I have been assuming. He says there that “the ancients” were better than we are “in being good at extending what they did”; and this still needs interpreting. It would be surprising if “extending what one does” did not have the same meaning as, or at least include, “extending one’s compassion.” And the ancient Chinese, like ourselves, spoke ordinarily of “being good at” (*shàn*) doing something only if doing it involves skill it takes time to use, even if not much time, and probably still more time to acquire. That is, whether my problem is to get myself *now* to “extend” my feeling so as to be moved effectively to do some immediately projected act, or, to bring about a long-term change in myself so that normally my presently recognized feeling-capacity does “extend” to do the sorts of things I see now I ought to do, Mencius is led from the over-simple “you *can* do it” position of 1A7 to a more sophisticated conception that one will need to “cultivate” (*yǎng*) oneself carefully. The most memorable discussion of this is in 2A2.<sup>3</sup>

#### 7.5.2 THE PROBLEM OF IMMEDIATE ACTION

Thus, when he talks to somebody like King Xuan, Mencius seems to want immediate action, and seems to see no reason why he shouldn’t get it. And I think one can without difficulty find other examples. Doing it—acting appropriately from “extended” compassion—is just a matter of “picking up” this “heart” and putting it down over there, as one might move a chess piece. Yet we also see him talking very differently in passages such as 2A2: becoming morally developed takes delicate self-cultivating. Forcing the development, doing something you’re not ready to do, will actually hurt you. There are two positions here, and both seem to be things Mencius wants to say, and this should arouse suspicion. Could there be a difficulty in each that the other compensates for?

(i) If I say, “It isn’t that you can’t, you just don’t!” I seem to oversimplify the problem of moral action absurdly. For, doesn’t doing something require that I be *moved* to do it? If Mencius is (as he is) saying, “You have the capacity to feel strongly enough about this to act. Just apply that capacity and act!” he seems to be overlooking the fact that even if (as many would not grant at all) it is possible for me deliberately to reshape myself emotionally, surely I can’t do this just as I might lift a feather in the air. If I try simply to force myself to do the “right” thing, I may simply incur all of the cost of being moral without attaining the substance of it. Thus, Mencius observes (7B11) that it will be possible for

someone who is interested only in gaining a reputation for being a person who is indifferent to mere possessions “to give away a state of a thousand chariots.” But “if one is not the sort of person to do it, reluctance would be written all over one’s face if one had to give away merely a basketful of rice and a bowlful of soup.” Becoming this sort of person may take some time and skill in self-management.

This leads to (ii) the view that acting rightly requires a process, which may take much time, of “extending” my embryonic emotions in directions that are delimited by their (hence my) nature. Meanwhile simply forcing myself to do the act because it is “right” may injure my self-development. But doesn’t *this* mean I may be in the situation of having to say to myself and others, “I see that this is the right thing to do, but I’m not ready yet—so let me do what I can but not all of it”? Mencius takes note of this attitude, and his response is an exasperated “If you can see that it’s right, *do it now, all of it!*” So he speaks, when someone asks if it would be a good idea to reduce taxes a bit this year, and next year drop all the way to the ten percent urged by Mencius (3B8):

Here is someone who appropriates one of his neighbor’s chickens every day. Someone tells him, “This is not the Way of a noble person.” He responds, “May I reduce it to one chicken every month and wait until next year to stop?” When one realizes that something is morally wrong, one stops at once. Why wait till next year?

So the suspicion is borne out. One might argue that this shouldn’t embarrass Mencius. Does not this shifting of position mirror a genuine perennial dilemma of moral life? Sometimes we *aren’t* ready: yet the obligation on its face *can’t* be denied or put off.<sup>4</sup>

A related misgiving is suggested by a penetrating passage from Iris Murdoch (1962):

One must perform the lower act which one can manage and sustain: not the higher act which one bungles. . . .  
Self-knowledge will lead us to avoid occasions of temptation rather than to rely on naked strength to overcome them. We must not arrogate to ourselves actions which belong to those whose spiritual vision is higher or other than ours. From this attempt, only disaster will come.<sup>5</sup>

(201, 204)

In contrast with Murdoch, Mencius *just assumes* that the person who looks at an obligation and says “I can’t, so I needn’t try” is always *wrong*—making a very limited exception of the case where he feels one would be mismanaging *oneself* in forcing oneself to do right acts just because they are acts of “rightness.” Consider, for example, 7A39, where Mencius excoriates King Xuan’s desire to observe

less than the ritually prescribed period of mourning, yet condones a similar request from a certain “prince whose mother died.” But this case is different, he argues: the prince *wanted* to do the thing right, but was not going to be able to. Mencius concludes, “What I said the other day referred to those who failed to act even when there were no obstacles.” Mencius cannot admit that there could be an exculpating *internal* obstacle; for, he insists, *every* person can become a sage. But, suppose we agree. Even so, on Mencius’s own admission, the process takes time. (In 2A2.1 he allows that it took *him* forty years to attain a degree of perfection that he will not allow to be called “sagehood.”) In the meantime, if I have any moral obligations of self-appraisal and self-management at all, it would seem that I might *sometimes* have a *moral* obligation to make the best of what I recognize to be a (temporarily) less than ideal state of my character. But if Mencius were to admit this, he would have hard work preserving the moral opprobrium of his concept of “self-rejection” and its applicability to persons such as King Xuan (or Ran Qiu).<sup>6</sup>

The ruler who is hesitant about slashing his tax rate right off might of course be *right* in a much more disturbing way: He might size himself up, conclude that the kind of ruler-role Mencius urges on him is one *he* would in the end make a mess of, with the result that not just he but *everyone* would be worse off. It is to be regretted that Mencius, and other Confucians, do not seem to have the sophistication to consider problems of this kind—which are thus abandoned to Daoists and a very different treatment.<sup>7</sup>

### 7.5.3 AM I RESPONSIBLE FOR HOW I FEEL?

There will be deeper objections; and it will be useful here to notice that Mencius’s position as I have presented it is a composition of several distinguishable views:

1. There is a sort of innate moral “deep structure” in a person, that can be fully developed, without forcing, in only one way.
2. I can choose the feelings I shall have, to a significant extent: either (a) I can simply *use* my basic emotional capacities as I use my physical ones, or (b) I can over time *develop* them in desired ways. This last is Mencius’s characteristic view, and he thinks of either the using or the developing of noticed emotional capacities as a matter of “extending” them into what I see to be appropriate “categories” of possible motivated action. This is independent of (1), because I *could* hold that you and I have different root motivational capacities, or none at all to start with, or acquire them in various ways.
3. I can judge I ought to do something without ipso facto being moved to do it: This is independent of (1) and (2), because I could deny it and still insist that I could come to do the thing from a different motive, e.g., genuine

compassion rather than simply doing-what-I-ought; and this requires “extending.”

4. There is a significant moral difference between doing something because it’s commanded by a rule I accept as a rule of right conduct and doing it because of my fully involved sensibility to the aspects of the case that make it right for me to do it. Only the latter sort of act is morally satisfactory.

All of this implies that for Mencius a moral person is a hierarchic structure of faculties such that I both can and should notice, evaluate, choose among, and often modify different dispositions that I may have. This itself is a view many will reject.<sup>8</sup> Point (1), which is Mencius’s theory that “human nature is good” (6A6), is the aspect of his thought that has received nearly all the attention of students of China and Chinese philosophers. But the others seem to me to be, though controversial enough, both more plausible and more interesting, and more worth attention.

An objector will hold, perhaps, that (1) feelings can’t be chosen. (Or, the objector may go along with half of Mencius and admit they can be *changed*, even though not chosen-and-assumed-in-the-choosing.)

But then the objector will say (2) even if they could be, it would never be *right* or *needful* to do it. (a) Never *needful* because whenever I *really* judge that a course is best, I am (or come to be), in the judging, disposed to follow it. And (b) never *right*, because the only *honest* and non-self-deceptive way to come to a judgment that a course is the right one for *me* is to see how I *do* feel about it, and to start manipulating my feelings will be, so to speak, to tamper with the evidence.

Now rather than saying that it is wrong—not the course of “emotional honesty,” we might say—ever to try to modify our affections and attitudes, one really has to be arguing that one can’t. For if one can, then it would seem one must, in some cases, be responsible for what one’s feelings are. And it seems unfair for you to tell me that I am forbidden to change what I am to be held responsible for, even though I can. And I think examples like the funeral case show that one can. The foregoing argument works also for beliefs, of course, and that should give one pause. Perhaps the thing to say is that there are some ways of going about modifying one’s feelings or beliefs that would be proper and others that would not be, and that these ways differ for the two. In any case, one doesn’t have to go all the way with William James to see that often one does have the ability to focus and refocus one’s attention on particular aspects of a contemplated act, and this may well affect how one feels about doing it.<sup>9</sup>

One could still take the position that this is never going to make any difference in what one does, but only at most in the shape or color of one’s motive for doing it. This would be to slight one of the points I made about Mencius earlier—that just this for him is a morally significant difference in *what* one does. But it is also quite plausibly denied. For a try at making Mencius look more reasonable here, consider some examples (I shall deliberately exclude anything suggesting Mencius’s notion of extending innate feelings):

1. I buy a new compact car, impulsively. Should I have done so? Well, I’m stuck with it, and consciously or sub-consciously I “make the best of it”—I direct my attention to desirable features of my car (I can, after all, almost get into the driver’s seat without getting my legs stuck—and that’s a lot better than many other brands of car), and away from their undesirable features (not enough headroom for me, etc.). I reflect that I’m going to get fair mileage; I remind myself that I could have spent a lot more (and I try not to think about how much I *did* spend). Soon I feel better about it.

2. I sign a promissory note for Jones who is borrowing five-hundred dollars from the bank. It develops that Jones can’t pay it, and I have to. Again I’m stuck, this time with an *obligation* I don’t think I like too much. So I try to be philosophical. I reflect that Jones really needed the money and is using it to good purpose, and is a decent chap and will try to pay me later, and it isn’t really hurting me much anyway, and so on. Soon I feel better about it.

3. I promise Jones—verbally and privately—that if he doesn’t make enough on some land he is selling to cover his wife’s hospital expenses, I will *give* him five-hundred dollars. It turns out he doesn’t. He’s too decent to bring the matter up, but he knows, and I know, that I’ve promised. It doesn’t happen to be very convenient, but it seems to me I mustn’t go back on my word. So I try to be philosophical about *this*. Jones really needs it. He’d do as much for me if I were in his fix. I see how I can manage, by cutting here and there, say, by dropping a few of my professional subscriptions, etc. Soon I feel better about it.

4. The last example I propose is just like the preceding one, except that in this case the strength of my “moral” motivation to keep my word is at best in an even balance with my distress about the difficulty it will cost me to do so. I reflect on the matter as before, and as before, soon I feel better about it. But in this case, if I hadn’t come to feel better about it, I wouldn’t have kept my promise, even though I judged that I ought to.

Shall I say that the first three examples are plausible enough, but the last one just isn’t? Mencius’s objection to those who like Ran Qiu “reject themselves” is in significant part precisely that they see no such utility in “reflecting.”<sup>10</sup>

But, one may ask—and quite properly—doesn’t this simply move the problem up one level? What account should

be given of the relation between (1) my full understanding of myself, as well as the problem before me, and (2) my being effectively moved to embark on a course of emotional self-management and self-change—supposing that we accept hypothetically Mencius’s implicit picture of a person as a structure, such that *I* have emotional *powers* that *I* can *use*. Or to put it another way, perhaps Mencius ought to admit an “internal” relationship (in current philosophical terms, not Mencius’s) between *this* judgment<sup>11</sup>—that *I ought* to “extend” my root-motivation into the problem-area of moral action—and my being *moved* to *do that*, or to embark on and pursue the course of self-cultivation that will have that result. Mencius’s poor results, already noted, with royal patrons such as King Xuan do not encourage one to suppose Mencius would have agreed. But he does seem almost to say this elsewhere.

To return to the example given: I judge that I ought to keep my promise to give Jones five-hundred dollars. I measure the strength of my motivation to do what I judge I ought to do and see that it is not strong enough to carry against my reluctance, unless I take steps, i.e., *focus my attention for a while* on aspects of the case that make this the right thing to do and that mitigate the difficulty of doing it; and I see, further, that if I do take these steps, I’m going to become effectively disposed to keep my promise.

Ex hypothesi, engaging in the indicated line of attending is both necessary and sufficient for my keeping my promise. The question is not about that now, but whether on the level of deciding how to handle myself, the same stand-off between morality and self-interest might be repeated: my moral half might say, since reflecting is necessary and sufficient for you to keep your promise, and since you ought to keep your promise, you ought therefore to reflect. And self-interest will say, better not tamper with yourself; you’ll end doing something you don’t like. What happens now?

At this point, if I understand him, Mencius is like Bishop Butler in holding that I *ought* to heed “the greater part” of myself, that it has right of place over “the lesser part.”<sup>12</sup> But he also seems to think sometimes that if only I do reflect carefully enough to get this far—to take complete inventory of myself—I just *will*: “It is the common disposition of people to desire nobility. But everyone has nobility in oneself. It’s just that one doesn’t think (*sī*)” (6A17). Sense appetites automatically seek their objects; they “don’t think,” don’t act, but simply respond. “It is the function of the heart to think; if it thinks it will get it” (compare Gaozi, “what you do not get from words . . . from the heart . . .”); and “If it doesn’t think it will not” (6A15).

#### 7.5.4 THE REGRESS PROBLEM

“It’s just that I don’t think.” But why don’t I? “Thinking”—not a purely cognitive activity for Mencius but the heart’s reflective attending to and even savoring of its own inner dispositions—is something *I do*, can be *urged* to do, and so, apparently, can *resist* doing. What kind of judgment or perception about myself would I have to reach to see that I *ought to think*? And how would I reach it, except by thinking?

To say, as Mencius seems always to assume, that I am morally responsible for my moral dispositions seems to lead to a regress: if I ought to do A, then I ought to come to want to do A, and so, I ought to come to want to come to want to do A, and so on. If I accept Mencius’s view, I have to find some way of stopping the regress without destroying the point, or else show that the regress is acceptable without embarrassment. Without going into great detail, a possible resolution of the problem, I would suspect, goes as follows: it is indeed true that if I *ought* to do A, then I *ought* to be motivated to do it, if I am not; and so ought to be motivated to be motivated, etc. At every step, there is the *possibility* that I will not see my obligation; and the further *possibility* that even if I see it I will do nothing. This is quite different from saying what would be quite absurd: that to do A intentionally, I *must adopt* a motive to do it; but to do this I must adopt a motive to adopt this motive, and so on, and so can never do anything. This is not to say there is no problem at all. Mencius is very much involved in this part of ethics in 6A15. Why are some people “greater” than others? Some follow the “greater part” of themselves. But why do some do *that*? Well, one has to *think*. . . . And of course sometimes we don’t or won’t, or somehow can’t. A certain sixteenth-century gentleman is in this part of the woods, too, when he asks his teacher “Why is effort not earnest?”<sup>13</sup> Sometimes of course it just *is*, and this should not be forgotten. If it isn’t, there may be times when, though I can understand the problem, the only way for my teacher to *deal* with it is to reach for the proverbial dust whisk—seeing that my itch to understand the problem (rather than thinking what to do) is paralyzing me by directing me to each of infinitely many acts of attention.<sup>14</sup>

But this is a pathological case. Normally such a regress would be self-terminating. When I notice that I *ought* to do the thing, *and* that I am insufficiently *moved*, I then have an obligation *and a motive* to work on myself. And this motive does not depend, for its existence, on an anterior motive to be motivated. It may, of course, be insufficient; it may be sufficiently strong to get me to try as hard as I can and I may *still* fail; but then, I might be adequately moved to try as hard as I can to do the thing in the first place and still

fail. It is part of the concept of *trying* that success is problematic. Mencius, and Mencians, have not been willing to say this. Not only do they insist (rightly) that trying *helps* (7A3); they want also to insist that it must *succeed* (6A6).

This is, after all, what makes them Mencians.

#### Notes

1. For the distinction between consequentialist (also called “teleological”) and deontological positions, see Frankena (1973, 14-17). [Editor.]
2. Note that the difficulty developed obtains also for (4) (Doing A from motive C) from motive O, where O is the bare motive to do what I ought. O can be (perhaps) my motive for cultivating myself, but not my motive for a particular moral act (and so, not my motive for the individual things I do in cultivating myself) without contamination of C.
3. For more on 2A2 and the notion of “voluntarism,” see “Philosophical Voluntarism in Fourth-Century China,” chapter 8 in this volume.
4. The moral life can be far more distressing than this, even. We do have to make choices where there is *no* “really” right course to take. But this won’t do for Mencius. I think that Fingarette (1972, chapter 2) is basically right in arguing that Confucianism is innocent of the notion of basic existential moral choice. I discuss this more in “Moral Decision in Wang Yangming: The Problem of Chinese ‘Existentialism,’” chapter 15 in this volume.
5. Quoted in Goldman (1976, 449).
6. Does this criticism apply to Confucians generally? Probably not, but I am not sure. Zhāng Xuéchéng, an eighteenth-century Confucian, e.g., insists repeatedly that one should recognize one’s limitations of ability; but he is talking about the activity of the writer and scholar, and not addressing the question whether it might sometimes be morally right to choose for oneself what one sees to be a less than *morally* ideal course of action. To be sure, for Neo-Confucians like Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming, it is a metaphysical fact that I always have available to me (at any given moment) the ability to recognize (and the motivation to perform) the right action. All I need do to succeed is to attend to my true self. So, in a way, the problem of insufficient motivation is metaphysically ruled out by Neo-Confucianism. Yet a related problem is there anyway. Consider Wang Yangming, and his students who want to “make up their minds” to be-

come “sages” but can’t. (See Chan, 1963, 216, no. 260). Still, no one even thinks of settling for a lower objective.

7. See later in this chapter, section 7.6.1.
8. See the discussion later in this chapter, section 7.6.2.
9. See the discussion later in this chapter, section 7.6.2.
10. Mencius also thinks that I and everyone have basic dispositions that such reflection can bring into play. In the present example I can be described as attending more closely to attitudes I already have, and to their implications; but where those attitudes came from is a separate question.
11. On internalism, see the introduction to this volume, p. 3, and above, p. 283, n. 4. [Editor.]
12. See, e.g., Butler (1983, 15, preface). See also Legge (1970, 56-57, 60-64). [Editor.]
13. See Chan (1963, 224, no. 280).
14. See Chan (1963, 224, no. 280), for the dust whisk example.

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#### Kwong-loi Shun (essay date 1997)

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[In the following essay, Shun examines how in his discussion of self-cultivation Mencius appealed “to the shared ethical predispositions of the heart/mind” to defend Confucianism against its detractors.]

## 5.1 ETHICAL PREDISPOSITIONS OF THE HEART/MIND

### 5.1.1 ETHICAL PREDISPOSITIONS

The discussion in the previous chapter shows that Mencius believed the human heart/mind has certain predispositions already directed toward the ethical ideal. This idea is reflected in other parts of the *Meng-tzu*. For example, 6A:6 describes the ethical attributes of *jen*<sup>a</sup>, *yi*<sup>a</sup>, *li*<sup>a</sup>, and *chih*<sup>b</sup> as already in human beings and not welded onto human beings from the outside, and 6A:17 observes that each person already has what is truly honorable within him- or herself (here what is truly honorable probably refers to the ethical attributes; cf. 6A:16). Also, he described being ethical or unethical as a matter of preserving or losing something in one’s heart/mind. For example, 6A:10 describes the worthy person as one who is able not to lose the heart/mind that everyone shares, and 6A:8 and 6A:11 describe being unethical as a matter of losing one’s heart/mind and learning as a matter of seeking the lost heart/mind.<sup>1</sup> Passage 4B:19 describes the superior person as preserving and the ordinary person as losing the slight element that distinguishes human beings from other animals, and 4B:28 says that what makes the superior person different from others is that he preserves the heart/mind.<sup>2</sup> Passage 4B:12 describes the great person as not losing the heart/mind of the newborn; one possible interpretation of this observation is that the ethical ideal is a realization of predispositions already in the heart/mind.<sup>3</sup>

In addition, the notion that the ethical ideal is a realization of certain directions built into the predispositions of the heart/mind is reflected in two analogies in the *Meng-tzu*. The first is the taste analogy already considered in connection with 6A:4-5. Passage 6A:7 likewise uses the taste analogy to make the point that just as people’s palates share a common taste for food, their hearts/minds share something in common. The phrase *hsin*<sup>a</sup> *chih*<sup>g</sup> *so t’ung jan che* can be taken to mean “that which is common to all hearts/minds” (cf. Lau). Alternatively, if we take *jan* to be used verbally to mean “approve,” as suggested by the parallel between *t’ung jan*, *t’ung ch’i*, *t’ung t’ing*, and *t’ung mei* in the passage, the phrase can be read as “what all hearts/minds agree in approving of” (cf. Legge; Chao Ch’i [C]; Chu Hsi [MTCC, YL 1390-91]; Tai Chen, no. 4). Either way, the subsequent remark that *li*<sup>c</sup> *yi*<sup>a</sup> (pattern and propriety) delights the heart/mind in the way that certain kinds of meat delight the palate shows that Mencius

regarded *yi*<sup>a</sup> as something that the heart/mind takes delight in.<sup>4</sup> Also, 2A:2 says both that the flood-like *ch’i*<sup>a</sup> shrivels up unless united with *yi*<sup>a</sup> and that it shrivels up when one’s actions are dissatisfying to the heart/mind; this shows that what is contrary to *yi*<sup>a</sup> is dissatisfying to the heart/mind.

These passages show that Mencius believed that everyone takes pleasure in *yi*<sup>a</sup> and finds dissatisfying what is contrary to *yi*<sup>a</sup>. Minimally, this means that one takes pleasure in one’s own behavior if it accords with *yi*<sup>a</sup> and finds it dissatisfying if it is contrary to *yi*<sup>a</sup>. Chu Hsi (YL 1391) thinks Mencius also believed that everyone agrees in approving conduct in human beings that accords with *yi*<sup>a</sup> and in disapproving conduct that does not. Tai Chen (no. 4) likewise takes the sensitivity to *yi*<sup>a</sup> to concern not just one’s own behavior but human behavior as such. This reading is compatible with 6A:7 and fits the reference to the heart/mind of *hsiu wu*<sup>b</sup> as one of the four beginnings—*hsiu* (regard as below oneself) is directed at things that bear a special relation to oneself, whereas *wu*<sup>b</sup> (aversion) may be directed at the behavior of oneself or of others.

Another analogy used by Mencius is a vegetative one in which he compares ethical development to the growth of a plant. For example, 2A:2 observes that not attending to one’s ethical development is like not cultivating the sprouts, and forcing one’s ethical development is like helping a plant to grow. Passages 6A:7 and 6A:8 compare ethical development to the growth of barley and of trees on Ox Mountain, 6A:9 draws an analogy between lack of persistence in one’s ethical development and inadequate nourishment of plants, and 6A:19 describes the maturing of *jen*<sup>a</sup> in terms of the ripening of the five grains. The vegetative analogy suggests the idea that the ethical development of human beings is like the growth of sprouts into mature plants. The idea also fits the references in 2A:6 to the four germs (*tuan*) as the starting point for ethical development (part of the character *tuan* is a picture of a sprouting plant with roots). Since the direction in which a sprout develops if uninjured is built into the constitution of the sprout, the analogy suggests that a certain direction of development is built into certain predispositions of the heart/mind.

Mencius’s appeal to such ethical predispositions played two roles in his thinking. He often referred to these predispositions to show that human beings have the ability (*neng*) to be ethical. People have the four germs and so should not regard themselves as being unable (*pu neng*) to be ethical (2A:6), King Hsüan’s compassion for the ox shows that his indifference to his people is a matter of not acting rather than being unable to act (1A:7), and the

love for parents and respect for elder brothers that people share show that they have certain abilities (7A:15).

As we saw in §2.2.2, one common challenge to Mo Tzu came from those who doubt that people are able to practice indiscriminate concern. Wu-ma Tzu challenged this doctrine on the grounds that he lacked the appropriate emotional dispositions to practice it (*MT* 46/52-60). Mencius's appeal to the predispositions of the heart/mind to demonstrate the human ability to be ethical suggests that he was probably aware of this challenge to the Mohists, a suggestion that gains support from his citing as an example of genuine inability one's holding a mountain and jumping over a river (1A:7), an example also found in the *Mo-tzu* (15/29-31, 16/46-48).<sup>5</sup> In emphasizing that the human heart/mind has predispositions in the direction of the Confucian ideal, Mencius was in part trying to show that human beings have the ability to practice the Confucian ideal, and hence that the Confucian proposal is not open to the same kind of objections as the Mohist one.

In addition, it is likely that Mencius also emphasized the ethical predispositions of the heart/mind as part of an attempt to defend the Confucian ideal. The main Mohist challenge to which he was responding did not concern one's ability to practice the ethical ideal, since this was as much a problem for the Mohists as for the Confucians. Instead, the Mohists attacked the kind of practices that the Confucians defended and appealed to *li<sup>b</sup>* (benefit, profit) as a basis for *yi<sup>a</sup>* (propriety). As we saw in the previous chapter, Mencius responded to this challenge by arguing that our recognition of *yi<sup>a</sup>* derives from certain features of the heart/mind, more specifically, from shared predispositions that already point in the direction of the ethical ideal.

The two roles played by the ethical predispositions are related—if the ethical ideal is a realization of a direction built into these predispositions, then the predispositions are also what make people able to live up to the ideal. Since the practical need to motivate people to practice the ideal may in certain circumstances require invoking considerations that have a more immediate appeal, we may expect Mencius to invoke such considerations on occasion, while pointing to the ethical predispositions to convince his audience that they are able to practice the ideal. This is probably what is going on in some of Mencius's dialogues with rulers of states in which he attempted to motivate the rulers to practice *jen<sup>a</sup>* on the grounds that doing so will have certain political advantages and also appealed to the predispositions of the heart/mind to show the rulers that they had the ability to practice *jen<sup>a</sup>* government. His appeal to politi-

cal advantage probably resulted from practical need and does not show that he regarded the ethical predispositions of the heart/mind as having no role in defending the ideal. Since the appeal to political advantage would have an effect only on those in certain political positions and with certain ambitions, and since Mencius was attempting to combat the Mohists and other opponents before a wider audience, political advantage is unlikely to be the only consideration he regarded as bearing on a defense of the Confucian ideal. More likely, the appeal to the shared ethical predispositions of the heart/mind also played this role, in addition to showing that people have the ability to be ethical.<sup>6</sup>

### 5.1.2 ETHICAL PREDISPOSITIONS AND ETHICAL DIRECTION

How do these ethical predispositions indicate an ethical direction? Consider first the spontaneous reactions that Mencius highlighted, such as King Hsüan's compassion for the ox (1A:7), one's alarm at seeing an infant about to fall into a well (2A:6), one's response to the sight of the bodies of deceased parents being devoured by wild animals (3A:5), and one's indignation upon being given food with abuse (6A:10). These reactions occur when one suddenly encounters certain unexpected situations; the suddenness is made explicit in 2A:6, and in each of the other three cases, the subject encounters something expected.<sup>7</sup> Unlike ongoing activities shaped by pre-existing goals, such as King Hsüan's oppressing the people (1A:7) or someone accepting ten thousand bushels of grain contrary to propriety (6A:10), such reactions reveal something deep in the heart/mind and show one the kind of person one really is.<sup>8</sup> Since one is caught unprepared, the reactions are not guided by ulterior motives but come directly from the heart/mind. That no ulterior motive is involved is made explicit in 2A:6 and 3A:5, and presumably is implicit in 6A:10 (one gives up life, which is the most important thing among ordinary goals) and 1A:7 (the king's sparing of the ox led others to regard him as miserly and so presumably did not serve any of his purposes). Moreover, the reactions are supposed to be shared by all, and one comes to realize this not through empirical generalizations about human beings but through reflections on one's own heart/mind. The reactions described in 2A:6, 3A:5, and 6A:10 involve hypothetical situations, showing that Mencius was inviting us to imagine how we would react if placed in such situations. Although 1A:7 involves an actual occurrence, what Mencius did in that passage was to lead the king to examine his own heart/mind.

What, then, do these reactions reveal? The answer depends on the kind of reactions involved. As commentators have noted (Chu Hsi, *MTCC*; Chang Shih), the example in 6A:10, which is also found in the *Li-chi* (*LC* 3/18a.5-b.2),

illustrates one of the four germs, that of *hsiu* (regarding as below oneself) and *wu<sup>b</sup>* (aversion). *Wu<sup>b</sup>* is explicitly mentioned in the passage, and the attitude of *hsiu* is suggested by the description of the beggar as disdainful (*pu hsieh*) acceptance of the food given with abuse. Such reactions move one to reject the food and presumably also to see the impropriety of accepting it. In this regard, the reaction described in 3A:5 is similar: it moves one to bury the dead bodies of parents and see the propriety of so acting. Indeed, although the reaction in 3A:5 is similar to the compassionate reaction described in 2A:6 in certain respects (each comes directly from the heart/mind and involves being unable to bear certain things), the former is also like a reaction of *hsiu wu<sup>b</sup>* in that it leads one to remedy a situation to which the reaction is directed.

The reactions under consideration not only lead one to see what is proper in an immediate context of action but also can guide one's future behavior or behavior in other contexts. For example, the reaction in 3A:5 can lead one to realize the propriety of burying family members in the future. And the reaction in 6A:10 seems intended to lead one to a certain view of one's behavior in the political context. The comparison to accepting food given with abuse shows that the reference to accepting ten thousand bushels of grain is probably a reference to accepting an offer from someone in power who has failed to treat one in accordance with *li<sup>a</sup>*.<sup>9</sup> The passage, it seems, is geared to lead the audience to see that accepting the offer is improper in the same way that accepting food given with abuse is, and thereby to motivate the audience not to so act in the political context. Accepting food given with abuse will lead to life, which is more important than the external possessions made possible by accepting the ten thousand bushels of grain. Since one would give up life in deference to propriety in the one case, it would be a loss of one's sense of what is important to accept the ten thousand bushels of grain contrary to propriety in the other case.

Further evidence that spontaneous reactions of the heart/mind can guide behavior can be found in 1A:7. The passage begins with King Hsüan asking Mencius about Dukes Huan and Wen and Mencius leading the king into a discussion of what it takes to be a true king (*wang<sup>a</sup>*). According to Mencius, the king could become a true king by caring for and protecting the common people. To show the king that he had the ability to do this, Mencius reminded him of a past occasion on which he was moved by compassion and spared an ox about to be killed for the purpose of consecrating a bell. This was supposed to show that the king had the ability to care for and protect the people, thereby becoming a true king. Mencius then asked why the king's bounty did

not extend to the people and urged the king to measure his own heart/mind. The king responded by referring to his supreme ambition, which Mencius identified as territorial expansion. Mencius then argued that the way to achieve this ambition is to care for and protect the people and to practice *jen<sup>a</sup>* government.

The interpretation of the passage is a matter of controversy. Mencius was in part trying to show the king that he had the ability to care for his people; this much seems clear, given Mencius's repeated reference to the king's ability. But what is less clear is whether Mencius was at the same time trying to motivate the king to care for his people and, if so, how this is supposed to come about. One possible suggestion is that the king initially wanted to care for the people but believed that he was unable to do so and that Mencius's sole purpose was to show that the king had this ability. However, the way the dialogue proceeded suggests that probably something more was going on. Although the king did ask early on whether he was capable of caring for the people, he did not at that point display an interest in caring for the people as such, other than hoping thereby to attain the political status of a true king. But later in the passage, Mencius seemed to expect a change in the king's attitude toward his people. Mencius asked the king why he did not extend his bounty to the people in a way that suggests the king himself should find it puzzling that he had not done so and hence that there is something that moved the king to be more caring. Furthermore, since the king appealed to his political ambitions to explain why he had not been more caring, what moved the king was independent of political considerations. So, at least from Mencius's perspective, something happened in the course of the dialogue that contributed to the king's motivation to look after the people.

It is, however, difficult to determine how the change came about. One issue of disagreement is whether the added motivation the king acquired was a mere causal outcome of his dialogue with Mencius, or whether it depended on his coming to see things in a certain way, such as acquiring what from Mencius's perspective constituted a better understanding of himself. Another issue of disagreement concerns what, from Mencius's perspective, the king's attitude toward his people was at the beginning of the dialogue, and what Mencius was drawing upon in the process of trying to add to the king's motivation. To facilitate presentation of the different possibilities, I will describe a range of proposals on the second issue and then, for each of these proposals, distinguish between two ways of elaborating on it that correspond to two different positions on the first issue of disagreement.



At one extreme is the suggestion that the king had no concern for his people to start with. In trying to motivate the king to be more caring toward his people, Mencius pointed to a similarity between the situation of his people and that of the ox. Since the king's reaction to the ox was a response to its suffering despite its innocence, and since he also knew about the suffering of the people despite their innocence, the king would be motivated to have compassion on his people and spare them. This suggestion can be developed in two ways. One is to take the awareness of the similarity to play a mere causal role in generating the new motivation, without depending on the king's viewing the similarity as a ground for having compassion on the people. Another is to say that the king regarded the similarity as a ground for having compassion on the people, and that it is this view of things that generated the new motivation.<sup>10</sup>

At another extreme is the suggestion that, even before the dialogue with Mencius, the king had compassion for the people in a full-fledged form, although it did not manifest itself because of the distortive influence of certain political ambitions. By reminding the king of his compassion for the ox, Mencius helped to facilitate the manifestation of the king's compassion for the people. Again, one variant of this suggestion regards the change in motivation as a mere causal process that did not depend on the king's becoming aware that he already had compassion on the people to start with. Another variant regards the king as being led to this awareness by reflecting on the ox accident, such awareness in turn generating the new motivation.<sup>11</sup>

The two suggestions represent two extremes in that the latter assumes the prior presence of full-fledged concern for the people and the former allows that the king might have no concern for the people to start with. Between these two extremes are other suggestions that assume the king had some degree of concern for the people. For example, one suggestion is that by leading the king to see that the plight of his subjects is like that of the ox, Mencius helped to crystallize the king's incipient concern for the people, thereby motivating him to spare the people.<sup>12</sup> By guiding the king to become more mindful of the plight of his subjects and acquiring a more vivid awareness of their suffering, Mencius helped to activate the king's concern for the people and to develop his awareness of their suffering beyond an impersonal level.<sup>13</sup>

The passage does not contain enough details to provide decisive evidence for any of these interpretations. Parts of the passage speak against the interpretation at the first extreme. For example, the king's compassion for the ox is

described as involving his viewing the ox as if it were an innocent person being led to the place of execution. This suggests that the king had some concern for the people to start with and that Mencius was attempting to help this concern materialize in action. As Wang Fu-chih (513-14, 516) has noted, Mencius was primarily urging the king to extend (*t'ui*) his actions, rather than to come to have the same concern for the people that he had for the ox. Indeed, that the king's compassion for the ox involved viewing the ox as if it were an innocent person suggests that he probably had more concern for human beings than for other animals.

This observation gains further support from the analogies Mencius used to describe the king's relation to the ox and his relation to his people: the former is like lifting a heavy weight and seeing the tip of a fine hair, whereas the latter is like lifting a feather and seeing a cartload of firewood. The analogies show that Mencius thought it would be easier for the king to be compassionate toward his people than toward the ox. Presumably, this comparative judgment is not based on the king's physical abilities; it would have been physically as easy for the king to issue an order to spare the ox as it is to issue an order to spare the people. Rather, in light of the observation in §2.2.2 that ability (*neng*) in the ethical context was often viewed as dependent on the appropriate emotional dispositions, the comparative judgment was probably based on the assumption that the king in some sense had more concern for the people than for animals.

However, although it is likely that the king had some prior concern for the people, it is not clear that it was initially present in a full-fledged form. It is possible that it needed to be crystallized or activated by the king's viewing the people in an appropriate way, and reminding the king of his compassion for the ox served such a purpose. As far as I can tell, there is insufficient evidence in the passage to defend any particular proposal about the form in which the concern was initially present and how exactly Mencius expected the dialogue to contribute to motivating the king to action.

The discussion of 6A:10 and 1A:7 helps make sense of 7A:17.<sup>14</sup> The passage presents being ethical as a matter of *wu wei<sup>a</sup> ch'i<sup>b</sup> so pu wei<sup>a</sup>, wu yü<sup>b</sup> ch'i<sup>b</sup> so pu yü<sup>b</sup>* (do not do what oneself/others do not do, and do not desire what oneself/others do not desire). Chao Ch'i (C; CC) interprets the passage to concern different individuals, others as well as oneself: do not make others do or desire what one oneself does not do or desire. Accordingly, he takes the passage to be about not imposing on others what one does not desire for oneself, and relates it to the way *shu<sup>a</sup>* (reciprocity) is explained in the *Lun-yü* (LY 15.24).<sup>15</sup> Ware probably follows this interpretation in translating 7A:17 as "do not have

done (desired) what you yourself would not do (desire).” Some translators take the passage to be about oneself and others instead; for example, Lau has “do not do (desire) what others do not choose to do (desire),” and Lyall has “do (wish) nothing they do not do (wish).” But comparison with 7B:31, which says that *jen<sup>a</sup>* and *yi<sup>a</sup>* result from one’s extending what one oneself cannot bear and would not do to what one can bear and would do, makes it unlikely that 7A:17 concerns different individuals. That 7A:17 concerns the same individual is reflected in the translations by Ch’ai and Ch’ai, Dobson, and Legge; it has to do with one’s not doing or desiring what one oneself would not do or desire. Chai and Chai and Dobson take *so pu wei<sup>a</sup>* and *so pu yi<sup>b</sup>* to concern what one ought or should not do or desire. Legge takes them to concern what one’s “sense of righteousness” tells one not to do or desire, thereby capturing the view that there are certain things in oneself that tell one what not to do or desire.

Since Mencius held the view that the heart/mind has ethical predispositions indicating certain ethical directions, it is likely that 7A:17 refers to the directions revealed by these predispositions.<sup>16</sup> That 7B:31 refers to the heart/mind of not desiring to harm others suggests that what one does not desire is harming others, and 6A:10 and 1A:7 provide examples, respectively, of one’s not doing certain things and one’s not desiring to harm others. Hence, the point of 7A:17 is probably that although there are things that human beings as a matter of fact do or desire, such as accepting ten thousand bushels of grain contrary to propriety (6A:10) or desiring to exploit one’s subjects for one’s own political ambitions (1A:7), something in the ethical predispositions of the heart/mind shows that one really would not do or desire such things. This in turn provides an interpretation of *ch’ung* (fill, develop) in 7B:31 and *k’uo ch’ung* (expand and fill) in 2A:6—they refer to the process of developing oneself in the directions indicated by the ethical predispositions of the heart/mind.

To complete this discussion of how the ethical predispositions can indicate ethical direction, we need to consider how Mencius would defend the idea of love with distinction against the Mohist challenge. Mencius regarded as a starting point for ethical development certain reactions and attitudes directed specifically at family members. The reaction described in 3A:5 is directed at the dead bodies of one’s parents, and the passage implies that one has more love for one’s brother’s child than for a stranger’s child. Passage 7A:15 describes love for parents and respect for elder brothers as the starting point for cultivating *jen<sup>a</sup>* and *yi<sup>a</sup>*. Passage 4A:27 describes serving parents and following elder brothers as the *shih<sup>b</sup>* of *jen<sup>a</sup>* and *yi<sup>a</sup>*, respectively, where “shih<sup>b</sup>” has been interpreted to mean the real sub-

stance (as opposed to *ming<sup>b</sup>*, or name), the concrete aspect (as opposed to *hsü*, or what is abstract), or the fruit (as opposed to *hua*, or flowering) of *jen<sup>a</sup>* and *yi<sup>a</sup>*.<sup>17</sup> The reference to reactions and attitudes directed specifically at family members probably plays a role in Mencius’s defense of love with distinction.

In 7A:15, Mencius described *jen<sup>a</sup>* and *yi<sup>a</sup>* as resulting from one’s extending (*ta*) to everyone one’s love (*ai*) for or attachment (*ch’in*) to parents as well as one’s respect (*ching*) for elder brothers. Hu Pingwen’s elaboration on Chu Hsi’s (MTCC) interpretation takes this idea to mean that one should not restrict such love and respect to oneself but should also make everyone know that they should have such love and respect. In this interpretation, what is extended is the subjects of love and respect: the process begins with one’s having such love and respect and ends with others’ also having love and respect for their own parents and elders. Chao Ch’i (CC) relates 7A:15 to *shu<sup>a</sup>* (reciprocity), and this suggests a similar interpretation: one helps others acquire what one oneself has, namely, love for parents and respect for elders. But, elsewhere, Chao Ch’i (C) describes extending as a matter of one’s exercising one’s love and respect in relation to others. This suggests an interpretation that takes what is extended to be the objects of love and respect: the process begins with one’s having love and respect for one’s parents and elders and ends with one’s having love and respect for everyone.

There are three reasons why the second interpretation is more plausible. First, the idea of extending the objects of certain attitudes from family members to others is found in other passages; for example, 1A:7 refers to letting the attitude of treating an elder as elderly, which is initially directed to elders of one’s own family, reach the elders of others. Second, *ta* (extend), which occurs in 7A:15, is used in other passages to refer to extending the objects of one’s attitudes. For example, 7B:31 speaks of extending what one would not bear or do to what one bears or does; as we saw earlier, this has to do with extending to other objects the attitudes one initially has toward certain objects.<sup>18</sup> Third, 7A:15 makes the claim that everyone has love for parents as a child and respect for elders as one grows up. This makes it unlikely that the point of 7A:15 is to urge one to bring it about that other people also have such love and respect.

Although one is supposed to extend the objects of one’s love and respect, one is still supposed to retain a special attitude toward members of one’s own family. Passage 7A:45 refers to treating as parents one’s own parents (*ch’in ch’in*), which is an attitude not directed at other people, and 3A:5 has the implication that there should be

a gradation in extending one's love outward from the family.<sup>19</sup> Passage 6A:5 implies that one should have more respect for one's eldest brother than for an older villager even if the villager is older by a year. How, then, would Mencius defend this gradation in one's attitude? As far as I can tell, the *Meng-tzu* does not contain sufficient details for reconstructing Mencius's position on this issue. All I can do is to describe, without actually ascribing to Mencius, one possible way of defending the gradation that draws on the work of David B. Wong and that is consistent with Mencius's appeal to shared predispositions of the heart/mind in defending the Confucian ideal.<sup>20</sup>

Consider first the affective concern for others that *jen*<sup>a</sup> emphasizes. Given the existence of the institution, it is within the family that one first develops such concern. Furthermore, it is a fact about human beings that as they are brought up within the family, they come to have attachment to those who care and provide for them, these individuals typically being their parents. The attachment can become more conceptualized over time; the child comes to see the objects of attachment as parents, and starting with a desire to be close to them, the child comes to acquire conceptions of what constitutes the well-being of parents and is moved to act for their well-being. With time, one can also become more reflective about one's relation to parents; one comes to learn about how parents have provided for one materially, and how they also shaped the kind of person one is.<sup>21</sup> As a result, one may come to regard one's attachment to and concern for parents as warranted by what they have done for one. In addition, one may regard the attachment and concern as also warranted in part by the fact that one owes one's life to parents; that is, the biological link can be seen as a relevant consideration in itself. At this point, one's attachment and concern are not just mere causal facts but things that one regards as warranted by certain features of the objects of attachment and concern.

Suppose next that one reflects on the relation one should ideally have to parents. Two kinds of considerations provide grounds for retaining the special attachment and concern just described. First, one recognizes it is a fact about human psychology that, having been raised by parents, one has such special attachment and concern. There is nothing disrespectful about such attachment and concern, which are deeply rooted in human motivations, and the ethical life should make accommodation for this fact about human motivations. Second, one also regards such attachment and concern as justified by what the parents have done for one in the past, such as material provisions, the way they shaped one's character, and perhaps also their being the source of one's life. Although one did not come to have this attachment and concern on such grounds, one can,

given the existence of the attachment and concern, still regard them as justified on such grounds.<sup>22</sup> These considerations provide grounds for regarding special attachment to and concern for parents as legitimate parts of the ethical life.

A similar account can be given for other people, such as friends and spouse, with whom one develops a like relationship later in life. These individuals have cared for one and contributed to one's life in various ways, and although one's attachment to and concern for them evolved as a matter of fact and not on the basis of grounds, one can come to see this attachment and concern as justified both because of what these individuals have contributed to one's life and because such attachment and concern reflect something respectable and deep-rooted in human motivations. One's concern for friends is not comparable to one's concern for parents given the difference in the histories of interaction, but this gradation can itself be justified in terms of the greater contribution the parents have made to one's life and the fact that having a special concern for parents to whom one stands in a unique relation is a respectable fact about human motivations. In this way, a gradation in one's concern for others can be seen as a legitimate part of the ethical life.

A similar account can also be given for respect for elders, a starting point for cultivating the attribute *yi*<sup>a</sup>. *Yi*<sup>a</sup> involves a commitment to what is proper, as defined by certain ethical standards to which one should defer. Again, given the existence of the family institution, one typically first develops such an attitude of deference within the family. Initially one learns how to behave simply by following the guidance of older members of the family; one's attitude involves following or obeying (*ts'ung*) the elders as well as *ching* (reverence, seriousness), which is a matter of devoting attention to and lowering oneself before the elders. As one grows older, one comes to see that such an attitude is indeed appropriate, since the elders are wiser and more experienced than oneself and since, having had a history of interaction with oneself, they know more than anyone else about one's needs and interests. One's reverence for them becomes more conceptualized, and one sees that it is an appropriate response to what one has learned from the elders and to their greater experience and wisdom. Further reflection leads one to see that this special attitude toward elders of one's family is a legitimate part of the ethical life for reasons similar to those described for concern for parents. Having such a special attitude is a fact about human motivations that is respectable and deep-rooted, and it is also warranted by what one has learned from the elders as well as by their ability to continue to provide appropriate guidance.

As the circle of one's interactions expands, one comes to have a similar attitude toward others, such as teachers and superiors. One still retains a special respect for elders in the family, with whom one has had a more extended history of interaction. This is a respectable fact about human motivations that the ethical life should accommodate, and it is also warranted by the fact that these are people from whom one has learned more in the past and who know more about one's special circumstances and so are in a better position to continue to provide guidance. In this way, a gradation in one's reverence can be seen as a legitimate part of the ethical life.

## 5.2 SELF-REFLECTION AND SELF-CULTIVATION

### 5.2.1 SELF-REFLECTION AND *SSU<sup>b</sup>* (REFLECT, THINK)

In the previous section, we considered the variety of ways in which the ethical predispositions of the heart/mind may indicate an ethical direction. Sometimes, as in the example described in **3A:5**, one comes to see what is proper in certain situations on the basis of one's spontaneous response to them. Sometimes, as in the examples described in **1A:7** and **6A:10**, one comes to see what is proper in certain contexts by reflecting on how one reacts in other contexts. Although the process by which one derives ethical direction takes different forms, for convenience I refer to this process as *self-reflection*, with the qualification that self-reflection may or may not involve actually reflecting on one's own ethical predispositions. Although Mencius related the ethical attributes to cultivating oneself in the direction indicated by the ethical predispositions of the heart/mind, this does not mean that these attributes are end points whose content is spelled out in detail and which guide one in the process of self-cultivation.<sup>23</sup> Rather, they serve more to describe different aspects of the direction revealed through self-reflection; for example, *jen<sup>a</sup>* emphasizes the aspect having to do with affective concern, and *yi<sup>a</sup>* the aspect relating to a commitment to propriety.

With this discussion of self-reflection as background, let us consider the notion of *ssu<sup>b</sup>* (reflect, think). Mencius often explained ethical failure in terms of a lack of *ssu<sup>b</sup>* (**6A:6**, **6A:13**, **6A:17**). In **6A:15**, he observed that one gets it if one (or the heart/mind) *ssu<sup>b</sup>* but not if one (or the heart/mind) does not *ssu<sup>b</sup>*. What one is supposed to get is not clear from the passage. Giles and Lyall leave unspecified the object of the getting, Chai and Chai have "obtains what is good," Dobson has "receives what is transmitted to it," Lau has "will find the answer," and Legge has "gets the right view of things."<sup>24</sup> Comparison with **6A:6**, which observes that "one gets it if one seeks but not if one lets go" (cf. **7A:3**) and whose context is the ethical attributes *jen<sup>a</sup>*, *yi<sup>a</sup>*, *li<sup>a</sup>*, and

*chih<sup>b</sup>*, shows that what one is supposed to get through *ssu<sup>b</sup>* has something to do with the ethical ideal. Commentators generally agree on this point; for example, Chu Hsi (MTCC) thinks what is attained via *ssu<sup>b</sup>* is *li<sup>c</sup>* (pattern, principle), Chang Shih takes it to be *t'ien li<sup>c</sup>* (pattern/principle of Heaven), which resides in the heart/mind, and Wang Fu-chih (696-97) takes it to be *yi<sup>a</sup>* (propriety). It is less clear, however, what *ssu<sup>b</sup>* involves and what its object is.

"*Ssu<sup>b</sup>*" occurs frequently in the *Shih-ching*, often as a transitive verb meaning reflecting on something or turning an object over in one's mind, where the object is in many instances something toward which one has a favorable attitude. For example, one may think about or turn over in one's mind a person to whom one is attached (*SC* 27/3-4, 28/4, 38/3, 87/1-2), and worry or be concerned about such a person (*SC* 44/1-2, 62/3-4, 66/1). *Ssu<sup>b</sup>* can also involve recalling or remembering something, as opposed to forgetting (*wang<sup>b</sup>*) (*SC* 201/3), and it can also involve pondering on or thinking about something to which one need not be favorably disposed (*SC* 26/4-5, 109/2, 114/1-3). Given these uses of "*ssu<sup>b</sup>*," Arthur Waley is probably correct in taking it to have the primary meaning of focusing attention on something, a process more akin to concrete observation than to an elaborate process of deliberation.<sup>25</sup> The *Meng-tzu* uses "*ssu<sup>b</sup>*" in the sense of thinking of something (**2A:2**, **2A:9**, **4B:24**, **4B:29**, **5A:7**, **5B:1**), where what is thought of can be something toward which one is favorably disposed (**7B:37**) or something one is thinking of doing (**3A:5**, **4B:20**, **6A:9**). Also, *ssu<sup>b</sup>* is described as something pertaining to the heart/mind that can be exhausted (**4A:1**).

Since *ssu<sup>b</sup>* is supposed to be necessary to attaining the ethical ideal, the object of *ssu<sup>b</sup>* is presumably related to the ideal. Some commentators have interpreted the object of *ssu<sup>b</sup>* in this way; for example, Chao Ch'i (C) takes its object to be goodness (*shan*). We just saw that to *ssu<sup>b</sup>* something involves directing attention to and reflecting on the thing, and this is often something toward which one is favorably disposed. As noted by David S. Nivison, the observation in **6A:7** that the heart/mind takes pleasure in *li<sup>c</sup> yi<sup>a</sup>* (pattern and propriety) just as the senses take pleasure in their ideal objects suggests that the object of *ssu<sup>b</sup>* is probably *li<sup>c</sup> yi<sup>a</sup>*.<sup>26</sup> This suggestion gains further support from the fact that "*ssu<sup>b</sup>*" and "*ch'iu*" (seek) are used in parallel structures (**6A:15**, **6A:6**, **7A:3**) and that, as we saw in §4.4.3, the object of *ch'iu* in Kao Tzu's maxim is probably *yi<sup>a</sup>*. Furthermore, as Nivison has also noted, the use of "*ssu<sup>b</sup>*" and "*ch'iu*" in parallel structures suggests that *ssu<sup>b</sup>* also involved a kind of seeking.<sup>27</sup> So, for Mencius, *ssu<sup>b</sup>* probably involved directing attention to and seeking the ideal object of the heart/mind, namely *yi<sup>a</sup>*.

*Ssu<sup>b</sup>* also takes *yi<sup>a</sup>* as an object in other early texts (e.g., *LY* 14.12, 16.10, 19.1; *TC* 627/14, 736/9), and the point that *ssu<sup>b</sup>* directed toward goodness or *yi<sup>a</sup>* is crucial to one's becoming good is made in the following passage from the *Kuo-yü*:

When the people are worked hard, they will *ssu<sup>b</sup>*; if they *ssu<sup>b</sup>*, the heart/mind of goodness [*shan*] will grow. If they are allowed to be lax, they will be indulgent; being indulgent, they will forget [*wang<sup>b</sup>*] goodness, and if they forget goodness, the heart/mind of evil will grow. . . . Where the soil is poor, all the people direct themselves toward *yi<sup>a</sup>*; this is due to their having been worked hard.

(*KY* 5/8a.11-8b.2)

The contrast in this passage between *ssu<sup>b</sup>* and forgetting goodness shows that *ssu<sup>b</sup>* is a matter of directing attention to goodness and keeping it in mind. Furthermore, since working the people hard is supposed to lead to *ssu<sup>b</sup>* and also to people's directing themselves to *yi<sup>a</sup>*, *ssu<sup>b</sup>* is also a matter of directing oneself to *yi<sup>a</sup>*. Thus, the passage makes the similar point that *ssu<sup>b</sup>* directed toward goodness or *yi<sup>a</sup>* is crucial to one's becoming good.

To return to **6A:15**, that passage contrasts the heart/mind with the senses by saying that the former *ssu<sup>b</sup>* whereas the latter do not. The senses are described as *pu ssu<sup>b</sup> erh pi yü<sup>a</sup> wu<sup>a</sup>, wu<sup>a</sup> chiao wu<sup>a</sup>, tse yin chih<sup>g</sup> erh yi yi* (not *ssu<sup>b</sup>* and are exhausted/obscured by things; when things come into contact with things, they draw them along and that is it). Commentators generally agree in taking *pi yü<sup>a</sup> wu<sup>a</sup>* to mean the senses are *pi* with regard to their ideal objects, *wu<sup>a</sup> chiao wu<sup>a</sup>* to mean such ideal objects come into contact with the senses, and *yin chih<sup>g</sup>* to mean the former pull the latter along.<sup>28</sup> The interpretation of *pi* is controversial. Chu Hsi (*YL* 1415) takes it to mean "being obscured" or "blinded," and Wang Fu-chih (705-6) "in its entirety" (cf. *LY* 2.2) in the sense that the operation of the senses lies entirely in their relation to sense objects.

The question we need to address is the difference between the heart/mind and the senses, which **6A:15** describes in terms of the difference between *ssu<sup>b</sup>* and not *ssu<sup>b</sup>*. One proposal is to take the contrast as one between the different ways the heart/mind and the senses move one to act. The operation of the senses is spontaneous in that when confronted by their ideal objects, they are moved to pursue these objects without deliberation. This spontaneity may be shared by the operation of the heart/mind, since the responses of the heart/mind described in such passages as **2A:6** and **3A:5** are also spontaneous in this sense. However, the operation of the senses is also automatic in that having been so moved, they lead the person to pursue the ideal objects unless the heart/mind intervenes. This is un-

like the operation of the heart/mind. Even if the heart/mind reacts spontaneously with compassion, this does not automatically lead to action. Instead, the person has to deliberate and, having decided to act on the reaction, put that decision into practice. Thus, the senses will lead to one's doing certain things without one's having to do anything to make this possible, whereas the heart/mind will lead to one's doing certain things only after one has actively done something, namely, having deliberated and decided.<sup>29</sup>

This proposal has some plausibility, although it needs to be qualified. Consider, for example, the reaction of compassion described in **1A:7**, which pertains to the heart/mind. Having reacted with compassion for the ox, King Hsüan did not have to engage in deliberation before actually sparing the ox. On the contrary, his sparing the ox immediately followed the reaction of compassion; the thought about the need to consecrate the bell only came into play later, leading him to substitute a lamb. Likewise, in the example of rejecting food described in **6A:10**, one gets the impression that rejection of the food is supposed to follow immediately upon one's regarding it as below oneself to accept the food, without deliberating about whether to act on the reaction. Thus, it seems that the operation of the heart/mind can be as automatic as that of the senses, and hence that the contrast between the two has to be located elsewhere.

The difference between them is perhaps that when the senses come into contact with their ideal objects, they are pulled along by the objects and have neither the capacity to reflect on the propriety of the course of action nor the capacity to refrain from being pulled along, even when the pursuit is improper. Being pulled along by the ideal objects that they come into contact with is the only way the senses operate, and this provides an interpretation of *wu<sup>a</sup> chiao wu<sup>a</sup> tse yin chih<sup>g</sup> erh yi yi* (when things come into contact with things, they draw them along and that is it). Thus, the senses do not *ssu<sup>b</sup>* in that they lack the capacity to reflect on what is proper, and they are obscured by external things or have their operation lying entirely in their relation to external things (*pi yü<sup>a</sup> wu<sup>a</sup>*) in that when confronted by their ideal objects, they are just pulled along by such objects without further reflection.

By contrast, although the heart/mind can have spontaneous reactions that automatically lead to action without further deliberation, it also has the capacity to intervene. It can reflect on what is proper, and when it regards a course of action issuing from its own reaction as improper, it has the capacity to halt that course of action. Hence, one main difference between the heart/mind and the senses is that only the former has the capacity to reflect on what is proper and to regulate one's action accordingly. Another

difference has to do with the relation of the heart/mind and the senses to their respective ideal objects. Unlike the senses, which attain their ideal objects by being pulled along when they come into contact with them, the heart/mind attains its ideal object,  $yi^a$ , only through  $ssu^b$ , which involves actually directing attention to and seeking  $yi^a$ .

This interpretation of the difference between the heart/mind and the senses fits the earlier proposal that  $ssu^b$  is the activity of directing attention to and seeking  $yi^a$ ; the capacity to engage in this activity is distinctive of the heart/mind and absent from the senses. In what way, then, does one go about directing attention to and seeking  $yi^a$ ? We have seen that  $ssu^b$  is linked to  $ch'iu$  (seek), and in §4.4.3 we also saw that Mencius's disagreement with the first half of Kao Tzu's maxim in 2A:2 implies  $yi^a$  is to be sought ( $ch'iu$ ) in the heart/mind. This makes it likely that  $ssu^b$  also involves directing attention to and seeking  $yi^a$  in the heart/mind. If this is correct, then  $ssu^b$  probably has to do with the process of self-reflection described earlier, which is a process guided by the ethical predispositions of the heart/mind. However, given the relatively few references to  $ssu^b$  in the text, it is not possible to provide more compelling evidence for this interpretation of  $ssu^b$ , although it fits with the rest of Mencius's thinking.

### 5.2.2 THE PROCESS OF SELF-CULTIVATION

Having discovered a direction of change through self-reflection, one still has to act to change oneself in that direction. There is little description in the *Meng-tzu* of this self-cultivation process, but there are at least two relevant passages. One is the part of 2A:2 describing the way to nurture the flood-like  $ch'i^a$ , and the other is 4A:27, which concerns the role of joy in the development of  $jen^a$  and  $yi^a$ .

In 2A:2, the flood-like  $ch'i^a$  is said to shrivel up if not properly related to  $yi^a$  and if one's conduct is dissatisfying to the heart/mind or if it does not measure up to its standards. Hence, self-cultivation involves acting in accordance with  $yi^a$ , which, given Mencius's view that the heart/mind takes pleasure in  $yi^a$ , is also to act in a way that is satisfying to the heart/mind.<sup>30</sup> Mencius also described the flood-like  $ch'i^a$  as being born of  $chi\ yi^a$  (accumulating  $yi^a$ ) rather than being appropriated by  $yi^a\ hsi$  ( $yi^a$  attacking).

There are at least three common interpretations of the contrast between  $chi\ yi^a$  and  $yi^a\ hsi$ . The first takes it to be a contrast between deriving  $yi^a$  from the heart/mind and acquiring  $yi^a$  from sources independent of the heart/mind. The second takes it to be a contrast between acting in accordance with  $yi^a$  while being fully inclined to so act and forcing oneself to act in accordance with  $yi^a$  against one's

inclinations. The third takes it to be a contrast between regularly and persistently acting in accordance with  $yi^a$  and sporadically acting in accordance with  $yi^a$ . Many commentators, including Chao Ch'i (C), Chang Shih, Huang Tsung-hsi (1/16a.6-b.7, 1/18a), Sun Shih, and Wang Fuchih (540), relate the contrast to the distinction between treating  $yi^a$  as internal and treating it as external, but it is often not clear from their explanations of the contrast whether they endorse the first interpretation or the second. Chu Hsi (MTCC, YL 1259-63), on the other hand, proposes the third interpretation, one endorsed by Hsü Fu-kuan and several translators, including Chai and Chai, Dobson, Giles, Lau, Legge, and Lyall.<sup>31</sup> There are also less common interpretations; for example, Yü Yüeh (MTTI) takes the contrast to be one between  $ch'i^a$  being guided by  $yi^a$  and  $yi^a$  being made subordinate to  $ch'i^a$ . As far as I can tell, there is insufficient textual evidence to adjudicate the issue.

Mencius continued in the passage under discussion to describe the self-cultivation process by saying *pi yu shih<sup>a</sup> yen erh wu cheng<sup>b</sup> hsin<sup>a</sup> wu wang<sup>b</sup> wu chu chang yeh*. This is followed by the story about the farmer from Sung who tried to help his grain seedlings grow by pulling on them and then by a criticism of those who abandon self-cultivation and those who force or help it grow. *Pi yu shih<sup>a</sup> yen* is taken by most commentators, including Chu Hsi (MTCC), Chang Shih, and Hsü Ch'ien, to mean that one should regularly devote oneself to practicing  $yi^a$ .<sup>32</sup> *Wu cheng<sup>b</sup>* or *wu cheng<sup>b</sup> hsin<sup>a</sup>*, depending on punctuation, has been interpreted by some, such as Ch'eng Ming-tao as reported by Huang Tsung-hsi (1/17a.8-b.3), to mean not consciously aiming at the desired result, presumably because doing so might undermine one's efforts. Others, such as Chu Hsi (MTCC; MTHW 3/5a.6-12), take it to mean not expecting the result to come quickly; otherwise, one either does not devote effort because one expects the result to come of its own accord, or one devotes some effort and then gives up or forces the process when the result does not come immediately.<sup>33</sup>

It is likely that *cheng<sup>b</sup>* concerns some kind of overeagerness that undermines one's efforts. In the line under consideration, *pi yu shih<sup>a</sup>* appears to be paired with (*hsin<sup>a</sup>*) *wu wang<sup>b</sup>*, and *wu cheng<sup>b</sup> (hsin<sup>a</sup>)* with *wu chu chang*. Since *chu chang* (help grow) is illustrated by the story about the farmer from Sung, which concerns overeagerness that undermines one's efforts, it is likely that *cheng<sup>b</sup>* also concerns such overeagerness. *Hsin<sup>a</sup> wu wang<sup>b</sup>* or *wu wang<sup>b</sup>*, depending on punctuation, is generally taken to mean keeping in mind and not letting one's efforts lapse (e.g., Chu Hsi, MTCC), and *wu chu chang* to mean not forcing the process out of overeagerness about the desired result (e.g., Huang Tsung-hsi, 1/17a.3).

The emphasis in 2A:2 on the need to keep in mind the goal of ethical development and to be persistent in one's efforts is found in other passages. For example, 6A:9 criticizes a ruler for lack of devotion and persistence, and 7B:21 observes that lack of persistence can retard one's progress. As for the dangers of overeagerness, it is not entirely clear from 2A:2 how overeagerness can undermine one's efforts. In suggesting that one who is overeager may give up efforts when the desired result does not come immediately, Chu Hsi is probably drawing upon an implication of 6A:18, which says that *jen*<sup>a</sup> winning out over the lack of *jen*<sup>a</sup> is like water winning out over fire. Those who practiced *jen*<sup>a</sup> in Mencius's time were criticized for insufficient efforts: having failed to extinguish a cartload of burning firewood with a cupful of water, they said that water cannot overcome fire. What it means for *jen*<sup>a</sup> to win out over the lack of *jen*<sup>a</sup> is subject to different interpretations; it can be a matter of one's practicing *jen*<sup>a</sup> to overcome one's own lack of *jen*<sup>a</sup> or, as Huang Tsung-hsi (2/69a.3-7) reads it, a matter of a ruler's practicing *jen*<sup>a</sup> to win over other rulers who lack *jen*<sup>a</sup>. Whichever interpretation we adopt, the passage emphasizes that practicing *jen*<sup>a</sup> requires persistence, and that overeagerness about the result can lead to one's abandoning the effort when the desired result does not come immediately.

However, although it fits with 6A:18, Chu Hsi's proposal does not quite fit the point of the story in 2A:2 about the farmer from Sung; in that story, the detrimental effect is due to overdoing things rather than lack of persistence. Another way of understanding the detrimental effect of overeagerness is that it is consciously aiming at the result that undermines one's efforts. For example, an aspiring concert pianist has to keep that overall goal in mind, but consciously aiming at this goal while practicing could divert one's attention in a way that hinders progress. Similarly, one engaged in self-cultivation has to keep in mind the overall goal of ethical improvement, but consciously aiming at this goal in dealings with people may prevent one from acquiring the genuine concern for others that is part of the goal. Still another way of understanding the detrimental effect of overeagerness is suggested by the story about the farmer from Sung, in which the plants suffer from his forcing their growth. This suggests the possibility that even in self-cultivation, one has to edge into the desired way of life gradually, and that proceeding too fast can have a detrimental effect.<sup>34</sup> Although these two proposals are compatible with Mencius's overall thinking, there is insufficient textual evidence for adjudicating between them.

Passage 4A:27 describes serving parents and obeying elder brothers as the *shih*<sup>b</sup> of *jen*<sup>a</sup> and *yi*<sup>a</sup>. Some interpret *shih*<sup>b</sup> to

mean "fruit," as when it is combined with *hua* (flowering) in *hua shih*<sup>b</sup> (Chu Hsi, MTHW; YL 1333; Sun Shih). Others interpret it to mean the "real substance," in contrast to *ming*<sup>b</sup> (name, reputation; Chiao Hsün), or what is concrete, in contrast to *hsü* (abstract; Huang Tsung-hsi, 2/20a.7-21a.1). The *shih*<sup>b</sup> of *chih*<sup>b</sup> (wisdom) and of *li*<sup>a</sup> (rites) are explained in terms of knowing without discarding and adorning "these two things." The two things referred to can be *jen*<sup>a</sup> and *yi*<sup>a</sup>, or serving parents and obeying elder brothers. The latter interpretation is adopted by most commentators, including Chao Ch'i (C), Chiao Hsün, Chu Hsi (MTCC), and Wang Fu-chih (616), and it is more likely in light of the parallel between the reference in 4A:27 to knowing "these two things" and the reference in 7A:15 to knowing to love one's parents and to respect one's elder brothers.

This passage goes on to explain the *shih*<sup>b</sup> of joy/music (*le/yüeh*) in terms of taking joy in "these two things," and it is said that *le tse sheng*<sup>a</sup> *yi*, *sheng*<sup>a</sup> *tse wu*<sup>b</sup> *k'o yi yeh*, *wu*<sup>b</sup> *k'o yi tse*. . . . "Le tse sheng<sup>a</sup> yi" has been taken by some translators (e.g., Lau, Yang Po-chün) and commentators (e.g., Wang Fu-chih, 616) to mean "joy arises"; they presumably take "le" to be the subject of "sheng<sup>a</sup>." But the occurrences of "tse" in the next two clauses have the meaning of "if/when . . . , then . . . ," as these translators also acknowledge, and this favors reading the "tse" between "le" and "sheng<sup>a</sup>" similarly. Furthermore, "sheng<sup>a</sup>" in "sheng<sup>a</sup> tse wu<sup>b</sup> k'o yi yeh" probably refers back to "sheng<sup>a</sup>" in "le tse sheng<sup>a</sup> yi," the latter being used verbally. This favors taking "le" in "le tse sheng<sup>a</sup> yi" verbally, referring back to one's taking joy in "these two things" ("le ssu erh che"). For this reason, I am inclined to interpret "le tse sheng<sup>a</sup> yi" as saying that when one takes joy in "these two things," they will grow (cf. Chu Hsi, MTCC); furthermore, when they grow, they become irrepressible.

Earlier, I gave reasons for taking "these two things" to refer to serving parents and obeying elder brothers. That serving parents and obeying elder brothers are the two things that are supposed to grow gains support from the fact that these are the *shih*<sup>b</sup> of *jen*<sup>a</sup> and *yi*<sup>a</sup>, and 7B:31 refers to *shih*<sup>b</sup> as something to be expanded or to be developed (*ch'ung*). However, whatever the referents of "these two things" may be, the passage implies that as one takes joy in the self-cultivation process, dispositions toward *jen*<sup>a</sup> and *yi*<sup>a</sup> will grow and become irrepressible.<sup>35</sup> That one will come to take joy in the self-cultivation process fits with Mencius's belief that human beings share a disposition to take pleasure in *yi*<sup>a</sup>, and one's taking joy will presumably involve at least being appropriately inclined and no longer having to force oneself to do such things.<sup>36</sup>

It is sometimes suggested that Mencius also believed that when one acts without the proper feelings and has to force oneself to act in accordance with *yi*<sup>a</sup>, this can be harmful to self-cultivation. A number of considerations might be cited in this connection. First, Mencius said in **2A:2** that the flood-like *ch'i*<sup>a</sup> shrivels up when one's actions are dissatisfying to one's heart/mind, and this may be interpreted to mean that acting against one's inclinations is harmful to self-cultivation.<sup>37</sup> Second, **4A:27** may be interpreted as saying that only action in which one takes pleasure contributes to self-cultivation. Third, Mencius's objection to forcing self-cultivation or helping it grow may be interpreted as making the point that doing what is proper against one's inclinations can have a detrimental effect on the process.<sup>38</sup> Fourth, Mencius's objection to treating *yi*<sup>a</sup> as external may be interpreted as an objection to doing what is proper contrary to one's inclinations.<sup>39</sup> Finally, the distinction in **4B:19** between acting out of *jen*<sup>a</sup> *yi*<sup>a</sup> (*yu jen*<sup>a</sup> *yi*<sup>a</sup> *hsing*) and putting *jen*<sup>a</sup> *yi*<sup>a</sup> into practice (*hsing jen*<sup>a</sup> *yi*<sup>a</sup>) may be interpreted as a distinction between doing what is proper while being so inclined and forcing oneself to do what is proper, with Mencius opposing the latter.<sup>40</sup>

This is an interesting suggestion, although I suspect the textual evidence is inconclusive. Concerning the first consideration, the remark in **2A:2** that acting in a way dissatisfying to the heart/mind causes *ch'i*<sup>a</sup> to shrivel up can be interpreted as saying that improper action, rather than proper action against one's inclinations, is harmful to self-cultivation.<sup>41</sup> This alternative interpretation gains support from Mencius's comment in the same passage that *ch'i*<sup>a</sup> will shrivel up if not properly related to *yi*<sup>a</sup>. As for the second consideration, it is not clear that **4A:27** carries the implication it is thought to have. The passage can be interpreted as saying that although one initially has to force oneself to do what is proper, one can, through regularly so acting, come to take joy in such behavior; when this happens, one's disposition to so act will grow and become irrepensible.<sup>42</sup> As for the third consideration, we have seen that **2A:2** does not contain enough details to adjudicate the different interpretations of the observation that overeagerness in self-cultivation can be detrimental to the process. The fourth consideration assumes an interpretation of the internality/externality of *yi*<sup>a</sup> that I gave reasons for rejecting in §4.3.3. The fifth consideration concerns **4B:19**, which I will discuss further below. At this point, in light of the fact that the context of the passage concerns the sage-king Shun, we can at least say that Mencius's advocacy of acting out of *jen*<sup>a</sup> *yi*<sup>a</sup> as opposed to putting *jen*<sup>a</sup> *yi*<sup>a</sup> into practice probably has to do with his conception of how a person should ideally act, rather than with how a person should act in the process of self-cultivation. Given the inconclusiveness of the textual

evidence, I will refrain from ascribing to Mencius the view that acting in accordance with *yi*<sup>a</sup> without the proper feelings can be harmful, while leaving it open that Mencius might have held such a view.

### 5.2.3 CH'I<sup>A</sup> (VITAL ENERGIES) AND THE BODY IN SELF-CULTIVATION

In discussing the idea of nourishing *ch'i*<sup>a</sup> in **2A:2**, we saw that Mencius regarded self-cultivation as affecting not just the heart/mind but also *ch'i*<sup>a</sup>. There is evidence that he also regarded self-cultivation as affecting the body.<sup>43</sup> Passage **4A:15** concerns how the way one is cannot be hidden (*shou*) from those who observe one's words and eyes. Commentators (e.g., Chao Ch'i, C; Chu Hsi, MTCC) agree in taking "shou" to mean "hide" (cf. *LY* 2.10) and take the passage to say that the condition of one's heart/mind cannot be hidden when others listen to one's words and observe the pupils of one's eyes. Chu Hsi (MTCC) and Chang Shih make the additional point that although one can put on a pretense in speech, one cannot do so with the pupils of one's eyes.

Passage **7A:21** concerns how the ethical attributes are manifested in one's physical form—*jen*<sup>a</sup>, *yi*<sup>a</sup>, *li*<sup>a</sup>, and *chih*<sup>b</sup> are rooted in one's heart/mind and manifest themselves in one's face, back, and the four limbs; of the four limbs, it is said that there is "understanding without speaking." Commentators agree that the mention of the four limbs refers to one's outward conduct, but they disagree about the interpretation of the reference to "understanding without speaking." Chao Ch'i (C) takes it to mean that even if one does not speak, others will understand one's four limbs in the sense of understanding the way one conducts oneself. Chu Hsi (MTCC; YL 1444) takes it to mean that one's four limbs can understand one's intentions, even though one does not speak and issue orders to the four limbs. Yü Yüeh (MTPI) objects to Chu Hsi's interpretation on the grounds that what Chu Hsi takes to be the meaning of "understanding without speaking" is true of everyone and has nothing specifically to do with the ethical attributes. He also rejects the alternative proposal that others can understand one's four limbs without the four limbs speaking, on the ground that the four limbs cannot speak. His own proposal is to emend the text to eliminate the reference to the four limbs. Yü Yüeh's objection against Chu Hsi's interpretation might not have force, since Chu Hsi's point might well concern the effortlessness of the ethical conduct of someone with the ethical attributes (the four limbs move properly without one's having to make an effort), which is the way Chang Shih interprets the passage. But Chao Ch'i's interpretation is also possible, and there seems insufficient textual evidence to adjudicate between these



interpretations. Still, whichever interpretation we adopt, the passage implies that the ethical attributes are manifested in one's body.

Mencius's view of self-cultivation as affecting the body as well as *ch'i<sup>a</sup>* can also be seen from 7A:36, where he said that one's dwelling can affect one's *ch'i<sup>a</sup>*, whereas nourishment can affect one's body (*t'i*). The same is said to be true of the loftiest dwelling in the empire, where "the loftiest dwelling" probably refers to *jen<sup>a</sup>*—3B:2 refers to "the loftiest dwelling" in an ethical context, and 4A:10 and 7A:33 (cf. 2A:7) refer to one's dwelling in *jen<sup>a</sup>*. Here, again, the passage concerns how one's ethical qualities affect not just the heart/mind but also *ch'i<sup>a</sup>* and the body.<sup>44</sup> Since 2A:2 describes *ch'i<sup>a</sup>* as what fills the body and as something guided by and supporting *chih<sup>c</sup>*, the directions of the heart/mind, *ch'i<sup>a</sup>* probably serves as the aspect of the person that mediates between the heart/mind and the body.<sup>45</sup>

In what way, then, does self-cultivation make a difference to *ch'i<sup>a</sup>* and the body? In recent writings, Yang Rur-bin has made the interesting proposal that just as self-cultivation involves one's realizing a direction of development implicit in the heart/mind, it also involves realizing a direction of development implicit in *ch'i<sup>a</sup>* and in the body.<sup>46</sup> In support of this proposal, Yang points to the parallel in 6A:8 between Mencius's view of *ch'i<sup>a</sup>* and his view of the heart/mind, as well as the comment in 7A:38 that only the sage can *chien<sup>b</sup>* (tread on, enact) *hsing<sup>b</sup>* (shape, physical form). To assess this proposal, I consider the two passages in turn.

Passage 6A:8 observes in connection with one's *ch'i<sup>a</sup>* in the early morning that there is a "slight element" in its likes and dislikes that is common to human beings and that failing to preserve one's *ch'i<sup>a</sup>* in the night leaves one not far removed from lower animals. The reference to *ch'i<sup>a</sup>* in the early morning and in the night probably serves to emphasize the condition of *ch'i<sup>a</sup>* when free from the influence of ordinary human endeavors, just as the reference in 2A:6 to the suddenness of one's seeing a child on the verge of falling into a well emphasizes the condition of the heart/mind when free from such influences. Also, the reference to the "slight element" common to the *ch'i<sup>a</sup>* of human beings, whose loss leaves one close to lower animals, parallels the reference in 4B:19 to the "slight element" that distinguishes human beings from lower animals and that the superior person preserves. These parallels show that, for Mencius, just as the human heart/mind has certain ethical predispositions that are most conspicuous when one is free from the influence of ordinary human endeavors and that should be preserved and nourished, the *ch'i<sup>a</sup>* of human beings also has a shared element that is most conspicuous when one is free

from such influences and that should be preserved and nourished.<sup>47</sup> So, there is evidence for Yang's observation that self-cultivation involves developing *ch'i<sup>a</sup>* in a direction already implicit in it, an observation that also gains support from Mencius's use of the vegetative analogy in 2A:2 and 6A:8 in talking about the growth of *ch'i<sup>a</sup>*.

To turn to 7A:38, Chao Ch'i (C) takes "chien<sup>b</sup>" to mean "reside in" and "chien<sup>b</sup> hsing<sup>b</sup>" to refer to the ethical attributes residing in one's physical form. On the other hand, Chu Hsi (MTCC; MTHW; YL 1451-52) rejects Chao's reading and takes "chien<sup>b</sup>" to mean "fulfill," as in "chien<sup>b</sup> yen" (to fulfill one's words); citing Ch'eng I with approval, he takes "chien<sup>b</sup> hsing<sup>b</sup>" to refer to one's filling up (*ch'ung*) one's physical form (*hsing<sup>b</sup>*) by exhausting its pattern (*li<sup>c</sup>*). Chang Shih's interpretation is similar to Chu's; he understands "chien<sup>b</sup> hsing<sup>b</sup>" as following and exhausting the pattern (*li<sup>c</sup>*) of one's physical form. Yang correctly points out that Chao Ch'i's interpretation is compatible with regarding one's physical form as ethically neutral and as something that the ethical attributes just happen to reside in, unlike Chu Hsi's interpretation, which regards one's physical form as having an ethical dimension whose fulfillment depends on the ethical attributes. Without committing himself to Chu Hsi's views about pattern (*li<sup>c</sup>*), Yang favors an interpretation that regards one's physical form as having an ethical dimension whose fulfillment depends on the ethical attributes.

These two interpretations can also be found among other commentators and translators. Some interpret "chien<sup>b</sup> hsing<sup>b</sup>" to involve giving completion or fulfillment to one's physical form. For example, Tai Chen (no. 29) takes "chien<sup>b</sup>" in "chien<sup>b</sup> hsing<sup>b</sup>" to mean "fulfill" (as in "chien<sup>b</sup> yen"). Lau translates "chien<sup>b</sup> hsing<sup>b</sup>" as "give his body complete fulfillment," and Lyall as "attain his full shape." Some interpret "chien<sup>b</sup> hsing<sup>b</sup>" to involve living up to or satisfying the design of the physical form. For example, Chai and Chai translate "chien<sup>b</sup> hsing<sup>b</sup>" as "conform to the design of his stature," Legge renders it as "satisfy the design of his bodily organization," and Ware has "live up to the stature." Since these commentators and translators take the ethical attributes to be necessary to completing one's physical form or living up to its design, presumably they regard the physical form as having an ethical dimension. By contrast, other commentators and translators regard the physical form as by itself neutral, although use is made of it in self-cultivation. For example, Wang En-yang takes "chien<sup>b</sup> hsing<sup>b</sup>" to refer to residing in or making use of one's physical form to put the Way into practice, and Chan translates it as "put his physical form into full use," and Dobson as "properly manipulate (the functions of the body)."

An examination of the use of “chien<sup>b</sup>” by itself does not suffice to adjudicate the issue. The *Shuo-wen* explains “chien<sup>b</sup>” as “li<sup>d</sup>” (tread), and “li<sup>d</sup>” as where the foot treads. Since there may or may not be a direction or design that the foot follows in treading a path, this explanation of “chien<sup>b</sup>” leaves open the question whether *chien<sup>b</sup> hsing<sup>b</sup>* involves following a direction of development or fitting a design that one’s physical form already has. “Chien<sup>b</sup>” is used in both ways in early texts. Sometimes, what one *chien<sup>b</sup>* need not have a direction that one follows or a design that one fits, as in references to treading (*chien<sup>b</sup>*) a certain place (*KY* 19/10b.2) or to the fact that the hooves of horses can tread (*chien<sup>b</sup>*) snow (*CT* 9/1). Sometimes, to *chien<sup>b</sup>* something involves following certain directions or fitting certain designs; examples include acting on (*chien<sup>b</sup>*) one’s words (*LC* 1/2a.4-5), enacting (*chien<sup>b</sup>*) *te<sup>a</sup>* (virtue, power) (*KY* 3/2a.1), and following (*chien<sup>b</sup>*) certain given paths (*LY* 11.20). And sometimes, although what one *chien<sup>b</sup>* may have a certain direction or design, to *chien<sup>b</sup>* the thing need not imply that one follows that direction or fits that design. For example, to *chien<sup>b</sup>* an official position involves one’s occupying a position with given responsibilities, without necessarily implying that one fulfills such responsibilities (e.g., *TC* 159/14; *KY* 17/2b.1). This is the way *chien<sup>b</sup>* is used in **5A:5** of the *Meng-tzu*, which refers to Shun’s occupying (*chien<sup>b</sup>*) the position of ruler. Thus, as far as the use of *chien<sup>b</sup>* by itself is concerned, it does not favor any of the interpretations of **7A:38** over the others.

Interestingly, however, a parallel in **5A:5** throws light on **7A:38**. Passage **5A:5** says that it was only after the people had responded to Shun in certain ways following Yao’s death that Shun came to occupy the position of ruler. The context implies that certain conditions have to be met before it is appropriate for someone to occupy (*chien<sup>b</sup>*) the position of ruler, even if it does not imply that the person will actually fulfill the responsibilities associated with that position. Now, **7A:38** says that it is only after one has become a sage that one can *chien<sup>b</sup>* one’s physical form. Again, the context implies that only by meeting certain conditions associated with one’s physical form, which the reference to sageness shows to be ethical conditions, is it appropriate for one to *chien<sup>b</sup>* one’s physical form. As I will show in §6.3.2, the use of “k’o yi” (capable, possible) in connection with *chien<sup>b</sup> hsing<sup>b</sup>* also carries the implication that certain conditions have to be met for it to be possible or appropriate for one to *chien<sup>b</sup>* one’s physical form.

These observations show that Mencius probably regarded the physical form as having some kind of ethical dimension, although the passage by itself leaves it open how we spell out this ethical dimension—whether the physical form has a

certain design that the sage fits or a direction of development that the sage realizes. In §2.1.2, we discussed two ideas in connection with the political thought of the *Lun-yü*. One is the idea of *chih<sup>a</sup> jen<sup>b</sup>*, understood in the sense of appreciating the qualities of a person and employing the person on such a basis.<sup>48</sup> The other is the idea that a cultivated person has the power to attract and transform others, and ideally this power should provide the basis for government. Both ideas are related to the idea that one’s ethical qualities are inevitably manifested in one’s physical form—it is because they are so manifested that they can be discerned by others and can have a transformative effect. And since a cultivated person has such a transformative effect, it follows that the effect of self-cultivation extends beyond one’s own person.

This idea can be found in some passages in the *Meng-tzu*. For example, the comment in **2A:2** that the flood-like *ch’i<sup>a</sup>* one cultivates is vast and unyielding and fills the space between Heaven and Earth suggests that the effect of self-cultivation extends beyond the person to the cosmic order.<sup>49</sup> Probably, as Chao Ch’i (C) and Hsü Ch’ien have noted, the reference to “filling the space between Heaven and Earth” has to do in part with the extension of the effect of self-cultivation beyond oneself, including the way a cultivated person deals with everything. In addition, we saw in §3.3 that *ch’i<sup>a</sup>* is viewed in early texts as something whose proper balance is linked to order in both the human and the natural realm, and this view of *ch’i<sup>a</sup>* is probably also at work in this passage. Passages **7A:13** and **7B:25** also describe the transformative power of a cultivated person, and **7A:13** observes that the superior person is “in the same stream as Heaven above and Earth below.” In addition, **4A:12** says that self-cultivation is the basis for the political order, and that *ch’eng* (wholeness, being real) has a transformative power; *ch’eng* is described as the way of *t’ien*, and reflecting on *ch’eng* as the way of human beings (cf. **7A:4**). Probably, the transformative power of a cultivated person is compared to the work of *t’ien* in that, just like *t’ien*, its manner of operation is subtle and indiscernible (cf. **7A:13**), and its effect reaches everything, enabling everything to be nourished and transformed (cf. Chao Ch’i, C; Chu Hsi, MTCC; and Chang Shih, on **7A:13**). To better understand this aspect of Mencius’s thinking, I turn to a discussion of his political thought.

### 5.3 SELF-CULTIVATION AND THE POLITICAL ORDER

Like Confucius, Mencius regarded the transformative power of a cultivated person as the ideal basis for government. If the ruler is *cheng<sup>b</sup>* (correct, rectified), then everyone will be *cheng<sup>b</sup>* and there will be order in human society (**4A:20**; cf. **7A:19**, **4A:4**). And, as in the *Lun-yü*, the *Meng-tzu* discusses various details of government despite the

emphasis on transformative power.<sup>50</sup> Examples include the importance of appointing worthy and able officials (**1B**:7, **2A**:4-5), the need for agriculture so as to provide for the needs of the people (**1A**:3, **1A**:7), the importance of education (**1A**:3, **1A**:7, **3A**:3, **7A**:14; cf. **7A**:20, 40), the proper way to impose taxation (**1A**:5, **2A**:5, **3B**:8) and the regulation of land use (**1B**:5, **3A**:3). The policies of a *jen<sup>a</sup>* (benevolent, humane) government or of a government unable to bear (*pu jen*) the suffering of the people are manifestations of the *jen<sup>a</sup>* heart/mind or of the heart/mind unable to bear the suffering of the people (**2A**:6, **4A**:1). It is important to have not just a *jen<sup>a</sup>* heart/mind but also guidance from the *jen<sup>a</sup>* policies transmitted from the past; on the other hand, properly appropriating such policies requires a *jen<sup>a</sup>* heart/mind and skill (**4A**:1; cf. **7B**:5).

In addition to these ideas, which we have considered in §2.1.2 in connection with the *Lun-yü*, Mencius highlighted three other ideas. First, he spelled out more explicitly the idea that order in society depends on proper attitudes within the family, which in turn depend on cultivating oneself. Passage **7B**:32 links self-cultivation to peace in the empire, and **4A**:11 and **4A**:28 link proper attitudes within the family to peace and order (cf. *LY* 1.2, 8.2). Passage **4A**:5 describes the person as the basis of the family, the family as the basis of the state, and the state as the basis of the empire; a parallel though somewhat different progression is found in **4A**:12.

Second, Mencius stressed that gaining the heart/mind of the people is the basis for legitimate government. Passage **4B**:16 makes the point that becoming a true king depends on gaining the genuine allegiance of the people, which in turn depends on nourishing the people with goodness; **4A**:9 emphasizes that it is by gaining the heart/mind of the people through practicing *jen<sup>a</sup>* government that one succeeds in becoming a true king (cf. **7A**:14, **7B**:14). Accordingly, it is the response of the people that reveals who has the authority from *t'ien* to take up the position of ruler (**5A**:5-6).

Third, Mencius made the point that since people will be drawn to the *jen<sup>a</sup>* ruler, the *jen<sup>a</sup>* ruler will be able to unify the empire, bring peace and order to society, and be without enemies or be invincible. The reference to the *jen<sup>a</sup>* ruler's being *wu ti* (without enemies, invincible) occurs several times (**2A**:5, **3B**:5, **4A**:7, **7B**:3-4); as Ch'en Ta-ch'i has noted, *wu ti* can mean either that such a ruler has no enemies or that such a ruler has no enemies who can stand against him.<sup>51</sup> Mencius sometimes observed that by gaining the allegiance of the people, the *jen<sup>a</sup>* ruler will be *wu ti* in the sense of not confronting any hostility (e.g., **1A**:5). Yet at times he also spoke of how the *jen<sup>a</sup>* ruler, if forced to fight,

will inevitably win (e.g., **2B**:1); according to him, no one can resist a ruler with the allegiance of the people (**1A**:6-7, **2A**:1), and victory will require little effort when the *jen<sup>a</sup>* ruler wages war against a ruler who is not *jen<sup>a</sup>* (**7B**:3). Probably, Mencius regarded the *jen<sup>a</sup>* ruler as *wu ti* in both senses. On the one hand, the *jen<sup>a</sup>* ruler enjoys the allegiance of the people and, ideally, is *wu ti* in the sense of not confronting any hostility. On the other hand, a few corrupt rulers may try to oppose the *jen<sup>a</sup>* ruler; since the *jen<sup>a</sup>* ruler has the allegiance of the people, he will easily defeat such opposition and be *wu ti*.

In his attempt to motivate rulers to practice *jen<sup>a</sup>* government, Mencius often appealed to the idea that practicing *jen<sup>a</sup>* will enable one to be without enemies or to be invincible and as a result become a true king. This is understandable given the political realities of his time—the consequences that he ascribed to *jen<sup>a</sup>* are exactly those that rulers aspired to. He also related *jen<sup>a</sup>* to honor (*jung*) and lack of *jen<sup>a</sup>* to disgrace (*ju<sup>b</sup>*) or disdain (*ch'ih*) (e.g., **2A**:4, **2A**:7, **4A**:7, **4A**:9), presumably because *jen<sup>a</sup>* leads to commanding others' allegiance, which is a position of honor, whereas the lack of *jen<sup>a</sup>* results in subordination to others, which is a disgraceful or disdained position. In addition, to motivate rulers to practice *jen<sup>a</sup>* government, he also pointed out that people will reciprocate the ruler's treatment of them. People will respond with love and reverence to being treated with love and reverence and will take joy in the ruler's joys if the ruler takes joy in their joys (**1B**:4, **4B**:28). Conversely, if the ruler treats his subordinates and the people harshly, they will regard him as an enemy (**4B**:3, **7B**:7).<sup>52</sup>

References to the political advantage of *jen<sup>a</sup>* government also occur in **1A**:1 and **6B**:4, which contrast *jen<sup>a</sup> yi<sup>a</sup>* with *li<sup>b</sup>* (profit, benefit). In these two passages, Mencius said to King Hui and Sung K'eng that a concern with *li<sup>b</sup>* in government can lead to disastrous consequences for a state, whereas a concern with *jen<sup>a</sup> yi<sup>a</sup>* has desirable consequences. Certain aspects of the passages may suggest that Mencius was advocating the use of *jen<sup>a</sup> yi<sup>a</sup>* rather than *li<sup>b</sup>* as a slogan in politics—in **1A**:1, he urged King Hui to talk about *jen<sup>a</sup> yi<sup>a</sup>* rather than *li<sup>b</sup>*, and in **6B**:4, he again urged Sung K'eng not to talk to the kings of Ch'in and Ch'u about *li<sup>b</sup>*. This has led some commentators, such as Chao Ch'i (C **1A**:1; CC **1A**:1, **6B**:4), Chiao Hsün (**1A**:1), and Sun Shih (**1A**:1), to take Mencius as concerned primarily with what slogans to use in politics.

However, although in **1A**:1 Mencius started by describing a situation in which everyone from the ruler down talks about *li<sup>b</sup>*, he went on to discuss what happens when everyone from the ruler down actually seeks *li<sup>b</sup>*. Likewise, in **6B**:4, he discussed the consequences of everyone taking

pleasure in or being moved by (*yüeh<sup>b</sup>*) *jen<sup>a</sup>* *yi<sup>a</sup>* as opposed to *li<sup>b</sup>*.<sup>53</sup> His concern was probably not just with slogans but also with practices in government. His urging King Hui and Sung K'eng not to talk about *li<sup>b</sup>* probably stemmed from his views on the serious consequences of what one talks about—**3B:9** and **6A:1** refer to the disastrous consequences of the teachings of Yang Chu, Mo Tzu, and Kao Tzu, and **2A:2** and **3B:9** discuss the disastrous consequences of faulty teachings. In the two passages under consideration, he probably thought that King Hui's stress on *li<sup>b</sup>* would lead those in lower positions to become obsessed with *li<sup>b</sup>*, and Sung K'eng's discussion of *li<sup>b</sup>* would lead the kings of Ch'in and Ch'u to become preoccupied with it.

It may seem puzzling that given Mencius's ascription of political advantage to *jen<sup>a</sup>* government, he should oppose a concern with *li<sup>b</sup>*, especially since both the *Tso-chuan* and the *Kuo-yü*, which often refer to Confucian ideas, describe *yi<sup>a</sup>* as the basis for producing *li<sup>b</sup>* (e.g., *TC* 200/12, 339/10, 391/1, 437/6, 627/14; *KY* 2/1b.9-11, 7/5b.9-10, 8/7b.9-11, 10/8b.5; cf. *KY* 3/3a.1-2, 3/3b.2). The explanation cannot be that the Confucians always used *li<sup>b</sup>* pejoratively, since it is sometimes used in a positive sense in both the *Lun-yü* (*LY* 20.2) and the *Meng-tzu* (*M* 7A:13) in connection with benefiting the people.<sup>54</sup>

There are a number of possible answers to this question. One suggestion is that although Mencius could have advocated *li<sup>b</sup>* in the respectable sense of benefiting the people, he tended to use the term in a pejorative sense (e.g., *M* 7A:25), because Confucius himself often spoke in a way opposed to *li<sup>b</sup>* (e.g., *LY* 4.16, 14.12) and because he needed to distance himself from the Mohists, who advocated *li<sup>b</sup>*. A second suggestion is that although Mencius was not opposed to *li<sup>b</sup>* that conforms to *yi<sup>a</sup>*, any *li<sup>b</sup>* that follows upon *yi<sup>a</sup>* will come of its own accord as long as one concerns oneself with *yi<sup>a</sup>*, and hence there is no need for one to be concerned with *li<sup>b</sup>*.<sup>55</sup>

A third suggestion is that in the political context, *li<sup>b</sup>* usually refers to such things as military strength or acquiring territories and wealth; according to Chao Ch'i (*C* 1A:1) and Chu Hsi (*MTCC* 1A:1), this was how Mencius understood King Hui's reference to *li<sup>b</sup>*. Since Mencius did not think rulers should be preoccupied with accomplishments of this kind, he avoided the use of *li<sup>b</sup>* in the political context. Wang Ch'ung (100/1-5) criticizes Mencius for unjustifiably construing King Hui's reference to *li<sup>b</sup>* in such terms rather than in terms of the security of the people. But, in light of passages like **6B:9**, it seems likely that what constituted *li<sup>b</sup>* for rulers of that time was indeed this kind of political

accomplishments (cf. Yü Yün-wen, *TMHP* 1/1a.3-2a.2; Hu Yü-huan, **1A:1**).

Finally, another suggestion, related to the previous one, is that advocating *li<sup>b</sup>* in the political context could easily lead rulers and those in office to seek *li<sup>b</sup>* in the partial sense of benefiting one's state, family, or self.<sup>56</sup> This can be seen from **1A:1** in which King Hui of Liang explicitly talked about profiting *his* state and in which Mencius described the king's concern as leading those below him to be concerned with profiting their own families or themselves. This aspect of **1A:1** might even be an implicit criticism of the Mohist advocacy of *li<sup>b</sup>*; that is, talk of *li<sup>b</sup>* in the political context inevitably leads to a partial concern with *li<sup>b</sup>* of the kind that Mo Tzu regarded as the source of disorder.

These are likely explanations of Mencius's opposition to a concern with *li<sup>b</sup>*, despite the political advantage of *jen<sup>a</sup>* government. However, there is another explanation, which can be highlighted by considering a tension between two ways of viewing the relation between *yi<sup>a</sup>* and *li<sup>b</sup>* sometimes found in early texts. For example, in the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*, although *li<sup>b</sup>* is sometimes presented as resulting from *yi<sup>a</sup>* (e.g., *LSCC* 4/10b.7, 19/11b.4-5, 22/4b.1-2; cf. 13/10b.5-7), it is also seen as something that can come into conflict with *yi<sup>a</sup>* (e.g., *LSCC* 11/9b.9-10). One possible resolution of this apparent tension is to say that the *li<sup>b</sup>* that may conflict with *yi<sup>a</sup>* concerns one's partial interest, whereas the *li<sup>b</sup>* that results from *yi<sup>a</sup>* concerns what benefits the public.<sup>57</sup> But another possibility is suggested by an observation in the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* that the petty person aims at *li<sup>b</sup>* and as a result fails to get *li<sup>b</sup>*, and that it is by not aiming at *li<sup>b</sup>* that one can attain *li<sup>b</sup>* (*LSCC* 22/1a.8-1b.1). This observation suggests that even with regard to *li<sup>b</sup>* in the sense of profiting oneself, aiming at *li<sup>b</sup>* can itself undermine the attainment of *li<sup>b</sup>*. Thus, an opposition to a concern with *li<sup>b</sup>* may stem not from anything undesirable about *li<sup>b</sup>* as such but from the view that such a concern can undermine the attainment of its object. This kind of idea is familiar from Taoist texts; it pervades the *Lao-tzu* and is also explicitly found in texts like the *Huai-nan-tzu* (e.g., *HNT* 14/8a.2) and the *Lieh-tzu* (e.g., *LiT* 8/7a.6-8).

To return to Mencius, although he opposed a preoccupation with the kind of political advantage that obsessed the rulers of his time, he did not seem to regard the objects of such concern as undesirable per se. In his conversations with rulers, he pointed out that such objects could be attained if the ruler would practice *jen<sup>a</sup>* government (**1A:7**) and that attaining such things as wealth is not problematic as long as the ruler shares his enjoyment of such things with the people (**1B:5**). Thus, in urging rulers not to be concerned with *li<sup>b</sup>*, Mencius was not saying that there was

something problematic with *li<sup>b</sup>* as such but was making the point that *li<sup>b</sup>* could be attained only by practicing *jen<sup>a</sup> yi<sup>a</sup>* without aiming at *li<sup>b</sup>*. As various commentators, including Chu Hsi (MTCC; MTHW 1/2a.5-2b.5; YL 1218-19), Chang Shih, Hsü Ch'ien, and Su Che, have noted in commenting on 1A:1, Mencius's point was that the object of a ruler's concern can be attained only if he practices *jen<sup>a</sup>* without aiming at such objects.

What the practice of *jen<sup>a</sup>* accomplishes may turn out to be something akin to, but not exactly the same as, what the ruler initially wanted. For example, the ruler might initially desire to be *wu ti* in the sense of having superior military strength, but what *jen<sup>a</sup>* government accomplishes is *wu ti* in the sense of confronting no or minimal hostility. Still, what *jen<sup>a</sup>* government accomplishes is something that a ruler wants and, furthermore, probably something more satisfying to the ruler than the initial objects of his concern.<sup>58</sup> The belief that such consequences follow from the practice of *jen<sup>a</sup>* only if one practices *jen<sup>a</sup>* without aiming at such consequences provides an additional explanation of why Mencius opposed a concern with *li<sup>b</sup>*.

There are other passages implying that the consequences of *jen<sup>a</sup>* follow without one's aiming at such consequences, such as 4A:9, which observes that a ruler who is fond of *jen<sup>a</sup>* cannot fail to become a *wang<sup>a</sup>* even if he does not wish to. Other passages make the stronger claim that attaining the consequences of *jen<sup>a</sup>* depends on not aiming at such consequences, such as 3B:5, which describes people as looking up to T'ang upon realizing that he did not engage in expeditions out of a desire to possess the empire. In addition, 4B:16 and 6A:16 contain statements of such ideas, and 2A:3 and 4B:19 can also be interpreted in terms of these ideas.

Passage 6A:16 concerns not just a ruler seeking to be *wang<sup>a</sup>* but also people seeking official ranks in government. Although the ranks of human beings (official ranks) will come to one if one cultivates the ranks of *t'ien* (the ethical attributes), those who cultivate the ranks of *t'ien* in order to achieve the ranks of human beings will inevitably fail. As various commentators, such as Chu Hsi (MTHW 11/10a.1-5; cf. MTCC), Chang Shih, and Hsü Ch'ien, have noted, Mencius's point is that the ranks of human beings follow upon one's cultivating the ranks of *t'ien*, but only if one is not cultivating the latter as a means to getting the former.

Passage 4B:16 observes that those who rely on goodness to gain others' allegiance (*yi shan fu jen<sup>b</sup>*) cannot succeed in gaining others' allegiance, whereas those who rely on goodness to nourish others (*yi shan yang jen<sup>b</sup>*) will gain the allegiance of the empire and thereby become a true king

(*wang<sup>a</sup>*). Here, the contrast is probably between those who make use of goodness in order to gain others' allegiance and those who are truly good and nourish others without aiming at others' allegiance; only the latter can succeed in gaining others' allegiance (cf. Chang Shih). The point is again that goodness has certain political consequences only when it is not practiced for the purpose of bringing about such consequences.<sup>59</sup>

The contrast between truly practicing *jen<sup>a</sup> yi<sup>a</sup>* and practicing *jen<sup>a</sup> yi<sup>a</sup>* for political advantage provides a possible interpretation of 2A:3, which describes overlords (*pa*) as relying on force and making use of or pretending to practice *jen<sup>a</sup>* (*yi li chia jen<sup>a</sup>*), unlike true kings (*wang<sup>a</sup>*), who rely on *te<sup>a</sup>* and truly practice *jen<sup>a</sup>* (*yi te<sup>a</sup> hsing jen<sup>a</sup>*). The former may try to practice *jen<sup>a</sup>* or even pretend to practice *jen<sup>a</sup>* to achieve political advantage, but they cannot truly gain the allegiance of others. The latter has *te<sup>a</sup>* and practices *jen<sup>a</sup>* without aiming at political advantage and, as a result, can truly gain the allegiance of others. The contrast also provides a possible interpretation of the observation in 4B:19 that Shun acted out of *jen<sup>a</sup> yi<sup>a</sup>* (*yu jen<sup>a</sup> yi<sup>a</sup> hsing*) rather than just putting *jen<sup>a</sup> yi<sup>a</sup>* into practice (*hsing jen<sup>a</sup> yi<sup>a</sup>*). Chu Hsi (MTHW 1/5a.4-9) interprets the observation in this manner, taking it to emphasize that Shun was truly *jen<sup>a</sup> yi<sup>a</sup>* and acted out of it, unlike the overlords who made use of *jen<sup>a</sup> yi<sup>a</sup>* to achieve political advantage. However, there are other equally viable interpretations. For example, it is possible to interpret this observation in terms of the contrast between those who are truly *jen<sup>a</sup> yi<sup>a</sup>* and those who have to force themselves to practice *jen<sup>a</sup> yi<sup>a</sup>* to cultivate themselves (e.g., Chu Hsi, MTCC; YL 1349), the contrast between those who practice *jen<sup>a</sup> yi<sup>a</sup>* without thinking in such terms and those who have a conception of *jen<sup>a</sup> yi<sup>a</sup>* and seek to put it into practice (e.g., Huang Tsung-hsi, 2/32b.1-3), or the contrast between those who fully develop their ethical predispositions to become *jen<sup>a</sup> yi<sup>a</sup>* and those who impose *jen<sup>a</sup> yi<sup>a</sup>* from the outside (e.g., Chiao Hsün; cf. Sun Shih).

It seems clear that Mencius was opposed to practicing *jen<sup>a</sup> yi<sup>a</sup>* for political advantage. There is, however, one passage that seems to conflict with this interpretation. In 7A:30, taking "chih<sup>g</sup>" (it) to refer to *jen<sup>a</sup>* in light of the parallel between "chia chih<sup>g</sup>" in 7A:30 and "chia jen<sup>ab</sup>" in 2A:3, we again find a description of the five overlords as making use of or pretending (*chia*) to practice *jen<sup>a</sup>*. However, the passage goes on to say that if one makes use of or pretends to practice *jen<sup>a</sup>* for long, it cannot be known that one does not have *jen<sup>a</sup>*. Chao Ch'i (C), followed by Chang Shih, Chiao Hsün, Sun Shih, and Yü Yün-wen (TMP 1/15b.8-16b.1; TMHP 2/1b.8-2a.3), takes this last remark to say that one will come to truly have *jen<sup>a</sup>* if one makes use of or pretends

to practice *jen<sup>a</sup>* for long; this reading is adopted by a number of translators, including Lau, Ware, Yang, and possibly Lyall. Chang Shih, Chiao Hsün, and Yü Yün-wen add the qualification that the five overlords were unable to make use of or pretend to practice *jen<sup>a</sup>* for long and so failed to become truly *jen<sup>a</sup>*; Yü Yün-wen adds that Mencius was making the remark in order to encourage rulers to persist in practicing *jen<sup>a</sup>*. But, even with these qualifications, the point that one who makes use of or pretends to practice *jen<sup>a</sup>* for political advantage can come to have *jen<sup>a</sup>* seems to conflict with the point made in other passages that one cannot achieve the political advantage of *jen<sup>a</sup>* if one practices *jen<sup>a</sup>* for such purposes.

It is not clear, however, that the remark in **7A:30** should be interpreted in this manner. Chu Hsi (MTCC; cf. YL 1449) opposes this interpretation and takes the remark to say that if one makes use of or pretends to practice *jen<sup>a</sup>* for long, one or perhaps other people will not realize that one does not really have *jen<sup>a</sup>*. This interpretation is adopted by a number of commentators, including Hsü Ch'ien and Huang Tsung-hsi (2/83b.8-84a.5). As far as I can tell, the passage by itself does not favor one interpretation over the other, although Mencius's opposition in other passages to practicing *jen<sup>a</sup>* for political goals provides some support for Chu Hsi's interpretation.

To complete this discussion of Mencius's political thought, let us turn to his response to a criticism of his conduct in the political context. The *Meng-tzu* contains several examples of his refusing to see a ruler or someone in power because he had not been treated in accordance with *li<sup>a</sup>*. This led to the criticism that if he had only been willing to have audience with those in power despite a breach of *li<sup>a</sup>*, he might have been able to effect desirable political changes and thereby help the people. As we saw in §§3.1.2 and 3.3, Mencius himself acknowledged that *li<sup>a</sup>* can sometimes be overridden by other considerations, and he was also opposed to rigidity in political behavior when criticizing Yi Yin, Liu Hsia Hui, and Po Yi in **5B:1**. And yet it seems that he was himself overly rigid in his insistence on an adherence to *li<sup>a</sup>* in the political realm and put *li<sup>a</sup>* above the well-being of the people. This line of criticism is found in **3B:1**, in which Ch'en Tai asked why Mencius was unwilling to bend a little to achieve desirable political changes, and in **4A:17**, in which Ch'un-yü K'un used the example of a drowning sister-in-law to make the point that Mencius could have saved the empire if only he had overlooked a breach of *li<sup>a</sup>*.

Mencius's response in **3B:1** is that Ch'en Tai was concerned with *li<sup>b</sup>* (profit, benefit) in proposing that one should "bend the foot in order to straighten the yard" in the politi-

cal realm; if *li<sup>b</sup>* is the main consideration, one may as well "bend the yard to straighten the foot." That Mencius should speak of bringing about *li<sup>b</sup>* by "bending the yard to straighten the foot" may seem puzzling, since it would be odd to speak of *li<sup>b</sup>* if one should give up something of greater significance for something of lesser significance. Some have suggested that this was a slip on Mencius's part.<sup>60</sup> Another possibility, however, is that Mencius was referring to gains of a specific kind, and that what is supposed to have been given up, although of a greater significance, does not constitute a gain of this kind.

We saw that when Mencius opposed a concern with *li<sup>b</sup>* in **1A:1** and **6B:4**, *li<sup>b</sup>* was understood in terms of such political advantage as acquiring territories, wealth, and military strength. Given the political context of **3B:1**, Mencius probably took Ch'en Tai to be talking about political advantage of a similar kind in speaking of "bending the foot to straighten the yard." If so, Mencius's reference to *li<sup>b</sup>* was a reference to such political advantage. This proposal gains support from the example of the charioteer in the same passage, which concerns one's bending oneself to enable another to achieve such material gains as catching birds. In this proposal, "bending the yard" refers to subjecting oneself to a humiliating treatment that is comparatively more significant than the political advantage to which "straightening the foot" refers. Since *li<sup>b</sup>* concerns political advantage and since subjecting oneself to humiliating treatment would not have detracted from political advantage if indeed it comes about, it is no longer puzzling to speak of *li<sup>b</sup>* resulting from "bending the yard to straighten the foot."

Still, the question remains why Mencius did not bend himself a little, if his opponents were correct in suggesting that he could have brought about significant political accomplishments by doing so. The answer is that, for Mencius, the only way to benefit the people is to guide rulers to *jen<sup>a</sup>* government rather than to help them acquire territories, wealth, and military strength. But, at the end of **3B:1**, Mencius pointed out that it is not possible to bend oneself and yet straighten (*chih<sup>f</sup>*) others; a similar claim is made in **5A:7** in terms of rectifying (*cheng<sup>b</sup>*) others. Similar ideas are found in the *Lun-yü* and expressed in terms of rectifying (*cheng<sup>b</sup>*) oneself to rectify others (LY 13.13; cf. 12.17, 13.6) as well as using what is straight (*chih<sup>f</sup>*) to straighten what is bent (LY 2.19, 12.22); the notions of rectifying (LY 1.14) and straightening (LY 18.2) are both linked to the Way. Mencius took as his task rectifying (*cheng<sup>b</sup>*) the heart/mind of people (e.g., **3B:9**), and his reference to rectifying or straightening others shows that in the political realm his goal was rectifying the ruler rather than bringing about political accomplishments of the kind that concerned

rulers. According to Mencius, one cannot rectify those in power if one bends oneself, presumably because one would be setting a bad example and also because bending oneself would lead to a lack of the kind of transformative power needed to transform others.

A similar point is made in 4A:17. In §3.1.2 we considered the use of *ch'üan*<sup>b</sup> in connection with the example of the drowning sister-in-law. In mentioning this example, Ch'un-yü K'un was criticizing Mencius's insistence on the observance of *li*<sup>a</sup> in the political context, on the grounds that if Mencius had been willing to overlook violations of *li*<sup>a</sup> and have an audience with those in power, he might have been able to gain their trust and as a result save the empire. According to Mencius, *ch'üan*<sup>b</sup> in the sister-in-law example would tell a man to overlook *li*<sup>a</sup> and extend his hand to save the sister-in-law; in this case, the means of saving the sister-in-law is the hand, and a breach of *li*<sup>a</sup> does not affect this means. In the political context, however, one saves the empire with the Way, and to overlook a violation of *li*<sup>a</sup> would undermine this means; this explains the passage's ending with the query whether one is supposed to save the empire with the hand (in lieu of the Way). Presumably, the underlying assumption is that in the political context overlooking violations of *li*<sup>a</sup> in the way one is treated would not be in accordance with the Way, a point that can also be seen from the end of 3B:1, where Mencius linked bending oneself to bending the Way. Since one who bends himself or the Way will not be able to straighten others, such a person would also fail to convert those in power and as a result fail to save the empire.<sup>61</sup>

#### 5.4 ETHICAL FAILURE

Having considered the nature of self-cultivation and its relation to the political order, let us turn to ways in which one may fail to be ethical. The *Meng-tzu* contains several general descriptions of ethical failure. For example, it is described as a case of one's letting go of or losing one's heart/mind (6A:8, 6A:10, 6A:11), or losing one's sense of balance, letting what is less important do harm to what is more important, namely, the heart/mind (6A:15; cf. 6A:14).<sup>62</sup> Such general descriptions, while emphasizing that ethical failure is a failure to preserve or nurture the heart/mind, do not tell us much about the source of the failure.

There are other more specific descriptions of ethical failure, which fall into three groups. First, there are people who are not drawn to the ethical ideal at all. Passage 4A:10 describes people who do violence to themselves in that their *yen* is opposed to *li*<sup>a</sup> *yi*<sup>a</sup> (rites and propriety); presumably, these are people who already have a conception of *li*<sup>a</sup> *yi*<sup>a</sup> but who consciously oppose it. It is not clear from the

passage who the target of criticism is, but it may include philosophical opponents who consciously opposed the Confucian ideal as well as those who opposed *li*<sup>a</sup> *yi*<sup>a</sup> because they were preoccupied with other pursuits apparently in conflict with *li*<sup>a</sup> *yi*<sup>a</sup>. Such was the situation of King Hui of Liang, who was preoccupied with profit (1A:1)—probably things such as strengthening one's state (1A:5) and increasing its population (1A:3)—and who was condemned in severe terms by Mencius as not *jen*<sup>a</sup> (7B:1) and as killing his people with his government (1A:4).

Second, there are people who are drawn to the ethical ideal to some extent but exert little or no effort in that direction. One may exert no effort because of preoccupation with other pursuits, but this will presumably be accompanied by a rationalization justifying one's lack of effort. This probably is the situation of those who claim a lack of ability (*neng*) to be ethical, a phenomenon that Mencius referred to on several occasions. For example, 2A:2 describes people who do not cultivate themselves because they think it will have no effect; 2A:6 and 4A:10 characterize those who regard themselves as lacking the ability to be ethical as people who rob themselves or give themselves up. One actual example is King Hsüan of Ch'i, who asked whether he was capable (*k'o yi*) of caring for his people and who attributed his failures in that respect to certain political ambitions (1A:7) or disorderly desires (*chi*<sup>b</sup>; 1B:3, 1B:5). In addition, there are those who exert some but not enough effort because they lack devotion or because they expect immediate results and give up when the results do not come quickly; the former is the situation of the king described in 6A:9, and the latter is a phenomenon discussed in §5.2.2.<sup>63</sup>

Third, there are those who are drawn to the ethical ideal and actively devote themselves to it, but who nevertheless fail. This can be due to forcing the process out of overeagerness or being drawn to the ideal for the wrong kind of reasons. The former phenomenon is discussed in §5.2.2, and the latter in §5.3 in connection with those who aspire to *jen*<sup>a</sup> in order to attain certain political advantages.

The preceding discussion shows that ethical failure can have different sources, such as erroneous teachings, preoccupation with other pursuits, insufficient devotion and persistence, or overeagerness. Among them, Mencius particularly emphasized erroneous teachings and distortive desires. Passages 2A:2 and 3B:9 describe how erroneous *yen* (teachings) can lead to bad policies and have disastrous consequences, and 3B:9 and 6A:1 refer to the disastrous consequences of the *yen* of Mo Tzu, Yang Chu, and Kao Tzu. The *yen* Mencius opposed include the teachings

of philosophical opponents, but they probably also include the advice one gives to rulers. For example, **6B**:4 describes how Sung K'eng's emphasis on *li<sup>b</sup>* (profit, benefit) in talking to the kings of Ch'in and Ch'u will have disastrous consequences for the states, and **3B**:6 and **6A**:9 observe that a king's improvement requires the company of those who are good and offer proper advice.<sup>64</sup>

The reference to distortive desires occurs in **1A**:7, in which King Hsüan referred to his great desire to expand his territories and rule over the empire, and in **1B**:3 and **1B**:5, in which he referred to his *chi<sup>b</sup>* of being fond of valor, wealth, and women. *Chi<sup>b</sup>* can mean sickness (*LY* 2.6), an aversion to something (*LY* 8.10, 14.32, 15.20), being quick (*M* **6B**:2), or being eagerly devoted to something (*MT* 13/56, 25/57, 35/37, 36/23). It can also refer to a kind of internal disorder; for example, both the *Mo-tzu* (14/2) and the *Kuo-yü* (14/10a.11-10b.1) compare *chi<sup>b</sup>* in a person to disorder in government. In the context of **1B**:3 and **1B**:5, *chi<sup>b</sup>* probably refers to an intense and extreme form of desire running wild in oneself. It is presented by King Hsüan as an obstacle to his practicing *jen<sup>a</sup>* government, probably because when the king had finished talking to Mencius and gone back to the practical affairs of government, his *chi<sup>b</sup>* led him to act against Mencius's advice or even to stop seeing merit in it. It is probably the dangers of the distortive effect of desires that Mencius had in mind when he advocated reducing desires in **7B**:35.<sup>65</sup> Also, his emphasis that the "constant heart/mind" of the common people depends on a "constant means of support" can be explained by the fact that if their basic needs are not met, people become preoccupied with their sustenance in a way that obstructs their ethical development (**1A**:7, **3A**:3). An overly luxurious life can have its dangers too, however, since one can become overindulgent and not attend to ethical pursuits (**6A**:7).

Mencius's acknowledgment of these sources of ethical failure poses a problem for the picture of ethical failure found in **6A**:15. In that passage, ethical failure is explained in terms of following the less important part of oneself (the senses) rather than the more important part (the heart/mind); furthermore, the ethical ideal will be attained as long as the heart/mind *ssu<sup>b</sup>* (reflect, thinks). The passage seems to locate the source of ethical failure entirely in the senses, and it is difficult to reconcile this idea with the account of the sources of ethical failure just described.

The problem is not that the senses cannot operate on their own without involving the heart/mind, since even if this is correct, one can still regard the senses as the primary source of ethical failure in that the operation of the heart/

mind alone will not lead to ethical failure whereas the operation of the senses along with that of the heart/mind can.<sup>66</sup> Also, the problem is not that Mencius elsewhere described ethical failure as a matter of "losing" one's heart/mind and hence as something involving the heart/mind; even if ethical failure involves the loss of the heart/mind, the loss may be due primarily to the operation of the senses. And the problem is not the one raised by Wang Fu-chih (695), who thinks that since Mencius described ethical failure as a matter of following the less important part of the person (**6A**:15) or harming the more important part for the sake of the less important part (**6A**:14), there must be a subject that follows the less important part and harms the more important part for its sake. Since that subject, according to Wang Fu-chih, is the heart/mind, ethical failure is still traceable to the heart/mind. The observation that the subject must be the heart/mind is not entirely clear; it may well be the person as a whole. And even if the observation is correct, one can still regard the senses as the primary source of ethical failure in that it is always the inclinations of the senses that lead the heart/mind to follow the less important part.

Rather, the problem is that, given the different ways in which ethical failure may come about, it seems that it may sometimes have its source primarily in the heart/mind, contrary to what is suggested in **6A**:15. For example, subscription to erroneous doctrines may well be traceable primarily to errors in the functioning of the heart/mind, rather than to the operation of the senses. Also, it is not clear that all distortive desires leading to ethical failure are traceable to the operation of the senses. For example, although a ruler's preoccupation with territorial expansion may arise from his desire for sensory satisfaction, it may also arise from a desire for power not necessarily related to sensory satisfaction. Wang Fu-chih formulates a related problem in terms of *ssu<sup>b</sup>*; **6A**:15 observes that one attains the ethical ideal if one *ssu<sup>b</sup>*, but if *ssu<sup>b</sup>* can be a reflection of any kind, it seems that *ssu<sup>b</sup>* can also be in error. One response Wang Fu-chih (701) gives to the problem is that the kind of *ssu<sup>b</sup>* that Mencius referred to in **6A**:15 is not just reflection of any kind, but *ssu<sup>b</sup>* directed toward *yi<sup>a</sup>*. This proposal fits the interpretation of *ssu<sup>b</sup>* described in §5.2.1, which takes *ssu<sup>b</sup>* to involve reflecting on and seeking *yi<sup>a</sup>*. However, the point remains that unethical behavior can result from certain operations of the heart/mind, even if such operations are not instances of the kind of *ssu<sup>b</sup>* referred to in **6A**:15.

As for remedying the two main sources of ethical failure, one cure for erroneous teachings is to expose their errors, and this Mencius presented as his reason for engaging in



disputation (3B:9). As for distortive desires, they can lead one to reject the ethical ideal, or even if one is drawn toward it to some extent, they can still lead one to lose sight of ethical considerations when the moment of action comes or to rationalize one's lack of effort in terms of a lack of ability. One remedy is to convince someone under the influence of such desires that being ethical will bring about what one desires rather than conflict with it, and Mencius often used such a strategy. He said to King Hui, for example, that the practice of *jen<sup>a</sup> yi<sup>a</sup>* will have desirable political consequences (1A:1), and to King Hsüan that *jen<sup>a</sup>* government and sharing one's enjoyment of things with the people was compatible with, and may even help the king achieve, what he greatly desired (1A:7, 1B:1, 1B:5).

The use of such a strategy may lead to the impression that Mencius was advocating *jen<sup>a</sup> yi<sup>a</sup>* on the grounds that they bring personal advantage, and Herrlee G. Creel has even suggested on the basis of these passages that Mencius was advocating a kind of "enlightened selfishness."<sup>67</sup> Although this may describe part of what is happening in Mencius's dialogues with King Hui and King Hsüan, it does not fully capture Mencius's views. Although he did appeal to political advantage in talking to rulers, we have seen that he also defended the Confucian ideal in terms of realizing a direction of development implicit in the ethical predispositions of the heart/mind. The appeal to political advantage probably did not capture Mencius's basic views about the grounds for practicing *jen<sup>a</sup> yi<sup>a</sup>*, although it helped to motivate rulers preoccupied with such advantage.<sup>68</sup>

To complete this discussion of ethical failure, let us consider Mencius's views about certain semblances of goodness. According to him, although practicing *jen<sup>a</sup> yi<sup>a</sup>* can gain others' approval and a good reputation, one who practices *jen<sup>a</sup> yi<sup>a</sup>* for such purposes is not truly ethical but will only attain certain semblances. In 6A:17, he described a good reputation as a consequence of having *jen<sup>a</sup> yi<sup>a</sup>* in oneself, and yet, in describing the spontaneous reactions of the heart/mind in 2A:6 and 3A:5, he emphasized that the reactions are not directed toward gaining the approval of others. Passage 7B:11 can be interpreted as describing how someone out to make a name can act in certain ways, such as giving away a state of a thousand chariots, but reveals his true self when caught unaware, as seen from a reluctance to give away even a basketful of rice and a bowlful of soup. However, this is not the only possible interpretation; 7B:11 has been interpreted by Chao Ch'i (C), Chang Shih, and Sun Shih to describe two different kinds of individuals, those who are out to make a name for themselves and those who are not.

The most elaborate account of someone who aims at others' approval and has only a semblance of goodness is the description of the honest villager in 7B:37. In that passage, which refers back to ideas in the *Lun-yü* (LY 13.21, 17.13, 17.18; cf. 13.24), Mencius elaborated on Confucius's comment that failing to find those who accord with the Way as associates, he would fall back on the wild and squeamish.<sup>69</sup> The wild is characterized as one who rushes forward, aspiring to be like the ancients; the squeamish as one who would not do certain things. The idea of not doing certain things (*pu wei<sup>a</sup>*) is highlighted in 4B:8 and 7A:17 and associated with *yi<sup>a</sup>* in 7B:31; 7B:31 gives the examples of not boring through or climbing over a wall to get a wife (cf. 3B:3) and not accepting abusive forms of address (cf. 6A:10). It is also linked in 7B:37 to disdain (*pu hsieh*) for the unclean and probably has to do with *ch'ih*, a sense of what is below oneself, which Mencius regarded as crucial to self-improvement (7A:7, cf. 7A:6).<sup>70</sup> The honest villager is characterized as one whose way of life is entirely geared to social opinion. His goal is others' good opinion, and since he adjusts his way of life accordingly, it is difficult to find anything in him that is obviously criticizable. His way of life appears good, everyone approves of him, and he regards himself as living properly. Yet he does not truly have *te<sup>a</sup>*, although he resembles someone with *te<sup>a</sup>* in a way that makes it easy for people to mistake him as having *te<sup>a</sup>* and hence to give him the name of *te<sup>a</sup>*; in this sense, he is a thief of *te<sup>a</sup>*.

What is common to both the wild and the squeamish is that they are motivated to improve themselves, by an aspiration to be like the ancients in one case and by a sense of what is below oneself in the other. This is one main respect in which the honest villager differs from these two: he has no serious commitment to improving himself beyond gaining others' approval, and he is content and regards himself as living properly as long as he gains that approval. His is a typical case of improving oneself for others (*wei<sup>a</sup> jen<sup>b</sup>*) rather than for the self (*wei<sup>a</sup> chi<sup>a</sup>*), and his practicing goodness for others' approval makes what he practices a semblance rather than genuine goodness.<sup>71</sup>

Given Mencius's criticism of those who gear their way of life to others' opinion, it might seem puzzling that he himself sometimes spoke as if self-cultivation should be guided by others' response. For example, 4A:4 observes that one should examine oneself for *jen<sup>a</sup>* (benevolence, humanness), *chih<sup>b</sup>* (wisdom), and *ching* (reverence, seriousness) if others do not respond to one's love, government, and courtesy with affection, order, and courtesy; it also observes in general that one should always examine oneself if one does not fare well in dealing with others. Passage

4B:28 likewise describes how the superior person engages in self-examination whenever he does not fare well in dealing with others, and 2A:7 (cf. *LC* 20/12a.5-7) compares the practice of *jen*<sup>a</sup> to archery—when one misses the mark, one turns to oneself to see if one has properly straightened oneself. These observations are probably explained by Mencius’s views about the transformative effect of a cultivated character. Since a cultivated character leads to certain responses from others, lack of the appropriate response reveals a deficiency in one’s character. In altering oneself in light of others’ responses, one is not making others’ responses one’s goal in self-cultivation but merely using them as a way of assessing one’s progress.

*Abbreviations*

The following abbreviations are used in the Text and the Notes; for complete publication data, see the Bibliography.

Early Texts

<i>HNT</i>	<i>Huai-nan-tzu</i>
<i>KY</i>	<i>Kuo-yü</i>
<i>LC</i>	<i>Li-chi</i>
<i>LiT</i>	<i>Lieh-tzu</i>
<i>LSCC</i>	<i>Lü-shih ch’un-ch’iu</i>
<i>LY</i>	<i>Lun-yü</i>
<i>M</i>	<i>Meng-tzu</i>
<i>MT</i>	<i>Mo-tzu</i>
<i>SC</i>	<i>Shih-ching</i>
<i>TC</i>	<i>Tso-chuan</i>

Commentaries on the *Meng-tzu* (by commentators with two or more commentaries included in the Bibliography)

<i>C</i>	Chao Ch’i, <i>Meng-tzu chu</i>
<i>CC</i>	Chao Ch’i, <i>Meng-tzu chang-chih</i>
<i>MTCC</i>	Chu Hsi, <i>Meng-tzu chi-chu</i>
<i>MTHW</i>	Chu Hsi, <i>Meng-tzu huo-wen</i>
<i>MTPI</i>	Yü Yüeh, <i>Meng-tzu p’ing-i</i>
<i>MTTI</i>	Yü Yüeh, <i>Meng-tzu tsuan-i nei-wai p’ien</i>
<i>TMHP</i>	Yü Yün-wen, <i>Tsun-meng-hsü-pien</i>
<i>TMP</i>	Yü Yün-wen, <i>Tsun-meng-pien</i>
<i>YL</i>	Chu Hsi, <i>Chu-tzu yü-lei</i>

*Notes*

1. Chu Hsi (YL 1406-7, 1409) takes “fang hsin<sup>ab</sup>” to mean being lax and not paying attention, but the occurrence of “fang ch’i<sup>b</sup> liang hsin<sup>ab</sup>” in 6A:8 and

the description of chickens and dogs as *fang* in 6A:11 show that “fang” means “to lose.”

2. Chang Shih reads “ts’un hsin<sup>ab</sup>” in 4B:28 to mean preserving the heart/mind. However, Chao Ch’i (C), Chu Hsi (MTCC; YL 1355), and Sun Shih take “ts’un hsin<sup>ab</sup>” to mean “keep something (*jen*<sup>a</sup> and *li*<sup>a</sup>) in mind.” Chao probably bases his reading on the rest of 4B:28, which argues that the superior person always keeps in mind *jen*<sup>a</sup> and *li*<sup>a</sup>. However, the use of “ts’un” in 4B:19 in connection with the slight element distinguishing human beings from other animals and the pairing of “ts’un hsin<sup>ab</sup>” with “chin hsin<sup>ab</sup>” in 7A:1, where “chin hsin<sup>ab</sup>” probably means “fully realizing the heart/mind,” make it likely that “ts’un hsin<sup>ab</sup>” has to do with preserving the heart/mind.
3. There is another possible interpretation of 4B:12. Whereas Chu Hsi (MTCC), Huang Tsung-hsi (2/27b.4-28a.6), and Chang Shih take “the heart/mind of the newborn” to refer to the heart/mind one is born with, Chao Ch’i (C; CC) and Chiao Hsün understand it as referring to the heart/mind of protecting and caring for the common people as if they were newborns. Only on the basis of the first interpretation, which Chao Ch’i notes but does not endorse, does the passage imply that the heart/mind already has predispositions in the ethical direction.
4. Graham (“Background,” p. 37) notes that this observation by Mencius is a response to an observation by Tzu-hua Tzu in *LSCC* 4/11b.7-12a.1.
5. The point is noted in Nivison, “Philosophical Voluntarism,” p. 21.
6. I have benefited from discussions with Bryan Van Norden in connection with these issues.
7. Hsü Ch’ien stresses this point in connection with the example in 6A:10.
8. Chu Hsi takes 7B:11 to be making a similar point. According to him (MTCC; MTHW; YL 1458), 7B:11 makes the point that one can yield a state when one is the focus of attention of everyone and if one is out to make a name, but if one is not the kind of person who truly can yield things to others, one would begrudge a basketful of rice and bowlful of soup when one is caught unaware, thereby revealing the kind of person one really is. This interpretation differs from that of Chao Ch’i, Chang Shih, and Sun Shih, who take the second half of the passage to concern a different kind of people, those who are not out to make a name. As

- far as I can tell, there is insufficient textual evidence to adjudicate between the two interpretations.
9. The reference to ten thousand bushels of grain occurs in 2B:10, in connection with a possible offer to Mencius.
  10. Something like this suggestion can be found in Nivison, "Two Roots or One?," pp. 746, 753-54; and idem, "Mencius and Motivation," pp. 421-22; I have myself elaborated on the second variant of this suggestion in earlier writings. Van Norden ("Mencian Philosophic Psychology," chap. 3) points out the distinction between the two variants of this suggestion.
  11. Something like this suggestion can be found in commentaries on this passage by later Confucian thinkers, such as Chu Hsi (MTCC 1A:7; YL 1223-24) and Chang Shih.
  12. Something like this suggestion is in Wong, "Reason and Emotion," esp. pp. 38-40. Nivison seems to be suggesting a similar picture in "Problems: Part II," pp. 9-10, and "Motivation and Moral Action," pp. 26-27.
  13. I have benefited from correspondence with Joel Kupperman in connection with these ideas.
  14. For an elaborate discussion of this passage, see Nivison, "Problems: Part II."
  15. Chao Ch'i (CC) also takes 7A:15 to be about *shu*<sup>a</sup>.
  16. This leaves open the question of how the predispositions indicate a direction. Later Confucians such as Chu Hsi (MTCC 7A:17) and Chang Shih (7A:17; cf. 7B:31) would interpret the passage in terms of one's originally being disposed not to do or desire certain things, although obscuration by selfish desires leads one to do or desire such things.
  17. See §5.2.2.
  18. The point is noted by Nivison ("On Translating *Mencius*," p. 115), who considers different interpretations of 7A:15 found among commentators and translators.
  19. Cf. Nivison, "On Translating *Mencius*," p. 116.
  20. Wong, "Universalism Versus Love with Distinctions."
  21. See *ibid.*, pp. 258-60.
  22. Wong (*ibid.*) cites *Lun-yü* 17.21 in developing this aspect of his account. That passage can be read in two ways, as making the point that human beings are as a matter of fact and without reflection attached to those who have cared for and nourished them, or that human beings feel obliged to reciprocate, given their awareness of how parents have cared for and nourished them. The passage probably highlights the first point more, and in ascribing affection for parents to a young child still held in the arms, *Meng-tzu* 7A:15 also highlights the unreflective kind of affection that one has for parents at a very early stage in life.
  23. Although agreeing with Ames's observation that Mencius did not conceive of ethical development as a process guided by "definite and specified goals" ("Mencian Conception," p. 159), I am inclined to see less flexibility in the direction of such development.
  24. In his "Introduction" to *Mencius* (p. 15), Lau takes *ssu*<sup>b</sup> to involve thinking about moral duties, priorities, etc., showing that he takes *ssu*<sup>b</sup> to involve finding the answer to questions about these issues.
  25. Waley, *Analects*, pp. 44-46.
  26. Nivison, "Philosophical Voluntarism," p. 13; cf. idem, "Motivation and Moral Action," pp. 47-48.
  27. Nivison, "Weakness of Will," p. 14.
  28. There are exceptions. For example, P'ei Hsüeh-hai takes both occurrences of "wu"<sup>a</sup> in "wu<sup>a</sup> chiao wu<sup>a</sup>" to refer to external objects (objects of the senses), and "chiao" to refer to how one external object after another acts on the senses.
  29. Something like this proposal can be found in Nivison, "Two Roots or One?," pp. 744-45; and idem, "Weakness of Will," p. 11.
  30. Passage 6B:2 also makes the point that one becomes a sage by behaving in the way the sages do.
  31. Hsü Fu-kuan, *Lun-chi*, p. 143.
  32. Most translators read "pi yu shih<sup>a</sup> yen" similarly; Giles and Lyall, however, take "shih"<sup>a</sup> to mean difficulties and the phrase to mean that difficulties will inevitably arise.
  33. Most translators adopt one or the other of these interpretations. There are exceptions: Chai and Chai take "cheng"<sup>b</sup> to mean "stop" (probably emending it to "chih"<sup>b</sup>), Giles takes it to mean "straighten out," and Lau emends "cheng<sup>b</sup> hsin"<sup>a</sup> to "wang<sup>b</sup>" (forget).
  34. This proposal can be found in Nivison's writings, and I will return to it later.

35. Nivison discusses this aspect of the self-cultivation process in “Mencius and Motivation,” p. 427, and “Two Roots or One?,” p. 745.
36. Chu Hsi (MTCC; YL 1333) and Huang Tsung-hsi (2/19b.1-3) take “le” to have this implication.
37. E.g., Nivison, “Motivation and Moral Action,” p. 46; Graham, “Background,” p. 31.
38. E.g., Nivison, “Mencius and Motivation,” p. 427.
39. This is one of the interpretations of the internality/externality of *yi*<sup>a</sup> described in §4.3.2.
40. E.g., Nivison, “Mencius and Motivation,” pp. 422-23, 427.
41. Cf. Chao Ch’i (C) and Chu Hsi (YL 1254).
42. Cf. Chu Hsi (YL 1335-36).
43. A point noted in Ch’en Ta-ch’i, *Ch’ien-chien chi*, pp. 226-34; Huang Chün-chieh, *Ssu-hsiang-shih lun*, pp. 22-23, 61-63; Yang Rur-bin, “Lun Meng-tzu ti chien-hsing kuan”; and Yüan Pao-hsin, pp. 74-79.
44. This point fits with the observation in §2.1.2 that the self that is the object of self-cultivation is not some “inner” or “private” entity but the person as a whole.
45. Cf. Yang Rur-bin, “Lun Meng-tzu ti chien-hsing kuan,” pp. 96, 111; idem, “Chih-li yü chien-hsing,” pp. 431-32.
46. Yang Rur-bin, “Lun Meng-tzu ti chien-hsing kuan”; cf. idem, “Chih-li yü chien-hsing.”
47. Indeed, the parallels are so close that Huang Tsung-hsi (2/64b.2-3) even identifies *ch’i*<sup>a</sup> in the early morning with *liang hsin*<sup>a</sup>, which is referred to in 6A:8.
48. In “Some Ancient Roots,” Metzger discusses the early Confucian optimism about one’s ability, or at least the ability of those who are cultivated, to *chih*<sup>a</sup> *jen*<sup>b</sup>.
49. Ch’en Ta-ch’i (*Ch’ien-chien chi*, pp. 231-32) makes the interesting observation that the vastness of the flood-like *ch’i*<sup>a</sup> refers to its filling the space between Heaven and Earth, and its unyieldingness refers to its not being movable by poverty, wealth, or superior force.
50. Cf. Hsü Fu-kuan, *Lun-chi*, pp. 138-40; Yüan Pao-hsin, pp. 117-24.
51. Ch’en Ta-ch’i, *Tai-chieh-lu*, pp. 129-35; my discussion in this paragraph draws on Ch’en’s discussion.
52. Ch’en Ta-ch’i (*Ch’ien-chien chi*, pp. 190-91) notes the interesting parallel between these observations by Mencius and Mo Tzu’s defense of indiscriminate concern on the ground that having concern for and benefiting others will lead others to treat one similarly.
53. See §4.3.1 in connection with the possibility that “yüeh<sup>b</sup>” can mean “being moved by.”
54. “Li<sup>b</sup>” is used in parallel to “te<sup>a</sup>” in M 7B:10, but here “li<sup>b</sup>” might not be used in a positive sense—both Chao Ch’i (C; CC) and Chiao Hsün take the reference to *li*<sup>b</sup> to describe those concerned with their own profit at the expense of propriety.
55. Cf. Ch’en Ta-ch’i, *Tai-chieh-lu*, pp. 64-68.
56. Cf. Schwartz, pp. 260-62; Wang En-yang, 1A:1.
57. Fung Yu-lan (*Hsin-yüan-tao*, pp. 17-18) proposes this way of dealing with the apparent tension in connection with Confucius’s and Mencius’s thinking.
58. In 1B:1, Mencius made this point with regard to enjoyment of music—sharing his enjoyment of music with the people would be more satisfying to the ruler than enjoyment of music by himself.
59. Passage 4B:16 seems to conflict with 2A:3, which contrasts those who rely on force to gain others’ allegiance (*yi li fu jen*<sup>b</sup>) and those who rely on *te*<sup>a</sup> to gain others’ allegiance (*yi te*<sup>a</sup> *fu jen*<sup>b</sup>); only the latter is supposed to succeed. The problem is posed by the fact that *yi shan fu jen*<sup>b</sup> is said in 4B:16 to fail, whereas *yi te*<sup>a</sup> *fu jen*<sup>b</sup> is said in 2A:3 to succeed. A way of resolving the problem is to say that the emphasis in 2A:3 is more on the contrast between force and *te*<sup>a</sup>, and that “*yi te*<sup>a</sup> *fu jen*<sup>b</sup>” does not carry the connotation of practicing *te*<sup>a</sup> with the goal of bringing about others’ allegiance.
60. E.g., Ch’en Ta-ch’i, *Tai-chieh-lu*, p. 86.
61. Cf. Lau’s discussion of 4A:17 in “Method of Analogy,” p. 245. Lau makes the interesting point that saving the empire involves causing the empire to have the Way, and this cannot be done by compromising the Way.
62. The reference to the heart/mind is not explicit in 6A:14, although the passage is so interpreted by

- Chao Ch'i (C) and Chu Hsi (MTCC). Comparison with 6A:15 gives support to this interpretation.
63. The contrast in 6A:9 between one who devotes one's *chih<sup>c</sup>* to learning chess and one who is distracted by thoughts of shooting at swans is interesting—setting one's *chih<sup>c</sup>* is sometimes compared to aiming in archery in early Chinese texts (see §3.3), and the reference to thoughts of shooting at swans is probably a way of emphasizing the distraction of one's *chih<sup>c</sup>*.
64. I follow Chao Ch'i (C) and Chang Shih in interpreting the reference in 6A:9 to those who expose the king to the cold as a reference to those who offer corrupting advice.
65. Comparison with the occurrence of “ts'un hsin<sup>a</sup>” (preserving the heart/mind) in other passages (e.g., 4B:28, 6A:8) favors interpreting “ts'un” in 7B:35 to refer to preserving the heart/mind. Chu Hsi (MTCC) gives this interpretation, but Chao Ch'i (C) takes “ts'un” to refer to preserving one's life.
66. The idea that the operation of the senses involves the heart/mind is found in certain early texts (e.g., *LSCC* 5/9b.6-10a.1) and is highlighted by later Confucians such as Wang Yang-ming (e.g., no. 201).
67. Creel, *Chinese Thought*, pp. 86-87. By contrast, Ts'ai Hsin-an (“Ts'ung tang-tai,” pp. 406-8; *Tao-te chieh-tse li-lun*, pp. 150-54) takes Mencius to be defending the practice of *jen<sup>a</sup> yi<sup>a</sup>* on the grounds that it benefits the public.
68. Cf. Lee Ming-huei, *Ju-chia yü K'ang-te*, pp. 148-52, 183-94; Yüan Pao-hsin, pp. 138-39, 146-50.
69. Here, I take “chung<sup>b</sup>” in “chung<sup>b</sup> tao” to be used verbally.
70. In 7A:6, the expression “wu ch'ih chih<sup>g</sup> ch'ih wu ch'ih yi” has been given different interpretations: “the move from being lacking in *ch'ih* to having *ch'ih* enables one to be free from *ch'ih*” (Chiao Hsün), “to *ch'ih* one's lack of *ch'ih* enables one to be free from *ch'ih*” (Chao Ch'i, cited by Chu Hsi, MTCC, and endorsed by Chang Shih), “the *ch'ih* of not having *ch'ih* is truly without *ch'ih*” (Lau; Yang Po-chün). The first interpretation is unlikely, since “chih<sup>g</sup>,” which links “wu ch'ih” and “ch'ih,” although often used in the sense of moving from one place to another, is rarely used in early texts to refer to a move from one state of character to another (cf. Yang Po-chün). It is difficult to adjudicate between the other two interpretations, both of which read the two occurrences of “wu ch'ih” differently: the first occurrence refers to one's not having a sense of what is below oneself; the second to being free from things that are below oneself (second interpretation) or truly lacking a sense of what is below oneself (third interpretation). Whichever interpretation we adopt, 7A:6 is clearly emphasizing the importance of *ch'ih*.
71. Passage 4B:6 refers to the kind of *li<sup>a</sup>* and *yi<sup>a</sup>* that is not truly *li<sup>a</sup>* and *yi<sup>a</sup>*. This may be interpreted as describing a situation like that of the honest villager: one appears to but does not really conform with *li<sup>a</sup>* and *yi<sup>a</sup>*. However, the passage can also be interpreted as describing overdoing things: although being respectful is *li<sup>a</sup>*, being overrespectful is not *li<sup>a</sup>*, although it may look like *li<sup>a</sup>* (e.g., Chang Shih, citing Master Ch'eng).

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SPPY	Ssu-pu pei-yao
SPTK	Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an

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### Henry G. Skaja (essay date 1998)

SOURCE: Skaja, Henry G. “How to Interpret Chapter 16 of the *Zhuangzi*: ‘Repairers of Nature (Shan Xing).’” *Wandering at Ease in the Zhuangzi*, edited by Roger T. Ames, State U of New York P, 1998, pp. 101-24.

[In the following essay, Skaja draws on philosophical teachings from the Mencius to closely examine a chapter of the Chuang Tzu (fourth-second centuries BC), a collection of Taoist philosophy and tales. Chinese characters originally in this essay have been silently removed.]

### CONSIDERING THE PROBLEM IN CONTEXT

Chapter 16 of the *Zhuangzi*, “Repairers of Nature (*Shan Xing*),” continues to pose significant interpretive difficulties for translators and commentators. For example, as indicated by Burton Watson, perhaps the most significant of these difficulties is that the chapter (lines 2-5) “attempts to derive the Confucian virtues and concerns from the Way [*dao*]” as presented by the Daoists.<sup>1</sup> A related difficulty (line 17) is indicated by Watson as follows: “Why the writer quotes such an un-[D]aoist injunction as ‘Rectify yourself,’ or what he means by it, I do not know.”<sup>2</sup> According to A. C. Graham, the chapter is “unrelated to anything elsewhere in the book.”<sup>3</sup>

In this paper I wish to show how these and other interpretive difficulties associated with chapter 16 can be resolved by considering more closely the historical, political, intellectual, and textual context in which the chapter was written (the problem of textual corruption notwithstanding).<sup>4</sup> In light of these contextual considerations, we find that the chapter acknowledges and resonates clearly with the teachings of the Confucian philosopher Mencius, in regard to his conception of human nature (*renxing*) and the Way (*dao*) as fundamentally social and cooperative in “virtue” or “character” (*de*).<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, we find that the chapter is highly critical of the teachings presented by the Confucian philosopher Xunzi, who, in direct opposition to Mencius, argued that people are by nature selfish and uncooperative (*xing*), so that human nature needs to be “transformed” or “repaired” through the “artifice” (*wei*) of scholars versed in the Way.<sup>6</sup> Thus, we can understand the title of chapter 16 and its primary subject of criticism: “Repairers of Nature.” As indicated by the author of the chapter, those who attempt to repair our nature actually destroy our naturally social and harmonious virtue or character (*de*)—and, thus, depart from the Way (*dao*).

Accordingly, I shall argue that, in a manner reminiscent of the social philosophy presented by John Dewey,<sup>7</sup> both Mencius and the author of chapter 16 conceive human nature and the Way as fundamentally social and cooperative in character. Consequently, both philosophers appeal to the natural cooperation and “cooperative intelligence” of people as the only means or “Way” of attaining lasting fulfillment in human life (*rensheng*), and of addressing and resolving adequately the social and political problems that divided classical China into competing factions during the “Warring States period” (463-222 B.C.E.). If my argument is correct, then we find that a number of the interpretive difficulties associated with chapter 16 tend to dissipate, so that the genuine philosophical or social issues which are addressed in the chapter can be brought to light for

contemporary philosophical discussion. In what follows, I shall attempt to bring these issues to light and, at the end of this paper, I shall provide a complete, annotated translation of the chapter.

In order to better understand my argument in regard to resolving the interpretive difficulties associated with chapter 16 of the *Zhuangzi*, consider the following remarks by James Campbell in regard to his recent book, *Understanding John Dewey: Nature and Cooperative Intelligence* (1995). Although Campbell's remarks are directed primarily to the contemporary situation in Western philosophy, they are nevertheless relevant. Therefore, I quote Campbell at length:<sup>8</sup>

[P]erhaps the most important . . . factor in the contemporary reconsideration of Dewey is the growing dissatisfaction with much contemporary philosophizing, with thinking that neither grows out of the problems and issues of our broader society nor is able to offer any assistance to that society as it attempts to address its difficulties. Creating a philosophy that was connected to society in both of these ways was a major concern for Dewey. . . .

For [Dewey], we humans live our lives as natural and social creatures who have emerged from and must ever interact with our natural and social environment. This world is our past and our future, our challenge and our means. He emphasizes that we interact with this environment much of the time—too much of the time—based on our unthinking desires and our untested beliefs. Yet we have the ability to inquire and evaluate: to move beyond the immediately good to lasting values, to actions and beliefs and goals that make possible human growth and long-term fulfillment. Central to Dewey's vision is the belief that this evaluative power, which he calls intelligence, is not an individual possession but a possession of the group. The efforts of the vibrant community of cooperative inquirers are consequently our best means of addressing our collective problems. Hence my subtitle: *Nature and Cooperative Intelligence*.

As indicated by Campbell, Dewey holds that we as people are by nature social and cooperative creatures. Consequently, it is necessary to appeal to our “cooperative intelligence” to attain lasting fulfillment in life, and in addressing social and political problems. My argument is most simply that, legitimate differences notwithstanding, both Mencius and the author of chapter 16 hold a similar view to that of Dewey.

#### THE CONFUCIAN CONNECTION

As indicated by Watson above, perhaps the most significant interpretive difficulty associated with chapter 16 is that it “attempts to derive the Confucian virtues and concerns from the Way.” That is, specifically, the chapter attempts to articulate in terms of human nature and the Way the

Confucian *social* virtues or characteristics, such as love for others (*ren*), appropriate conduct toward others (*yi*),<sup>9</sup> ceremonial interaction with others (*li*), music in the company of others (*yue*) and, thus, knowledge or understanding (*zhi*) among people—what I have referred to as “cooperative intelligence.” Furthermore, the chapter attempts to address the major philosophical issues or concerns of the age, such as the controversial doctrine of “nonaction” (*wuwei*), the character (*de*) of human nature or life, the “patterns” of activity and reasoning (*li*) that emerge therefrom,<sup>10</sup> the appropriate object of conscientiousness or loyalty (*zhong*), and the promotion of natural-social harmony (*he*)—all with respect to the Way as the integral, harmonious process of life and growth. The following is my translation of the problematic passage (lines 2-5) referred to by Watson:<sup>11</sup>

Those of old who promoted the Way employed tranquillity to cultivate understanding. They understood the life process, yet they did not employ this understanding to take action (*wei*). So they may be said to have employed understanding to cultivate tranquillity. When understanding and tranquillity are mutually cultivated, harmony and patterns emerge from our nature. Our natural character consists in the harmony, and the Way consists in the patterns. When our natural character embraces all things, we have love; and when the Way patterns all things, we have appropriate conduct. To understand appropriate conduct and to have affection for creatures is to be loyal. When there is purity and fullness within, and a return to our true emotions, we have music. When trust is expressed in face and body, and there is compliance with culture, we have ceremony.

In his pioneering research, A. C. Graham has provided us with the clue to unlocking this “interpretive difficulty.” The clue lies in the Mencian conception of human nature.<sup>12</sup> As indicated by Graham,

The author surprises us by recommending the Confucian moral virtues, which like Mencius he sees as inherent in human nature. He holds that if we still the passions and achieve the equilibrium in which tranquility and awareness support and enhance each other, Goodwill [*ren*] and Duty [*yi*] become natural to us, and so do Music [*yue*] (which otherwise excites the passions) and Rites [*li*] (which otherwise are empty formalities).<sup>13</sup>

If we consider closely the “syncretic” intellectual attitude of the time, we find that the author's “recommendation” is not as surprising as it might initially appear.<sup>14</sup> Although Graham has provided us with insight into the close relationship between chapter 16 and the teachings of Mencius on human nature, Graham is reluctant to acknowledge that the author of this chapter, *like* Mencius but *unlike* Xunzi, conceives human nature as fundamentally *social* and *cooperative* with respect to “virtue” or “character” (*de*).<sup>15</sup> Graham's reluctance in this regard seems to stem from his



following of Arthur Waley in the translation and interpretation of “*de*” as the “Power” of an individual substance, essence, or thing—that is, “the inherent capacity of a thing to perform its specific functions successfully.”<sup>16</sup> Thus, the translation and interpretation of *de* as the “Power” of an individual substance, essence, or thing tends to ignore social and cooperative considerations altogether.<sup>17</sup>

However, if we explicitly acknowledge the social and cooperative “virtue” or “character” of human nature, then it is not at all surprising to find with the author that the Confucian *moral* or *social virtues*, such as love (*ren*), appropriate conduct (*yi*), ceremony (*li*), music (*yue*), and knowledge or understanding (*zhi*) among people are indeed inherent in human nature (*renxing*) and are, thus, naturally expressed during the course of human life (*rensheng*).<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, it not surprising to find with the author that the social and cooperative character of human nature or life is integral to that of “the Way” (*dao*), or “the Way of Heaven” (*tian dao*), as the integral process of life and growth in general. In regard to the social and cooperative character of human nature and this comprehensive Way, consider the following representative remarks by Mencius:

Love, appropriate conduct, ceremony, and wisdom are not welded in us from outside, but are originally integral to us. It is just that we never take the time to think about it (*fusi*), that’s all! (Mencius 6A6, reading “*wo*” in the original sense of “we” or “us” rather than “me”)

As an exemplary person, a ruler (*junzi*) regards love, appropriate conduct, ceremony, and wisdom as his nature (*xing*). These are rooted in his heart-mind (*xin*) and grow (*sheng*) in his expression [and are thus extended to others].<sup>19</sup>

(7A2)

The myriad creatures are all integral to and completed by us. There is no greater joy (*le*) than to realize upon reflection that one has interacted with integrity (*cheng*).<sup>20</sup> Try your best to put yourself in the place of others (*shu*) and conduct yourself accordingly.<sup>21</sup> You will find that there is no shorter way to love for others (*ren*).

(7A4)

There is a way for a person to interact with integrity. If he does not understand/express (*buming*) what is socially desirable (*shan*), then he cannot interact with integrity.<sup>22</sup> Thus, integrity is the Way of Heaven (*tian zhi dao*); to direct one’s thoughts towards integrity is the way of man (*ren zhi dao*). There has never been a person who achieves integrity that fails to motivate others. On the other hand, one who does not achieve integrity can never hope to motivate others.

(4A12)

TYRANNY, ISOLATIONISM, ANARCHY, OR  
COOPERATION?: SOME DIFFICULTIES IN  
GRAHAM’S INTERPRETATION

Graham’s reluctance to acknowledge the social and cooperative character of human nature and the Way, as conceived by Mencius and the author of chapter 16, presents its own interpretive difficulties. According to Graham, chapter 16 “is an apology for the hermit’s life” and “is explicit that the sage is a hermit except in the Utopian age.”<sup>23</sup> However, Graham’s appeal to a Utopian age notwithstanding, the text seems clearly to indicate otherwise. If the chapter “is an apology for the hermit’s life” and “is explicit that the sage is a hermit,” why then does it “recommend” the Confucian moral or social virtues?—and why does it articulate those social virtues as inherent in human nature and the Way?

Furthermore, we find that even Confucius states that when the Way does not prevail in the world one ought to retire from public office (*Analects* 8.13)—but this hardly implies that one ought to become a hermit and attempt the suicidal task of isolating oneself from the community of social life altogether. As indicated by the author of chapter 16, a scholar (*shi*) can simply “deepen his roots” (line 15) and “remain in place” (line 16) in pursuit of the Way and, as such, become a teacher of others through personal example: “Rectify yourself, that’s all” (line 17).<sup>24</sup> In regard to these social considerations, let us consider Graham’s own translation of the text (lines 12-13):<sup>25</sup>

As long as there is no means for the Way to rise up in the age or the age to be resurrected by the Way, even if [*sui* = although?] a sage is not living in the mountain forests the Power in him has been obscured. It has been obscured, therefore it is not that he has chosen his obscurity.

As for what of old was meant by [a scholar] “living in obscurity,” it was not that someone was lying low and refusing to show himself, or keeping his words to himself and refusing to make them public, or hoarding his knowledge and refusing to let it out. It was that the fate of the times [*shiming*] was too much awry.

Where exactly in the text, as translated by Graham, is it “explicit” that the sage is a hermit? Graham’s interpretation in this regard seems to stem from his translation of *de* as the “Power” of an individual substance, essence, or thing and, as such, it tends to ignore social and cooperative considerations altogether. But even in light of Graham’s own translation, Graham’s interpretive remarks regarding the sage as a hermit do not seem to apply to chapter 16. They may, however, apply to the passages that Graham gleans from the other chapters of the *Zhuangzi*, which he then associates with chapter 16—that is, the passages that Graham gleans respectively from chapters 20, 19, and 12.<sup>26</sup> But

nevertheless it is strange that Graham should associate these passages with chapter 16—in light of his own somewhat curious remark that chapter 16 of the *Zhuangzi* is “unrelated to anything elsewhere in the book.”<sup>27</sup>

Let us examine Graham’s interpretation of chapter 16 in greater detail:<sup>28</sup>

It is an apology for the hermit’s life by an author of uncertain date, not recognisable anywhere else in the book. His style is pedestrian but he is interesting as the first documented instance of a true anarchist in China, in the sense that he conceives the ideal community as living in a spontaneous oneness without any ruler at all. He dates the decline of the social order from the very first rulers, Sui-jen [Suiren] and Fu-hsi [Fuxi], and is explicit that the sage is a hermit except in the Utopian age, when he enters the world not to take office but to submerge in the primordial oneness. This anarchism is rooted in what looks like a Taoistic [Daoistic] variation on the doctrine of the goodness of human nature preached by the Confucian Mencius.

Graham’s interpretive remarks are most puzzling in light of his own translation of the chapter. First of all, as I have indicated by appeal to Graham’s translation, the chapter is not “an apology for the hermit’s life” nor is it “explicit that the sage is a hermit” except in a Utopian age or otherwise. Rather, I argue, the chapter is most simply and unsurprisingly an apology for the familiar Daoist doctrine of *wuwei* (lit., without action or management)—that is, “non-interference” in what Graham calls the “wholeness” or “integrity” of “the life process” (*sheng*).<sup>29</sup> The author indicates that the doctrine of *wuwei* has been violated in various ways and degrees by the earliest, traditionally recognized rulers of China (= the known world)—such as Suiren, Fuxi, and even the “Confucian hero” Shun.<sup>30</sup> Consequently, we find that the author is suspicious of anyone who attempts to “take charge of the world (*wei tian-xia*)”<sup>31</sup>—that is, literally, to manage everything under the sky (to become master of the universe so to speak). According to the author (lines 7-11), all such attempts have invariably led to tyranny over others, social hardship and intellectual confusion (*huo*) and, consequently, a loss of “cooperative intelligence” or understanding (*zhi*) among people. Thus, Graham is quite correct to the extent that the author of this chapter, like Zhuangzi of the Inner Chapters, rejects the traditional Confucian appeal to “the way of the former kings (*xian wang zhi tao*).” Accordingly, we find that the author holds a somewhat different political view from that of Mencius. Mencius, like Confucius, hoped for the possibility that a sage ruler of China might still arise.<sup>32</sup>

Still, secondly, it is not at all clear from an examination of the text that the author is “a true anarchist . . . in the sense that he conceives the ideal community as living in a spon-

aneous oneness without any ruler at all.” What is clear, however, is that, aside from the author’s obvious and justifiable suspicion of anyone who attempts to “take charge of the world,” the author recommends that those who happen to find themselves in political power (those “having the caps and carriages of high office”) ought to be tolerant of and defer to others (lines 5-7) and, thus, embrace the doctrine of *wuwei*, or non-interference in the naturally integral, spontaneous, and harmonious process of life/growth (*sheng*). To do so is to achieve integrity, to remain “whole” or “complete (*quan*)” in the company of others and, thus, to “preserve one’s life in the Way.” Here the author seems to make a strong appeal to the Confucian, as well as Daoist, notion of rulership (*wang*) by personal example through the expression of virtuous character (*de*) and the Way (*dao*)—that is, rulership by deference to and cooperation with others, as opposed to tyranny over others by “taking charge of the world” and ordering people about under threat of punishment.<sup>33</sup> This cooperative and deferential sense of rulership is not reducible to the conduct of any individual person, but is a natural function of community or social life, so that anyone and everyone can become a sage or sage ruler. In this regard, consider the following remarks by Mencius—bearing in mind that Mencius and the author of chapter 16 have different interpretations of the legendary sage, or sage ruler, Shun:

When anyone told him that he had made a mistake, Zilu was delighted. When he heard others speak in a desirable manner (*shan yan*), Yu bowed before the speaker. The great Shun was even greater. In order to achieve what is desirable with others, he was ready to discard his own ways and accord with theirs, and was glad to gain from others in order to achieve what is desirable (*shan*). From the time he was a farmer, a potter and a fisherman to the time he became emperor, he gained from others. To gain from others in order to achieve what is desirable is to enable others to achieve what is desirable. Thus, there is nothing greater for a ruler (*junzi*) to do than to enable others to achieve what is desirable.

(2A8)

Note that I have employed Mencius’s own definition of “*shan*” (7B25) as that which can be consistently desired (*keyu*) without conflict or contradiction, “that which is desirable.” “*Shan*” is, of course, commonly translated as “good” or “goodness.” Note also that the author of chapter 16 (line 9) is suspicious of anyone who “departs from the Way for the sake of goodness (*li tao yi shan*).” Here it would seem that Mencius and the author agree in principle if not explicitly in words, since both would agree that pursuing the Way is “desirable” or “good.”<sup>34</sup>

Thirdly, in regard to Graham’s interpretation of chapter 16, it can be argued by appeal to the text that what Graham

calls the “spontaneous” or “primordial oneness” is simply the original unity (*yi*), natural-social harmony, or integrity of people and things inherent in the life/growth process—to the extent that it is still unspoiled by those who attempt to take charge of the world:

Those of old lived in the midst of teeming activity, and yet with the rest of the world they attained tranquillity and tolerance. At that time the Yin and Yang were in harmony and at peace, ghosts and spirits worked no mischief, the four seasons attained their full measure, the myriad creatures were unharmed, and all that lived escaped an untimely death. Although men possessed understanding, they did not attempt to employ it for their own benefit. This was called attaining the utmost in unity with others. At that time no one stepped forward to take action (*wei*), so that things were continuously so of themselves.

(*ziran*)

As indicated elsewhere by the author (lines 17-21), all attempts to take charge of and manage the world are made ultimately to further one’s own individual “ambition” (*zhi*), and to increase one’s own individual “happiness” or “joy” (*le*), to the inevitable detriment of self and others. (Consider, for example, the obvious cases of Hitler, Stalin, and the self-proclaimed First Emperor of China, Qin Shihuangdi.) It is for this reason, I submit, that the author advocates cooperation with others and, thus, “cooperative intelligence” or understanding (*zhi*) with respect to rulership—in contrast to the political policies of tyranny, isolationism, and/or anarchy (in the sense indicated by Graham).

Lastly, in regard to Graham’s interpretation of the chapter, consider what Graham calls “the doctrine of the goodness of human nature preached by Mencius”: “*xing shan*,” translated literally as “human nature is good.” As I have indicated elsewhere in regard to this “doctrine” or “theory” attributed to Mencius, it makes as little sense philosophically to say that human nature is good or bad as it does to say that the nature of oxen is good or bad—since, strictly speaking, “good” and “bad” are not characteristics of nature and the nature of things, but are terms that we employ in reference to that which we happen to desire (*yu*) and dislike (*e*).<sup>35</sup> In regard to this point, Graham makes two relevant observations:

[E]arly expositions of the Mencian theory, such as the *Chung Yung* [*Zhong Yong*] and the appendices of the *Changes* [*Yi Jing*], never explicitly describe human nature as good. . . .<sup>36</sup>

The word *shan* is normally applied to actions and agents which accord with Heaven [*tian*] and the Way, not to Heaven and the Way themselves, so that it becomes doubtful whether Nature can be good in itself any more than the nature of water is an entity which tends downward.<sup>37</sup>

Furthermore, I submit, the literal translation of *xing shan* as “human nature is good” fails to capture Mencius’s distinction between that which we happen to desire (*yu*), and that which we judge to be desirable (*keyu* = *shan*) and undesirable (*bushan*) upon critical reflection or thinking (*si*). This distinction is implicit in Mencius’s definition of the word “*shan*” (7B.25), as translated by both D. C. Lau and A. C. Graham:

The desirable is called . . . [*shan*].

(Lau, *Mencius*, 1976, p. 199)

It is the desirable that is meant by . . . [*shan*].

(Graham, 1986, p. 32)

The Mencian distinction between that which is desired and that which we judge to be desirable or undesirable is also emphasized by John Dewey in his “The Construction of Good”:<sup>38</sup>

The fact that something is desired only raises the *question* of its desirability; it does not settle it. Only a child in the degree of his immaturity thinks to settle the question of desirability by reiterated proclamation: “I want it, I want it, I want it.”

It is worth notice that . . . there are many other recognitions in ordinary speech of the distinction. . . . Noted and notable . . . ; remarked and remarkable; advised and advisable . . . ; blamed and blameable, blameworthy; objected to and objectionable; esteemed and estimable; admired and admirable; shamed and shameful; honored and honorable; approved and approvable. . . . The multiplication of words adds nothing to the force of the distinction. But it aids in conveying a sense of the fundamental character of the distinction; of the difference between mere report of an already existent fact and judgment as to the importance and need of bringing a fact into existence; or, if it is already there, of sustaining it in existence.

In light of the above discussion, consider Mencius’s own remarks:

That which is desirable is called “*shan*” (*keyu zhi wei shan*). A person who understands/expresses what is desirable (*ming shan*) is called “trustworthy (*xin*).” To do so in full measure is called “beautiful (*mei*),” but to shine forth in brilliance is called “great (*da*).” To exhibit the greatness that transforms others is called “sage (*sheng*).” The enduring influence of a sage, which is beyond one’s ability to adequately comprehend (*buke chih*), is called “pervasive (*shen*).”

(7B25)

Note the Daoist flavor of this passage. This indicates clearly that Mencius was influenced by the language and arguments of his Daoist-oriented critics.<sup>39</sup> It also indicates the fact that Mencius was proficient in dealing with such critics

on their own terms. Consider, for example, the Mencius-Gaozi debate on human nature (*Mencius* 6A1-4). In response to Gaozi's argument that human nature or life tends neither to what is desirable nor undesirable, Mencius argues that

Human nature [or life] tends to what is desirable (*renxing zhi shan*), just as water tends downward. . . . Although a person can be made to act in a way that is undesirable (*ren zhi keshi wei bushan*), our social nature remains as it was [that is, tending to what is desirable].

(6A2)

Thus, as Mencius explains in regard to the doctrine or theory of human nature attributed to him:

Insofar as what is genuine in respect to people is concerned, people have the ability to act in a manner that is desirable (*keyi wei shan*). This is what I mean by "*shan*." That a person should act in a manner that is undesirable (*wei bushan*) is not the fault of our natural ability (*cai*). . . . Love for others, a sense of community and appropriate conduct towards others, ceremonial interaction with others, and [thus] wisdom are not welded in us from outside. They are originally integral to us. It is just that we never take the time to think about it, that's all!

(6A6)

There are gifts bestowed by Heaven (*tianjue*), and there are gifts bestowed by people (*renjue*). The expression of love and appropriate conduct (*ren yi*), loyalty and trust (*zhong xin*), and the unflinching enjoyment (*le*) of what is mutually desirable (*shan*)—these are gifts bestowed by Heaven.

(6A16)

That which people do not have to learn, yet are able to do, is what they are naturally able to do (*liangneng*). That which people do not have to reflect upon, yet realize, is what they naturally realize (*liangzhi*).<sup>40</sup> Now, there are no young children who do not realize loving their parents, and none of them as they grow do not realize respecting their elders. Loving one's parents is *ren*. Respecting one's elders is treating them appropriately (*yi*). There is nothing left to do but to extend these [*ren* and *yi*] throughout the world.

(7A15)

In short, Mencius argues that our socially oriented nature or life tends continuously to what is found to be mutually desirable upon critical reflection or thinking: community and cooperation with others—the expression of love, appropriate conduct, ceremonial interaction and, thus, "cooperative intelligence," understanding or wisdom among people. My point is that the author of chapter 16 of the *Zhuangzi* argues in a similar manner, merely verbal differences and any legitimate differences of opinion notwithstanding.

THE PROBLEM OF *SHIMING*

Another interpretive difficulty associated with chapter 16 concerns the notion of *shiming*. As observed by Fukunaga Mitsuji, and noted by Burton Watson, "this concept of good and bad times that are fated [*shiming*] is quite contrary to the philosophy expressed in the Inner Chapters [of the *Zhuangzi*], according to which any time is as good as any other."<sup>41</sup> As Watson explains, "The thinking here is in fact much closer to the ideas of timeliness and fate expressed in the Confucian *Analects* or the *Book of Changes*."<sup>42</sup> Considering that Confucianism and the philosophy presented in the *Book of Changes* both became intellectually prominent, Watson's explanation is largely correct. However, contrary to Fukunaga's observation as relayed by Watson, it is not altogether clear in the Inner Chapters of the *Zhuangzi* that "any time is as good as any other." Clearly the Inner Chapters recognize the importance of timeliness with respect to conduct and the completion of affairs. For example, see Watson's note (1968, p. 61, n. 12) in regard to what he takes to be a problematic passage in chapter 4, "In the World of Men," involving the notions of timely conduct and *ming*.

Consider also that the translation of "*ming*" as "fate" poses its own interpretive difficulties, if the translation presupposes the philosophical doctrine of determinism. Although *ming* may be impossible to change, this does not imply that *ming* means "fate" or "destiny" in the deterministic sense of *predetermination* by a presupposed causal agent.<sup>43</sup> For example, as indicated by Mencius in regard to the notion of *tian ming*:

Although no one acts and yet there is activity—this is *tian*.<sup>44</sup>

Although no one directs something to happen and yet it does happen—this is *ming*.

(5A6)

Although *ming* literally means "a spoken command" or "decree," such that the term carries a strong normative sense, it can be shown by appeal to a variety of textual evidence in the classical Chinese literature that, in the most general philosophical or descriptive sense, *ming* means simply "that which emerges," "issues forth," or "happens" during the course of the ongoing life/growth process.<sup>45</sup> Thus, that which emerges, issues forth, or does happen during the course of this process can obviously be relative to the times (= *shiming*), as well as be relative to our nature (= *xingming*). It is perhaps because of this ambiguity with respect to the normative and descriptive senses of the term *ming* that Mencius refers to the notion of our "correct

*ming*”—in regard to facing dangerous situations that occur and punishments that have been decreed:

There is nothing without its *ming*—according to which, if pursued, it receives what is correct (*zheng*) for it. Therefore, those who understand *ming* would not stand under a dangerous wall. To realize the Way unto death is our correct *ming* (*zhengming*). To die in handcuffs and leg-irons is not our correct *ming*.

(7A/2)

In the case of what Mencius calls our “correct *ming*,” we find that “any time is as good as any other” to understand and realize the Way. Clearly, the author of chapter 16 would agree with Mencius in this regard: “Rectify yourself, that’s all!”

ON THE PHILOSOPHICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN  
MENCIUS AND THE AUTHOR OF CHAPTER 16

In pointing out the similarities between Mencius and the author of chapter 16 of the *Zhuangzi* in regard to the social and cooperative character of human nature and the Way, I do not wish to minimize their philosophical differences. Some of these differences have already been indicated above.

Perhaps the major difference between these two philosophers is that, whereas Mencius tends to favor a politically pro-active approach to the Way, the author of chapter 16 emphasizes repeatedly the notion of *wuwei*, indicating a relatively “nonactive” or “quietistic” approach. Thus, whereas Mencius emphasizes, the author decidedly rejects the proactive way of the traditionally acclaimed sage kings. This is not to say, however, that the notion of *wuwei* or non-interference in the life process does not play a significant role in Mencius’s philosophy of human nature and the Way. Indeed, it does. As indicated by Roger T. Ames, the notion of *wuwei* plays a significant role in both Confucian and Daoist philosophy.<sup>46</sup> However, like the author of chapter 16, Mencius supplements the notion of *wuwei* with that of knowledge or understanding (*zhi*) among people, that is, what I have referred to as “cooperative intelligence.”

A related difference is that, whereas Mencius emphasizes deliberate cultivation of our naturally social and cooperative character, the author of chapter 16 emphasizes tranquility and wishes to restrict attempts at deliberate cultivation as destroying the original “wholeness” or “completeness” of our character. Thus, whereas Mencius tends to be prospective or forward-looking in his approach, the author tends to be retrospective or backward-looking in his approach. This is not to say that Mencius is unconcerned with the natural origin of people and things, just as it is not to say that the author is unconcerned with rectifying social and

political problems. The appeal to origins is a common theme throughout classical Chinese philosophy, both for making philosophical points and for establishing the legitimacy of those points. The concern to rectify social and political problems seems to be common to Chinese philosophers in general—although, of course, there are a variety of views presented on what those problems are and how those problems should be resolved.

Lastly, whereas Mencius wishes to honor the traditional sages and their institutions, the author of chapter 16 does not. The author views the institutions of the traditional sages as a primary cause of social confusion and disorder. As such, the author tends to be critical of customary conventions and conventional learning. In this respect, the author’s view is consistent with the free-wheeling spirit of the *Zhuangzi* and the unconventional or nonconventional views presented throughout the book.

Thus, we find that whereas Mencius tends to be politically optimistic, proactive, and traditional in his approach to the Way, the author tends to be politically pessimistic, skeptical, and nonconventional. For the author, it seems, the attempts to improve a corrupt social or political situation by appeal to customary conventions only tend to worsen it. Furthermore, it seems that in such situations the temptation to benefit oneself at the expense of others is too great.

In spite of these philosophical differences, it is important to bear in mind that both Mencius and the author of chapter 16 strongly emphasize “happiness” or “enjoyment (*le*)” in the naturally social and cooperative character of human nature and the Way—and, thus, enjoyment in the naturally cooperative intelligence or understanding among people. Neither philosopher seems to indicate a greater overriding value. It is for this reason primarily that I have appealed to the socially oriented philosophy of John Dewey for purposes of elaboration, and for purposes of resolving the outstanding interpretive difficulties associated with chapter 16 of the *Zhuangzi*. In this regard, consider the following remarks by Dewey from *Experience and Nature*:<sup>47</sup>

Human experience in the large . . . has for one of its most striking features preoccupation with direct enjoyment, feasting and festivities; ornamentation, dance, song, dramatic pantomime, telling yarns and enacting stories. In comparison with intellectual and moral endeavor, this trait of experience has hardly received the attention from philosophers that it demands.

Nothing but the best, the richest and fullest experience possible, is good enough for man. The attainment of such an experience is not to be conceived as the specific problem of “reformers” but as the common purpose of men. The contribution which philosophy can make to this common aim is criticism. Criticism certainly includes

a heightened consciousness of deficiencies and corruptions in the scheme and distribution of values that obtains at any period.

#### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this paper I have tried to show how some of the outstanding interpretive difficulties associated with chapter 16 of the *Zhuangzi* can be resolved by considering more closely the historical, political, intellectual, and textual context in which the chapter was written. In particular, I have appealed to the teachings of the Confucian philosopher Mencius, and have argued that both Mencius and the author of chapter 16 conceive human nature and the Way as fundamentally social and cooperative with respect to “virtue” or “character.” Consequently, I argue, both philosophers appeal to the cooperation and “cooperative intelligence” of people as the only means or “Way” to attain lasting fulfillment in social life, and to address and resolve adequately any social and political problems that arise. For purposes of elaboration, I have appealed to the socially oriented philosophy of John Dewey.

The interpretation of chapter 16 that I have presented differs in significant respects from that of Burton Watson and A. C. Graham. To the extent that my interpretation is useful in resolving the interpretive difficulties associated with the chapter, I leave it for the reader to consider and decide. In what follows, I present a complete, annotated translation of this somewhat problematic and neglected chapter.

#### ZHUANGZI, CHAPTER 16: “REPAIRERS OF NATURE (*SHAN XING*)”

Those who attempt to repair their nature through conventional learning, in hopes of recovering what they were originally; those who attempt to smooth over their desires through conventional thinking, in hopes of attaining enlightenment—we may call them the blinded and benighted people.<sup>48</sup>

Those of old who promoted the Way employed tranquillity to cultivate understanding. They understood the life process, yet they did not employ this understanding to take action. So they may be said to have employed understanding to cultivate tranquillity.<sup>49</sup> When understanding and tranquillity are mutually cultivated, harmony and patterns emerge from our nature.<sup>50</sup> Our natural character consists in the harmony, and the Way consists in the patterns.<sup>51</sup> When our natural character embraces all things, we have love; and when the Way patterns all things, we have appropriate conduct. To understand appropriate conduct and to have affection for creatures is to be loyal. When there is purity and fullness within, and a return to our true emotions, we have music. When trust is expressed in face and body, and

there is compliance with culture, we have ceremony. But if emphasis is placed *exclusively* on the practice of ceremony and music, then the world becomes disordered.<sup>52</sup> If that is the manner in which one attempts to rectify, then he draws a cloud over our natural character. Our natural character is not to be put at risk. If it is put at risk, then things will invariably lose their nature [or life].<sup>53</sup>

Those of old lived in the midst of teeming activity,<sup>54</sup> and yet with the rest of the world they attained tranquillity and tolerance. At that time the yin and yang were in harmony and at peace, ghosts and spirits worked no mischief, the four seasons attained their full measure, the myriad creatures were unharmed, and all that lived escaped an untimely death. Although men possessed understanding, they did not attempt to employ it for their own benefit. This was called the utmost in unity with others. At that time no one attempted to take action, so that things were continuously so of themselves.<sup>55</sup>

However, a time came when our naturally harmonious character deteriorated to the point that Sui ren and Fuxi stepped forward to take charge of the world [lit., to manage everything under the sky]. As a result, there was compliance but no unity. Our natural character then further deteriorated to the point that Shennong and the Yellow Emperor stepped forward to take charge of the world. As a result, there was stability, but no longer any compliance.<sup>56</sup> Our natural character continued to deteriorate to the point that Yao and Shun stepped forward to take charge of the world.<sup>57</sup> They started the trend of reformation through government and, consequently, introduced artificiality [lit., rinsed the clean and scattered the simple], departed from the Way for the sake of goodness, and thereby endangered our natural character for the sake of conducting affairs.<sup>58</sup> As a result, they abandoned our nature in order to follow after their heart-minds. Although heart-minds distinguished and recognized one another, this was insufficient to settle the world, so that cultural conventions were tacked on, and information thereby accumulated.<sup>59</sup> Cultural conventions destroyed what is basic to us, and information swamped our heart-minds, so that for the first time people became confused and disordered. They could not return to their nature and true emotions, nor recover what they were originally.

From this we can see that the world had lost the Way and the Way had lost the world. The world and the Way had lost each other. From what source then could a man of the Way arise in the world? From what source then could the world arise in the Way? If the Way does not arise in the world and the world does not arise in the Way, then, although the sage does not retire to the mountains and forest, his natural

character is obscured. It is obscured, so that he does not choose to obscure it.<sup>60</sup>

Thus, regarding what was of old meant by a scholar “living in obscurity,” it was not that he hid and refused to show himself, nor that he kept his words to himself and refused to speak out, nor that he stowed away his understanding and refused to share it.<sup>61</sup> It was simply that what had emerged [or what had been decreed] at the time was greatly awry.<sup>62</sup> If what had emerged at the time was fortunate in that it allowed him the opportunity to perform great deeds in the world, then he would have returned to the unity without leaving a trace. If what had emerged at the time was unfortunate in that it afforded him only great hardship in the world, then he would have deepened his roots to secure what was ultimate, and attend upon that. This was called preserving one’s life in the Way.

Those of old who sought to preserve their lives did not engage in disputation to ornament their understanding.<sup>63</sup> They did not employ their understanding to trouble the world, nor employ their understanding to trouble our natural character. Undaunted, they simply remained in their places and returned to their nature. What more could they have done? It is not inherent in the Way to engage in petty actions. It is not inherent in our natural character to make petty distinctions. Petty distinctions harm our natural character. Petty actions harm the Way. Therefore, it is said, “Rectify yourself, that’s all!”<sup>64</sup> To be happy in completeness is what it means to achieve one’s ambition.<sup>65</sup> When those of old spoke of achieving their ambition, it was not a matter of having the caps and carriages of high office. They meant simply that nothing could be added to their happiness.<sup>66</sup> But nowadays what is meant by achieving one’s ambition is a matter of having caps and carriages. That caps and carriages happen to belong to one’s person is not a result of what emerges from our nature. A thing that arrives by chance is a lodger with us, and we who give it lodging can neither prevent it from coming nor stop it from departing. The men of old did not for the sake of caps and carriages pursue their ambition, and did not because of poverty and need try to conform to convention. It was simply that they were as happy in one condition as in the other—and, therefore, they had no worries. Nowadays when our lodgers depart we are unhappy, from which it can be seen that we tend to ruin the happiness we have. Therefore, it is said, “Those who abandon themselves in things and lose their nature in convention may be called the wrong-way-around people.”

#### Notes

1. Watson 1968, p. 172n2. Brackets mine. Line numbers refer to those in the *Harvard-Yenching Sinological*

*Index*. Cf. chapter 38 of the *Laozi* or *Dao De Jing*. According to this chapter, the Confucian virtues and concerns mark a departure from the Way (*dao*).

2. Watson 1968, p. 174n5.
3. Graham 1989a, p. 28.
4. Here it is especially important to consider the “hundred schools” of philosophy that emerged during the Warring States period (463-222 B.C.E.) of classical China, and the “syncretic” intellectual attitude that was necessary to establish and maintain social reunification and harmony. For discussion on the historical, political, and intellectual context of Confucianism and Daoism, see, for example, Roger T. Ames (1983). Ames’s discussion of *wuwei* (“non-action” or “non-interference”) as a political policy in these traditions is particularly relevant.

In regard to the textual context of the *Zhuangzi* itself, I submit that chapter 16 should be read at least in light of the other Outer Chapters, particularly those that A. C. Graham describes as “Syncretist”—that is, chapters 13 (“The Way of Heaven”) and 15 (“Finicky Notions”). As indicated by Graham (1986, p. 319), the contemporary Chinese scholar Kuan Feng groups chapters 15 and 16 together in the traditional manner. Graham disagrees with Kuan Feng in this regard. However, the interpretation I shall present tends to agree with the traditional grouping of the chapters presented by Kuan Feng.

It seems that Graham’s method of grouping the chapters is based largely on grammatical considerations for the purpose of determining specific authors and, thus, tends to ignore some rather important considerations of relative content. According to Graham, chapters 15 and 16 of the *Zhuangzi* constitute “single essays.” But Graham describes the former as “Syncretist,” and the latter as “Primitivist in tone” (1986, p. 319) and (grammatically?) “unrelated to anything elsewhere in the book” (1989a, p. 28). Nevertheless, Graham points out that, like all homogeneous blocks of text, both essays/chapters “must be presented complete” (1989a, p. 31).

5. That the chapter resonates with the teachings of Mencius should not be surprising. As indicated by Arthur Waley (*The Way and Its Power*, p. 49), “The branch of Confucianism founded by Mencius was profoundly influenced by the [Chi]-country [D]aoism,” which focused on achieving a quiet heart-mind (*xin*), tending of the vital spirit (*shen*), as well as promoting natural harmony (*he*). “In this there is nothing

surprising, for Mencius spent much of his life in the country of [Chi].”

Note that the chapter also bears resemblance in both content and style with the opening passages of the Confucian classics, *Great Learning (Da Xue)* and the *Doctrine of the Mean (Zhong Yong)*, which were originally chapters in the *Book of Ceremony (Li Ji)*. These passages emphasize the naturally social and cooperative character of people and things—in addition to exemplary conduct on the part of particular persons.

6. See *Xunzi*, “Our Nature Is Bad [*Xing E*].” “Artifice” is A. C. Graham’s translation of “*wei*.” As Chung-ying Cheng has indicated to me in conversation, *wei* literally means that which is the result of “human making” or “action” (*wei*). For discussion of Xunzi’s criticism of Zhuangzi, see Fung Yu-lan 1952, p. 279f.
7. See, for example, Dewey’s *Human Nature and Conduct: An Introduction to Social Psychology* (1922), *Experience and Nature* (1925), *The Quest for Certainty: A Study of the Relation between Knowledge and Action* (1929), and *Philosophy and Civilization* (1931). In the latter work, pp. 79-80, Dewey proposes “the social” as the all-inclusive philosophic category:

There are at the present time a considerable number of persons who habitually employ the social as a principle of philosophic reflection. . . . There are others, probably a greater number, who decline to take “social” seriously as a category of description and interpretation for purposes of philosophy, and who conceive any attempt so to take it as involving a confusion of anthropology and sociology with metaphysics. The most they would concede is that cultural material may throw light on the genesis and history of human beliefs. . . . Denial of opposition between the social and natural is, however, an important element of the *meaning* of “social” as a category. . . . A denial of the separation is not only possible to a sane mind, but is demanded by any methodological adoption of the principle of continuity. . . . Upon the hypothesis of continuity—if that is to be termed a hypothesis which cannot be denied without self-contradiction—the social . . . furnishes philosophically the inclusive category.

The general philosophical point made by Dewey is that the category of social phenomena is *continuous with*, but *irreducible to*, other categories of natural phenomena—for example, phenomena that are predominately mechanical or mechanistic in character. A related point made by Dewey is that people and things exist (= act-react, interact or “transact”) only

*relative* to one another—and not as absolute individuals or things-in-themselves.

8. Campbell 1995, pp. ix-x.
9. “Appropriate conduct” or “a sense of appropriate conduct” is Roger Ames’s translation of “*yi*.”
10. “Pattern” or “patterns” is A. C. Graham’s translation of “*li*.”
11. Unless explicitly indicated otherwise, all translations are my own. Note that, as indicated by both Watson and Graham, the last line of this passage involves textual corruption.

Note also the striking resemblance of this passage with the last section of chapter 11, the title of which is translated by Watson as “Let it Be, Leave It Alone.” As indicated by Watson (1968, p. 124n17), the last section of that chapter, “with its recognition of the necessity for benevolence, righteousness, law, ritual, etc., seems to clash violently with what has gone before. Some commentators interpret it as a description of the kind of compromise even the perfect [Daoist] ruler must make if he is to rule effectively. Others regard it as an interpolation or a passage misplaced from some other section. See the similar passage on p. 79.”

12. See Graham’s “The Background to the Mencian Theory of Human Nature,” in Graham 1986.
13. Graham 1989a, p. 171. Compare with Mencius’s remarks in regard to Gaozi on “achieving a quiet heart-mind,” *Mencius* 2A2.
14. As indicated above, Graham does not acknowledge the syncretic character of chapter 16, although he explicitly does so in regard to chapters 13 and 15.
15. In contrast to Mencius, Xunzi argues that people are by nature selfish and disgusting (*e*), so that it necessary to “transform” our nature by way of *ren*, *yi*, and *li*. See *Xunzi*, “Our Nature is Bad (*Xing E*).”
16. See Graham 1989a, p. 7. See also Waley, *The Way and Its Power* (n.d.).
17. This philosophical criticism is reflected in the contemporary communitarian critique of classical liberalism, in regard to the latter’s emphasis on *individualism* and *individual* liberty or freedom. See, for example, Michael Walzer’s “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism” in David Theo Goldberg, ed. (1995), pp. 198-211, originally given as the John Dewey Lecture at Harvard Law School in September 1989, also found



in *Political Theory* 18.1 (Feb. 1990): 6-23. Note that Walzer's communitarian critique in no way denies what is of obvious value in classical liberal theory—namely, individual liberty or freedom. Walzer's point is simply that classical liberals tend to forget that people are by nature *social creatures* who gain identity as people only in the context of a social environment or tradition. Accordingly, social obligations as well as individual liberties should obtain. This point is also made in Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue* (1984). In regard to Aristotle's virtue-based ethical theory, MacIntyre redefines "virtue" to include a personal narrative set against the background of a social tradition.

With respect to classical Confucian philosophy, Herbert Fingarette puts forth his own communitarian critique of liberalism in his general introduction to Mary I. Bockover, ed. (1991). There Fingarette focuses on the tension between *individual rights* and *social obligations*.

18. See Graham's discussion (1986) on the interchangeability of the terms "*xing*" (nature) and "*sheng*" (the life process) in "The Background to the Mencian Theory of Human Nature."
19. "Exemplary person" is Roger Ames's translation of "*junzi*."
20. "Integrity" is A. C. Graham's (1986, p. 55) translation of "*cheng*," also commonly translated as "sincerity." As indicated by Graham,

Each thing has its nature, and 'becomes complete' (*ch'eng* [*cheng*]) by fulfilling the capacities of its nature. In man this state of maturity, by which we act wholeheartedly according to our nature and become in the full sense men, is *ch'eng* [*cheng*] . . . "wholeness, integrity," defined in the *Chung Yung* [*Zhong Yong*] by "Integrity is self-completion."

It should perhaps be added that, for Mencius, people achieve wholeness or integrity only in the context of others, and only by treating themselves and others appropriately (*yi*).

21. Note that "putting yourself in the other person's place" is Roger Ames's interpretive translation of "*shu*."
22. Note that "*shan*" is commonly translated as "good."
23. Graham 1989a, p. 171.
24. Note that chapter 15 discusses five types of scholars (*shi*), which, as indicated by Graham (1986, p. 319), include:

1. Moralists who disapprove of the regime
2. Moralists who prefer teaching and self-improvement
3. Politicians concerned only with personal ambition and organizational issues
4. Hermits who sit fishing by the river (Zhuangzi himself would be a good example)
5. Cultivators of longevity

In regard to these five types of scholars, Graham indicates, "Only one of the types criticized does take office; public life is if anything even more important for the Syncretist than for a Confucian, who can at least withdraw from it on moral grounds." Elsewhere Graham (1989a, p. 264) indicates, "After declaring that all five can fulfil their aims by following the comprehensive Way of Heaven and Earth, the writer proceeds to an exposition, much of it in the same words as in [chapter 13] 'The Way of Heaven.'" Here I would argue that both chapters 15 and 16 should be read in light of chapter 13, "The Way of Heaven."

25. Graham 1989a, p. 172.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 173-75.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 170-71.
29. See Graham 1986, pp. 9-17, 55.
30. Compare with chapter 11.
31. "Take charge of the world" is Watson's (1968) translation of "*wei tianxia*."
32. See, for example, *Analects* 6.30; and *Mencius* 2A1, 7B38.
33. Note that deference to others is a common underlying theme in the writings of Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall on classical Chinese philosophy. See Hall and Ames 1987 and 1995.
34. For discussion on discarding the concept of good (*shan*), see chapter 10 (Watson 1968, p. 113).
35. Skaja diss., (Ph.D. University of Hawaii, 1992), pp. 22 and 108.
36. Graham 1986, p. 57.
37. Graham 1986, p. 58.
38. Chapter 10 of Dewey's *The Quest for Certainty* (1929), p. 260.
39. See note 5 above.

40. Here it important to bear in mind that *liangneng* and *liangzhi* also carry the connotation of excellence. Thus, *liangneng* can be construed as the natural or instinctive ability to excel in the Way; and *liangchih* can be construed as the natural or instinctive ability to excel in understanding or realizing the Way (in practice).
41. Watson 1968, p. 173n4.
42. Watson 1968, p. 173n4.
43. See Hall and Ames 1987, chapter 5, for discussion on the notion of *ming*.
44. Note that, depending on context, “*tian*” can be translated as “Heaven” or “Nature.”
45. Thus, for example, *tianming* is that which emerges or issues forth from *tian* (the heavens, sky, or Nature as the process of life/growth)—which, as indicated in the first line of the *Zhong Yong*, is our nature or *xing*: “*Tianming zhi wei xing*.” Accordingly, *xingming* is that which emerges or issues forth from our nature or *xing*. Note that a number of passages in the Outer Chapters of the *Zhuangzi* involve the notion of *xingming*. In line with this general interpretation of *ming*, the author of chapter 16 indicates that harmony and patterns of activity “emerge from our nature (*qu qi xing*).”
46. See Ames 1983, chapter 1.
47. Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, pp. 78, 412.
48. Note that both Watson and Graham translate *suxue* as “vulgar learning,” and *susi* as “vulgar thinking.” It is difficult to determine precisely the subjects of the author’s criticism. As indicated by Watson 1968, p. 171n1, “The writer is attacking the Confucian and Mo-ist ideals of moral training, and those schools of thought that advocated the lessening or elimination of desire.”
- However, it is clear that, like the author, the Confucian Mencius was not concerned with “repairing our nature.” On the other hand, as I have indicated, the Confucian Xunzi advocated in “Our Nature Is Bad” that the nature of people needs to be “transformed” or “repaired” by those versed in the Way. Note that, in the *Zhuangzi*, discussions of our nature (*xing*) begin only with chapter 8.
- Here I would argue that the author is, in general, critical of those who are compelled to “take action (*wei*).” All such attempts violate the doctrine of *wuwei*, or “non-interference” in the life/growth process (*sheng*) that constitutes our nature (*xing*). The reference to “vulgar” or “conventional” learning and thinking seems to indicate that this chapter was presented as a scholarly plea intended to influence the various rulers of state in adopting a political policy of *wuwei*. Cf. chapter 11, “Let It Be, Leave It Alone” (Watson’s translation).
49. Here the author’s dual emphasis on attaining understanding and tranquillity indicates clearly the philosophy of *wuwei*. Cf. chapter 13, “The Way of Heaven,” on the tranquillity and understanding of the sage. Cf. also Mencius’s remarks (2A2) on the way of “attaining a quiet heart-mind.”
50. See the above discussion on the notion of *ming*.
51. I have translated “*de*” as “our natural character,” which the author indicates is one of social and cooperative harmony. Note that the reference to *de* (virtue or character) is made before the reference to *dao* (the Way), which is consistent with the ordering of these notions in the *Mawangdui* version of the *Laozi*.
- Cf. chapters 5 and 9 on the notion of complete character (*quan de*), and chapter 11 on the notion of great character (*da de*).
52. Contrast with *Xunzi*, chapters 19 and 20, “On Ceremony” and “On Music.”
53. This is the problematic passage indicated by Watson (1968, p. 172n2), discussed above. As indicated by both Watson and Graham, line 4 is corrupt.
- Note that the author is not critical of ceremony (*li*) and music (*yue*) as such, since these are an expression of our naturally social and cooperative character. Rather, he criticizes attempts to rectify *exclusively* by means of ceremony and music. As indicated by the author, such attempts fail to do justice to what is *basic* to the practice of ceremony and music—namely, our naturally social and cooperative character, and the Way. Cf. the last section in chapter 12, which endorses the practice of love, appropriate conduct, and ceremony in respect to our natural character and the Way.
54. Note that Watson translates *hun mang* as “crudity and chaos,” whereas Graham translates it as “the merged and featureless.”
55. This passage indicates clearly the naturally social and operative character of people and things inherent in the life process.

56. For critical discussion of the legendary Yellow Emperor's attempt to "govern the world," see chapter 11 (Watson 1968, pp. 118-19). Note that the Yellow Emperor, like the legendary Laozi, is commonly considered to be a Daoist hero, as indicated by the conjunctive term "Huang Lao."
57. As indicated by Watson (1968, p. 172n3), "All these figures are mythical rulers or culture heroes."
58. For a contrasting account of Yao and Shun on rulership, and the deterioration of our natural character, see chapter 12 (Watson 1968, p. 131). There the subject of attack seems to be the Legalists (*fajia*), who advocated rulership strictly by means of rewards and punishments.
59. Note that "*wen*" is usually translated as "culture." However, in light of the previous remarks by the author, I have translated the term as "cultural conventions." Note that the author is not critical of culture as such, that is, in the Deweyian sense of community. Here the author seems to be referring to the cultural conventions instituted by the various legendary rulers indicated above.
60. Here the author's point seems to be that the natural character of the sage has been obscured by the people of the world having lost the Way as the result of tyrannical rulers—and *not* that the sage retires to the mountains and forests as a hermit. Indeed, the lines that follow seem to indicate explicitly that a scholar or sage is not a hermit, which is consistent with my basic argument in regard to interpreting this chapter. Cf. *Mencius* 7A9.
61. Cf. the five types of scholars discussed in chapter 15.
62. See the above discussion on the notion of *shiming*.
63. This seems clearly a derogatory reference to the Moists—and to the rhetoricians or so-called "logicians" (*mingjia*) such as Hui Shi, who dispute about the meaning of "hard" and "white."
64. The author's advice, it would seem, is simply that one should accord with our nature, natural character, and the Way.
65. Cf. chapter 5, "Signs of Character Complete." Also, see chapter 12 for further discussion on the completeness of our natural character. There Confucius's student Zigong is made to say:

Those who grasp the Way are complete in character; being complete in character, they are complete in body; being complete in body, they are complete in spirit; and

to be complete in spirit is the way of the sage. Such a person is content to live among people and walk by their side, never knowing where it will lead. . . . The praise and blame of the world are no loss or gain to him. He may be called a man of complete character.

(cf. Watson's 1968 translation, pp. 135-36)

66. Cf. chapter 13 on "Heavenly Joy," "Great Peace" in government, and the "Great Way." Cf. also Mencius's emphasis on delighting in the Way (7A8).

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### **Kang Jung In and Eom Kwanyong (essay date 2003)**

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[In the following essay, the authors examine Aristotle's and Mencius's political thought to demonstrate the Confucian tradition of resistance to tyranny.]

#### INTRODUCTION

Westcentrism,<sup>1</sup> which has been developed in close association with Hegelian historicism since the Enlightenment, underlies liberalism and Marxism, created by modern European civilization as universal political ideologies. It has also served as the core assumption of modernization theory since World War II, and of the civilizing mission of European colonialism and imperialism in the nineteenth century. In the process of the evolution of Westcentrism, modern Western thinkers took advantage of the intellectual heritage of ancient Greek civilization, which they called upon as their ancestor, so that Greek philosophers could unwittingly influence the shaping of modern Westcentrism. For example, in his examination of tyranny in *Politics*, which would later become a classic of Western political science, Aristotle described tyranny as originating from and therefore suitable for Asia. Later Enlightenment thinkers in Europe embarked on the mission to reappropriate Aristotelian Hellenocentric coupling of Asia and tyranny and to elaborate it in the Westcentric concept of "Oriental despotism" which was fully formulated by Montesquieu. Thus, the Aristotelian concept of tyranny based on Hellenocentric version of civilization-barbarism was inherited and expanded in Montesquieu's notion of Oriental despotism. Montesquieu stated that, since the peoples of Asia and Africa possessed a servile spirit and lacked the spirit of liberty throughout their entire history, despotism—a form of government in which "a single man, unrestrained by law and other rules, dominate[d] by his will and caprices"—reigned supreme outside Europe (Richter 1977, 196, 214).<sup>2</sup> And John Stuart Mill, who

had completed the development of modern liberalism, asserted that Asians had never undertaken any form of systematic resistance against ruling power, so that Asian civilizations had repeated a cycle of stagnation and decay (quoted from Yi Seung-hwan 1998, 82).

Western bias against Asian civilization in the era of imperialism and colonialism seems to find contemporary reverberation with regard to the prospects of democracy in East Asia, for example in the argument of Samuel P. Huntington. He notes that Confucian democracy is a contradiction in terms, because Confucian tradition is hostile to democracy. Thus Huntington (1991) asserts in his survey of recent democratization in non-Western societies that Confucianism is a more critical barrier to democracy than Islam, while Christianity encourages the development of democracy. In this context, Montesquieu's assertion that tyranny reigned supreme in Asia correlates with the Aristotelian understanding that Asia presents an archetypal example of tyranny. Also, Mill's assertion that Asian history lacks systematic resistance is a modern version of the Aristotelian approach claiming that the people of Asia are servile and therefore take tyrannical rule for granted. Furthermore, Huntington's characterization of Confucianism as hostile to democracy and democracy in East Asia as "dominant party-democracy" suggests, too, that authoritarianism, a contemporary substitute for tyranny, is acceptable and natural in East Asia, while democracy therein is unstable and deviant.<sup>3</sup> Considering the line of thought from Aristotle to Huntington, we can see that Westcentrism has been deeply rooted in the Western intellectual tradition for over two thousand years, and emerged later in a full-blown form to legitimate Western imperialism and colonialism in the modern era.

The purpose of this essay is to refute the perennial assumption held by Western thinkers and scholars such as Aristotle, Montesquieu, J. S. Mill and Samuel P. Huntington. The essay will show that there has been a strong tradition in Confucian political thought that criticizes and resists tyranny and even justifies revolting against it. We will first examine the Aristotelian notion of tyranny in order to find out how tyranny and Asia were combined in Aristotle's nascent form of political Orientalism. Next, we shall compare Aristotle's analysis of tyranny with the political thought of Mencius (372-289 B.C.) in order to prove that there has also been a great tradition in East Asia to check and control tyranny.<sup>4</sup> This comparison will show that the Westcentric concept of Oriental despotism, which appeared in a pristine form in Aristotle and has been inherited and expanded by modern and contemporary Western thinkers since Montesquieu, might not apply to the Confucian tradition of East Asia. We will show that, in fact,

resistance against oppression and tyranny is an active component in Confucian tradition.

This insight might be useful in forming a united intellectual front of East and West to resist contemporary tyranny. Today, Orientalist thought still stubbornly haunts the world, dividing the world into a dichotomy of civilization and barbarism, and asserting that authoritarianism, a modern substitute for tyranny, is natural and normal in the East, while democracy is natural and normal in the West. Also, by comparing Aristotle's theory on the politics of city-states with Mencius, who lived in the Spring and Autumn Period of pre-Chin China, this discussion proves a preliminary kind of dialogue among civilizations.

#### HELLENOCENTRIC ORIENTALISM IN ARISTOTLE'S CONCEPT OF TYRANNY

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) wrote *The Politics* by collecting materials from the Greek polis and neighboring states, and by empirically analyzing and comparing their political systems. Although *The Politics* is still considered one of the greatest books in politics, the book reflects a pristine form of Orientalism. This refers to Aristotle's Hellenocentric worldview (and acceptable view, at the time) that the Greek citizens, living freely in a self-governing polis, had developed reason to the fullest degree and reached the highest stage of human development. Although his research method was objective and empirical, Aristotle erred in defining the differences between the Greeks and the neighboring tribes as natural and essential<sup>5</sup> and presenting the "other" as barbarian. Aristotle's *The Politics* sets the Greeks against the Persians through Hellenocentric exceptionalism and Orientalism.

Contemporary Westcentrism has inherited and expanded such Hellenocentric attitude, adopting ancient Greek civilization as its intellectual origin, and thus identifying Hellenocentrism as its archetype.

Next we shall examine how tyranny and Asia were coupled in Aristotle's political thought. In the beginning of *The Politics*, Aristotle distinguishes the rule of a statesman from those of a monarch and a house manager (a patriarch). The rule of a statesman as a horizontal ruler over free and equal citizens is basically democratic in the sense that the ruler exercises "his authority in conformity with the rules imposed by the art of statesmanship and as one who rules and is ruled in turn" (Aristotle 1969, 1-2). In contrast, the rule of a monarch and a patriarch as the vertical one over unfree and unequal humans are basically despotic in the sense they wield an "uncontrolled and sole authority" (Aristotle 1969, 1).

Aristotle distinguishes between Greeks and barbarians, the latter including both Europeans and Asians (Persians). That is to say, the ancient Greeks felt themselves distinct from Europeans and Asians. The Greek stock belonged to the natural master and ruling element, as it had the capacity, “by virtue of its intelligence, to exercise forethought” (Aristotle 1969, 3). By contrast, the barbarian stock was in a state of slavery by nature, because it lacked a natural ruling element and had “the element which was able, by virtue of its bodily power, to do the physical work” (Aristotle 1969, 3). Thus, the barbarians and the slaves are the same by nature. Aristotle quotes the following phrase from a poem: “. . . barbarous peoples should be governed by the Greeks” (Aristotle 1969, 3). It was natural for the ancient Greeks to think that they were equipped with rational faculty and freedom that allowed them to participate in the political life of the polis, their supreme political association. The polis, the civilized political community, was supposed to pursue the common interest of free citizens.

Thus, the famous Aristotelian proposition that “man is a political animal”—or, more accurately, that “man is by nature an animal intended to live in a polis” (Aristotle 1969, 5)—should be understood as a direct expression of Greek Exceptionalism. This proposition was intended to apply not to all people but to the Greeks only.<sup>6</sup> The common interpretation by most scholars that the Aristotelian proposition, “man is a political animal,” applies to all people is an anachronistic misinterpretation. For Aristotle, human nature is not common and instinctual to all human beings, but something revealed in the ultimate end, as a goal to be attained. In fact, only Greeks, who have reached the stage of living in the polis, are indeed political animals by nature, and barbarians who are “without a polis, by reason of [their] own nature and not of some accident” constitute “a poor sort of being” (Aristotle 1969, 5). According to Aristotle’s pristine form of Orientalism, the life of slavery is fit for barbarians when they live in Greece, and tyrannical rule is suitable for barbarians when they live outside, because they lack reason and the ruling element of free men.

It seems mandatory to examine in more detail the Aristotelian notion of tyranny that is fit for barbarians. For Aristotle, a city-state occupied by free citizens is the ideal political association in which people can pursue their common interest. In contrast, “[t]hose constitutions which consider only the personal interest of the rulers are all wrong constitutions, or perversions of the right forms” (Aristotle 1969, 112). Furthermore, “[w]e may say that when the One, or the Few, or the Many, rule with a view to the common interest, the constitutions under which they do so must necessarily be right constitutions. On the other

hand the constitutions directed to the personal interest of the One, or the Few, or the Masses, must necessarily be perversions” (Aristotle 1969, 114). Thus, Aristotle presents kingship, aristocracy and the polity as correct constitutions that pursue people’s common interest, and tyranny, oligarchy and democracy as perverse. Among the three perversions, tyranny is conceived as the worst form, as it is the perverse form of kingship, the best constitution (1969, 158).

Plato also suggests that tyranny is an extremely corrupt political system. In *The Republic*, he describes the deterioration process of his ideal city and defines tyranny as the “extreme illness of a city” (Plato 1968, 222). Likewise, Aristotle also defines tyranny as an unnatural state of chaos and confusion: “There is no society which is meant by its nature for rule of the tyrannical type, or for rule of the other types found in wrong or perverted constitutions: the societies that are under such types of rule have fallen into an unnatural condition” (1969, 150). Thus, the supreme duty of citizens is to overcome the unnatural condition of tyranny and restore the natural, normal condition (Aristotle 1969, 150).<sup>7</sup>

For Aristotle, the capacity to overcome tyranny is a privilege reserved only for “civilized” Greeks. Barbarians, however, are servile and familiar with tyrannical rule, and accustomed to living under it. In discussing the natural faculties of citizens fit for his ideal state, Aristotle notes that “[t]he peoples of cold countries generally, and particularly those of Europe, are full of spirit, but deficient in skill and intelligence,” and that “[t]he peoples of Asia are endowed with skill and intelligence, but are deficient in spirit.” Therefore Europeans “attain no political development and show no capacity for governing others,” and Asians “continue to be peoples of subjects and slaves.” In contrast, the Greek stock equipped with the best qualities of the two peoples continues to remain free and is capable of attaining the “highest political development” and “governing every other people—if only it could once achieve political unity” (Aristotle 1969, 296).<sup>8</sup> As these quotes show, Aristotle distinguishes between the Greeks and the Europeans and Asians, calling the latter two barbarian.

Not being satisfied with merely distinguishing between Greeks and barbarians, Aristotle subdivides barbarians even further, presenting Asians as more servile than Europeans: “These uncivilized peoples are more servile in character than Greeks (as the peoples of Asia, in turn, are more servile than those of Europe)” (1969, 138). Here, Asia refers to the confines of Persia and its vicinities east of the Aegean Sea. Therefore, what Aristotle referred to as Asia included only the ancient “near east” which was far

smaller than what we today understand as Asia (Bae 2001, 205).<sup>9</sup>

Aristotle defines human nature in terms of ethnic differences. He regards Asians as servile, as leading a slavish life without any resistance and taking tyrannical rule for granted. He extends his definition of human nature based on ethnic differences to the political community. Judging from this examination, Aristotle's argument that "[t]here is no society which is meant by its nature for rule of the tyrannical type" (1969, 150) is in fact applicable only to Greek city-states, and tyranny remain natural and constitutional for European and Asian barbarians, as can be seen in the following passage:

Another type of kingship is the sort which is to be found among some uncivilized [i.e. non-Hellenic] peoples. Kingships of this sort all possess an authority similar to that of tyrannies; but they are, nonetheless, constitutional. . . . The reason is that these uncivilized peoples are more servile in character than Greeks. . . .

(1969, 138)

Thus, Aristotle identifies the archetype of tyranny in the Persian monarchy:

Many of its characteristics are supposed to have been originally instituted by Periander of Corinth; but many of its features may also be derived from the Persian system of government.

(1969, 244)

From our examination so far, it is evident that the Aristotelian essentialist scheme of civilization-barbarism leads to the conclusion that non-Greek barbarians did not have the capacity nor right to resist tyranny. Aristotle assumed that barbarians' kingship was permanently tyrannical and impossible to overthrow. In contrast, he supposed that tyrannies in Greece could and should be overturned, and that if they did exist in Greece they were mere perversions.

Aristotle's point might be less disputable had he based his definition of the Persian kingship on empirical research. Clearly, however, Aristotle branded Asia as tyrannical based on his Hellenocentric bias. For him, barbarian tyranny was a natural and normal political system for the servile and slavish Asians, while the Greek tyranny was regarded as a temporary and pathological aberration. With this in mind, we will now examine Aristotle's analysis of tyranny in more detail.

#### ARISTOTLE'S ANALYSIS OF TYRANNY

Aristotle examines and formulates ideal political systems in volumes two and seven of *The Politics*, and devotes himself to analyzing actual politics in volumes three to five. He

describes and diagnoses tyranny in comparison with other political systems, examines the cause of its collapse and measures for its preservation in volumes three and four. Aristotle (1969) describes major features of tyranny thus:

Tyranny is single-person government of the political association on the line of despotism [i.e. treating the citizens as a master treats slaves].

(115)

. . . he [the tyrant] too uses coercion by virtue of superior power.

(122)

. . . the tyrant, who rules contrary to the will of his subjects, has a [foreign] bodyguard to protect him against them.

(138)

Tyranny is bound to exist where a single person governs men who are all his peers or superiors, without any form of responsibility, and with a view to his own advantage rather than that of his subjects.

(179)

According to the above quotes, Aristotle sees tyranny as a political system that transforms equal relations among free men into those between master and slaves. It also serves the private interest of the ruler, not the common interest of the community. While kingship rules with the consent of subjects and within the legal limit, tyranny does not respect law nor satisfy the consent of subjects as the condition for legitimate political power (Aristotle 1969, 241).<sup>10</sup> If a tyrant feigns taking into consideration the consent of the subjects, he only does so to legitimate his rule for private gains. But when he is unable to gain the consent of his subjects, however, he relies upon physical coercion such as a foreign bodyguards or mercenaries. He corrupts his citizens and turns them into servile subjects.<sup>11</sup> Thus tyranny is the most corrupt political regime, an unnatural condition not worthy of being called "political" in the least.

After diagnosing the major symptoms of tyranny, Aristotle examines the causes of its collapse and the necessary measures for its preservation. Its collapse is caused by internal quarrels among partners in a tyranny, the actual attacks of revolutionaries against the office and life of a tyrant, and so on (Aristotle 1969, 237, 240). The reasons why subjects rebel against their tyrants are often "unjust oppression, fear, and contempt" (Aristotle 1969, 237). According to Aristotle, "[t]he honours paid to the man who assassinates a tyrant—and not a mere thief—are also great" (1969, 66).

Aristotle then discusses the method for preserving tyranny. According to him, it is preserved in "two ways which are

utterly opposed to one another.” The first is traditional and is “still followed by the majority of tyrants,” and the second is the very reverse of the first, “turning of tyranny into the nature of a kingship” (1969, 244, 246). While the first method presupposes that the subjects are hostile to a tyrant and “the aim is to make them unable to conspire,” the second aims at “making the subjects indisposed to conspire” (1969, 246, Barker’s note).

The first method consists of various measures. One is the purge of outstanding and spirited men, as they can be a threat to tyranny. A second is to breed mutual distrust and discord among subjects<sup>12</sup> so that they remain estranged and are unable to launch collective action against their tyrant. A third is to encourage ignorance among subjects and to place all people under constant surveillance of secret police, thus keeping people in isolation and atomization. A fourth is “impoverishing their subjects,” partly to prevent people from having the means for engaging in political action and partly to keep them busy earning a living. Some examples are the waging of frequent wars, imposition of heavy taxes, and initiating large-scale construction works such as “building of temple to Olympian Zeus by the family of Peisistratus” (Aristotle 1969, 244-245).

By contrast, the second method seeks to prolong tyranny by disguising itself as kingship: “The tyrant should act, or at any rate appear to act, in the role of a good player of the part of King. . . . He should plan and adorn his city as if he were not a tyrant, but a trustee for its benefit. He should always show a particular zeal in the cult of the gods” (Aristotle 1969, 247-248).<sup>13</sup> Just as Glaucon says in Plato’s *The Republic* that the “extreme of injustice is to seem to be just when one is not” (Plato 1968, 38), the tyrant, a man of extreme injustice, may prolong his rule by acting as if he were not unjust. For example, the tyrant may justify his rule by acting more as a steward than as a tyrant, more as public arbitrator than as a seeker of private interest, more as a guardian of his subjects than as their dominator, more as people’s representative than as their demagogue, and more as a guardian of tradition than as its destroyer. After all, Aristotle ended up bringing the superiority of kingship into sharp relief in his recommendation for the second method (Mandt 1994, 55).

Thus far, we have summarized Aristotle’s theory of tyranny. It is interesting to note that the elaborate diagnosis and critique of tyranny was present in classical Confucianism, notably in *The Works of Mencius*, Aristotle’s contemporary in pre-Chin China. Mencius established the “Theory of the Overthrow and Punishment of a Tyrant” as an important strand in the Confucian tradition, and his theory

has laid the groundwork for Confucian justification of revolutionary struggle against tyranny and autocracy. It is mandatory to examine Mencius’ theory of tyranny and compare it with Aristotle’s.

THE THEORY OF THE OVERTHROW AND PUNISHMENT  
OF TYRANTS IN CLASSICAL CONFUCIANISM:  
THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF MENCIUS

Aristotle defines tyranny as rule by a single arbitrary ruler and points to Asia (including Persia) as its archetype. However, there is in fact a strong critical voice opposing tyranny in the political thought of Mencius that contradicts Aristotle’s Hellenocentric conviction. Mencius’ political philosophy may be characterized as the ideal of “kingly rule” (or rule of virtue).<sup>14</sup> Its major features can be summarized as follows: requiring the support and consent of the people as a condition for legitimate political rule; the provision of basic property (or material needs) for the people; requiring the joint rule of a monarch and ministers to prevent a single, arbitrary rule; abiding by the theory of the overthrow and punishment of tyrants; and, finally, ruling virtuously with generosity rather than with strict rule of law with heavy punishment (propagated by Chinese Legalists).

While Aristotle devotes himself considerably to describing major features of tyranny and examining the method for maintaining tyrannical rule, *The Works of Mencius* does not include such considerations. Instead, Mencius focuses his attention mainly on describing major features of genuine kingship, proposing preventive measures against tyranny, and legitimizing the overthrow and punishment of tyrants.<sup>15</sup> Concrete descriptions of tyranny in Confucian political philosophy can be found mainly in the *Shujing* (Book of Documents)<sup>16</sup> as well as in *The Works of Mencius*. We shall next identify major features of tyranny presented in the *Shujing*, and then examine Mencius’ critical analysis of tyranny and justification of revolution in comparison with Aristotle’s.

The *Shujing* and *The Works of Mencius* reflect similarities between Confucian and Aristotelian descriptions of tyranny in the following passages:

After the death of King Yao and King Shun, the principles that mark sages fell into decay. Oppressive sovereigns arose one after another, who pulled down houses to make ponds and lakes, so that the people could not get clothes and food. Afterwards, corrupt speakings and oppressive deeds became more rife; gardens and parks, ponds and lakes, thickets and marshes became more numerous, and birds and beasts swarmed. By the time of the tyrant Chau [Zhou], the kingdom was again in a state of great confusion,

(Mencius 1960, 280)



The king of Hea [Xia] extinguished his virtue and played the tyrant, extending his oppression over you, the people of the myriad regions. Suffering from his cruel injuries, and unable to endure the wormwood and poison, you protested with one accord your innocence to the spirits of heaven and earth.

(Confucius 1960, 186)

Now, Show [Zhou],<sup>17</sup> the king of Shang, does not reverence Heaven above, and inflicts calamities on the people below. He has been abandoned to drunkenness, and reckless in lust. He has dared to exercise cruel oppression. Along with criminals he has punished all their relatives. He has put men into office on the hereditary principle. He has made it his pursuit to have palaces, towers, pavilions, embankments, ponds, and all other extravagances, to the most painful injury of you, the myriad people. He has burned and roasted the loyal and good. He has ripped up pregnant women.

(Confucius 1960, 284-285)

Now Show, the king of Shang treats with contemptuous slight the five constant virtues, and abandons himself to wild idleness and irreverence. He has cut himself off from heaven, and brought enmity between himself and the people. He cut through the leg-bones of those who were wading in the morning; he cut out the heart of the worth man. By the use of his power killing and murdering, he has poisoned and sickened all within the four seas. His honour and confidence are given to the villainous and bad. He has driven from him his instructors and guardians. He has thrown to the winds the statutes and penal laws. He has imprisoned and enslaved the upright officer. He neglects the sacrifices to Heaven and Earth. He has discontinued the offerings in the ancestral temple. He makes contrivances of wonderful device and extraordinary cunning to please his woman.

(Confucius 1960, 294-295)

Reading the above quotes, it is clear that there are many similarities between Aristotelian and Confucian descriptions of tyranny worthy of close examination. First of all, tyranny in Confucian thought refers to the form of rule enforced entirely by violent and immoral means. As the above quotes show, the foremost feature of tyranny is violent rule of terror that instills constant fear. Such a reign of terror is similar to Aristotle's tyrant, who mobilizes coercive force and relies upon foreign bodyguards. It was by ruling with violent and immoral means that Jie and Zhou, the two notorious tyrants, drove people to desert them. Second, just as Aristotle defines kingship as the rule within the limit of law and tyranny as the rule in violation of law, the tyrant in the *Shujing* is portrayed as an arbitrary destroyer of law, as we can see in the passage, "He has thrown to the winds the statutes and penal laws." Third, Aristotle states that tyranny is maintained by the removal of outstanding men and men of spirit who threaten it, and

in the *Shujing*, tyrants kill loyal ministers, those representing the will of people as in the phrase, "burning the loyal and the good." Furthermore "imprisoning and enslaving upright officers" is an idea similar to Aristotle's description of the tyrant who turns free citizens into subjects. Fourth, just as the tyrant in the *Shujing* built palaces, towers, pavilions, embankments, ponds, and all other extravagances to increase his own pleasure and to harm his people, so did Aristotle's tyrant impoverish his people by undertaking large-scale construction works. This also confirms Aristotle's point that tyranny is a single person's rule with a view to his own advantage. Finally, Aristotle suggests that the tyrant is a destroyer of tradition by showing that the tyrants always need to display particular cultist zeal. Chinese tyrants are also found to destroy tradition as shown in the passage: "He neglects the sacrifices to Heaven and Earth. He has discontinued offerings in the ancestral temple." Considering all this, the discussion of tyranny in classical Confucianism that appears in *The Works of Mencius* and the *Shujing* is very similar to Aristotle's ideas of tyranny.

Turning to Mencius' critique of tyranny and justification of its overthrow, it should be noted that Mencius stressed the idea of the joint rule of a king and ministers and the will of people as the source of legitimate political rule, either to prevent tyranny or to overthrow it. First of all, it was for the sake of preventing a single man's arbitrary rule that Mencius stressed the joint rule of a king and ministers. King Shun whom Mencius admired most was famous for his willingness to consult with and follow others in his rule, instead of insisting on his own way: "He (Shun) regarded virtue as the common property of himself and others, giving up his own way to follow that of others, and delighting to learn from others to practise what was good" (Mencius 1960, 205).

Shun's precedent served an exemplary model not only for saintly kings but also for kings and lords during the Spring and Autumn period who placed priority on real politics more than moral politics:

There was the behaviour of T'ang [Tang] to I Yin [Yi Yin]:—he first learned of him, and then employed him as his minister; and so without difficulty he became kingly sovereign. There was the behaviour of the duke Hwan to Kwan Chung [Guan Zhong]:—he first learned of him, and then employed him as his minister; and so without difficulty he became chief of all the princes.

(Mencius 1960, 214)

In Confucian political thought,<sup>18</sup> the relation between king and ministers is based basically on righteousness and reason, so ministers may abandon a king if righteousness and

reason are in discord. A king's arbitrary rule over ministers is rejected in Confucian political thought. Furthermore, as is shown in the above quote, Confucianism argues that the king may exercise his rule by learning of his ministers. Mencius warned against the danger of a single rule by a monarch and contributed to consolidating the idea of a joint rule of king and ministers, a uniquely Confucian political idea.

Mencius also criticized tyrannical rule by employing the analogy of a lapidary. He argued that the government of the country should rely upon expert knowledge, and that even a king's authority should not interfere with ministers, just as carving and polishing a gemstone should be completely trusted to a lapidary (Mencius 1960, 168). Mencius' idea of rule by experts is similar to Plato's idea of philosopher-rulers, and contrasts sharply with Aristotle's stress on the rule by amateurs.

Had Mencius' argument stopped here, then he might have been criticized for merely defending oligarchical rule by a small class of intellectuals or experts, just as Plato has been criticized. However, Mencius was not satisfied with his argument for the joint rule of king and ministers in order to check tyrannical rule. He further proposed the support and consent of the people as the condition for legitimate political power, which may be understood in line with Aristotle's stress on rule with subjects' consent as the essential condition distinguishing kingship from tyranny. The support and consent of the people may be confirmed passively, such as when people welcome a given policy of a king or he makes it a rule to share pleasures with his people. But more importantly, we find that Mencius insists that power come from the people and be exercised in accordance with the will of the people.

Mencius declares that the source of power lies in the people. According to him, the authority of kings such as Yao and Shun was recognized and given by Heaven, and Heaven in turn also reflected the will of the people. In his explanation of the succession from Yao to Shun, Mencius stated that Heaven and the people accepted Shun in turn, when Yao presented Shun to both of them respectively (1960, 355). Quoting a passage from the *Shujing*, Mencius says that "Heaven sees according as my people see; Heaven hears according as my people hear" (1960, 357). This means that Heaven reflects the will of people, although the two are separate sources of authority.

Regarding the exercise of political power, Mencius explicitly states that the will of the people as a whole should be reflected in important government policies. For example, the appointment of ministers and penal administrators

were important government affairs in ancient China, and Mencius stresses that a king should implement such policies, as those of appointing and dismissing ministers and passing a death sentence upon a criminal, only after all the people approve them. He notes:

When all those about you say,—“This is a man of talents and worth,” you may not therefore believe it. When your great officers all say,—“This is a man of talents and virtue,” neither may you for that believe it. When all the people say,—“This is a man of talents and virtue,” then examine into the case, and when you find that the man is such, employ him. . . . You must act in this way in order to be the parent of the people.

(1960, 166)

Mencius asserts here that in appointing ministers, a king should deliberate in a long series of hearing processes with diverse strata of courtiers, ministers and people, and then make a final decision on the basis of these hearings and his own reflections (1960, 166). Mencius places great importance on the will of the people in policy-making process. Although the mechanism representing the will of the people in ancient Chinese states was not institutionalized, Mencius' political thought clearly incorporates the spirit and idea of representing the will of people in Confucian political thought. This might suggest that Confucian political thought possibly follows the concept “by the people,” in addition to the elements “of the people” and “for the people,” whereas it has been commonly thought to contain only the latter two among the three elements of democracy.<sup>19</sup> Mencius' trust in the people's will also indicates that the common argument that Confucian tradition is a critical barrier to the development of democracy in East Asia may be made too cursory at best.

Finally, it is important to note that for Mencius, the support and consent of the people is crucial not only in legitimating political power, but also in resisting and overthrowing tyranny. Thus, Mencius stressed the fact that people enthusiastically welcomed kings Tang and Wu as leaders of revolutions when they undertook the overthrow and punishment of tyrants:

While Tang punished their rulers, he consoled the people. His progress was like the falling of opportune rain, and the people were delighted. It is said in the *Book of History* [*Book of Documents*], “We have waited for our prince. When our prince comes, we may escape from the punishment under which we suffer.”

(1960, 273)

Mencius replied, “If the people of Yen [Yan] will be pleased with your taking possession, then do so.” Among the ancients there was one who acted on this principle, namely king Wu. “If the people of Yen will not be pleased

with your taking possession, then do not do so." Among the ancients there was one who acted on this principle, namely king Wan [Wen].

(1960, 273)

People's delight with Tang's "progress" as if it were "the falling of opportune rain" explicitly indicates their active support and consent to the new political order. Of course, the institutionalized validation procedure of popular support and consent was absent in the times of Mencius. Yet Mencius' recognition that political power is effective only when it is based on popular support and consent shows his deep insight into the origin and generation of political power.

In addition, in his legitimization of resistance against tyranny, Mencius argues that the tyrant is not a king but a thief or ruffian:

The king Hsuan [Xuan] of Chi [Qi] asked, saying, "Was it so, that Tang banished Chieh [Jie], and that king Wu smote Chau [Zhou]?" Mencius replied, "It is so in the records." The king said, "May a minister then put his sovereign to death?" Mencius said, "He who outrages the benevolence proper to his nature, is called a robber; he who outrages righteousness, is called a ruffian. The robber and ruffian we call a mere fellow. I have heard of the cutting off of the fellow Chau, but I have not heard of the putting a sovereign to death, in his case."

(1960, 167)

Mencius' calling tyrants "mere fellows" rather than "kings" reverberates in a similar passage in *Two Treatises of Government* of John Locke, who is famous for his theory of resistance. Pointing to the dangerous nature of the arbitrary and tyrannical supreme ruler, Locke states: "But when he quits this Representation, this Public Will, and acts by his own private Will, he degrades himself, and is but a single private Person without Power, and without Will, that has any Right to Obedience" (1967, 386). Here the "private person" is equivalent to Mencius' "mere fellow." Mencius' logic of overthrowing and punishing a tyrant is comparable to Aristotle's praise of tyrannicide in which he said that he who kills a tyrant is awarded with great honor. Likewise, Tang and Wu, who overthrew and punished tyrants, have been honored and enshrined as "sage kings" in Confucian political thought.

Mencius' theory and insight so far delineated clearly show that Oriental despotism is a Western invention of stigma upon Asia, and is inapplicable to ancient Chinese and East Asian civilization and classical Confucianism. Mencius' political philosophy is clearly incompatible with tyranny. And therefore, Mill's derogatory remark that the history of

a lack of systematic resistance in Asia to tyranny is clearly Orientalist ideology based on poor evidence.

#### CONCLUSION

Aristotle defines tyranny as a single man's arbitrary rule that is disrespectful of the law, goes against the will of the people, and pursues the ruler's private interest. According to Aristotle, such tyranny seeks to preserve itself by employing various measures such as breeding mutual distrust and fear through constant surveillance, encouraging ignorance and impoverishment of people, and suppressing free political action by citizens. Tyranny thus represents the antithesis to Aristotle's ideal polity, in which governance depends on the support and consent of free citizens and political action is based on deliberative consensus. Aristotle also examines those elements maintaining tyranny, and notes that great honors are given to citizens who overthrow tyranny.

Mencius provided a path-breaking turning point in the history of Confucian political thought by elevating the status of people as high as the mandate of Heaven. For Mencius, tyranny, which rules against the will of people, is the worst political system. The tyrant is no more than a robber or a ruffian who betrays benevolence and righteousness, and is thereby demoted to the status of "a mere fellow," who happens to occupy the throne. According to Mencius, tyranny is also an open dictatorship of terror, which fails to provide basic living conditions for people, exercises arbitrary rule of men which trespasses the standard of propriety and law, oppresses virtuous ministers, ignores the popular opinion, and imposes rule by violence. Thus, the tyrant who dominates over the people with cruelty and greed rightfully becomes the object of popular grievance and hatred, and is a public enemy whose murder will be supported by popular will. For example, when Tang and Wu overthrew and punished Jie and Zhou, they were empowered by popular support and consent. Tang and Wu were able to do it by gaining popular support and consent, while Jie and Zhou were overthrown by losing that support.

Thus far, we have compared Confucian theory of tyranny with that of Aristotle. Through this comparison, we criticized the Aristotelian, Hellenocentric argument that the peoples of Asia were servile and tyranny naturally suited their political system. At the same time, we have found that Aristotelian analysis of tyranny sheds insightful light on understanding tyranny in ancient China and that Mencius' understanding of tyranny was quite similar to that of Aristotle. The political thought of Mencius has remained an important source of East Asian tradition. Mencius

encourages and approves active resistance and struggle against tyranny and oppression, and strives for the realization of virtuous “kingly rule.” In no way does Mencius preach an “orientalized” tradition which, according to Aristotle and Mill, encourages passivity and discourages resistance against tyrannical rules. Reexamination of political thought in East Asia suggests that traditionally, there was a criteria of judgement for proper politics which asserted that it was legitimate to overthrow and punish tyrants. With this in mind, we will be better equipped to rejuvenate the elements hospitable to progress in East Asian tradition and to conduct a genuine dialogue between Eastern and Western civilizations.

#### Notes

1. Eurocentrism is used more frequently than Westcentrism. This paper will use the latter term to explicitly include the United States, Canada, Australia, etc. Westcentrism consists of three general propositions. First, that modern Western civilization has reached the highest stage of development in human history (Western superiority). Second, that the developmental stages in Western history are universally applicable to all human histories in the world (universalism and historicism). Third, that non-Western societies positioned in lower stages of development in history can improve themselves only by emulating and accepting Western civilization (civilization/modernization = Westernization).
2. In opposition to this Orientalist attitude, one interpretation notes that the rule of virtue and the rule of law (or ritual/propriety) were closely intertwined in classical Confucianism represented by Confucius, Mencius, and Xunzi. Also, the rule of *li* (ritual/propriety) in Confucianism was actually a non-liberal form of constitutionalism related to the constitutional issue of how to control rulers. See Kang (2003).
3. At the same time, it may be said that democracy in the West is normal and natural, while Nazism, Fascism, and Franco’s authoritarianism may appear to have been temporary perversions. With regard to the critique of Western scholars’ (particularly Huntington’s) Westcentrism with regard to democracy, see Kang (1999; 2000).
4. Aristotle lived from 384 to 322 B.C. and Mencius from 372 to 289 B.C.—the two men lived almost in the same period.
5. As we shall later examine, Aristotle defines human nature as essentialist in terms of ethnic differences. According to *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies*, “Essentialism is the assumption that groups, categories or classes of objects have one or several defining features exclusive to all members of that category. Some studies of race or gender, for instance, assume the presence of essential characteristics distinguishing one race from another or the feminine from the masculine. In analyses of culture it is a (generally implicit) assumption that individuals share an essential cultural identity . . .” (Ashcroft et al. 1998, 77).
6. Doubtlessly even Greek women were excluded from its intended application.
7. Hella Mandt is one among contemporary theorists who presents the resistance to tyranny not as a right but as the duty (Mandt 1994, 61).
8. Thus, according to Ernest Barker, “Aristotle advised Alexander, in the exhortation ‘On Colonies,’ to distinguish between Greeks and barbarians,” treating the former as a constitutional leader and the latter as a despotic master, as the latter, including Persians, lacked the capacity to develop virtues. However, Alexander who had a good sense of balance as a politician did not follow Aristotle’s advice but treated Greeks and Persians equally, promoting “intermarriage and common military service” (Barker 1969, iix, xvii). Thus, Barker continues, “It meant a great revolution,” giving birth to “the *cosmopolis* in place and instead of the polis” (Barker 1969, iix).
9. Because of the constraints of his times, Aristotle could not have extended his research of political systems farther east than Persia.
10. Aristotle asserted that “kingships among uncivilized peoples,” for example, in Asia, are thus “of the nature of tyrannies.” According to Aristotle, then, the law in the kingships of Asia is a means for maintaining tyranny rather than an instrument for checking it.
11. For example, refer to the following passage: “. . . and when it is imposed, by fraud or by force, it is instantly regarded as a form of tyranny” (Aristotle 1969, 241). In addition, Aristotle’s explanation of deceitful actions the tyrant takes to preserve his rule proves this point (1969, 246-250).
12. Thus we find the following sentence in *The Nichomachean Ethics*: “[Justice] exists least in the worst form: in tyranny there is little or no friendship” (Aristotle 1998, 212).
13. Of course Aristotle adds the crucial safeguard that “the reformed tyrant shall retain power, and is still in

a position to govern his subjects with or without their consent" (1969, 247).

14. When comparing Confucius and Mencius, Mencius stressed "righteousness" more strongly than "benevolence" among the Confucian cardinal virtues.
15. This is also the difference between Aristotle and Mencius. While Aristotle examines the method of preserving tyranny as well as overcoming it, Mencius rather takes a firm stand against tyranny. Thus, although both of them display strong normative attitude in their political analysis, still we could say by comparison that Aristotle shows more positivist temper, while Mencius maintains a more normative spirit.
16. The *Shujing* (Book of Documents) is a collection of books on history covering the earliest three dynasties in ancient Chinese history, which were originally kept by the offices of history in various dynasties and were later filed and edited by Confucius. Thus, the theory of the overthrow and punishment of tyrants did not appear first in *The Works of Mencius*, but had been present from the beginning of Chinese political thought. However, Confucius did not mention the overthrow and punishment of tyrants in his *Analects*. Thus it is Mencius who contributed to promoting the theory into one of the core principles of Confucianism. James Legge translated the *Shujing* as *The Shoo King*. Refer to Confucius (1960).
17. Show is the name for Zhou, the last king of Shang.
18. How ministers serve the prince depends on how the latter treats the former. "When the prince regards his ministers as his hands and feet, his ministers regard their prince as their belly and heart; when he regards them as the ground or as grass, they regard him as a robber and an enemy" (Mencius 1960, 318). The founder of Ming empire was allegedly exasperated at this passage, and removed it from *The Works of Mencius* as well as the following passage: "The people are the most important element in a nation; the spirits of the land and grain are the next; the sovereign is last" (Mencius 1960, 483). See Huang Zongxi (2000, 54 n. 16).
19. Of course, this point should not be interpreted as asserting that all Confucian heritage is hospitable to democracy. Rather it only intends to criticize some Western scholars who are more than happy to deny the value of Confucianism because of its some ostensibly negative aspects.

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### James Behuniak, Jr. (essay date 2005)

SOURCE: Behuniak, James, Jr. "The Human Disposition." *Mencius on Becoming Human*, State U of New York P, 2005, pp. 73-99.

[In the following essay, Behuniak focuses on Mencius's understanding of inherent and learned aspects of human nature, discussing parables from the philosopher's teachings in his analysis. Chinese characters originally in this essay have been silently removed.]

#### RELATIONSHIPS AND THE HUMAN DISPOSITION

As suggested in chapter three, preserving the kind and quality of feeling generated in the family and expressed through filial affection is profoundly important in the Confucian world. Confucius considers filial piety (*xiao*) to be the root from which the Confucian way (*dao*) emerges.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the *Book of Filial Piety*, which asserts that the way of parent and child is the "natural disposition" (*tianxing*) of the human experience,<sup>2</sup> considers filial piety to be the root of excellence in character and the source of all Confucian teaching.<sup>3</sup> In the *Zhongyong*, tributes to great Confucian exemplars commence in recognition of their filial piety.<sup>4</sup> And with the ascendancy of Confucianism in the Han, the epitaph *xiao* is added to the posthumous title of every emperor.<sup>5</sup> The importance of family feeling in this tradition cannot be overstated. In the Confucian world, all qualitatively human relationships are derivations of family relationships.<sup>6</sup> In the absence of family, one has little claim on the designation "human" (*ren*).

Mencius is both heir and progenitor to this profoundly family-centric way of thinking. For Mencius, as we have seen, the cultivation of character is a process rooted in feelings of family affection. It is also family affection that serves as a necessary condition for qualifying one as human. On this point, Mencius is unequivocal: "if one is not engaged [*de*] in family affection [*qin*], one cannot be called human [*ren*]."<sup>7</sup> The newly recovered *Six Positions* (*Liuwei*) document from Guodian concurs and is even more explicit, suggesting that family affection is itself a sufficient condition:

Having affection [*qin*] towards one's close and distant relatives: being "human" lies solely in this [*weiqirensuozai*]. Engage [*de*] in this affection and the "human" begins to be present [*ju*]; disengage from this affection and the "human" ceases to be [*zhi*].<sup>8</sup>

The Mencian notion of the human disposition (*renxing*) is here understood as a corollary to this Confucian assertion. For Mencius, the giving and receiving of family affection is an essential component of the human experience: it is from associated living in the family that all qualitatively "human" sensibilities stem. Being born into a caring family "disposes" one towards feelings of family affection, and it is the proclivity of this initial, "human" disposition to extend one's family-borne sensibilities into the world and become increasingly "human" along Confucian lines.

This interpretation of the human disposition raises a much debated question in Mencian studies: Is the Mencian notion of *renxing* genetic or is it cultural?<sup>9</sup> Mencius describes family affection as something "unlearned" (*buxue*),<sup>10</sup> and maintains that the "capacity" (*cai*) to become human is something "conferred by *tian*."<sup>11</sup> Interpreted genetically, these statements are considered as evidence of Mencius' belief in innate, human characteristics biologically given prior to any social conditioning or contact. If family affection (*qin*) is understood to be such a characteristic, then *renxing* for Mencius would be something akin to a biologically given "human nature."

Such a one-sided reading, however, is in tension with the assumptions of a *qi* cosmology. In a *qi* cosmology, formation and function are inseparable within the process of structured emergence, such that, as Tang Junyi puts it, dispositions (*xing*) "match up" with the ongoing process of *tian* (*tiandao*).<sup>12</sup> If we preserve the kind of transactional model that is more consistent with this cosmology, then social and cultural circumstances become factors in the shaping of "unlearned" responses "conferred" by *tian*. If structural emergence is understood as the process of "taking shape" within the layered patterns and processes that are *tian*, then the conditions that sponsor emergence factor into emergent formations and their concomitant functions.<sup>13</sup> Such an understanding would give more weight to the social, cultural, and historical aspects of the human disposition, and in addition to being more loyal to Warring States cosmology, it would better fit the account of human emergence that Mencius presents in his telling of the Chanxiang episode.<sup>14</sup>

This episode involves Xuxing, an uncouth southerner from Chu and follower of the egalitarian, agrarian-based Shen-neng ideal.<sup>15</sup> Xuxing settled in Tang and began to attract local followers. One of these adherents was Chanxiang. Chanxiang had formerly been educated under Chenliang,

originally a southerner like Xuxing, although one who had come north to be educated in the most productive course (*dao*) established by the Confucians. Chanxiang, in transferring his allegiance from the refined, northern-educated Chenliang to the southerner, Xuxing, was abandoning the Confucian course and returning to an agrarian ideology associated with southerners.

While arguing with Chanxiang over the merit of Shenneng ideology, Mencius volunteers a lesson in cultural history. He relates how, before Xie was appointed minister of education under Yao and Shun, the Chinese people existed only at the level of material subsistence. This, Mencius says, was “the most productive course [*dao*] that they had.” He continues to relate how, “being well-fed and warmly-clothed but dwelling idle without education, they were ‘close’ [*jin*] to birds and beasts.” Mencius explains that once Xie was appointed minister, he proceeded to teach the people “human relationships” (*renlun*): affection between father and son, appropriateness between ruler and subject, distinction between husband and wife, respect of the old by the young, and faithfulness between friends.<sup>16</sup> In the account given in the *Book of Documents*, we learn that Xie’s establishment of human relationships was initiated because, without them, people were “not affectionate” (*buqin*).<sup>17</sup> In Mencius’ telling, it was Xie’s establishment of the human relationships that enabled the Chinese people to “consume themselves” (*zide*).<sup>18</sup>

After recalling the historical establishment of human relationships, Mencius echoes Confucius’ praise of Yao, adding that Yao patterned himself after (*ze*) *tian* in his accomplishments. In the *Analects*, Confucius’ praise reads in part: “How great was Yao as ruler! How majestic his accomplishments, and how brilliant his cultural achievements!”<sup>19</sup> Mencius is matter-of-fact about the superior achievements of Confucian-based Chinese civilization: “I’ve heard of Chinese civilization converting barbarians,” he says, “but I’ve never heard of converting back to barbarian!” Mencius cannot accept the fact that Chanxiang would abandon Confucianism and follow the likes of Xuxing, a “twittering-tongued barbarian from the south, whose most productive course is not that of the ancient kings.” Mencius lodges his disapproval with a striking image: “I have heard of emerging from a dark ravine to settle in a lofty tree, but I have never heard of descending from a lofty tree to settle in a dark ravine.”

Mencius’ treatment of Chanxiang is telling. If a human disposition is something that Mencius considers “good” (*shan*), then in labeling Chanxiang’s conversion back to barbarian ways “not good” (*bushan*), he is suggesting that, in abandoning the human relationships established by Xie,

Chanxiang becomes less than human. That non-Confucian practice fails to distinguish “human” experience from barbarism and leaves people closer to animals is always Mencius’ position. His main objection to the teachings of the Yangist and Mohist schools is that each undermines one of the human relationships that distinguish the Chinese from animals. He objects to Mohism on the basis that it fails to acknowledge fathers and to Yangism on the basis that it fails to acknowledge rulers, and “without rulers and fathers, we are animals.”<sup>20</sup> Mencius’ point throughout is that those who are not proceeding on the course established by Xie have lost their human dispositions. They are closer to animals.

The distinction between humans and animals is one that Mencius describes as “slight” (*xi*); he explains that the common person loses this distinguishing feature while the exemplary person like Shun, who “has insight into human relationships,” preserves it.<sup>21</sup> The five human relationships, which include the putatively “unlearned” feeling of family affection (*qin*), are the features that distinguish humans from birds and beasts. These distinguishing features do not appear to be strictly genetic for Mencius; instead, he traces them back to Xie’s reforms, which under the wisdom of Yao are patterned like *tian*. The Chanxiang episode would suggest that the human disposition, if understood in terms of germinal, moral sensibilities rooted in one’s family upbringing, is understood by Mencius more as a historical, genealogical inheritance than as a genetic or biological one.<sup>22</sup>

As Mencius sees it, people are born into a world in which institutions like family have a history. If the human disposition emerges with moral sensibilities and habits shaped by such institutions, then the human disposition also has a history. And history is something always being made. If the sages, who are of the same sort (*lei*) as any other person,<sup>23</sup> can pattern themselves after *tian* and contribute to the extension of the human disposition, then any other person can as well. One is not only shaped *by* the institutions that one is born into; one can also contribute to the process of reshaping *them*. As Mencius says: “in building high, one takes advantage of existing hills.”<sup>24</sup> The person is both beneficiary and contributor to the structures established by one’s predecessors. Just as one’s disposition “extends” over the span of one’s life (*sheng*), the collective, human experience, over time, can be “extended” by the work of sages. The work of the sage is not at an end. Mencius eagerly awaits the emergence of new sages and considers their arrival “overdue.”<sup>25</sup>

We can assume that, prior to the achievements of Yao and Xie, Mencius considered people “close” to animals

in disposition (*xing*), since the word that Mencius uses in this context, “close” (*jin*), is the word Confucius uses in reference to *xing*. Confucius says, “In disposition we are close [*jin*], and by habit and experience [*xi*] we are distanced.”<sup>26</sup> Confucius employs the language of proximity and distance in a manner reminiscent of an episode in the *Book of Documents* involving Taijia, son and successor of Tang, the founder of the Shang dynasty. Here, too, disposition is how people are initially “close” and habit and experience are what introduce “distance.”

The *Book of Documents* relates that Yiyin, a minister to Taijia, decided to strategically relocate the palace of his wayward king in order to rehabilitate his ethical disposition (*xing*) which had been completely altered by poor ethical habits (*xi*). Yiyin declares:

Now this is inappropriate behavior, and by habit has become established as his disposition [*xing*]. I cannot remain close by what I do not accord with.<sup>27</sup> I will build a palace in Tong, where Taijia will be intimately connected to the former Kings.<sup>28</sup> This instruction will prevent him from wandering astray in life.<sup>29</sup>

Taijia’s bad habits lead him so far astray that he develops a completely new disposition, one out of accord with the disposition of those to whom he was once in “close” proximity. Yiyin’s solution is to locate him even “closer” to the cultural and historical source of the disposition he left behind. Taijia’s moral disposition is treated exclusively as a cultural product—not as anything even remotely genetic. Mencius is clearly fond of the Taijia story. In recollecting it, he relates how Taijia was successfully rehabilitated by the relocation initiated by Yiyin,<sup>30</sup> and how the minister acted out of noble intent in banishing the king.<sup>31</sup> Mencius himself prescribes a similar program for King Yen of Sung.<sup>32</sup>

Read against the story of Taijia, Confucius and Mencius are saying that disposition (*xing*) is how “we” are close, an observation of the fact that groups, having achieved some level of common practice and like-mindedness, share certain tendencies and attitudes. Mencius suggests the same in his telling of the Chanxiang episode. While Confucius does not present a position on the “goodness” (*shan*) of a disposition,<sup>33</sup> from what he does offer, we can surmise that like Mencius he is not presenting a biological or genetic account of the human disposition. Confucius realizes that dispositions are culturally malleable: those who begin “close” in their culturally disposed tendencies may, like Taijia, become distanced from one another through the undergoing of experience and the formation of habit.

In the *Mozi*, we see just how far groups of people diverge by virtue of their cultural habits. Mozi presents a series of

ethnographies intended to illustrate the degree to and frequency with which habit (*xi*) replaces appropriate behavior (*yi*) and becomes customary (*su*). Mozi’s examples are intended to shock. East of Yue, people once chopped up and ate their first-born sons in order to benefit their next born. South of Chu, there are a people who scrape the flesh off the bones of their dead parents and, once they have buried the bones, feel they have “completed the actions of filial offspring.” Mozi calls into question the associated humanity of such people:

Leaders regard these customs as the affairs of governing state, and the people regard them as acceptable procedure; they are performed without cessation and adopted without discrimination or choice. Yet how could it be that they actually represent the most productive course with regards to associated humanity and appropriateness? What we have here are people instituting habitual practices and deeming appropriate their vulgar customs.<sup>34</sup>

Mozi would have custom established on the basis of his utilitarian principle. While he never explicitly links the notion of custom (*su*) to Confucian ritual (*li*), he likely means to suggest that Confucian ritual is equally indiscriminate and established without utilitarian evaluation.<sup>35</sup>

Mencius, however, is equally critical of people’s tendency to behave indiscriminately and form habits (*xi*) without reflection. As he says:

The multitudes do not understand what they practice and form habits without their noticing it. Their entire persons emerge without any realization of the course [*dao*] they are on.<sup>36</sup>

The Mencian prescription for this malady differs from that of the Mohist. Rather than guide social practice according to the normative standard of benefit (*li*), Mencius proceeds in deference to appropriateness (*yi*), the “fittingness” that calls to mind the normative measure of harmony (*he*). He stresses family affection and filial piety with the aim of eliciting moral, social, and political practices that correlate with the harmony of the family institution established by Xie. The identification of family affection with a qualitatively “human” existence is an endorsement of the Confucian way. The ancient sages, in establishing the five human relationships, began with family affection, and for Mencius, this has been the foundation of “human” experience ever since.

From Mencius’ Confucian perspective, the family-borne disposition is morally and socially good. Family affection conditions an initial disposition the proclivity of which is to develop more robust human relationships (*ren*) and more refined moral sensibilities (*yi*). That such a human disposition does not reduce to biological functions, “eating



and reproduction” (*shise*), for instance,<sup>37</sup> is a point that Mencius wishes to make clear:

Gaozi said: “Disposition is the life process [*sheng*].”

Mencius said: “To say that disposition is the life process: is this like saying white is white?”

“Yes.”

“And the whiteness of white feathers is like the whiteness of white snow, and the whiteness of white snow is like the whiteness of white jade.”

“Yes.”

“Then is the disposition of a dog like the disposition of an ox, and the disposition of an ox like the disposition of a human?”<sup>38</sup>

Kwong-loi Shun’s meticulous philosophical and linguistic analysis of this passage yields the following submission, with which I concur:

[Mencius] wanted to redirect attention to a way of viewing *xing* that does not emphasize the biological. Instead, as seen from his query that ended the debate, he viewed the *xing* of human beings as something that distinguishes them from other animals, rather than as biological tendencies common to all.<sup>39</sup>

This distinguishing feature is cultural. It is “human relationships” that make “human” dispositions possible, not anything strictly biological.<sup>40</sup> Before the advent of human relationships, all beings were more or less animals. Thanks to the family-related institutions established by Xie, becoming “human” is now a “capacity” that people have from birth. If one neglects the cultivation and extension of this capacity over the course of one’s life, then one reverts back to being an animal. Confucians, remaining family-centric, identify themselves with the “human” side of this distinction and thus strive to maintain it. As Confucius says, “I cannot go congregating with birds and beasts; for if I am not a member in the human world, then who am I?”<sup>41</sup>

#### THE HUMAN DISPOSITION AS GOOD

Mencius is widely recognized for his optimistic assertion that the human disposition is “productive” or “good” (*shan*). Confronted with alternative notions, he explains his position as follows:

As far as one’s emotion [*qing*] is concerned, one is capable of becoming good [*shan*]. This is what I mean by “good.” As for those who are not good [*bushan*], this is not the fault of their capacity [*cai*].<sup>42</sup>

In coming to understand the Mencian position, we now benefit from the recently unearthed *Dispositions Arise*

from *Conditions* document that deals extensively with the notions of “emotion” (*qing*) and disposition.

The first thing to note about *Dispositions Arise from Conditions* is that it locates emotion (*qing*) within a disposition (*xing*) not as a fixed attribute, but as the discursively emergent product of experience. The text begins:

Generally, while people have a disposition [*xing*], their heart-minds [*xin*] have no fixed aspirations [*zhi*]. These wait upon things and events, and only then arise. They wait upon an inclination, and only then enter into action. They wait upon the formation of habit, and only then become fixed. The energies [*qi*] of pleasure, anger, grief, and sadness are a matter of disposition. When they come to be externally manifest, things and events have activated them. Dispositions arise from conditions. Conditions are conferred by *tian*. The proper course [*dao*] has its beginning in emotion [*qing*]. Emotion arises from a disposition. In the beginning stage, the proper course is close to emotion; and in the concluding stage, it is close to appropriateness. Those who understand emotion are able to discharge it; those who understand appropriateness are able to incorporate it. Predilection itself is disposition. Likes and dislikes are a matter of things and events. Goodness [*shan*] itself is disposition. Being good or not good is a matter of the propensity of circumstances [*shi*].<sup>43</sup>

In *Dispositions Arise from Conditions*, dispositions (*xing*) name the predilections, aspirations, and proclivities developed in transaction with things and in relation to the propensity of circumstances. Apart from the experience of doing and undergoing in the world, disposition (*xing*) and feeling (*xin*) are notions void of content. They are “mute.” The text explains:

When dispositions are under consideration, things and events are activating them. Metal and stone have a sound, but if they are not struck they will not ring out. So, although people have dispositions and feelings, in the absence of things and events to activate them, they would not arise.<sup>44</sup>

Dispositions can only be considered as embedded in the world. Feelings can only be considered as engaged. In other words, dispositions have no transcendent “nature” that is formed prior to engagement in the world. Once a process is commenced, an initial disposition obtains. This disposition is then “grown” over the course of its emergence. The text explains:

Dispositions have things that agitate them, things that challenge them, things that cooperate with them, things that discipline them, things that produce them, things that nourish them, and things that grow them.

Things and events agitate dispositions, inclinations challenge them, things already brought about cooperate with them, appropriateness disciplines them, the propensity of

circumstance produces them, habits nourish them, and the process itself [*dao*] grows them.<sup>45</sup>

With *Dispositions Arise from Conditions* now in hand, little doubt should remain that disposition (*xing*) can be understood as a process-oriented notion in the Warring States period and that it is so understood in the Si-Meng lineage of Confucianism.

But what is “emotion” (*qing*) and how does it assist us in understanding the Mencian notion of a “good” human disposition? As *Dispositions Arise from Conditions* suggests, “emotion arises from a disposition.” The presentation of pleasure, anger, grief, and sadness as *qi* energy configured in a disposition is consistent with our previous discussion of the transactional nature of feeling (*xin*) in chapter two. *Qing* as a neutral term appears to be the most inclusive manner by which to refer to the terminal result of the transactions that issue into various emotional states. These transactions are conditioned by a disposition; hence, emotional content itself “arises” from a disposition. The question to be asked of Mencius can be framed as follows: what is the distinguishing emotion (*qing*) that arises from a qualitatively “human” disposition?

In *Dispositions Arise from Conditions*, dispositions are presented in terms that resonate with the *Mencius* and other writings in the Si-Meng school: they arise from “conditions” (*ming*) that are “conferred by *tian*.” This is to say that dispositions take shape within ongoing processes and are “grown” over the course of adjustment to those processes. Just to be disposed is to have predilection, but the things and events that are experienced must be factored in before predilection becomes actual likes and dislikes. Similarly, just to be disposed is to have some degree of goodness (*shan*), but only when the propensity (*shi*) of a set of circumstances is factored in can a disposition become productive or unproductive. Mencius explains that as far as one’s emotional content is concerned one is capable of becoming good (*shan*). This, he says, is what he means by “good.” With *Dispositions Arise from Conditions* as our guide, we know better what to look for in filling out his position.

First, if Mencius is talking about an emotion, he is also talking about a disposition that facilitates it. Second, if Mencius is talking about a disposition, he is also talking about a set of conditions that sponsor its emergence. Third, if Mencius is talking about a “good” disposition, he is also talking about the propensity of circumstances under which it is so. In keeping with the causal framework of a *qi* cosmology, all four elements—conditions (*ming*), disposition (*xing*), propensity (*shi*), and emotion (*qing*)—operate

in tandem, so we are not looking for disparate explanations. As the family-borne, “human” disposition commences with family affection (*qin*), this would be the most likely candidate for the emotion that Mencius has in mind. Family affection is emotion arising from the propensity of a disposition configured within a family. Mencius clearly considers the family to be the most productive (*shan*) set of conditions from which to emerge both morally and socially.

Mencius does not use the term *qing* very often. The term “feeling” (*xin*) does most of its work. One important occurrence of *qing* is in the “Ox Mountain” passage. The passage can be understood within the framework of the botanical model, and it helps establish the link between *qing*, understood as family-borne feeling, and the “capacity” (*cai*) that Mencius refers to in his description of the human disposition as good (*shan*). Mencius says:

The trees on Ox Mountain are no longer beautiful. The mountain lies on the outskirts of a large state: its trees are chopped down with axes, so how can they become beautiful? Given a regular hiatus, and the nourishment of the rain and dew, there is no lack of new shoots emerging; but then the cattle and sheep come to graze upon the mountain. This is why the mountain looks so bald. Seeing only its baldness, people think Ox Mountain never had any “wood stuff” [*cai*]. But how can this be the disposition [*xing*] of the mountain?

And so with humans: how can they be without the feeling of associated humanity and appropriateness? The case of losing this good, fertile feeling is like that of denuding trees with an axe.<sup>46</sup> When these are chopped day after day, how can they become beautiful? Even given a regular hiatus and the energies [*qi*] of a calm morning, the predilections that resemble closely [*jin*] those of humans become very few. What is done over the course of the day has a constricting effect and they perish.<sup>47</sup> If this constriction takes place repeatedly, then even the energies of the night will not be enough to preserve these predilections. If the energies of the night are not enough to preserve them, then one is not far from an animal. When humans see such an animal, they will think that it never had the capacity [*cai*]. But how can this represent the emotion [*qing*] of a human? Hence, anything that receives nourishment will grow; and anything deprived of nourishment will wither away. Confucius said, “Hold it and it is preserved, let it go and it perishes. It comes and goes at irregular periods and no one knows its direction.” It is perhaps to the heart-mind that he refers?<sup>48</sup>

As the “Ox Mountain” passage suggests, the “capacity” to become human can be understood in botanical terms. The term “capacity” (*cai*) overlaps phonetically with the notion of “wood stuff” (*cai*), which is also understood as the “quality” or “disposition” of an organic material.<sup>49</sup> Kwong-loi Shun argues that the “capacity” to become human in the *Mencius* refers ultimately to the “four sprouts”

(*siduan*) of human virtue.<sup>50</sup> It has already been suggested, and will be further argued below, that these capacities are “rooted” in family affection. Hence, just as the “wood stuff” of Ox Mountain is rooted in mountain soil, the disposition of which is to produce beautiful trees, the “capacity” to remain “close” to humans is rooted in family affection and its related states of feeling (*xin*), the disposition of which is to produce beautiful persons. We see once again, in the “Ox Mountain” passage, that it is daily “habit” that gradually overwhelms one’s family-borne disposition and results in behavioral tendencies that are no longer “close” to those that are considered distinctly human.

That developing one’s human capacity along Confucian lines inflicts no violence upon the initial disposition of the human “wood stuff” is a point Mencius is keen to make in his debates with Gaozi:

Gaozi said: “Disposition is like the willow tree. Appropriateness is like a cup or bowl. To take a human disposition and make associated humanity and appropriateness is like making a cup or bowl from the willow tree.”

Mencius responded: “Can you make cups and bowls in accord with the disposition of the willow tree, or must you mutilate the willow tree in order to make cups and bowls? If you must mutilate the willow tree in order to make cups and bowls, then must you mutilate people in order to make them persons of associated humanity and appropriateness? In bringing disaster upon associated humanity and appropriateness, it will certainly be this doctrine [*yan*] of yours that the world will be following.”<sup>51</sup>

The family-borne “human” disposition has a tendency toward Confucian development just as water tends to flow downward.<sup>52</sup> One born in family affection need not be forced to create oneself in a Confucian direction.

There is another level of significance to the “Willow Tree” passage. In likening Confucian virtues to objects “made” from a resistant, raw material, Gaozi substitutes a production model for the process-oriented botanical model. According to Mencius, such “technical” separation of ends from means is a property of doctrine (*yan*), and he does not allow Gaozi’s “willow tree” example to pass without the derogatory classification of his approach to human realization as doctrinaire. The Yangists and Mohists are associated with doctrines that attempt to force upon human development some end-driven result “for the sake of” (*wei*) some standard of benefit (*li*).<sup>53</sup> Mencius rejects the imposition of fixed ends upon the creative process of human development along with any doctrine formulated to endorse them. Recall that Mencius is “spontaneous” rather than “technical” in his orientation. He recommends not imposing anything on human development and seeks

instead to “bring about” only that which will emerge out of the human disposition’s own proclivities. He explains his position as follows:

The world’s doctrines [*yan*] about disposition [*xing*] are simply designed to bring something about [*gu*]. Those who would bring something about consider benefit [*li*] to be fundamental. What is objectionable in such clever people is their forced reasoning. If the clever were only to act as Yu did in guiding the floodwater, then there would be nothing objectionable in their cleverness. Yu guided the floodwater by not imposing anything on it [*wushi*]. When clever people also proceed without imposing anything, this is great cleverness indeed. While the heavens are high and the stars are distant; if only one seeks what comes about [*gu*] in this way, one can calculate the solstices of a thousand years without leaving one’s seat.<sup>54</sup>

The movement of celestial objects is conditioned in such a manner that their trajectories are open to forecast by the astute, empirically-minded observer. Mencius maintains that the conditions of human emergence can also be a matter of forecast to the empirical observer. For Mencius, human emergence is initially conditioned by family experience. Accordingly, Mencius forecasts a Confucian direction of development that he alleges will proceed unforced from these initial conditions.

Below, we consider the process of “bringing to fruition” (*shi*) the human virtues. We shall see that, while Mencius forecasts the direction of human development in the form of the “four sprouts,” he is not establishing their end results. In keeping with the botanical model, the end products of these virtues emerge over the course of their well-integrated (*cheng*) growth and unforced maturation. Mencius is a process-oriented thinker. He does not establish fixed ends antecedent to the process of development. This feature distinguishes Mencius from his principal adversaries, the Mohists and Yangists.

#### THE FOUR SPROUTS AND THE FAMILY

That humans have certain “shared” traits is an important theme in the *Mencius*. We find the most substantive discussion of this theme in two passages: the “Child at the Well” passage, in which Mencius outlines the four sprouts of human virtue, and the “Barley” passage, in which Mencius likens the process of becoming human to that of growing rows of barley. In order to understand these passages in context, we must bear in mind the principal themes discussed thus far. In what follows, we revisit the internal/external (*nei/wai*) debate, harmony (*he*), configurative energy (*qi*), and the botanical model. It will be argued that the common traits that Mencius attributes to humans as a “sort” (*lei*) in fact serve to reinforce a creative, particularistic

notion of human development, one that he traces back to the family institution.

In the “Child at the Well” passage, Mencius presents the cultivation of one’s human disposition as contingent upon the proper extension of feelings from what he refers to as their “sprouts” (*duan*). The “Child at the Well” passage is best considered in its entirety. Mencius says:

Each and every human [*ren*] has feelings [*xin*] sensitive to the suffering of others. The former kings had such feelings, and these were manifested in their compassionate governing. Putting such feelings to work in governing, they ordered the world as easily as turning it in their palms.

As for each human having feelings sensitive to the suffering of others, suppose a person suddenly sees a child about to fall into a well. Each would feel empathy for the child—not in order to gain the favor of the child’s parents, nor to win the praise of villagers and friends, nor out of concern for a potentially blemished reputation.

From this we observe the following: without such a feeling of commiseration one is not human, without a feeling of shame one is not human, without a feeling of deference one is not human, and without a feeling of discrimination one is not human. A feeling of empathy is associated humanity [*ren*] in its germinal state. A feeling of shame is appropriateness [*yi*] in its germinal state. A feeling of deference is ritual propriety [*li*] in its germinal state. A feeling of discrimination is wisdom [*zhi*] in its germinal state.

People [*ren*] have these four sprouts just as they have four limbs. For one to possess these four sprouts yet consider oneself incapable of developing them is self-mutilation; for one to consider the ruler incapable of doing so is to mutilate the ruler.<sup>55</sup>

For anyone having these four sprouts in him or herself, to realize their enlargement and bring them to “fullness” [*chong*] is like having a fire catch or a spring break through. If these germinal beginnings are brought to fullness, one might safeguard the whole empire; if they are not, one might not even tend to one’s own parents.<sup>56</sup>

In fitting this passage into the Mencian botanical framework, it is necessary to establish the “soil” from which the sprouts that distinguish humans from other sorts of creatures emerge. In the “Child at the Well” passage, “not tending to one’s parents” is presented as just as much of a threshold for calling someone “human” as empathy for the child in danger. We have already seen that, according to Mencius, if one fails in maintaining one’s family affection (*qin*) one can no longer be called “human.”<sup>57</sup> Mencius, however, does not identify family affection as a “sprout.” It is more likely that family affection is the “soil” from which the “four sprouts” emerge. Hence, if one becomes unhuman to such a degree that one cannot even care for

one’s own parents, then one’s “four sprouts” wilt in the process. All human virtues emerge from and remain rooted in family feeling. Without family feeling one cannot even begin to become human.

To assume that “human” sensibilities are rooted in some source outside (*wai*) the family would violate the core of Mencius’ position. This is a position reinforced in the “Two Roots or One” episode with Yizhi.<sup>58</sup> Mencius there maintains that moral growth is rooted not in doctrine but in family affection. Again, Mencius is not alone in maintaining his family-centric position; the *Book of Filial Piety* concurs. In the *Book of Filial Piety*, the “human” disposition traces back to the earliest stages of childhood:

In the efficacious virtue of the sage, what was there besides filial piety? Family affection originates at the parent’s knee; thereby veneration for one’s parents is nourished on a daily basis. The sage proceeds from veneration to the instruction of respect; and proceeds from family affection to the instruction of concern. Sagely instruction is comprehensive without being severe, and sagely government is effective without being strict. They proceed from the root.

The way [*dao*] of a father and his son is a natural disposition [*tianxing*]; and this is also appropriateness (*yi*) between ruler and subject. This originates from one’s parents. There is no greater gift.<sup>59</sup>

Moral development in this tradition traces back to the affections that one is disposed to share with one’s parents in the earliest stages of life. Moral sensibilities then “extend” in the form of a disposition to feel and act in a qualitatively “human” way as one’s person takes shape. In keeping with the major premise of this tradition, the four sprouts that grant one the capacity to become increasingly human are most adequately understood as extensions of the “unlearned” sensibilities rooted in one’s family upbringing. Initially, to be human is to “take shape” in an environment of family affection. It would be difficult to imagine Mencius appealing to the “four sprouts” of the child who did not.

Mencius’ description of the human virtues provides further evidence that the four sprouts are rooted in family experience. Recall that the “fruit” (*shi*) of each sprout is developed entirely in terms of family relationships and their embellishments:

Serving one’s parents is bringing associated humanity to fruition. Respecting one’s elder brothers is bringing appropriateness to fruition. Understanding the two and not leaving them is bringing wisdom to fruition. Ordering and embellishing the two is bringing ritual propriety to fruition.<sup>60</sup>

Given that the “fruit” of each human virtue matures in a family context, the “fullness” of the four sprouts spoken of

in the “Child at the Well” passage can be understood as the unique achievements of persons, like Shun, who have remained consistently rooted therein. Giving “fullness” (*chong*) to something is to be understood as “bringing it to fruition” (*shi*). Together, *chong* and *shi* take on the verb/compliment form in the *Mencius*.<sup>61</sup> Hence, the cultivation of what is human, from its germinal state to its achieved form, is a process located in the family context—beginning to end. Humans are creatures who initially emerge from families and sustain that root in cultivating their distinct persons. Shun was such a person, and the sage and we are of the same sort.<sup>62</sup>

#### THE SATISFACTION OF BECOMING HUMAN

Locating the project of becoming human in the family highlights the personalized, nonprogrammatic nature of this process. Recall the polemic context: Mencius’ rejection of the Mohist doctrine of concern for each (*jianai*) is based on the contention that no order is to be imposed on human virtues outside (*wai*) the process of “bringing these to fruition” (*shi*) in one’s own concrete relationships. The image of the four sprouts, in keeping with the botanical imagery throughout the *Mencius*, is designed to foreground the creative dimension of growth. As the man from Song learned, things that grow do so in their native environments, at their own speeds, or else they perish.<sup>63</sup> The point here is that one cannot force a strict pattern upon growth. Pattern must emerge within the process of maturation; it must “take shape” in transaction with its immediate environment.

Hence, in emerging from particular families and “extending” their sensibilities into the world, individual persons “bring to fruition” what it means to become human. The “human” itself takes shape. There is no strict blueprint by which to govern this process; it is governed instead by allowing the novel development of social patterns that emerge from an extended form of interpersonal feeling that originates with family affection. The *Book of Filial Piety* maintains that the ancient sages “governed” society in such a noncoercive manner and in so doing were “effective without being strict.”<sup>64</sup> The *Mencius* can also be understood as an endorsement of such noncoercive governing. Institutions such as burial rites, relationships such as those between ruler and subject, customs such as dietary habits, even ethical standards such as those governing the proper treatment of animals, will arise and transform of themselves with the “extension” of human sensibilities and the emergent demands of associated living.<sup>65</sup>

The importance of associated humanity (*ren*) in Mencius’ thinking thus becomes understandable. Associated humanity

grows initially from the family.<sup>66</sup> To lose family feeling, and by extension one’s associated humanity, amounts to forfeiting participation in the novel construction of an emergent human world. Outside the circle of associated humanity lies the perverse world of the animal; within the circle of associated humanity reside the emergent standards of human morality and feeling. As Mencius puts it, “associated humanity is human feeling [*renxin*].”<sup>67</sup> There is no sharp distinction between the process of associated living and the “human” sensibilities that emerge over its course. Hence, for Mencius, the Confucian way (*dao*) amounts to “associated humanity coming together [*he*] in what is human [*ren*].”<sup>68</sup> The substance of what it means to be “human” emerges in the process (*dao*) of associated living. It is this *process* orientation that must be restored to the Mencian position. While one remains nominally “human” when a distressed child elicits a certain response, this “capacity” or “ability” (*cai*) to respond to that child becomes by default the *responsibility* to do something and to participate in the process of determining what being “human” in that instance will mean.

While becoming human is a process in the *Mencius*, it is not a haphazard or random development. Becoming human and “giving fruit” to the human virtues is fueled by a spontaneous, creative energy and generative of deep satisfaction. Mencius makes reference to this on two occasions. First, in the “Child at the Well” passage, he speaks of an unstoppable momentum that attends the process of “bringing to fullness” (*chong*) one’s capacity to become human. He likens this to “a fire catching or a spring breaking through.”<sup>69</sup> Later, when discussing the complimentary notion of “bringing to fruition” (*shi*) one’s inchoate human qualities, Mencius describes the unstoppable creative energy this generates:

When joy arises how can it be stopped? Being unstoppable, one dances it with one’s feet and waves it with one’s arms without being aware.<sup>70</sup>

The spontaneous energy and felt satisfaction that Mencius presents as part of cultivating one’s human capacities traces back to his resolution to the *nei/wai* debate, to his grounding in a *qi* cosmology, and ultimately to the normative measure of harmony (*he*).

The feelings that make one human are rooted in the love one shares with one’s family; the “four sprouts” are, by association, also forms of immediate feeling that indicate a disposition that is humanly configured, well integrated (*cheng*), and coherent (*li*). Recall that if a disposition remains well integrated as it grows in its broader constitutive habits, it configures a “flood-like” *qi* that Mencius equates with development that is “optimally vast” (*zhida*) and

“optimally firm” (*zhigang*).<sup>71</sup> By integrating well and preserving coherence over the course of developing as a person, one maximizes in breadth and depth the circuit of one’s experience.<sup>72</sup> Mencius resolves the *nei/wai* debate by appeal to the transactional nature of well-integrated growth. The “flood-like” *qi* is the qualitative result of a life configured so as to optimize the felt satisfaction of integrating well into the patterns that constitute one’s environment. Maintaining such integrity over the course of personal development maximizes one’s life force (*qi*).

As argued in chapter three, the quality associated with integrating things productively (*shan*) into patterned wholes—be it adding ingredients to a soup or adding voices to an ensemble—is assessed, in the Confucian tradition, according to the measure of harmony (*he*). Mencius uses the same kinds of illustrations, culinary and musical, in describing the pleasure that humans feel in sustaining coherence (*li*) and fitting in appropriately (*yi*) as they cultivate their incipient human capacities, suggesting that becoming human is also an achievement evaluated in terms of harmony. The pleasure of becoming human, like that of a good culinary or musical experience, is fundamentally an aesthetic pleasure. Such pleasure speaks to the manner in which humans are similar as a sort. We turn now to the “Barley” passage:

In good years, the young are largely reliable. In bad years, the young are largely impetuous. It is not that the capacity [*cai*] conferred by *tian* is radically different. The difference comes about as a result of their feelings [*xin*] being blocked.

Consider barley. Allow that we sow barley seeds and cover them with soil. The earth is the same, and the season they are sowed likewise the same. The plants shoot forth, and by summer solstice, each and every one is ripe. While there are dissimilarities, this is due to the various richness of the soil, the nourishment of the rains and moisture, and the disparity of personal attention.

Hence, generally, things of the same sort [*lei*] each resemble one another. Why should humans alone be an exception to this? The sage and we are of the same sort. Thus Longzi said, “In making a shoe for a foot one hasn’t known, we know one will not produce a basket.” Shoes resemble one another since feet throughout the world are similar.

So it is with taste in food. Palates are similar in their preferences. Yiya was the first to apprehend the preferences of our palates. Were it the case that the disposition [*xing*] of palatal preferences differed in humans in the manner that dogs and horses are of different sorts than we, then how could it be that each and every palate in the world pursues the preferences of Yiya? When it comes to taste in food, the fact that the world looks to Yiya shows that all the palates in the world resemble one another.

So it is also with listening to music. The whole world looks to Shikuang, and this shows that all ears in the

world are similar. The same goes for what the eye sees. The whole world appreciates the beauty of Zidu; whoever does not is blind. Hence it is said: all palates have the same standard in taste; all ears have the same standard in sound; and all eyes have the same standard in beauty.

When it comes to feeling, is it this alone in which nothing is commonly so? What is it to feeling that is commonly so? It is coherence [*li*] and appropriateness [*yi*]. The sage was the first to apprehend what in our feelings is commonly so. Hence, coherence and appropriateness bring pleasure to our feeling just as meats bring pleasure to our palates.<sup>73</sup>

This passage suggests that becoming human is a felt pleasure that all humans share. And read within the family-centric framework of the *Mencius*, it also states that despite differences in “nourishment” and disparities in “personal attention,” the young, like so many barley seeds, emerge “largely reliable” from the “soils” of their respective families. The conclusion to be drawn from the “Barley” passage, however, is ultimately this: The pleasure of becoming human in a family has as its foundation, like any good musical, culinary, or aesthetic experience, the normative measure of harmony (*he*).

Considering the polemic context of the *Mencius*, it is no surprise that the pleasure Mencius appeals to in designating the “human” as a sort (*lei*) is the same as that which comes from being a Confucian. Recall that Confucianism provides the satisfaction of cultivating associated humanity (*ren*) and appropriate conduct (*yi*) while meaningfully participating in a world beyond oneself. By preserving integrity (*cheng*), which is something that does not reduce to either “internal” or “external” factors, one is “intensively” involved and “giving one’s all” (*zhong*) and simultaneously “extensively” involved and “putting oneself in another’s place” (*shu*). The exemplary person is at once integrally present in the world and sensitive to its other participants; this is the “single thread” that Confucius equates with his entire philosophy.<sup>74</sup> Confucians had long considered this pleasure to be found in family experience. Mencius is now isolating that satisfaction and designating it qualitatively “human.” He is aware, however, that avenues for this satisfaction are not ahistorical; as he says, “The sage was the first to apprehend what in our feelings is commonly so.”<sup>75</sup> It was the historical sage who inaugurated properly “human” institutions (*renlun*) based on his experience with these feelings.

We can now summarize what Mencius considers humans to share. First, Mencius considers people to have the “capacity” to become increasingly human. This capacity we identify as the four sprouts of human virtue that trace back to being born and nourished in family affection (*qin*). This

capacity is “conferred by *tian*.” *Tian* in this context is understood as the history, experience, culture, institutions, and general processes that have shaped human emergence since Xie was minister to Yao and Shun. This disposition (*xing*), formed through family affection, is one that over the course of person’s life (*sheng*) has the proclivity to extend in ways that correspond with traditional Confucian virtues. This disposition is deemed “human,” it is productive or “good” (*shan*), and it is something that “humans” initially share.

Second, people share an inherent pleasure in sustaining coherence (*li*) while fitting themselves appropriately (*yi*) into the world over the course of developing their initial, human dispositions. Recall that the coherence of one’s disposition is linked to its integration (*cheng*), its propensity to feel and act with spontaneous appropriateness (*yi*). Integrity is upset by desire (*yu*) and doctrine (*yan*), each of which mediate experience and compromise the continuity of growth. To preserve and extend one’s integral feelings over the course of growing as a person is something that, according to Mencius, each and every human will find pleasure in.<sup>76</sup>

#### THE VALUE OF THE PERSON

That becoming human for Mencius represents something more than just a biological process is also reflected in the “Fish or Bear’s Paw” passage. The human life is not one merely “lived”—it is one “lived with self-respect.” Mencius explains:

Fish I want. Bear’s paw I also want. If I cannot have both, I would rather take the bear’s paw. Life I want. Appropriateness I also want. If I cannot have both, I would rather take-appropriateness. While life is what I want, there is something I want more than life. Hence, I will not cling to life at all costs. . . .

There are things one wants more than life, and things one loathes more than death. It is not the person of quality [*xian*] alone that has this feeling [*xin*]; each and every human has it. It is just that the person of quality never forfeits it.<sup>77</sup>

The self-respect of a person can be understood in terms of that person’s “value” (*gui*), but just as not all humans maintain their self-respect, not all humans realize their own value. Mencius explains:

The desire for value [*gui*] is a feeling similar [*tong*] in humans. In fact, every human has value in him or herself; it is just that this has never been reflected on. What people value is not truly valuable. What Zhaomeng finds value in, Zhaomeng can also depreciate.<sup>78</sup>

The *Songs* say: “Having intoxicated us with wine, having filled us with character [*de*] . . .”

This illustrates that, having been satisfied with associated humanity [*ren*] and appropriateness [*yi*], one does not long after the exquisite foods that others enjoy. Being worthy of esteem and widely appreciated exhibits itself in one’s person [*shen*], such that one does not long after the exquisite trappings of others.<sup>79</sup>

When it comes to locating the “value” of a person, Mencius does not appeal to common traits; he is more interested in the end products of those who develop a personal character (*shen*) of unique quality and integrity.

In the “Barley” passage, as in the “Child at the Well” passage, Mencius gives a nod in the direction of shared human traits. His main objective in doing so is to defend Confucianism against its adversaries. He is interested in “grounding” Confucian practice in felt experience and in the historical era of the sages: the era that gave rise to the human experience itself. According to Mencius, the sages established human experience and they understood what was pleasurable in that experience. Mencius would like to make it appear that Mohists and Yangists, so far removed from such experience, are neither Chinese nor human. The presentation of “shared” human traits is largely a polemic device that serves this purpose.<sup>80</sup> One wonders if Mencius would ever formulate such notions without the prompting of adversaries. Polemic exigency aside, Mencius has a *genuine* philosophical interest in the novel contributions that individual persons make to human experience over the course of its emergence. He is most interested, and without provocation, in individual particularity and worth.

Mencius understands that shared traits are not enough to secure the worth of human individuals. He relates the following:

“Since Zengxi was fond of jujubes, Zengzi, his son, could not bear to eat them.”

Gong Sunchou asked, “Which is more delicious, roasted meat or jujubes?”

Mencius replied, “Roasted meat, of course.”

“So, why was it that Zengzi ate roasted meat but did not eat jujubes?”

“Roasted meat is a common [*tong*] taste, but jujubes are a particular [*du*] taste. We avoid the use of another’s given name, but we do not avoid the use of one’s family name. The family name is what is common; the given name is what is particular.”<sup>81</sup>

The significance of this passage becomes clear once we consider the role of names in the Chinese world. Names speak both to the continuity and the particularity that characterizes persons. One’s given name (*ming*) does not merely signify one’s existence; a given name confers distinction

in the form of one's "reputation." Given names, we learn in the *Zuozhuan*, "cannot be loaned to others" since "they are used to generate one's credibility."<sup>82</sup> Zengzi cannot adopt the particular characteristics that distinguish his father just as he cannot adopt his father's given name, which itself serves as his father's "claim" to an achieved distinction.<sup>83</sup> Zengzi must distinguish his own "name" and establish his own reputation, a prospect that Confucius holds to be of the highest importance.<sup>84</sup>

Mencius does maintain that humans are similar in that they come from families and find satisfaction in the development of their self-worth. The "value" of humans, however, is based more on the particularistic, achievement end of human development than on the "shared" nature of these base characteristics. In the "Jujube" passage, the sorts of things that humans share, like pleasure in roasted meat or a surname (*xing*), provide insufficient content to distinguish one person from another.<sup>85</sup> Similarly, the virtues that distinguish humans from nonhumans are content-poor without being "filled out" (*shi*) in the creative emergence of the particular person. Mencius is more interested in the process of human cultivation than he is in base characteristics. He does designate humans as a sort (*lei*), but when he remarks, "the glorious phoenix is the same sort of thing as any bird, and the mighty ocean the same sort of thing that runs in the gutter,"<sup>86</sup> he is not exalting common traits at all but rather celebrating the achievement of distinction.

For Mencius, the achievement of distinct character over the course of a life is what really generates worth and brings each and every human satisfaction. If this satisfaction is as common to us as the pleasures of the palate, then this only means that the creative possibilities of becoming "human" are as varied as those of becoming "delicious." What is important to Mencius is not the common, empty capacity to become human, but rather that some people are "twice, five times, or countless times" better at developing their human capacity than are others.<sup>87</sup> This qualitative disparity among humans is due to the relative inability of some to be productive in "getting the most" (*jin*) out of the capacities furnished through their initial, family-borne dispositions.

Mencius insists that to become sage-like one must "go somewhere" (*jian*) with one's initial disposition.<sup>88</sup> This is done by "pursuing" (*cong*)<sup>89</sup> either its lesser or greater components (*ti*), and with qualitatively different results. While those who succeed in maintaining a human status do so equally in some general sense, this is not as important to Mencius as how some humans distinguish themselves in a more concrete sense. As Gong Duzi inquires:

"While equally human, some become greater humans than others, how is this?"

Mencius replied, "Those who pursue the greater component become the greater humans, those who pursue the lesser components become the lesser humans."<sup>90</sup>

The greater (*da*) component is the function of feeling (*xin*), the root of one's emergence as a "home-grown" human person with distinct moral character. The lesser (*xiao*) components include the sensory functions and members of the physical body that have a different "value" and ought not to rank higher than feeling in priority for nourishment and cultivation. The function of feeling rather than the biological body, strictly speaking, is the locus of the capacities (*cai*) that enable one to cultivate oneself as human.<sup>91</sup>

As argued above, these sprouts originate and find expression in family experience. Becoming human is the process of getting the most out these sprouts. In so doing, one is bringing something inchoate to "fullness" and thereby "bringing to fruition" one's human virtues.<sup>92</sup> To "get the most" (*jin*) out of one's initial disposition and feelings is to draw out from these everything that they make available. The notion of "getting the most" out of something is reflected in a cognate term, *jin*, which refers to the remnant ashes of something fully combusted. In a Confucian context, this does not mean developing an inherent *telos* toward a predetermined end.<sup>93</sup> In keeping with the normative measure of harmony (*he*) that guides the Confucian program, "getting the most" out of a thing means integrating its qualities by facilitating its optimal expression within the aesthetic limits of balance and proportion. That *jin* involves a balanced, proper measure is suggested in the image of striking a bell from the *Book of Rites*:

Struck with something small, a bell gives a small sound. Struck with something large, it gives a large sound. But let it be struck leisurely and properly and one "gets the most" [*jin*] out of its sound.<sup>94</sup>

*Jin* refers to the optimal expression of something. Here, optimal expression involves not just volume but proper proportion, for only then does something productively contribute the full range of its unique qualities.

In the context of bringing about social harmony, to allow people to "optimally express" themselves and to contribute their experiences to that of a collective humanity is considered crucial to securing political legitimacy. In the *Book of Documents* we read:

If rural men and women are not given the confidence to "get the most out of themselves" [*zijin*], the people's lord will fail to complete his own achievement of merit.<sup>95</sup>



These passages in the *Book of Rites* and the *Book of Documents* contribute towards a more adequate understanding of *jin* in a Confucian context. The term involves optimal expression and balanced integration. It also suggests the creation of an environment that facilitates the contribution of each person to an ongoing humanity, and is thereby related to social conditions generally and tied to political legitimacy.

As we see in the next chapter, Mencius and other Si-Meng Confucians understand people's "getting the most" out of themselves in their own circumstances—historical, social, economic, biological, spiritual and so on—in relation to the overall advancement of the "human way" (*rendao*).

#### Notes

1. *Analects* 1.2.
2. *Book of Filial Piety* 2/9/28.
3. *Book of Filial Piety* 1/1/4-5.
4. *Zhongyong* 17 and 19.
5. Lewis (1999) p. 358.
6. The sociologist Ambrose King makes this argument. See King (1985) p. 58. See also Hall and Ames (1995) pp. 276-77.
7. *Mencius* 4A: 28.
8. Li (2002) p. 131; *Liuwei* 6:1.
9. Irene Bloom and Roger T. Ames have established the two clearest positions on the issue.

Bloom (1994) argues that *renxing* for Mencius means "human nature" in a genetic or "fundamentally biological" sense. It is one, however, "intelligible in both normative and descriptive terms" (p. 44). According to her reading, this is a position Mencius establishes in relation to three counter-positions advocated in the text, the most important of which is advocated by Gaozi in *Mencius* 6A: 3. Bloom calls this a "narrow biologism" that maintains that *xing* can be wholly reduced to biological life and physical appetites. According to Bloom's reading, Mencius maintains in *Mencius* 6A: 7 that "the faculty of the moral mind" (*xin*) is just as "biological" as other physical drives and dispositions. Accordingly, Mencius affirms the presence of the moral "faculties" in terms referred to as "the capacities sent down from Heaven" or what in modern terms we would recognize as genetic." Mencius' assertion that "the sage and we are the same in kind" further reflects, for Bloom, the genetic status of

these faculties and affirms the fundamental identity of human beings. See Bloom (1997) p. 27. Thus, this heaven-endowed, genetic identity is what Mencius means by "human nature."

Ames argues that "human nature" is not an adequate translation of *renxing* since the term is not intended as a description of what human beings "genetically" or "biologically" share. According to Ames, "genetic" readings reflect an "interpretive prejudice" that privileges an "ahistorical given" over what human beings themselves achieve. See Ames (1991) p. 143. Noting that the differences between the human being and the animal are considered "infinitesimal" (*xi*) in *Mencius* 4B: 19, Ames identifies these differences as cultural rather than biological. Appealing to the fact that *xing* in the *Mencius* is also used verbally (see *Mencius* 7A: 21, 7A: 30, 7B: 33, and Ames (1991) pp. 159-60), Ames maintains that the human virtues for Mencius are not "givens," but are instead, as *Mencius* 7A: 21 states, are "what the exemplary person cultivates as *xing*," or, literally, what they "*xing*." Being culturally achieved rather than biologically given, the human virtues identified with *renxing* are neither genetic nor inalienable. They can be forfeited or "lost" (*shi*) by morally inattentive people. Thus, for Ames, "when (Mencius) says 'there is no human being who is not good (*shan*),' he is also saying that 'anyone who is not good is not really human.'" See Ames (1991) p. 162.

The interpretation forwarded here is more in line with Ames's cultural reading, as will be demonstrated presently.

10. *Mencius* 7A: 15.
11. *Mencius* 6A: 7.
12. Tang (1988) p. 22.
13. The phrase "The human and *tian* are joined in continuity" (*tianrenheyi*) is conceived not as the coordination of two separate and independent spheres, but rather in terms of the continuity (*yi*) of interdependent processes mutually emergent.
14. The episode is found in *Mencius* 3A: 4.
15. For more on Shenneng movement, see Graham (1989) pp. 66-74.
16. The *Six Positions* document from Guodian also identifies basic human relationships with the instruction (*jiao*) of the first king (*xianwang*). The document is

- unusual in that it treats the distinction (*bie*) between male and female as prerequisite to the establishment of affection (*qin*) between father and son. The patriarchal character of Confucian thinking in this period is nowhere more in evidence than in the *Six Positions*.
17. Legge (1994) vol. 3, p. 44.
  18. *Mencius* 3A: 4.
  19. *Analects* 8.19.
  20. *Mencius* 3B: 9.
  21. *Mencius* 4B: 19.
  22. The question is more complex in the *Book of Filial Piety*, where filial piety is described as arising out of respect for the physical inheritance of one's skin and hair from one's parents. It is difficult to say whether such a notion is indicative of the kind of thinking that, Irene Bloom might say, "in modern terms we would recognize as genetic." See *Book of Filial Piety* 1/1/4-6 and n. 9 above.
  23. *Mencius* 6A: 7.
  24. *Mencius* 4A: 1.
  25. *Mencius* 2A: 1.
  26. *Analects* 17.2.
  27. "Close by" (*xia*) and also, by extension "intimate with" (*xiajin*).
  28. "Intimately connected to" (*mier*) and also, by extension, "near to" (*erjin*).
  29. Legge (1994), vol. 3, pp. 203-04.
  30. *Mencius* 5A: 7.
  31. *Mencius* 7B: 31.
  32. *Mencius* 3B: 6.
  33. *Analects* 5.13 suggests that beyond his observation of the relation between disposition and proximity, Confucius did not discuss the topic.
  34. *Mozi*, 25; Watson (1963) pp. 75-76.
  35. Kwong-loi Shun shares this inference. See Shun (1997) p. 29.
  36. *Mencius* 7A: 5.
  37. In *Mencius* 6A: 4, Gaozi suggests that disposition reduces to these functions.
  38. *Mencius* 6A: 3.
  39. Shun (1997) pp. 93-94.
  40. To some degree, however, the human disposition as Mencius understands it does rely on "biological" conditions. Birds, dogs, or plankton cannot adopt a human disposition, and one would presume that there are some "biological" factors that explain why not. Be that as it may, it is Mencius' intention to elevate cultural conditions over biological conditions in his presentation of *renxing*. To be "biologically" human is a necessary but not sufficient condition for having a *renxing*.
  41. *Analects* 18.6.
  42. *Mencius* 6A: 6.
  43. Li (2002) p. 105; *Xingzimingchu* 1.
  44. Li (2002) p. 105; *Xingzimingchu* 2.
  45. Li (2002) pp. 105-06; *Xingzimingchu* 5-6.
  46. *Liang* means "good" and, in its extended sense, "fertile." It is also associated with "grain" (*liang*). See Karlgren (1957), p. 194. *Liang* here means "good" in the sense of "good land." Maintaining the botanical metaphor here is important. To translate *liang* simply as "good" is to lose the sense of being "good for" or "productive," which is also the sense in which Mencius uses the term *shan*.
  47. *Gu* has the extended sense of "binding" as in "binding one's hair in a knot." See Karlgren (1957) pp. 91-92. Presumably it is the unencumbered flow of configurative energy that is being "constricted" by unproductive, daily habits.
  48. *Mencius* 6A: 8.
  49. *Cai* is also associated with the notion of "planting" (*zai*). See Karlgren (1957) pp. 247-48. *Zhongyong* 17 employs the notion of botanical "capacity" in a philosophical context.
  50. Shun (1997) pp. 216-17.
  51. *Mencius* 6A: 1.
  52. *Mencius* 6A: 2.
  53. A. C. Graham (2001) demonstrates that the Yangists and Mohists have points in common in terms of their terminology and technique of debate:  
  
For example, the later Mohist dialectical chapters, the Yangist chapter *Shenwei* ("Be Aware of What You are For") in the *Lüshichunqiu*, and the second and third dialogues of "Robber Chi" all share a technical use of the falling tone *wei*, "for the sake of," to pose the

question of what one is for, one's end in life, the final criterion by which all actions are to be judged.

(pp. 221-22)

Hence, Graham translates the Mencian condemnation of Yang Zhu in these terms: "What Yang was for was self" (*weiwo*). See *Mencius* 7A: 26 and Graham (2001) p. 223. The Mohist interest in benefit (*li*) is clear enough throughout the *Mozi*. In Graham's reconstruction of the Yangist teachings, he proposes that Yangism "starts from the same calculations of benefit and harm as does Mohism." See Graham (1989) p. 56.

54. *Mencius* 4B: 26.
55. Cf. *Mencius* 1B: 28.
56. *Mencius* 2A: 6.
57. *Mencius* 4A: 28. "If one is not engaged in family affection, one cannot be considered human."
58. *Mencius* 3A: 5.
59. *Book of Filial Piety* 2/9/26-29.
60. *Mencius* 4A: 27. Cf. 7A: 15.
61. *Mencius* 7B: 25. What is good (*shan*) in a person becomes aesthetically best when it is "given fullness so as to be brought to fruition" (*chong-shi*). *Shi* in this instance is the resultative compliment of *chong*.
62. *Mencius* 6A: 7.
63. *Mencius* 2A: 2.
64. *Book of Filial Piety* 2/9/28.
65. In the spirit of Mencius, we "extend" the significance of certain episodes in order to suggest this point. What if, in *Mencius* 1A: 7, King Xuan felt that he could not bear the sacrificial slaughter of *any* animal? And what if the exemplary person *did* go into the kitchen? What if Mencius himself, so quick to call others animals, could experience the equivalent impact of a Warring States March on Birmingham and the wearing of placards that read, "I am a Man"? The point suggested has the merit of being true. Standards of morality and feeling are transformed and redefined with human experience. And there is always further to go.
66. *Analects* 1.2.
67. *Mencius* 6A: 11.
68. *Mencius* 7B: 16.
69. *Mencius* 2A: 6.
70. *Mencius* 4A: 27.
71. *Mencius* 2A: 2.
72. Cf. Hall and Ames (2001) p. 24.
73. *Mencius* 6A: 7.
74. *Analects* 4.15.
75. *Mencius* 6A: 7.
76. In scholarship more inclined to understand *renxing* in genetic terms, it is presented as "significant" that Mencius "repeatedly" uses the phrase "each and every human" in attributing "the natural tendencies he then specifies" [Bloom (1997) p. 24]. There are seven instances in which Mencius uses the term "human" without qualification in connection with "each and every" (*jie*), and they are not always important where they do occur. There are the significant uses connected with the four sprouts, which "each and every human" has (*Mencius* 2A: 6). And there is the equally important discussion concerning that which "each and every human" is unable to bear (*ren*); the claim, however, is that each and every person has limits, not that there is a uniform threshold (*Mencius* 6A: 6). There is the claim that "each and every human" can become a sage (*Mencius* 6B: 2). And there is also the claim that "each and every human" has, as part of his or her parental feeling (*xin*), the wish to see offspring happily married and not involved in shameful or illicit conduct (*Mencius* 3B: 3). In the "Fish or Bear's Paw" passage, discussed below, there is the claim that "each and every human" has a sense of dignity and self-worth that prevents him or her from surviving at any cost. We learn, however, that this dignity can be lost and it is only maintained in persons of quality (*Mencius* 6A: 10). The remaining claims, that "each and every human" believes that Chenzhong would refuse the state of Qi if offered under inappropriate circumstances and that "each and every human" would hold his or her nose while passing by Xishi covered in filth, would appear to be less significant as "natural tendencies" (*Mencius* 7A: 34 and 4B: 25). The list of substantive traits shared by "each and every human" can be roughly categorized under the two proposed headings: feelings derived from being brought up in a family, and the satisfaction of generating self-worth by emerging as a distinct, well-integrated person. The notion of "self worth" and the "value" of a person will be considered presently.

77. *Mencius* 6A: 10.
78. Zhaomeng is the title of chief minister of Jin, a title held by four ministers in the house of Zhao. In the *Zuozhuan*, Zhaomeng is presented as capable of “observing the aspirations” (*guan zhi*) of senior officers by having them chant a song of their own choosing. Zhaomeng then evaluates their characters accordingly. See Lewis (1999) pp. 162, 424.
79. *Mencius* 6A: 17.
80. See *Mencius* 3B: 9, for his own explanation of his polemic purpose. Here, as elsewhere, his program is associated with safeguarding the original work of the sages.
81. *Mencius* 7B: 36.
82. Hall and Ames (1987) p. 273.
83. On the use of names as “claims” in character, see Lewis (1999) p. 33.
84. *Analects* 15.20.
85. Here we note that surname (*xing*) is cognate with disposition (*xing*); both are initial starting points, but insufficient for the purpose of distinguishing one human from another.
86. *Mencius* 2A: 2.
87. *Mencius* 6A: 6.
88. *Mencius* 7A: 38.
89. *Cong* is yet another illustration of the priority of situation over agency characteristic of Chinese language (see Ch. 1 n. 43). The term suggests both “to” and “from,” meaning both “to follow” and “to come from.” In this instance, understanding *cong* as “to pursue” retains the notion of “to follow” while leaving room for the emergent dimension.
90. *Mencius* 6A: 15.
91. Mencius is not suggesting that one neglect the body and senses; he comments instead on the failure of some to apply the same concern that they have for their physical preservation to the preservation of their feeling (*xin*) (*Mencius* 6A: 12). He makes clear, however, that these two sorts of components (*ti*) have different values (*gui*), and that the greater component ought not to be neglected for the sake of cultivating the lesser component. He uses botanical imagery to make his point, noting that some trees are more valuable than others. (*Mencius* 6A: 13). Cf. *Mencius* 6A: 11 and 6A: 13.
92. The terms “bringing something to fullness” (*chong*) and “getting the most out of something” (*jin*) have a verb/compliment relationship in the *Mencius*. In *Mencius* 5B: 4, the content of appropriateness (*yi*) as a sort (*lei*) is discussed. The suggestion is made that taking anything that is not one’s own might count as theft. “Fully expressing [*chong*] the sort to such an extreme,” Mencius says, “is getting the most [*jin*] out of appropriateness.”
93. I suspect that *jin* does not involve an inherent *telos* in any classical Chinese context. The term does have a different connotation in the *Zhuangzi*, however, and this is important to point out.
- In chapter one it was argued that Zhuangzi does not endorse the Mencian project of developing one’s disposition (*xing*). Recall that Zhuangzi, in the “Inner Chapters,” focuses instead on the “shape” (*xing*) of things and feels that the “character” (*de*) of each shape is sufficient. Hence, for him, dispositions (or shapes) are not to be improved upon by a program of education, as the *Zhongyong* prescribes (See *Zhongyong* 1). As a corollary to this, shape is not to be improved upon through ritualized practices.
- This difference in attitude between the Confucian school and Zhuangzi comes to bear on the translation owed *jin* in the *Mencius* and the *Zhuangzi*. For Zhuangzi, to *jin* something is not to “get the most” out of it, but simply to “exhaust” it or allow it to go into “extinction.” For Zhuangzi, “The moment we obtain a shape we await its ‘exhaustion’ [*jin*]” (*Zhuangzi* 4/2/18; cf. Graham (2000) p. 51). For Zhuangzi, special effort and concern is not required to improve upon one’s shape; for as he sees it, a shape will run its own course and in the process be exhausted (*jin*). A teleological end does not dictate this process of “exhaustion” any more than “getting the most” out of something involves a predetermined end in a Confucian context. Shape for Zhuangzi is an expression of the transformation of things—the shaping and reshaping of things as they transform one into the next. Since there is no “essence” or “species” posited that transcends shape, there is nothing that furnishes any particular shape a *telos* over the course of its being exhausted.
94. *Book of Rites* 18.9. See Legge (1967) vol. 2, p. 89.

95. *Book of Documents* 6.4.11. See Legge (1994) vol. 3, p. 219.

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#### Joanne D. Birdwhistell (essay date 2007)

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[In the following essay, Birdwhistell considers the influence of gender on the Mencius, commenting on discussions of masculinity and familial and social relationships in the text. Chinese characters originally in this essay have been silently removed.]

We can read a text in many ways, and what we find depends in great part on the questions we bring to our reading. The richness in texts and approaches enables us as contemporary readers gain a better understanding of the complexities of the thought and world of the ancient philosophers. While the text of Mencius has been the subject of numerous studies, contemporary developments in scholarship invite its further examination. These developments are of various kinds, with some the result of recent archeological discoveries, while others related to a greater awareness of the assumptions that shape our investigations.

Inspired by the latter kind of advance, I offer here an examination of Mencian thought and argumentation from the perspective of gender.<sup>1</sup> Studies of *Mencius* to date have generally not been concerned with gender or have seen the Mencian position as largely favorable to women because of its inclusion of values typically associated with women. Both approaches have thus assumed, whether implicitly or explicitly, that Mencian moral and political concepts were gender neutral, theoretically applying to both men and women. I claim here that such gender neutrality was not the case and that Mencian teachings applied specifically to men, especially those in privileged positions. In addition, gender was not an extraneous component of Mencian moral and political concepts. It was embedded in philosophical discourse at all levels, from the assumptions and words themselves, to the content and contexts of argumentation.

Recognizing the gender specificity of Mencian ideas is important because it affects our interpretation of central Mencian claims. If we read through a gender lens, we will be able to understand the behavioral dynamics of how a man was to become a great man (*daren*), the Mencian ideal of the moral person, and how the process related to cultural understandings of men and women. By not attending to the gender dimension of Mencius' views, we miss both how radical and conservative his position was, and we forego gaining certain insights into the Confucian-Mencian tradition and its relation to Chinese society and culture.

I begin this study with several observations, which will be supported here briefly and more extensively in the course of the following discussion. First, viewed in terms of gender, Chinese philosophy is a story about competing forms of masculinity. Recorded in texts dating from the earliest times to the present, philosophical conflicts and activities have been carried out primarily in reference to the male sphere of society and government. The thinkers, ideas, texts, and actions belonged to a masculine realm of political power and culture from ancient to contemporary China. As an ongoing conversation on how to behave, Chinese philosophy was an affair of elite men, for they were the ones who both developed the ideas and established the perspectives for their understanding. Their concerns, not those of women and nonelite men, filled the pages of the texts. Nonetheless, women and their behavior were relevant to the philosophical conversation.

A second observation is that various kinds of forgetting have occurred within the Chinese philosophical tradition. The most obvious kind is that revealed by recent archeological discoveries, which have brought to light ancient texts and ideas lost for two millennia.<sup>2</sup> Another type of forgetting has happened with the burying of ideas in the received texts themselves. That is, some ideas were embedded but remained unrecognized in the known texts, contained subversively in the texture of the texts' explicit arguments. While certainly elusive, suppressed arguments appearing in fragmented form within the texts have kept open the possibility for some of the forgotten ideas to re-emerge. Such fragments hint at the existence of issues or conflicts whose losers had to record their ideas, and perhaps even the conflicts, elsewhere, in sites other than the philosophical texts. Although details have long been lost, cultural memories remain, transformed and transmitted in narratives, images, symbols, and words.

By reconstructing parts of these forgotten conversations, we can see how Mencius argued for his views. His arguments were fraught with potential difficulties, of course, for they entailed the inclusion of values derived from fe-

male gendered behavior while excluding actual women. An early pre-Mencius textual illustration of the process of exclusion occurs, for instance, in the response of Confucius (Kongzi, 551 BCE-479 BCE) to King Wu's comment about having ten capable officials. Half a millennium after King Wu, a founder of the Zhou dynasty (1027? BCE-256 BCE), Confucius said that there were only nine, for one was a woman.<sup>3</sup> In other words, serving as an official was male gendered behavior, even if one was an actual woman.

Told in many cultural forms, not only in texts, the philosophical argument that I reconstruct here is about how female gendered behavior was central to Confucian-Mencian thinking, even as the teachings concerned the actions of men. My thesis is not that women were central in the sense of *yinyang* thinking, however, which offers the framework of an all-encompassing and complementary binary system. Rather, women were central in a more fundamental, nonbinary, and pre-*yinyang* sense, in which women embodied the seemingly unknowable and indestructible creative source of life.<sup>4</sup> My account concerns how Mencian thinking appropriated fundamental characteristics of women as mothers and wives and, through certain processes of transformation, applied these characteristics to elite men in their social-political realms, thereby constructing philosophical concepts and views.<sup>5</sup> Such processes of appropriation and transformation remained characteristic of this classical tradition as it developed over time, although specific cultural and ideological meanings of these processes changed with the contexts. Current scholarship suggests, moreover, that such gendering processes are continuing in the present, well beyond the boundaries of the former Confucian (*ru*) or classical imperial order.<sup>6</sup>

The textual range of my analysis is intentionally limited, for it is the particulars in the claims and argumentation that reveal how ideas and concepts mean certain kinds of behavior. To provide a sufficiently detailed analysis of the processes by which female gendered behavior helps construct Confucian-Mencian thinking, I offer a close reading only of *Mencius*, a text of the Warring States period (480 BCE-221 BCE) and one of the most important works in the tradition. My focus concerns Mencian argumentation and the sociopsychological processes that enable a man to become a great man, or a gentleman (*junzi*).<sup>7</sup>

*Mencius* is especially appropriate to analyze from a gender viewpoint because of its contributions to Confucian thought and its philosophical importance both historically and in our contemporary world. Although Confucian and Mencian views were widely challenged when first advocated, they eventually became critical to the moral, social,

and political foundation of the Chinese imperial order, which lasted well into the nineteenth century. Mencius was the first major follower of Confucius in the received tradition, and the text that bears his name became especially important from the Song period (960-1279) on.<sup>8</sup> During the Song it was accorded classical status by Zhu Xi (1130-1200) as one of the Four Books, along with the Confucian *Analects* (*Lunyu*), *Great Learning* (*Daxue*), and *Focusing the Familiar* or *The Mean* (*Zhongyong*). The Four Books together with Zhu Xi's commentaries formed the basis of the civil service examination system in the early fourteenth century, and this educational-political system remained in effect until 1905. Contemporary adherents and sympathizers of New Confucianism continue to place special value on *Mencius*, and scholars remain very much interested in it.<sup>9</sup>

Viewed historically, it has been (and continues to be) a text of constantly changing meanings, for thinkers have successively interpreted it in light of their own particular concerns and cultural circumstances.<sup>10</sup> Although my reading is from a perspective of contemporary interest, I still treat *Mencius* as a text from a particular historical period. I consider its ideas to be based on specific assumptions and issues of its time, even though we know only some of the historical particulars now. I also maintain that we do not need to, and must not, decontextualize *Mencius* from its historical setting in order to make it relevant today, since many ancient issues continue to be important. The *Mencius* I discuss is not the one that Song thinkers understood from their political and ontological perspectives, or that Qing (1644-1911) thinkers understood with their concerns of evidential research, or that some contemporary thinkers understand in terms of Enlightenment-based assumptions. I address a dimension of Mencian thinking that was of no explicit interest to the thinkers and writers of traditional Chinese or Western philosophy but still pervades the text.

In addition to the history of the changes in understanding this text, there is another kind of story involving *Mencius*, namely the compilation of the text itself during the Warring States period. From the work of textual dating and compilation of E. Bruce Brooks and A. Taeko Brooks, we know that *Mencius* like many texts was compiled over a period of time. The compilation of this text continued beyond the life of Mencius himself, who died about 303 BCE.<sup>11</sup> According to the Brooks' analysis, the text consists of a number of layers, which they identify with a Northern and a Southern school. They date the original interviews of Mencius to ca. 320-310 BCE, with additional material being added in various ways until 249 BCE, when Lu ceased to exist as a state and further textual activity also stopped.

The history of this text is relevant to many scholarly questions including a few of my concerns here, but it is outside the primary aims of my analysis. Moreover, since much of the text consists of statements not made by Mencius himself but still attributed to him, I have taken the liberty of referring to all of the ideas as if they were actually stated by Mencius, in order to avoid numerous clumsy phrases and circumlocutions. We need to keep in mind, however, that when we examine this text from the perspective of the history of its compilation, we see a clear development in ideas. Thus, when this development is relevant to my analysis, I indicate whether a passage is from an earlier or later layer of the text.

My discussion is mostly based on what can be found within the text itself, although information from other writings helps suggest the philosophical significance of my claims. Some data illustrate, for instance, how maternal relations and female gendered behavior were historically central to Confucian-Mencian thinking. Not addressed directly as an issue and not a topic of teaching in the classical philosophical works, maternal practices are mentioned occasionally in texts in regard to other ideas, and mothers themselves were clearly recognized as important throughout Chinese society in both earlier and later periods. In the *Odes* (*Shijing*), for instance, the mother of the ancient sage ruler King Wen, a founder of the Zhou dynasty along with his son King Wu, was admired for teaching her son the proper virtues.<sup>12</sup> The mothers or maternal families of Confucius and Mencius were seen as critical to their early education and upbringing. Both thinkers were thought of as orphans, and both experienced a distancing from the paternal family.<sup>13</sup> Later on, other philosophers in the tradition, the famous and not so famous, such as Zhu Xi and Li Yong (1627-1705) respectively, were also depicted as orphans, that is, fatherless, even though they were not young children when their fathers died.<sup>14</sup> There was, in other words, an ongoing cultural message that mothers are especially important for a man's success.

Some texts, such as the *Biographies of Exemplary Women* (*Lienüzhuan*) from the Han period (206 BCE-220 CE), relate the importance of mothers both within and beyond the Confucian tradition. Called the way of mother and son (*muzizhidao*), the mother and son relationship from the later Han to late imperial times was recognized as having great significance among the political elite.<sup>15</sup> By the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and possibly much earlier, women's lives and the women's quarters were openly viewed as the position of genuine morality and as the moral center of society. Considered outside the political sphere of elite men with its turbulence and corruption, women's practices and places (the home) were seen as

tangible embodiments of supposedly unchanging Confucian moral values.<sup>16</sup>

Such information suggests the existence of ongoing gender issues implicitly embedded within Confucian-Mencian discourse but not addressed openly. Despite its personal, social, and philosophical importance from the classical to the late imperial period, the mother and son relationship was not one of the five recognized Confucian relations. It did not belong to the Confucian-Mencian theoretical social ontology, which for centuries characterized the social order in terms of the five relations (*renlun*) and four classes (*simin*). The only relation among the five involving actual women was that of husband and wife. This relation was a theoretically recognized male relation, in contrast to that of mother and son, which was not. In other words, this social ontology described a world that was patriarchal, hierarchical, based on family and patrilineage, and fundamentally gendered. This ontology rendered women largely invisible in the philosophical texts, insofar as it applied to male relations and the texts did not address women's relationships, as it did those of men.

The theoretical exclusion of the mother and son relationship from this ontology is confirmed in many ways, both obvious and subtle. One way consists of the explicit references to the father and son relation throughout the *Analects* and *Mencius* (and other texts, such as *Xunzi*), while simply not mentioning women's relationships. We also find that when different kinds of behavior are ranked in a moral sense, the examples focus on men and behavior that is socially and politically applicable to them.<sup>17</sup> A further method of exclusion is the typical reference to men in terms of rank and occupation and to women in terms of their sex or marital status.<sup>18</sup> All four of these characterizations (rank, occupation, sex, and marital status) are social-political in a contemporary sense, but only the former two are of philosophical concern within the Confucian-Mencian ontology.

While gender can be defined in various ways, here it refers to certain forms of patterned behavior within a cultural and communicational system. Evident in the earliest records in China, gender is culturally encoded in a variety of forms. It pertains not only to a person's positions and behavior in the family, state, and economic realms, but also to the more personal dimensions of one's body movements and appearance, and one's aims, expectations, and hopes in life. How gender has been thought about and its cultural meanings have changed over time.<sup>19</sup> Although gender has been an aspect of *yinyang* correlative and metonymic thinking throughout most of Chinese history, *Mencius* was compiled prior to the extensive development of *yinyang* theory,

a phenomenon of the Han period. Before the full acceptance of *yinyang* theory, texts tended to describe personal behavior in terms of particular social situations or practices of women and men, rather than categorize it in terms of abstract cosmic patterns linked to *yinyang* polarities.

The move from a particular to a more abstract level of thinking about behavior did not, however, obliterate previous forms of masculine gender fluidity, a significant characteristic linking earlier and later periods. The great male heroes of the early Zhou dynasty, men such as Kings Wen and Wu and the slightly later Zhong Shanfu, are described in the *Odes*, for instance, in terms of both masculine and feminine traits. *Tian* (an important religious and philosophical term with a range of meanings and so variously translated as Heaven, conditions, circumstances, and forces) is similarly depicted; it is associated with the male and with force, and yet it also gives birth.<sup>20</sup>

Although such transgendering may appear to be favorable to women by the valuing of feminine traits, such a conclusion is deceptive, for the processes of appropriation and transformation entail silencing. Mencius' moral ideal may have been androgynous, but he remained a male. The concept of androgyny itself is problematic, moreover, because it implicitly affirms a binary sex and gender system, and it supports certain cultural values derived from binary patterns of the cosmos. Thus, in examining Mencian ideas about masculinities, it is helpful to consider such questions as where women are situated socially, whether the great women who also appear in the *Odes* and other ancient texts are comparably masculine and feminine, and what the philosophical implications are of the elite male's incorporating some but not all gender traits of women.

At the same time that the early Confucian-Mencian thinkers were promoting an implicitly transgendered ideal, elite men were strongly discouraged from exhibiting certain types of feminine behavior.<sup>21</sup> This phenomenon suggests that, by the time of philosophical textual development, a selectivity of vision was prevalent with regard to the recognition of gendered behavior. That is, some behavior that had originally been appropriated from women was generally not recognized as such and became either accepted or tabooed, while other behavior was condemned. No philosophers, for instance, attempted to reconcile the fact that only women can give birth, a matter of female gendered behavior, with their claim that *tian* gave birth to the people and to the world, despite the depiction and correlation of *tian* with maleness as opposed to femaleness.

Although often portrayed now as universalistic and somehow neutral in its perspective, *yinyang* thinking, as it functioned



for about two thousand years in Chinese society and values, was, like philosophical thinking, constructed from a male perspective and belonged to a male discourse. With this perspective built into its very concepts, it concerned questions about masculinities, not femininities.<sup>22</sup> There was no comparable system constructed from a female perspective and belonging to a female discourse. Women certainly participated in the *yinyang* discourse, but they did so by experiencing the world through male concepts, for the comprehensiveness of *yinyang* thinking precluded alternative conceptual assumptions. The *yinyang* cosmic dimension of gender thinking provided a theoretical way to include women and justify their actual social location by associating them with *yin*, the completing, dark, and low position, as opposed to *yang*, the initiating (birthing?), bright, and high position. Those activities for which actual women often had responsibility, such as household management, were not addressed in the philosophical texts.

*Yinyang* thinking offered a way not even to acknowledge those views of women's and men's activities that did not derive from the perspective of privileged men, for there was no place to locate such views theoretically. From the perspective of the Confucian-Mencian social ontology, the daily activities of some people, such as washing clothes or taking care of domestic chores, were not activities (that mattered). *Yinyang* thinking thus reinforced cultural characteristics found in the earlier records of the received tradition, namely, the maleness of the philosophical discourse and so also of the subject, and the higher social value placed on the activities of elite men. Later history illustrates this phenomenon of exclusion through a variety of practices that conceived women and other "others" as recipients of action and rendered them oppressed, often by themselves.<sup>23</sup>

Historians note that gender fluidity in Chinese society was not accompanied historically by any significant broadening of social roles or relaxing of moral norms, and indeed the opposite was the case for elite women.<sup>24</sup> That is, the actual social conditions of women became increasingly restrictive as Confucianism developed, especially from the Song period on. This trend was furthered by various structural features of society, one of which was the flourishing of the examination system, which helped reinforce certain social values associated with binary cultural categories like inner and outer (*neiwai*) and *yinyang*. Like *yinyang* thinking, *neiwai* thinking was also constructed from a male perspective and was a male discourse. For instance, in the matter of political participation (open only to males), successful examination candidates who became government officials were, theoretically speaking, outer (*wai*) and so correlated with *yang* and its male association, while those not in gov-

ernment and who failed the exams were inner (*nei*) and so correlated with *yin* and its female associations. At the same time, since designations of the *yin* and *yang* positions depended on the context, this binary thinking also reinforced the social classification of women and the home as inner and *yin*, and men and political affairs as outer and *yang*.

With some notable exceptions, active political participation by women ended during the Han, a time when *yinyang* correlative thinking took hold and the Confucian canon was established. Even women who were politically involved, such as Wu Zhao (625?-706?), who declared herself Emperor of the new Zhou dynasty in 690 (during the late Tang dynasty) and the Dowager Empress Ci Xi (1835-1908), who ruled behind the throne in the late Qing dynasty, entered a political-philosophical discourse in which the subject remained male gendered. Too much out of place, these women were seen as dangerous to the social-political order, although some dimensions of their (female) behavior were not.<sup>25</sup>

Women were praised within the philosophical tradition for certain virtues, the very ones that made them (in varying ways and to varying degrees) invisible, silent, marginal, subordinate, or associated with things that were undesirable, feared, or considered evil. Such judgments were not self-made but were made from a position of privilege. The oppressive practice of footbinding, for instance, made beautiful feet and restricted persons. Women disciplined themselves by carrying out this practice themselves, and so they literally embodied certain values of (patriarchal) society. Foot-binding was a reification of both social restrictions constructed for maintaining order and cultural judgments about that which is ugly and evil. Moreover, as we learn from the earliest texts, good and evil were culturally conceived in terms of beautiful and ugly as well as orderly and disorderly. A contemporary transformation is seen in the practice of "voluntary" leg bone stretching, designed to make a person taller and so more socially acceptable but often leaving young men and women partially crippled.<sup>26</sup> Just as Confucian-Mencian thinking in the past claimed, incorporated, and transformed pre-Confucian values and practices, such as gender fluidity, so the post-Confucian world similarly continues these processes.

Although scholars in the fields of Chinese literature, history, religion, and anthropology have provided many insightful analyses relating to gender, the story has just begun to be told in Chinese philosophy. Ellen Marie Chen took an early lead decades ago by discussing how the great mother and motherly love are at the core of early Daoism and its concept of *dao*, but her work has not been followed by a body of studies in philosophy comparable to the

developments in other disciplines.<sup>27</sup> If we look across cultures to Western philosophy, however, a simple listing of the philosophical studies would fill volumes, even shelves. To cite but two of thousands of examples, Page duBois has described a process of appropriation and transformation that constructed the ideal philosopher in Platonic thinking, and Laura Inglis and Peter Steinfeld have analyzed how women both disappeared and yet remained critical in the development of Western philosophy.<sup>28</sup>

The questions motivating this study have expanded and changed over time, but they began with an interest in understanding why and how women in Chinese and other cultures have historically supported the elite's value systems despite the fact that these value systems help construct social conditions that are restrictive and oppressive to women in many ways. This is not to say that men are not also restricted in their behavior, because they certainly are. I could only begin to answer my initial questions after first understanding that, and how, Chinese philosophy historically was a discourse about masculine behavior, and secondly understanding that, and how, it constantly incorporated female gendered behavior as it developed. I have concluded that the feminine (especially, maternal) dimension of Confucian-Mencian ideas was one of the factors that enabled women to support, teach, and promote these values. It was by no means the only factor, however. Furthermore, the incorporation of feminine traits into the Confucian-Mencian ideal of masculinity, especially for elite and powerful men, has not led to the participation of women in those spheres of activity most highly valued in society because those social and political institutions remain male gendered. At best, women have been able to appropriate some forms of masculine behavior by engaging in activities similar to those of men. But they have done so in their separately gendered social realms.

Another factor in the support of patriarchal values by women is the lack of genuine alternatives to dominant social values and practices. People who are disadvantaged by social values and institutions believe in and accept them as the way things are, just as much as the privileged do. Moreover, the ways in which people personally adjust to, and learn, their culture's values contribute to how their character or "person" is shaped, and that character in turn interacts with various features of their social life which then confirm the apparent validity of these values. It is difficult to dismantle the coding that prevents the perspective of particular values from being clearly recognized, particularly when that perspective belongs to a privileged elite.

Such ideas appear to have a validity that transcends a particular time, often because they are claimed to be grounded

in biological traits or cosmic processes that are assumed to be universal. Alternative interpretations and genuinely competing ideas are often impossible to imagine, and generally they are not readily available to illustrate how seemingly neutral ideas or values actually entail specific gender and class perspectives, as well as theoretical and historical assumptions. If one is to see the world differently, a wholly different set of assumptions has to come into play, including recognition that philosophical discourse, and the social, cultural, and political realm to which the discourse applies, is gendered.

The interpretations I offer have been carefully considered and are open to textual corroboration. My account is based primarily on the text of *Mencius* itself and secondarily on a few related, relevant texts. The ideas I present are found in the texts, sometimes hidden in plain view and other times not even hidden. However, one has to look in order to see, and what I present here has not usually been looked for, as translations of *Mencius* into English indicate. Since previous translations have been done from a perspective that has much in common with that of Mencius himself, they obscure the very points that I want to bring into awareness. Although it can be made visible, the textual evidence that I cite remains invisible if most cultural rules (Chinese and Western) are followed.

In addition, my methodology of focusing on social relationships and practices, and not on abstract ideas, is a widespread form of Chinese thinking itself. The classic of *Changes (Yijing)*, for instance, is organized around sixty-four hexagrams, which represent situations that are continually changing. The poems of the *Odes* focus on situations, some political and many personal, as they express the thoughts and feelings of the writers, many of whom claimed to be women (whether true or not). The classic of *Documents (Shujing)*, the *Record of Rites (Liji)*, and many other texts also illustrate this concern with activities and practices. From a philosophical viewpoint, the use of a context or set of practices to establish a frame of reference, which then provides a set of assumptions, associations, and guidelines for thinking, is a feature of Chinese culture. It is an approach that Chinese thinkers and writers themselves used.

One result of studies that have brought out the viewpoint of an "other" has been to remind us that how we conceive and discuss the past is based on a particular, not universal, perspective, no matter what our claims may be. For instance, in the field of environmental history, Mark Elvin has shown how the story of Kua Fu's insatiable thirst, found in the *Liezi* and *Huainanzi*, can be interpreted as a story about environmental destruction, rather than about

someone who misjudges his own abilities and so attempts to do too much (the traditional view). Francesca Bray's anthropological study demonstrates how places, spaces, work, and the body are not somehow neutral but are encoded with (patriarchal) values and ideas. And Maram Epstein's literary study reveals how gender is used to convey political positions of orthodoxy and protest, rather than simply functioning as an entertaining feature of some stories.<sup>29</sup>

Despite many advances in knowledge and technology, it still remains that who tells the story is also who controls the memory. As the categories that structure accounts and the tellers of the stories change, however, our understandings of the past and present are transformed. Our perspectives and questions depend on many unspoken assumptions, just as the concepts and narratives of what we are studying did. Recent studies involving gender, for instance, have addressed dimensions of life that historically were hidden from recognition or treated as unimportant. This scholarship enables us to see what we, as contemporary scholars, and they, the past audience of Chinese texts, have been taught not to see. Taking a perspective outside the master narrative of Chinese philosophy, enables me to present a *Mencius* that is not entirely familiar and to uncover some of the implicit ways elite Chinese culture taught people to understand the world.

Gender is one of the most fundamental cultural ordering patterns that seem so natural people are generally not aware that they know them. Gender is still often dismissed as irrelevant. Appropriating from and transforming female gendered behavior, as well as tacitly using the feminine in argumentation, were aspects of the conflicts over changing norms of masculinity, and these aspects and conflicts were both known and unknown. In contrast, comparable conflicts over norms of femininity did not exist in philosophical writings. Although we can only speculate, appropriating from the feminine is perhaps tied to preliterate (prehistorical) changes in the power or status of some women in relation to some men. The traces of such hypothesized changes barely survive but are suggested by the ongoing worldwide traditions of female deities, such as the Chinese Queen Mother of the West, the female deities of Hinduism and Buddhism, and the Christian view of the mother of Jesus as the Mother of God.

On an explicit level, I read *Mencius* as instructing men on how to behave in new ways. If they already were behaving in these ideal ways, this kind of instruction would not have been needed and most likely would not have appeared. As Mark Edward Lewis has suggested, the teachings of this and similar texts were creating an ideal world that did

not exist.<sup>30</sup> Plato's ideals have a similar significance. Although much of Mencian thought is stated in the form of descriptions of behavior, these statements are actually prescriptions of what men ought to do. We should also be cognizant that, at the same time that *Mencius* advocates new behavior that is criticized by some as not sufficiently strong and masculine, and perhaps even seen as somewhat weak and feminine, this text provides a strong defense of patriarchy.

A final issue to note briefly is the power of words and a culture's fundamental assumptions about them. When we try to assign a familiar word to situations or practices that may not be recognized as even existing from a privileged cultural perspective, both in Chinese and English, we are immediately confronted with resistances of belief and language. It is often difficult to apply ordinary words in everyday use to activities viewed as unusual, because words are social entities and they contain within themselves specific perspectives. Whether we approve or not, words have meanings beyond our specific references and intended uses, and they belong to those other ontologies too.

For example, the words father and mother may seem to be an appropriate pair, but when viewed in terms of many social practices, they are not, for the practices called fathering and mothering in English do not function in complementary situations. A father can mother, but a mother can never father. Except for breast-feeding and giving birth, a man can feed, bathe, and otherwise take care of a child, but a woman cannot inseminate. In Chinese we find something comparable. The Chinese term *yang* has various meanings, including to nourish in a broad sense or specifically to breast-feed. Similarly, *sheng* entails a range of meanings, including to give birth, produce, or provide sperm. While *Mencius* exhorts a man to *yang* his parents, wife, and children, *Xunzi* points out in one passage that a father cannot *yang* (breast-feed, nourish) but can *sheng* (give birth to, beget) a child, and a mother can feed but cannot instruct.<sup>31</sup> Here we see how critical interpretation and translation are. Another brief example occurring in English and Chinese, and relevant to this study, is that we can talk about the ruling that the ruler does but not about the wife-ing that the wife does, unless we change the vocabulary to words like helping, responding, and serving. Thus we see how a perspective and a social context is built into a word itself.

These examples touch on the difficulties faced in trying to take the perspective of other voices within a particular social ontology, whether that attempt involves making an outsider or non-subject (such as wife) into a subject, attempting to recover voices that have been silenced, or

attempting to speak from a different social discourse.<sup>32</sup> Cultures and their texts work against the effort to recover some types of memory but are never able to silence other positions completely, because the other is built into the discourse and the contexts. It is always there, recognized or not. My aim is to help bring these others into our awareness.

#### Notes

1. The distinction between gender and sex is a contemporary Western construct, and prior to modern times a person's behavior (gender) was typically not distinguished from a person's anatomy (sex). To reflect traditional Chinese views, I use the terms male and masculine, and female and feminine, interchangeably. For further discussion, see Brownell and Wasserstrom, 24-26; Laqueur; and Furth. Delphy, 63-76, claims that the sex/gender distinction of twentieth-century scholarship should specifically be credited to Margaret Mead, who first used it in her *Sex and Temperament*, and to Simone de Beauvoir and others who subsequently developed the ideas.
2. Scholars are increasingly incorporating the newly recovered texts and their ideas in their studies. To cite only a few examples, see Csikszentmihalyi; Yates; Ames and Hall, *Focusing*; Ames and Hall, *Daodejing*; and Behuniak, Jr.
3. *Lunyu (Analects)* 8.20. Some scholars interpret this passage as having a favorable view of women. For two of the many translations available, see Lau, *Confucius, The Analects*; and Ames and Henry Rosemont, Jr.
4. Many Western philosophers and scholars have pursued a similar approach, widely seen as stimulated by Nietzsche, whose numerous comments about women and woman include: "Suppose truth is a woman—what then?" and "Yes, life is a woman!" See respectively Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 1, and Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, sec. 339, 193.
5. To reference Nietzsche again and Peter J. Burgard's claim, "He [Nietzsche] includes woman, accords the feminine a central role, in the articulation of his philosophy, even as his extreme sexism excludes woman." See Burgard, "Introduction," 12. Commenting on Nietzsche, Inglis and Steinfeld suggest that in criticizing the morality of Christianity as the virtues of women and slaves, and in contrasting it to a Roman, heroic, masculine morality, Nietzsche was in effect acknowledging transgendering processes in morality while also denigrating women. See Inglis and Steinfeld, 131-167. Other traditions of philosophical and religious thinking are beyond the scope of this analysis, but I suggest that the female may also implicitly be central to most if not all of them.
6. For current examples, see Brownell and Wasserstrom. Also consider the implications of the question they ask in the Afterword to their recent volume: "What if, instead of using history to explain gender, it [a book] used gender to explain history?" 435.
7. In preparing this study, I have consulted various editions of *Mencius (Mengzi)* in Chinese and English, including Legge, *Mencius*; Lau, *Mencius*; and *Mengzi xinyi (A New Translation of Mencius)*, comp. Xie Bingying, et al. Throughout this study I have checked my translations against those of Legge and Lau and have often used modifications of their translations. All references to Lau's translations are to his English only text. The analysis regarding gender in *Mencius* is my own, however.
8. Han Yu (768-824) is traditionally regarded as the thinker responsible for elevating the importance of *Mencius* for later thinkers with his idea of the *daotong* (orthodox transmission of the Way). See Wilson, *Genealogy*.
9. The list is long and still growing, but some major studies include Behuniak; Csikszentmihalyi; Shun; Nivison; Jullien; Ames, "Mencian Conception"; Chan; Huang, *Mencian Hermeneutics*; and Richards. Nivison discusses the backgrounds of some major translators of *Mencius in Ways*, 175-77.
10. For a discussion on the different perspectives that Chinese thinkers used for reading, see Wilson, "Messenger"; and Gu. For an overview of Chinese commentaries on *Mencius*, see Huang, *Mencian Hermeneutics*; and for examples of different contemporary readings of classical texts, see Yu, et al.; and Geaney, "Mencius's Hermeneutics."
11. Brooks and Brooks, "The Nature and Historical Context." See p. 273 for the dates of the added material in diagram form. The traditional dates for Mencius are 371 BCE-289 BCE, but Qian Mu has suggested 390 BCE-305 BCE, while the Brooks believe these dates are still uncertain. See Chan, 3, and Brooks and Brooks, 276, note 13. All the early texts were compiled over time by more than one person, and so this aspect of the textual history of *Mencius* is typical.

12. *Odes*, Mao 240. See Legge's commentary and translation, in Legge, *The She King*, 446-448; and Waley and Allen, 235-236.
13. See Eno; and Jensen.
14. For references to Zhu Xi and to mothers as teachers, and to Li Yong, see respectively Birge; and my *Li Yong*.
15. See my article, "Cultural Patterns"; Hsiung-ping Chen; Cole; and Brown.
16. Mann, *Precious Records*.
17. See, for example, *Xunzi* 20/29 "Way of the Son"; *Mencius* 1A7, 1B5, and 2A5; and *Lunyu* 13.18.
18. Among the numerous examples, see *Mencius* 3B2, 3B3, and 3B4; and *Mozi* 8/32 "Against Music."
19. As Delphy points out, the sex/gender distinction is problematic for feminists because it is a cultural distinction that perpetuates the male/female and other hierarchies in society. I would add that the same could be said for the *yinyang* distinction. That is, in whatever context *yinyang* is applied, the *yin* position is spatially lower and is implicitly associated with a "female" position. This view is prominent in the Daoist text *Daodejing* (*Laozi*) but came to be accepted throughout Chinese culture. See *Daodejing*, ch. 28, for an example of *yin* strategies' being advocated to achieve a *yang* goal of sagehood.
20. For example, Mao 260, in Waley and Allen, 275-277.
21. Geaney, "Guarding." Reference is to *Xunzi* 3/5 "Against Physiognomy."
22. Maram Epstein discusses this point in reference to late imperial fiction. See her *Competing Discourses*. Some scholars point to an origin of *yinyang* to which gender is irrelevant, a claim about which I have serious reservations, but in any case origin does not determine later social meanings and usage, which is the issue here. Also see Rouzer.
23. I use Iris Young's definition of the concept of oppression, as a grouping of social conditions experienced by social groups and summarized by this general term, oppression. See Young. Although her analysis examines such conditions as exclusion, denigration, exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, violence, and cultural imperialism in American society, Chinese society exhibits many comparable conditions. The complexity of human experience is such that the recognition of oppression does not necessarily preclude the existence of certain opportunities, including learning to read, write, paint, or becoming honorary gentlemen. The fact that women or men themselves carried out certain practices, such as foot-binding in the case of women, does not negate its oppressive aspects. For a discussion on how and why people come to discipline themselves, see Bartky.
24. The relationship between actual social conditions for women and what thinkers and texts said about women, the female, and the feminine, is complex. To cite just a few studies, see Nylan, "Golden Spindles"; Raphals, "Gendered Virtue"; Raphals, *Sharing the Light*; Bray; Ko; Mann and Cheng; and Wang.
25. For instance, in the *Odes*, Mao 192, Lady Bao Si, rather than the king, is blamed for the fall of the Western Zhou dynasty in 771 BCE because of her close relationship with King You.
26. *The New York Times*, May 5, 2002, p. 3.
27. Ellen Marie Chen.
28. See duBois; and Inglis and Steinfeld.
29. Respectively, Elvin and Liu, 2; Bray; and Epstein.
30. Lewis.
31. Geaney, "Feminine and Beastly Nature," 8. Reference is to *Xunzi* 13/19 "On Ritual." In English, breast-feeding is not necessary for feeding. The claim of the father's begetting the child but not nourishing/breast-feeding the child (*funengshengzhi*, *bunengyangzhi*) offers an example of (long forgotten) appropriation and transformation, with *sheng* expanding to mean "to beget" as well as "to give birth."
32. The work of Western writers in this regard is voluminous. For two early and influential works, see Gilligan; and Ruddick.

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### Han-liang Chang (essay date 2007)

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[In the following essay, Chang analyzes the arguments of Mencius and other intellectuals who were involved in the Great Debate, an extended discussion among Chinese philosophers on the relationship between *ming* (name) and *shi* (substance).]

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

This essay attempts to present a major controversy in classical Chinese intellectual history, commonly called the Great Debate on *ming* (name) and *shi* (substance), and to interpret that debate in the light of the contention between

logic and rhetoric, similar to the one that has characterized Western philosophy since Plato's early dialogue *The Gorgias*. The English rendition of the "Great Debate," being at once accurate but imperfect, is so popular that its source is hardly traceable. The added qualification of "great" suggests the importance of the issue, but the word *debate* unfortunately fails to transmit the double denotation of "differentiation" and "debate," imposed on the homophone by modern usage.<sup>1</sup> Thanks to contemporary scholars like Chmielewski (1962-1969), Graham (1989), Defoort (1997), Chang (1998, 2003), Lu (1998), Reding (2004), Cui (2004), we have become aware of the contention of logic and rhetoric and, to a lesser extent, the relation between logic and grammar suggested by these ancient texts. For instance, when Chmielewski points out that "in early Chinese philosophical texts we generally have to do with *persuasion* rather than demonstration" (1963: 92), his frame of reference is no doubt the classical opposition of rhetoric to logic outlined by Aristotle.<sup>2</sup> Another source of confusion results from the translation of *bian* into *debate*, which gives one the mistaken impression that those who were involved in the event were actual interlocutors performing speech acts. This philological knowledge may serve as a reminder that our analysis has already been contaminated by language's historical corruption and its cross-cultural dissemination. However, the confusion of *bian* as "differentiation" and *bian* as "debate" serves paradoxically to elucidate the inherent and necessary relation between semantics and pragmatics.

## 2. ZIXUE IN THE PRE-QIN CHINA

The Debate took place in the Pre-Qin (Chin) China, that is, before the first empire—the Qin Empire, which was founded in 221 B.C. It was enacted by the exchanges among groups and generations of literati/intellectuals called *zi* (Elder or Sage), as in the suffix of such names as Mozi (ca. 476-390 B.C.), Xunzi (ca. 313-238 B.C.), Zhuangzi (369-286 B.C.), etc., over a period of three hundred years. Studies devoted to the doctrines and writings of *zi* are called *zixue* (knowledge of the Sages), and they constitute one of the four major divisions of classical learning, the other three being *jing* (the Confucian Canons), *shi* (Orthodox Histories), and *ji* (Authorial Collections). The substance of the *zi* writings is close to that of philosophy in the West; therefore, *zixue* is sometimes called *zhexue* (philosophy) (Tan 1978: 61).

There are two important characteristics of the controversy over *ming* (name) and *shi* (substance or "actuality") (Makeham 1994). First of all, because of the long time-span in which the controversy took place, and because of the historical distance which makes documentation of

names and events difficult and sometimes dubious, the people who were involved in this debate, except in rare cases, could not have possibly been acquaintances, nor could they have been contemporaries actually engaged in immediate speech interaction. Thus all the extralingual and paralingual features essential to discourse as a speech interaction or the concrete manifestation of language are absent. This lack of immediate *tête-à-tête* contact is highlighted by a second characteristic, namely, the fact that none of these Sages (*zi*) could have authored the writings attributed to them. These were recorded and compiled by their disciples and by later scholars, sometimes as late as the Han Dynasty in the second century, and the respectable appellation of *zi* also serves to indicate the fact that their writings were posthumously published. I have termed this phenomenon of controversy among people of different generations as "controvert the dead" (Chang 2001). Because of their posthumous publication, quite a few of those *zi* writings have been regarded, maybe justifiably so, as apocryphal. It is not my intention here to address this thorny issue of apocrypha because the authenticity of this or that text bears little relevance to the nature and validity of the controversy.

Regarding the origin of *zi* and *zixue*, there is little consensus either, though the following points are generally accepted. Firstly, *zi* is a respectable appellation accorded to their master by disciples of later generations. Secondly, extant materials indicate that there were two oldest interpretations regarding their origins. According to the Daoist (Taoist) master Zhuangzi in the chapter "Tianxia" (The Social World) of his collected writings, the so-called "Sages" can be traced to various philosophical schools in ancient times ("*gu zi dao shu*" [ancient knowledge], i.e., before the time of the Warring-States Period, ca. 475-221 B.C.). But according to the orthodox historian Ban Gu (32-92 A.D.) in his *Hanshu yiwenzhi* (Art and literature corpus of the *History of Han*), these Sages were descendants of *wangguan* (courtier-scholars) who lost their official jobs and went into the business of private teaching. Although Ban derived his material from his predecessors the Liu father (Liu Xiang, ca. 77-76 B.C.) and son (Liu Xin, 50 B.C.-20 A.D.), it is from his text that the expression *zhuzi* (Several Sages) have come down to us. Thirdly, the flourishing of contending schools in the Warring-States Period bears witness to the social change and political turmoil of the time, the rise of liberal thinking, private education, and wide circulation of books (Tan 1978: 72-73).

With so many rival schools of "philosophers" proposing and propounding their theories and praxes, and oftentimes vying for official recognition and political gain, it is only natural that they should run into conflict, which manifests



itself most explicitly in their polemics. In the following pages, I shall first outline the nature of such polemics, and then focus my discussion on one particular issue, which relates to the Sages' different conceptualizations of language and its representational functions. This will bring us to the Chinese version of the "nominalist" versus "realist" debate on name and substance (Graham 1989: 82-83).

### 3. THREE LEADING CONTROVERSIALISTS

Among the philosophers engaged in verbal fencing, three are particularly worth mentioning, the Daoist Zhuangzi, the Confucianists Xunzi and Mengzi (better known to the West as Mencius, ca. 372-289 B.C.), and the anonymous members of the Mohist school or the Later Mohists. Zhuangzi was probably the first philosopher to launch a critique on the other schools, followed by Xunzi and Mengzi (Ji 1998: 14-15). Chronologically, one should start with Zhuangzi for his overall critique of his contemporaries in the chapter entitled "Tianxia," and then move to Xunzi who attacks the twelve Sages of the time. However, it is Mengzi who is especially eloquent in expressing the moral urgency of disputation and the way in which disputation serves to fashion a person. Therefore, I shall begin with the well-known dialogue between Mengzi and his disciple Gongduzi, and then move on to Xunzi and Zhuangzi.

### 4. MENGZI'S APOLOGIA

Asked by his disciple why he is so fond of disputing, Mengzi comes to his self-defense in the following passage. I am quoting from the Scottish Sinologist James Legge's (1815-1897) "archaic" translation from the late nineteenth century and have put in brackets the current standardized *pinyin* Latinization for Chinese names.

The disciple Kung-tu [Gongdu] said to Mencius [Mengzi], "Master, the people beyond our school all speak of you as being fond of disputing. I venture to ask whether it be so." Mencius replied, "Indeed, I am not fond of disputing, but I am compelled to do it."

(Legge 1973: 278-279)

Mengzi then explains why he is fond of disputing. As a worthy disciple of Confucius, Mengzi laments the disintegration of political and social orders in the Warring-States Period. He observes, "After the death of Yao and Shun [two ancient sage rulers], the principles that mark sages fell into decay"; "corrupt speakings and oppressive deeds became more rife"; "unemployed scholars indulge in unreasonable discussions" (280). These include two most popular theoreticians, Yang Zhu [Yangzi, fl. late 5th-century B.C.] and Mozi [Mozi, ca. 476-390 B.C.], whose words "fill the country." And, continues Mengzi, "If you listen to people's discourses . . . you will find that

they have adopted the views either of Yang or of Mo" (282). "If the principles of Yang and Mo be not stopped, and the principles of Confucius not set forth, then those perverse speakings will delude the people, and stop up *the path* of benevolence and righteousness" (283). Mengzi admits to being "alarmed by these things," and sets upon himself the task of defending "the doctrines of the former sages, and to oppose Yang and Mo" (283). He says:

I drive away their licentious expressions, so that such perverse speakers may not be able to show themselves . . . I also wish to rectify men's hearts, and to put an end to those perverse doctrines, to oppose their one-sided actions and banish away their licentious expressions;—and thus to carry on the work of the three sages. Do I do so because I am fond of disputing? I am compelled to do it.

(Legge 1973: 283-284)

One has to situate Mengzi's *apologia pro vita sua* in the context of the afore-mentioned conflicts of philosophical doctrines. Mengzi's primary target, as the text shows, is the contending Mo and Yang schools. His strategy is argumentation by authority, and his excuse the championship of the lost orthodox tradition, as he says rather self-righteously: "When sages shall rise up again, they will not change my words" (283). That tradition is based on the political order of rectification of names, whereby kings, courtiers, fathers and sons enter into a well-governed, unbroken chain of political and familial filiations.

### 5. XUNZI CONTRA TWELVE PHILOSOPHERS

In the same manner as Mengzi criticizes Yangzi and Mozi for using "licentious expressions" to transmit "perverse doctrines," another follower of Confucius, Xunzi, inveighs against his contemporaries' abuse of language by "embellishing aberrant doctrines, and decorating devious statements." His critique is directed at the twelve Sages (*shierzi*), in an essay that has been translated as "Contra twelve philosophers" (Knoblock 1988), reminiscent of the post-Hellenistic disputational tradition made popular by Sextus Empiricus and the Stoics. Xunzi's criticism represents one of the positions regarding the use of language in philosophical and political argumentation. According to Xunzi (Wang 1955), all the twelve people, including Confucius's followers Zisi (484-402 B.C.) and Mengzi, excel in persuasion, and "their arguments are well-grounded, and their speeches make good sense, so that they can deceive the ignorant and beguile the crowd" (my translation). In John Knoblock's more elegant rendition, it reads "Some of what they advocate has a rational basis, and their statements have perfect logic, enough indeed to deceive and mislead the ignorant masses" (1988, 1: 223).

It may look strange why this kind of sound persuasion, with “a rational basis” and “perfect logic,” is not acceptable. Such statements cannot but transmit truth arrived at through logical reasoning. Let us examine how Xunzi criticizes the twelve philosophers. Earlier he opens the chapter by passing his overall evaluation on the use of language by these philosophers. Knoblock renders this as:

Some men of the present generation cloak pernicious persuasions in beautiful language and present elegantly composed but treacherous doctrines and so create disorder and anarchy in the world. Such men are personally insidious and ostentatious, conceited and vulgar, yet they spread through the whole world their confused ignorance of wherein lies the distinction between right and wrong and between order and anarchy.

(222-223)

Isn't what Xunzi criticizes exactly the concern of rhetoric where the logical truth-claim is suspended, as in the case of Gorgias and other sophists?

Xunzi divides the twelve philosophers he counters into six groups: (1) Tuo Xiao and Wei Mou; (2) Chen Zhong and Shi Qiou; (3) Modi (Mozi) and Song Yan; (4) Shen Dao and Tian Pian; (5) Hui Shi and Deng Xi; (6) Zisi and Meng Ke (Mengzi), but he does not label them by school names, these being a later invention by the Grand Historian.<sup>3</sup> What do the twelve philosophers have in common, apart from their excellence in language's social use? Xunzi does not seem to detect any problem in his faulting their use of “beautiful language” for “pernicious persuasions”; “elegant composition” for “treacherous doctrines.” The twelve philosophers' doctrines on physical indulgence, repression of human emotions and innate nature, economy and frugality, their ignorance of gradations of rank and status, their lacking “a classical norm for the state or to fix social distinctions” and “guiding rules or ordering norms for government” (Knoblock 1988, 1: 224), not understanding the guiding principles of the Confucian model—none of these drawbacks diminish their illocutionary and perlocutionary forces. These are ethical and political issues rather than linguistic ones, revealing an assumption that beautiful language has to be morally good and politically correct, or, in short, that there is an inherent agreement between name and substance.

Therefore the heart of the matter lies in ethical considerations rather than rhetorical ones—for rhetoric is at the service of ethics, a fact none of the philosophers of the time would openly deny. This insistence on the politicized moral intent in language use, or more exactly, at the expense of language, underlies in fact the criticism of the Confucianists Mengzi and Xunzi though they have been

regarded as representing two opposing camps amongst the followers of the Sage. There is no surprise that the late dialectician Gongsun Longzi (fl. 257 B.C.?) should become the common target of the Later Mohists, Xunzi, and his contemporary Zhuangzi.<sup>4</sup> Their dispute centers on the relationship between name as *signans* and what it represents, i.e., its *signatum*, an issue to which we shall return after our survey of Zhuangzi.

#### 6. ZHUANGZI AND THE MOHISTS ON DIFFERENTIATION

Whereas Mengzi targets the two extreme versions of utilitarianism popularized by Mozi and Yangzi, and Xunzi criticizes all his fellow-philosophers, Zhuangzi's practice is not unlike Xunzi's when he launches a shooting spree on all the other schools. In the chapter “Tianxia,” the last chapter of the book attributed to him, Master Zhuang begins by giving a survey of the current intellectual climate.

Many are the men in the world who apply themselves to doctrines and policies, and each believes he has something that cannot be improved upon [. . .] The men of the world all follow their own desires and make these their “doctrine.” How sad!—the hundred schools going on and on instead of turning back, fated never to join again.

(Watson 1968: 362, 364)

Then he blames the followers of Mozi, who indulge in futile verbal games like the famous “hard-white” and “difference-sameness” sophisms and answer each other with contradictory phrases that do not match (367).

As spokesmen of two dominant philosophical schools, Zhuangzi and Mozi differ in many aspects. Particularly relevant to our concern here are their opposing views about argumentation. It is not easy to reconstruct the chronology of their exchanges though it can be established by textual evidence that the debate on the nature and function of argumentation was between the Daoist philosopher and Mozi's disciples. Throughout his writings, Zhuang as doxographer often alludes to the contention of Confucianism and Mohism.<sup>5</sup>

In “Qiwulun” or “Discussion on Making All Things Equal,” the second chapter of *Zhuangzi*, the philosopher succinctly represents their polemics.

When the Way relies on little accomplishments and words rely on vain show, then we have the rights and wrongs of the Confucianists and the Moists [Mohists]. What one calls right the other calls wrong; what one calls wrong the other calls right. But if we want to right their wrongs and wrong their rights, then the best thing to use is *clarity* [*ming*].”

(Watson 1968: 39; transliteration and emphasis added)

With the English translation, it seems Zhuangzi is suggesting a third party as the arbitrator. This is, however, not the case. The mediaeval annotator Guo Xiang (252-312 A.D.) questions the very possibility of a “clarified” supra-truth beyond the interlocutors’ positions and suggests a total erasure of truths through the two sides’ double negations of pros and cons (Guo 1975: 65). Towards the end of the same discourse, Zhuang picks up the adage again:

A state in which “this” and “that” no longer find their opposites is called the hinge of the Way. When the hinge is fitted into the socket, it can respond endlessly. Its right then is a single endlessness and its wrong too is a single endlessness. So, I say, the best thing to use is clarity.

(Watson 1968: 40)

Here the cryptic “clarity” can be glossed by Zhuangzi’s refutation of Gongsun Longzi’s famous arguments of *zhiwu* (On Pointing at Things) and *baima* (On White Horse). Zhuang illustrates the principle of “clarity” by commenting on Gongsun’s sophisms:

To use an attribute to show that attributes are not attributes is not as good as using a non-attribute to show that attributes are not attributes. To use a horse to show that a horse is not a horse is not as good as using a non-horse to show that a horse is not a horse. Heaven and earth are one attribute; the ten thousand things are one horse.

(Watson 1968: 40)

The allusions are to the two paradoxes popularized by Gongsun Longzi. The first one asserts, in the transliterated Chinese original, “*wu mo fei zhi er zhi fei zhi*” (“all things [concepts] are indicated [appellated], but indication [appellation] itself cannot be indicated [or the indicator itself is not what is indicated]”; my translation). And the second paradox—perhaps the more famous one—states, “*bai ma fei ma*” (“white horse is not horse”; my translation). This is not the occasion to disambiguate Gongsun Longzi’s puzzles. Much has been done in this regard (Chang 1998). The important thing is that the kind of epistemological enquiry into the nature of things based on differentiation is in diametrical opposition to that of Zhuangzi’s. The latter’s basic idea is to dismiss differentiation from our knowledge. Zhuang’s refutation of Gongsun may sound banal because of its tautological argument and the writer’s failure to comprehend, perhaps intentionally, Gongsun’s distinction between object-language and meta-language.

#### 7. ZHUANGZI AND THE MOHISTS ON DISPUTATION

There is no accident that it is in the same chapter where Zhuangzi refutes his contemporary Mohists and rhetoricians (alternatively called logicians or dialecticians) that he voices his position against argumentation or debate.

The statement is so famous that it is worth quoting in length.

Suppose you and I have had an argument. If you have beaten me instead of my beating you, then are you necessarily right and am I necessarily wrong? If I have beaten you instead of your beating me, then am I necessarily right and are you necessarily wrong? Is one of us right and the other wrong? Are both of us right or are both of us wrong? If you and I don’t know the answer, then other people are bound to be even more in the dark. Whom shall we get to decide what is right? Shall we get someone who agrees with you to decide? But if he already agrees with you, how can he decide fairly? Shall we get someone who agrees with me? But if he already agrees with me, how can he decide? Shall we get someone who disagrees with both of us? But if he already disagrees with both of us, how can he decide? Shall we get someone who agrees with both of us? But if he already agrees with both of us, how can he decide? Obviously, then, neither you nor I nor anyone else can decide for each other. Shall we wait for still another person?

(Watson 1968: 48)

The statement revealing Zhuangzi’s idealist agnosticism can be construed as a direct response to Mozi and his disciples. The latter’s comments on debate are scattered mainly in chapter 40, “The Upper Canon,” and chapter 45, “The Small Pick” of the *Mojing* (Sun 2002; Li 1996). Mozi defines *bian* or disputation as “contending over claims which are the converse of each other,” and asserts that “winning in disputation is fitting the fact” (Graham 1978: 318). These characteristically elliptical and cryptic remarks are annotated as follows.

[*Bian*]: One calling it “ox” and the other “non-ox” is “contending over claims which are the converse of each other.” Such being the case they do not both fit the fact; and if they do not both fit, necessarily one of them does not fit (not like fitting “dog”).

(Graham 1978: 318)

A disputation can be established only when the two parties are not talking about the same thing in different names, e.g., there being no dispute between calling an animal *gou* (dog) and calling it *quan* (whelp), and when the two parties are not talking about different things in different names, e.g., there being no dispute between calling an animal *niu* (ox) and calling another *ma* (horse). Reding (2004) describes this situation in terms of the principle of non-contradiction. If we go back to the Chinese original, we may venture a less cryptic interpretation. “*Bian* refers to competition (*zheng*) between two opposite claims (*bi*), and it’s only right that one side wins [and the winner of the dispute has the valid argument]” (Li 1996: 289; my translation). This text is glossed with the following notes.

An example of *bian* is as follows: One party claims an animal to be “ox”; the other “not ox” [or “non-ox”]. This illustrates *zheng bi* (competition between or disputation over opposite claims). It’s impossible that both sides’ claims are right. That not both claims are right means one claim is not right. The wrong claim is just like claiming an ox to be a dog.

(Li 1996: 289; my translation)

It is not my intention to challenge Graham’s reading, given, amongst other things, the well known difficulty of *Mojing*’s language. Apparently, the Mohist stance suggests, firstly, a common ground for debate, and then the possibility of transcendental arbitration. Both concepts—the existence of a common ground and the possibility of arbitration—are based on the assumption of language’s “objective cognitive content” (Reding 2004: 20; cf. Zhu 1988: 54ff); in other words, *ming* and *shi* correspondence. Reding explains the above instance in terms of the impossibility of contradiction and identifies the similar mechanism underlying Zhuangzi’s relativism regarding debate cited above (2004: 19-20). There was indeed no contradiction if by this one meant, literally, “self-contradiction” or “paradox”: a person making at once two contrary statements, or a *doxa* plus another *doxa*. One could say there is no paradox of contradiction in the Mohist example, but this does not lead to the conclusion that there is no controversy when two parties engage in language disputation. *Dictio* or *versus*—What’s in a name (or a line)?

#### 8. FROM DIFFERENTIATION (*BIAN*) TO DISPUTATION (*BIAN*)

In Chapter two of *Zhuangzi*, the Daoist master criticizes the futile differentiation/disputation (*bian*) between Confucianists and Mohists. This is the passage where he denounces disputation, which, strangely but logically, begins with differentiation of values.

Words [*yan*] are not just wind [*cui*]. Words have something to say. But if what they have to say is not fixed, then do they really say something? Or do they say nothing? People suppose that words are different from the peeps of baby birds [*gou yin*], but is there any difference [*bian*], or isn’t there? What does the Way [*Dao*] rely upon, that we have true and false? What do words rely upon, that we have right [*shi*] and wrong [*fei*]? How can the Way go away and not exist? How can words exist and not be acceptable? When the Way relies on little accomplishments and words rely on vain show, then we have the rights and wrongs of the Confucians and the Moists. What one calls right the other calls wrong; what one calls wrong the other calls right.

(Watson 1968: 39; transliteration added)

This passage will lead to our subsequent discussion of Zhuangzi’s critique of his contemporary rhetoricians, in

particular his close friend Hui Shi and the sophist Gongsun Long.

Confused as it first seems, the passage nevertheless contains an implicit protolinguistic or proto-semiotic theory, a theory not incompatible with that held by the Mohists mentioned above. Several points can be made in this regard. Firstly, language has to make sense, and secondly its ultimate value closes on the transcendental signified *Dao* (Way). Whilst *cui* (wind) and *gou yin* (peeps of baby birds) also make sounds, *yan* (speech) as linguistic sign is characterized by its double articulation in sound (signifier) and sense (signified). On top of this basic signification that involves the phonic and semantic aspects of language is the higher metaphysical level that manifests *Dao*. Furthermore, human speech is not only restricted to the first-order of semiosis, i.e., signification, but also covers the second-order of semiosis which is none other than communication—discussion, debate, disputation—or its failure. It is at this point that semantic differentiation gives rise to, or gives way to, pragmatic disputation. This transformation is particularly conspicuous in Zhuangzi’s rejoinders to his fellow-logicians and rhetoricians.

Criticizing his logician friend Hui Shi, Zhuangzi has this to say, “Hui Shih had many devices and his writings would fill five carriages. But his doctrines were jumbled and perverse and his words wide off the mark” (Watson 1968: 374). A bosom friend of Zhuang’s, but not short of his ridicule, Hui Shi is well known for his sophisms, such as “The southern region has no limit and yet has a limit” and “I set off for Yueh today and arrived there yesterday.” Others include: “Heaven is as low as earth; mountains and marshes are on the same level”; “The sun at noon is the sun setting”; “The thing born is the thing dying.” Zhuangzi comments: “With sayings such as these, Hui Shih tried to introduce a more magnanimous view of the world and to enlighten the rhetoricians” (Watson 1968: 375). The latter happily responded with other similar absurdities. Zhuang has identified and listed twenty-one of them. Examples are: “Fire is not hot”; “Mountains come out of the mouth”; “Wheels never touch the ground”; “Pointing to it never gets to it; if it got to it, there would be no separation”; “The flying bird’s shadow never moves”; “No matter how swift the barbed arrow, there are times when it is neither moving nor at rest”; “A dog is not a canine”; “A yellow horse and a black cow make three”; “The orphan colt never had a mother”; “Take a pole one foot long, cut away half of it every day, and at the end of ten thousand generations there will still be some left” (Watson 1968: 375-376).

Zhuangzi singles out two prominent dialecticians, Huan Tuan and Gongsun Long, for his criticism. According to

Zhuang, “Dazzling men’s minds, unsettling their views, they could outdo others in talking, but could not make them submit in their minds—such were the limitations of the rhetoricians.” But “Hui Shih day after day used the knowledge he had in his debates with others, deliberately thinking up ways to astonish the rhetoricians of the world” (Watson 1968: 376).

Most of the afore-mentioned sophisms remind one of Zeno’s paradoxes, e.g., “Achilles and the tortoise” and “the flying arrow,” and hence may sound familiar to Western readers. Their origins can hardly be traced, because they are also found in the Mohist Canons and other texts. Suffice it to say that these commonplaces are reflective of philosophers’ general interest in logic and language, and they join to construct an intertextual and discursive space for disputation.

As if to display his literary talent and mastery of the verbal art, Zhuangzi makes free use of all the available dramatic devices in his representations of Hui Shi and Gongsun Long, not short of logical fallacies and violation of cooperative principles, if gauged as real life situations. This forces us to reflect on the extent to which conventions of writing and constraints of genre interfere with speech pragmatics. In fact, many of the sophistic debates of the time are embedded in the popular genre of philosophical dialogue (Chang 2003). This is not a stylistic privilege of Zhuangzi’s, but a commonplace shared by many others, including Mengzi and Gongsun Long. For instance, four chapters of the surviving six attributed to Gongsun Long are written in dialogue form, whether or not the interlocutors are identifiable historical personages is another matter. In Zhuangzi’s refutation against Gongsun, the latter is now alluded to in passing as an a-personal third party (Benveniste 1971), now dramatized as an interlocutor engaged in verbal exchange with another person. Rhetoricians like Zhuangzi must have found dialogue a ready-made strategy to exercise their power of persuasion.

#### 9. MING AND SHI: CONJUNCTION OR DISJUNCTION?

As has been pointed out, most of the sophisms lampooned by Zhuangzi boil down to some basic semantic and cognitive issues. The paradoxes “A dog [*gou*] is not a canine [*quan*]” and “The orphan colt [*gu ju*] never had a mother” clearly suggest that the logicians entertain their audiences by playing on the confusion of the linguistic sign’s functions of signifier and signified and its external reference. In other words, what is at issue here is the distinction between (or debate on) word and object, or name and substance (*ming shi zhi bian*). It was so popular in the logical writings of the time that it came to be confused with the later

Daoist appellation of *Xin ming* (form/name) in the Han Dynasty. The debate involves almost all the Pre-Qin philosophical schools because, like the philosophical traditions of other civilizations, naming seems to be a fundamental and universal concern. Laozi (fl. sixth century B.C.) begins by stressing the dialectics of namelessness and naming as the birth of the (human) universe; Confucius (551-479 B.C.) and his disciples are all in favor of rectifying names. Following Confucius’s famous statement of rectification of (political) names as a prerequisite for everything, Xunzi and Lu Buwei (ca. 290-235 B.C.) have each composed a treatise entitled “*Zhengming*” (rectification of names). It is interesting to note that in Lu’s treatise the author devotes much space to the dialectician Yinwenzi (ca. 360-280 B.C.) and alludes to the latter’s lost book entitled *Mingshu* (Book of names). The same Yinwenzi is the subject matter of another portrait by his dialectician follower Gongsun Long.

From the perspective of modern logical semantics and semiotics, much of the discussion is confused and needs logical clarification and semiotic re-articulation. For instance, the semantic range of *ming* is too broad to be functional. Suffice it to cite the usages of three philosophers who are particularly concerned with the issue, Mozi, Xunzi and Yinwenzi. Mozi’s classification of names is quite well known. These are *daming*, *leiming*, and *siming* (Sun, Y. 2002, 15: 429), which can be respectively translated as “comprehensive name” (“unrestricted name”), “classifying name” and “proper name” (“private name”) (Chmielewski 1962: 18; Graham 1978: 325). Whilst *daming* refers to the name of any thing or object, *leiming* to that of a class of things or objects, such as *ma* for *horse*, *siming* to the proper name of a person or place, Yinwenzi makes the distinction among *ming wu zhi ming* (names of things), *hui yu zhi ming* (names in praise or blame), and *kuang wei zhi ming* (names for description). Xunzi calls them, respectively, *sanming* (random names), *xingming* (legal names), *jueming* (rank names), and *wenming* (embellished names) (Sun 1994: 153). Xunzi has traced these names to the Pre-Confucian Three Dynasties, the vanished Golden Age ruled by Sage Kings. It is then that the foundation for nomenclature was laid and any kind of deviation in language would confound that canonized system.

I have elsewhere discussed the possibility of semantic and semiotic remodeling of this debate (Chang 1998). A logico-semantic remodeling of the discourse of *Zhengming* would make it possible for us to reread the concept as a problem of definitional logic, which is a pre-condition for a correct axiomatic-deductive, synthetic reasoning. From the logical point of view, the discussion of a dialectician like Gongsun Long involves the reasoning procedure from

the definitional, to the propositional, and to the inferential logic. With this, the paradox of “*bai ma fei ma*” (“white horse” is not “horse”) can be easily disambiguated and rationalized by the type-token relation. But a semiotic modeling would more effectively solve the famous paradox because its analysis of the referring relation of sign-functives starts by suspending sign’s referentiality. The issue is no longer logico-semantic. I believe a more adequate approach to such sophisms would be semiotic.

Gongsun Long is notorious for his insistence on clear distinction and explicit formalization of names. This has incited the joint attack of his fellow-logicians, including Xunzi, Zhuangzi, and the Later Mohists. In the chapter of “Xiaoqu” (the Small Pick) of the Mohist Canons, the author refutes Gongsun by asserting that “A white horse is a horse, and riding a white horse is riding a horse” (Li 1996: 378; my translation). This kind of rather simplistic distinction between type and token fails to articulate the more subtle semiotic mapping of the relationship between signifier and signified, or *signans* and *signatum*. From a different persuasion, Xunzi asserts that a true master (*junzi*) surely knows the difference between hardness and whiteness, thickness and non-thickness, but he has other concerns than indulging in dialectics.

Zhuangzi launches his critique of Gongsun Long on several occasions. As we have shown, the Daoist metaphysician is not interested in the linguistic sign as relating signifier and signified, but in the sign’s referent. For him, any enquiry into the nuance of a sign’s constituents can be criticized as “devious argument for hardness and whiteness and treacherous explication of sameness and difference” (Guo 1975: 359; my translation). Zhuangzi’s argument is both evasive and simplistic: before language can be abolished, one should be content with its referential function.

This can be evidenced by his comment on the white horse argument. He challenges Gongsun Long to the effect: “To use a horse to show that a horse is not a horse is not as good as using a non-horse to show that a horse is not a horse” (Watson 1968: 40). This refutation has little force because “A horse is not a non-horse” is just like “A white horse is a horse,” both being analytic discourse based on tautological implicates, whereas “A white horse is not a horse” is mystical discourse based on contradictory implicates. The original Chinese “*bai ma fei ma*” contains a semiotic dimension, which cannot be represented by English unless it’s de-grammatized. The two signs “white horse” and “horse” linked by the negative copula can never be equated because of the differentiation in their sign-functives, be the referring relationship one of the Saussurian signifier/signified or the Peircean qualisign/sinsign. Ironically, in

his treatise on *ming* and *shi* (“Mingshilun”) (Gao and Lin 1996: 212-215), Gongsun Long asserts: “What is *ming*? It is used to name *shi*. Knowing this *ming* does not refer to this *shi*, and knowing this *shi* is not available here, one should not use this *ming*. Knowing that *ming* does not correspond to that *shi*, and knowing that *shi* is not available here, one should not use that *ming*” (214; my translation). Here Gongsun Long, Zhuangzi, Xunzi and the Later Mohists seem to concur in their shared belief in *ming* and *shi* correspondence.

## 10. CONCLUSION

There is a touch of irony in Zhuangzi’s rather harsh criticism of Gongsun Long. He criticizes the latter for lacking respect for language’s referential function, and for concealing speech by rhetoric. Whilst Gongsun Long, motivated by his belief in differentiation, has suspended language’s referential function, Zhuang does exactly the same thing, but through other strategies to blur distinctions. He has recourse to pompous, highly imaginative writing. As a rhetorician, he is no less good than the dialectician at “employing paradoxical explanations, terms for vastness, expressions for infinity” (Guo 1975: 1098; my translation). All those involved in the Great Debate participate in a prolonged language game, and their polemical discourse only serves to highlight and reiterate the failure in communication because each disputer encodes his language in one way, but decodes others’ in another.

## Notes

1. The Chinese word for *bian* in its original form is double denotative; it means at once *debate* and *distinction*, but two different words (graphic forms or graphemic signifiers) are used for the two senses (signifieds) in modern Chinese. However, the semantic differentiation and identification denoted by the original form are important to our understanding of the complex relationship between semantics and pragmatics, i.e., clarifying nuances of meaning and engaging in debate.
2. Whilst Aristotle begins his *The Art of Rhetoric* with the statement “Rhetoric is the counterpart of dialectic” (1991: 66), he subsumes the enthymeme or “rhetorical demonstration” under dialectic and stresses its difference from “logical syllogisms” (68, [*Topics*]).
3. It must be noted that there were no school titles in the Pre-Qin China. This practice is due to the Grand Historian, Sima Qian, who grouped the Pre-Qin *zis* into six schools, i.e., Yin-Yang, Confucian, Mohist, Nominalist, Legalist, and Daoist, in the first century B.C.

4. Here, again, a precise chronology is impossible. Graham points out: "There is a chronological difficulty about taking Chuang-tzu to be directly criticising Kung-sun Lung, who was a client of the Lord of P'ing-yüan (died 251 B.C.)" (1989: 179). Books like Qian Mu (1935) may help to clarify factual points of contact or the lack of them, but positivism fails to account for textualized (i.e., fictionalized) events and has little explanatory power for the philosophical issues involved.
5. To the supposedly older Mohist Canons or *Jing* are appended Commentaries on Canons or *Jingshuo*, presumably by the Later Mohists. Amongst the seventy-one chapters of extant Mohist writings, only six deal explicitly and almost exclusively with logic and language. They are (1) the Upper Canons (*Jingshang*); (2) the Lower Canons (*Jingxia*); (3) Commentaries on the Upper Canons (*Jingshuoshang*); (4) Commentaries on the Lower Canons (*Jingshuoxia*); (5) the Great Pick (*Daqu*); and (6) the Small Pick (*Xiaoqu*). Partly due to the shared critical commonplaces, these texts can be read intertextually as rejoinders to other philosophers' discussions of linguistic and logical concepts. These and many other sophistic texts join to form an intertextual space where opinions crisscross and interact, which complicate the problems of chronology and authenticity of authorship.

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### Xu Jin (essay date 2011)

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[In the following essay, Jin compares the writings of Mencius and his contemporary Xunzi on international political philosophy and conflict resolution.]

Mencius and Xunzi were two great pre-Qin Confucians, yet generations of scholars gave them radically different

assessments: Mencius was raised to the status of "Second Sage" after Confucius, while Xunzi remained neglected for centuries until the late Qing Dynasty (nineteenth century). The main reason for this was that Xunzi's thought was close to that of the Legalists, and two of his disciples, Hanfeizi and Li Si, were prominent Legalist scholars and politicians. Hence, in a society dominated by Confucian orthodoxy, he was "discriminated" against.<sup>1</sup>

From the point of view of research in international political philosophy, however, Xunzi most certainly deserves to be highlighted. Xunzi lived at the end of the Warring States Period and died just seventeen years before the first emperor of Qin unified China in 221 BCE. Hence, he had the opportunity to personally experience, as well as understand on the basis of texts, practically the whole course of events and history of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods (eighth to third century BCE) and on this basis propose his own point of view and his own ideas about international politics. Therefore, he may be seen as the great synthesizer of international political philosophy of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods. In sorting out and studying his international political philosophy, we find that his academic importance is indisputable. If we take Xunzi as the endpoint of international political philosophy in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, then Mencius is a key point in the same era but earlier than Xunzi. As a student of Mencius's international political philosophy, I have found that they have areas of agreement as well as areas where they sharply disagree. These similarities and differences show that both inherited the same academic lineage and also show how Xunzi criticized and developed the thought of his predecessor, Mencius. In this essay I make a simple synthesis and comparison of the similarities and differences in the hope that it will awaken the reader's interest.

Put simply, what Mencius and Xunzi hold in common in their international political philosophy is their methodology. What they share to some extent is their understanding of international power, and where they differ is in their understanding of state power, the origin of conflict, and the way to resolve conflict. Naturally, the contributions that their international political philosophies make to contemporary international relations theory and China's foreign policy are not identical.

#### AREAS OF AGREEMENT

In reflecting on the international questions they faced, Mencius and Xunzi adopted similar methods of analysis. They both set their level of analysis at that of the individual.



In Mencius's view, the type of state determines the nature of the international system and international order. In his analysis, the nature of the international system as a dependent variable has two variants, namely, the system of humane authority and that of hegemony. The dependent variable of international order also has two variants, namely, order and disorder. The independent variable of the nature of the state has two variants, namely, the sage king and the hegemon. Mencius's definition of humane authority is a state "that practices benevolence by virtue," whereas his definition of a hegemonic state is "one that pretends to benevolence but uses force."<sup>2</sup> In Mencius's language, the terms *sage king* and *hegemon* both refer to the nature of the state and also to the type of ruler, and can refer to the nature of the system as well. In other words, the type of ruler, the nature of the state, and the nature of the system are three ways of expressing the same thing. This is exactly the same as Xunzi's analytical frame. The specific logical relationship is that the ruler who implements humane (or hegemonic) government may make the state become humane (or hegemonic) and then go on to establish a system of humane authority (or hegemony). A system of humane authority is peaceful and hence there is order, whereas a hegemonic system is unstable and hence there is disorder.

Like Xunzi, Mencius sets his analytical level not at that of the state but rather at that of the individual. In his analysis, the nature of the state is only a mediating variable. The basic cause that determines the nature of the state is the ruler. A given type of ruler leads to a given type of state. A ruler who implements humane authority will have a humane state, whereas a ruler who implements hegemony will have a hegemonic state. In this way, the ruler himself will ultimately shape and determine the features of the entire international system. Mencius and Xunzi had good reasons for doing their analyses at the individual level. A state is a political organization formed by human beings. In the linguistic system of contemporary international relations theory, idioms such as *a state thinks* or *a state decides* use the word *state* synecdochically. In fact, a state itself cannot think or decide. It has no way of acting. What can think, decide, and act are the people in the state, especially the ruler. Therefore, Mencius thinks that the ruler and the state are of the same nature. Often in his writings he refers to the ruler in place of the state, as for instance, "O King, if you should but implement benevolent governance for the people," or "if the king goes to punish them, who will oppose the king?"<sup>3</sup> or "if the ruler of the state likes benevolence, he will have no enemies in all under heaven."<sup>4</sup> In fact, it is not the ruler himself who has no enemies in all under heaven; it is rather the state, which the ruler who likes benevolence represents.

Xunzi is a conceptual determinist whereas Mencius is a conceptual determinist with a tendency toward dialectic. They both think that the persons of the ruler and the ministers are the original motivation for all state conduct. Mencius's dialectical tendency lies in his denial that force has any importance to a state that aspires to humane authority. But he recognizes the important role of force to any state that aspires to hegemony. He says, "Using force and pretending to benevolence is the hegemon. The hegemon will certainly have a large state. Using virtue and practicing benevolence is the sage king. The sage king does not rely on having a large territory. Tang had seventy square kilometers and King Wen had a hundred square kilometers. Should you make people submit to force rather than to the heart, force will never suffice; should you make people submit to virtue, they will heartily rejoice and sincerely follow, as the seventy disciples followed Confucius."<sup>5</sup> This passage says that to become a hegemon a state must be large and powerful, whereas to become a humane authority a state relies not on military force but on the attractive force of morality, which causes other states readily and sincerely to submit and come to the king. Furthermore, Mencius even more than Xunzi points out clearly that it is enough to rely on the will of the ruler and the ministers. Their firm determination can effect a rapid change from hegemon to humane ruler or from humane ruler to hegemon. Mencius encourages King Xuan of Qi to implement royal government by saying, "Hence the ruler is not a humane ruler because he does not act as one, not because he cannot."<sup>6</sup>

Mencius and Xunzi both adopt a strict method of analysis, that is, they use a single variable to explain the changes in the logical chain of cause and effect. Both take the idea of the ruler as the first independent variable and international order as the ultimate dependent variable and construct a progressive layered logic chain of cause and effect. Therefore, figure 5.1 applies equally to Xunzi's and to Mencius's international political thought.

Finally, Mencius and Xunzi both use the method of induction on the basis of isolated cases to present their point of view. In fact, this method of research is the one commonly adopted by scholars in the pre-Qin era. In assessing this method, Yan Xuetong points out in chapter 2 of this volume, "Many of the examples he [Xunzi] chooses come from historical legends. They lack any time for the events, background, or basic account and there is no way of ascertaining their authenticity. Moreover, his examples lack the necessary variable control" and their "scientific value is poor." The veracity and plausibility of the cases are not very strong. Hence, "according to the standard of modern science his analytical method is not scientific." As a

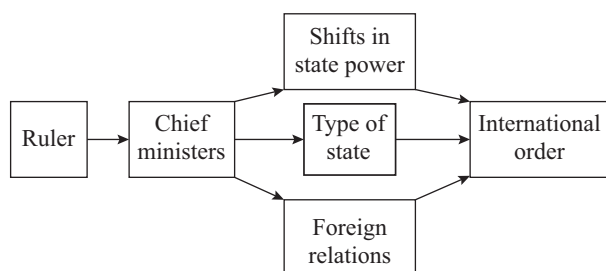


Figure 5.1 The chain of causation between the ruler and international order

scholar educated in contemporary social sciences, I completely agree.

If you are a scholar with a sense of history, however, then you will find Professor Yan’s remarks quoted here a bit hard on the ancients. Most of the pre-Qin classics were lost in the confusion at the changeover between the Qin and Han dynasties. The works of the masters that we now see have passed through the large-scale compilation and reading of the Han Confucians. Hence, historical material that nowadays seems to be lacking in “real origins” may not necessarily have been inauthentic history at the time of the masters, or they may have generally held that these examples were real history. Their veracity is a bit like that of contemporary people who believe that the earth orbits the sun. This fact does not require us to state the time, background, process, and origins of this belief.

POINTS OF PARTIAL SIMILARITY

Mencius’s and Xunzi’s views of international power or world leadership have points in common and points where they differ. Neither pays attention to the structure of international power or relations between large states. Rather, they are interested in the nature of international power. The difference lies in that Mencius specifically points out the direction and policy by which a state can attain humane authority, whereas Xunzi does not specially note this. Furthermore, Mencius forcefully rejects hegemony, whereas Xunzi is not opposed to a state making efforts to attain hegemony.

Xunzi separates international power into three kinds—humane authority, hegemony, and tyranny—whereas Mencius recognizes only two kinds: humane authority and hegemony. Both think that humane authority is the highest form of power in the world. Its foundation is the morality of the ruler (the Son of Heaven). To possess humane authority is almost like possessing world leadership, or “possessing all under heaven.” Mencius says, “Should you exercise

humane government, then all within the four seas would lift their heads and gaze on you and seek to have you as their prince.”<sup>7</sup> “Possessing all under heaven” refers not to using military force to conquer the world but rather to gaining such political legitimacy that the various states of the world consciously submit to one’s leadership. Both scholars think that one does not acquire world leadership by seizing it, but rather it spontaneously belongs to one.<sup>8</sup> The conversation between Mencius and his pupil Wan Zhang over the abdication of Yao in favor of Shun illustrates this point:

Wan Zhang said, “Yao gave all under heaven to Shun. Is that not so?”

Mencius replied, “No. The Son of Heaven cannot give all under heaven to anyone.”

“So who gave all under heaven to Shun?”

He replied, “Heaven gave it to him.”<sup>9</sup>

The problem is that heaven cannot speak, so how do we know that a particular person or state has received the mandate of heaven? Mencius points out one can observe the direction of a person’s mind. If the mind is directed positively, this is a sign that one has obtained the mandate of heaven, and from this one can possess world leadership. If a person’s mind is directed negatively, then this means that one has lost the mandate of heaven, and from this one will lose world leadership. He says, “He appointed him to preside at the sacrifice, the hundred spirits enjoyed his offerings. This showed that heaven accepted him. He appointed him to be in charge of affairs and the affairs were well managed, so that the common people were at peace with them. This showed the people accepted him.”<sup>10</sup> He again uses the example of Yao abdicating in favor of Shun to prove his point: “Of old, Yao presented Shun to heaven and heaven accepted him. He revealed him to the people and the people accepted him. Therefore I say, ‘Heaven does not speak, it simply shows itself by deeds and actions.’”<sup>11</sup>

Although Xunzi argues that a state should make an effort to attain humane authority, he does not say what policies the enlightened ruler or state should adopt to this end, whereas Mencius does give a more detailed prescription. Mencius’s basic suggestion is that the ruler should first raise his moral standing to become a benevolent prince and then both at home and abroad he should “implement benevolence.” Mencius begins from the premise that human nature is good, holding that “all people can become a Yao or a Shun,” the ruler naturally being no exception. Yao, Shun, Yü, Tang, and Wu were all ancient sage kings and the models for later rulers. From their way of behaving

to their actions, they embodied the Confucian political philosophy of being “sages within and humane rulers on the outside.” Hence rulers should study and imitate their every word and action. Mencius says, “If you dress in the dress of Yao, recite the words of Yao, and do the deeds of Yao, then you are quite simply Yao.”<sup>12</sup> That is, by studying and imitating the sage kings the ruler becomes a sage king himself.

If the ruler has an idea of benevolence and justice, the next step is to implement benevolent government.<sup>13</sup> “Benevolent government” is a policy for both domestic and foreign affairs. In domestic matters, Mencius asks the state to restrict its excessive absorption of social resources, adopt a policy of light taxation, and ensure that the basic requirements of life are guaranteed for the common people. Once the ordinary people’s basic livelihood is guaranteed, then you must promote education, lest “well-fed, adequately clad, and peacefully housed, but without education, they are close to the birds and beasts.”<sup>14</sup> Regarding the state, education of the people serves to establish a harmonious society. Mencius thinks that teaching the people is geared toward making the ordinary people “understand human relationships,” such that “there is affection between parents and children, justice between rulers and ministers, distinct roles for husband and wife, sequential order between older and younger siblings, and trustworthiness among friends.”<sup>15</sup> Once these five areas are performed well, society will naturally be harmonious and ordered.

In his foreign policy, Mencius also stresses benevolence and justice as the main principle. He opposes the then-common practice of states employing hegemonic strategies to go to war, annexing land and increasing their populations. He especially emphasizes that the government should stop using war to annex land and people. He says, “Enacting one unjust deed, killing one innocent person, and obtaining all under heaven: they [sage kings] all would not have done such things.”<sup>16</sup> Again, “To take from one state to give to another is something a benevolent person would not do. How much less can one do so by killing people?”<sup>17</sup>

On hegemony Xunzi and Mencius part company. Xunzi thinks that humane authority is the ideal form of power and hence deserves being promoted, whereas tyranny is the worst form of power and hence should be opposed. He has no moral reaction to hegemony nor is he opposed to its existence. On the contrary, he implicitly supposes that a hegemonic state must have a considerable degree of morality even if its morality falls far short of that of a humane authority. He says,

Although virtue may not be up to the mark or norms fully realized, yet when the principle of all under heaven is

somewhat gathered together, punishments and rewards are already trusted by all under heaven, all below the ministers know what they can expect. Once administrative commands are made plain, even if one sees one’s chance for gain defeated, yet there is no cheating the people; contracts are already sealed, even if one sees one’s chance for gain defeated, yet there is no cheating one’s partners. If it is so, then the troops will be strong and the town will be firm and enemy states will tremble in fear. Once it is clear the state stands united, your allies will trust you. Even if you have a remote border state, your reputation will cause all under heaven to quiver. Such were the Five Lords. Hence Huan of Qi, Wen of Jin, Zhuang of Chu, Helü of Wu, and Goujian of Yue all had states that were on the margins, yet they overawed all under heaven and their strength overpowered the central states. There was no other reason for this but that they had strategic reliability. This is to attain hegemony by establishing strategic reliability.<sup>18</sup>

This passage means that even if the morality of a hegemonic state is not perfect, it understands the basic moral norms of this world. The domestic and international policy of a hegemonic state must take as its principle reliability in its strategies. Domestically it should not cheat the people and externally it should not cheat its allies.

Mencius also thinks that humane authority is the ideal form of international power and most worth aspiring to, but he is vehemently opposed to hegemony. He thinks that even if a hegemonic state succeeds in dominating the whole world, its span will be brief and illegitimate and it will not win the support of many countries because a hegemonic state “uses force to subdue people.” The biggest problem with using force to subdue people is that the states that follow one “will not follow from their hearts, but because their strength is insufficient,” and therefore they will look for an opportunity to rebel.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, although hegemon’s false benevolence, fake justice, and paucity of goodness may allow them to cheat people for a while, it cannot be forever. The result of their lack of benevolence will become apparent and as a consequence they will lose the minds of the people and end up losing hegemony. Mencius goes on to say that a state that seeks hegemony for itself risks its own security, because that type of state must practice hegemonic government and this requires seeking profit in everything, and seeking profit in everything will upset the orthodox order of society. He says, “If ministers serve their prince with an eye to profit and sons serve their fathers with an eye to profit and younger brothers serve their older brothers with an eye to profit, so you end up expelling benevolence and justice between rulers and ministers, fathers and sons, and older and younger brothers and all draw close to one another with an eye to profit, such a society has never avoided collapse.”<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, promoting hegemonic government will make all

large states your enemies and they will fight with your allies. This requires an expenditure of state force and is a threat to the life and property of the people. Mencius uses the example of King Hui of Liang pursuing profit alone with the result that the power of his state went into decline to explain that profit is a danger to the state and the ordinary people. He says, "For the sake of territory, King Hui of Liang trampled his people to pulp and took them to war. He suffered a great defeat but returned again only fearful that he would not win so he urged on the son whom he loved and buried him along with the dead. This is what is called 'starting with what one does not love and going on to what one does love.'" <sup>21</sup> Thus, he concludes, "The three dynasties acquired all under heaven by benevolence and they lost it through lack of benevolence. This is the reason why states decline or flourish, rise or fall. If the Son of Heaven is not benevolent, he cannot retain what is within the four seas. If the feudal lords are not benevolent they cannot retain the altars of soil and grain." <sup>22</sup>

From Xunzi's and Mencius's analyses of hegemony set out earlier, we can see that the origin of the difference between their views on this question lies in a difference in their definitions of hegemony. Xunzi thinks that the basis of hegemony is hard power and reliability in strategy, <sup>23</sup> whereas Mencius thinks that the only basis for hegemony is hard power. Therefore, Xunzi accepts that the existence of hegemony has certain positive features, whereas Mencius thoroughly rejects it. What is interesting is that Xunzi's analysis of hegemony is much closer to the United States' advocacy of hegemony, namely, that a superpower must not only exercise hegemony but also be faithful in its alliances. When its allies are threatened it should not spare itself in protecting them, as in the 1960s and 1970s the United States protected South Vietnam and took part in the Vietnam War. Thus, we also find that the domino theory and Xunzi's theory of reliability in strategy have points in common. Mencius's attitude to hegemony, by contrast, is very much like that of the Chinese government. Since 1949, the various Chinese governments have firmly opposed hegemony and hegemonism. <sup>24</sup>

#### POINTS OF DIFFERENCE

##### *UNDERSTANDING OF STATE POWER*

Although Mencius and Xunzi both emphasize the importance of political power and acknowledge it as the primary factor in state power, they have different opinions about the degree of importance of political power. <sup>25</sup> Mencius greatly respects political power and depreciates the importance of economic and military power, whereas Xunzi thinks that all three are necessary, but political power is

the foundation for the exercise of economic and military power. <sup>26</sup>

Professor Yan says, however, that "Xunzi overlooks the importance of hard power for humane authority." I beg to disagree. Professor Yan says,

Even if the territories of Bo and Hao ruled by the kings Tang and Wu, respectively, were small, the states of the feudal lords of that time may have been even smaller and weaker. By the Spring and Autumn Period, the scale of states had generally increased in size. Both Qi and Qin were once larger than Chu, and so Chu was not the strongest state at the time. Therefore, when Xunzi uses the example of Chu's being larger than the lands of the kings Tang and Wu and yet not being able to attain all under heaven to prove that power is not important for humane authority, his argument is less persuasive.

I think that here Professor Yan has misread Xunzi and misread history. Although it is certain that the territories of Kings Tang and Wu were larger than those of some of the feudal lords, their territories were far smaller than those ruled by King Jie of the Xia and King Zhòu of the Shang; hence, in terms of hard power they were definitely on the weaker side. For example, when King Wu led a punitive expedition against King Zhòu, he certainly had fewer troops than King Zhòu did. <sup>27</sup> So when Xunzi says that the kings Tang and Wu were able to attain humane authority even with territories of only one hundred square kilometers, he is speaking of their hard power in relation to that of King Jie of the Xia and King Zhòu of the Shang. Furthermore, in land area, for most of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods the state of Chu was the first or second largest state. It was only toward the end of the Warring States Period that it was overtaken in size by Qin. Moreover, in the Spring and Autumn Period, Chu was certainly what could be called a superpower. It contended for hegemony first with Qi and then with Jin and was very rarely eclipsed. Hence, I think that there is a certain plausibility in Xunzi's using the failure of a state as large as Chu to attain all under heaven and comparing this with the territories of Kings Tang and Wu as proof that hard power is not important to humane authority.

The difference in view of Mencius and Xunzi on the issue of state power may be owing to a difference in political philosophy. Mencius is a pure ethical idealist who believes that for the state to simply seek material goods, especially to raise its military power, is harmful. He uses the example of King Hui of Liang, who set his sights purely on profit, as quoted earlier. In contrast, a state that seeks benevolence and justice can attain humane authority over all under heaven and will have no enemies at all.

Mencius argues,

With a territory of a hundred square kilometers, it is possible to be king. O King, if you should implement benevolent governance for the people, reduce punishments, lighten taxes and duties, allowing for deeper plowing and ensuring that weeding is well done, then the fit will spend their holidays practicing filial piety, brotherly affection, loyalty, and constancy. At home they will serve their parents and elders; outside they will serve their masters; then they can but take wooden staves in hand and attack the armored troops of Qin [in the northwest] and Chu [in the south], whose rulers steal their people's time so that they are not able to plow or hoe to support their parents. Their parents freeze and starve; their brothers, wives, and children are dispersed. They set pitfalls for their people or drown them. If the king goes to punish them, who will oppose the king? Thus it is said, "The benevolent has no enemies."<sup>28</sup>

This is to say that a state that speaks of benevolence and justice and implements benevolent government will be united internally. Political motivation will be strong. In contrast, a state that speaks of gain and implements hegemonic government will be rent apart internally and its political motivation will be weak. In a conflict between a king and a hegemon, the king can win without a fight.

For Mencius the pursuit of political morality is called "justice" and the pursuit of military and economic power is called "profit." The relationship between Xunzi's three factors of state power—political power, economic power, and military power—thus becomes in Mencius's thought one between justice and profit. Hence, the debate about justice and profit becomes a debate between the king and the hegemon. In other words, if the ruler speaks of justice, proposes the kingly way, and implements benevolent

government, then the result will be that political power will rise and ultimately one will become king of all under heaven. If the ruler speaks of profit, proposes the

hegemonic way, and implements hegemonic government, although some countries may be called hegemonic, most will descend into political chaos and a diminution of state power. Moreover, even the successful hegemonies will be unable to hold on to their status for long. Their state power will rapidly decrease and they will lose their hegemonic status. The deductive relationships in Mencius's debate between justice and profit can be set out as in figure 5.2

*THE ORIGIN OF CONFLICT*

Xunzi believes that human nature is evil and Mencius believes that it is good. Their viewpoints are diametrically opposed, and this leads them to equally opposed views about the origin of conflict. Xunzi thinks that there is no end to desires and that material goods cannot satisfy them. Since desires cannot be satisfied, people will go on seeking more. This quest will never end and hence it will give rise to competition, which will continue and break out in violent conflict. He says, "When man is born he has desires. Though desires are unfulfilled, yet he cannot but seek. If he seeks, and has no limits set, then he cannot but conflict with others. If he conflicts with others there will be disorder, and if there is disorder there will be poverty."<sup>29</sup>

It is relatively easy for an exponent of the evil of human nature to start from human desires and postulate the origin of violent conflict, but how an exponent of the goodness of human nature can postulate the origin of violent conflict requires a lot more effort to explain. The question confronting an exponent of the goodness of human nature such as Mencius is: if human nature is good, where does the evil present in real life come from? If a person could but maintain the goodness of their nature, then international conflict would not take place.

First, Mencius thinks, not that human nature is originally good, but that human beings have a natural inclination

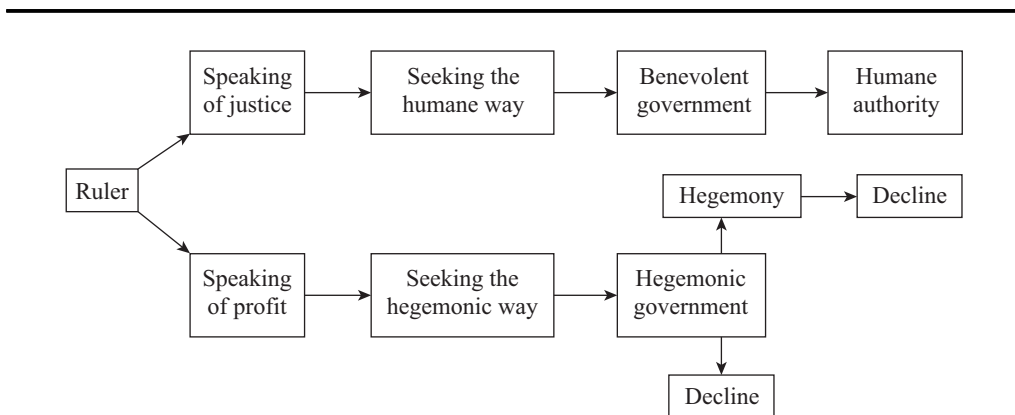


Figure 5.2 Logical relationships: justice vs. profit and humane authority vs. hegemony

toward the good, that is, that they have an a priori basis for being good. These naturally good tendencies need to be directed, educated, and fostered before they can be fully expressed—that is, nature may move toward goodness and hence the goodness of human nature is a process. Mencius says, “It is no surprise the king is not wise. Although there are plants in the world that grow easily, yet with one day of sunshine and ten days of frost, they will not be able to grow. I see you very rarely, and the moment I leave the Jack Frosts come. I may bring out some buds, but to what good?”<sup>30</sup> That is, even though the king has the seeds of goodness in his heart, yet they cannot grow properly with one day of violence or ten of cold. This is especially so when Mencius leaves, since the people who lead the king to fall into injustice (the frost) will gather around him and egg him on to do wrong. Therefore, Mencius’s theory of the goodness of human nature says, not that human nature is originally good, but that the heart has seeds of goodness, which may be developed to do good.<sup>31</sup>

Second, the fact that Mencius thinks the king can be led astray by small-minded persons shows that he acknowledges that people may be led astray by profit and desire. Mencius distinguishes two kinds of organ in the human body. The first is the “small” organs, such as the mouth, the ears, the eyes, and the nose. These organs are designed to satisfy natural desires: “The mouth is oriented to taste, the eye to colors, the ear to sounds, the nose to smells, the four limbs to ease and rest. This is nature. There is also about them what is of Heaven’s decree, so the gentleman does not ascribe everything to nature.”<sup>32</sup> The second kind is the “great” organ, the good mind, the mind of benevolence, justice, rites, and wisdom. There is a contradiction between the great and small organs: namely, the tension between benevolence and profit or between good and evil. A person becomes the sort of person he is by following the effects of the organs; that is, “those who follow the great organ are great people; those who follow the small organs are petty people.”<sup>33</sup>

Now, why is it that some people follow the great organ (become exemplary persons) and some the small organs (become petty people)? Mencius says, “The organs of ears and eyes do not think but are veiled by things. When one thing encounters another thing, then it leads it astray. The organ of the mind does, however, think. By thinking it obtains; by failing to think it fails to obtain. These are what Heaven has given to us. Establish yourself in that which is great and then what is small cannot steal from you. This alone is what makes a great person.”<sup>34</sup> In other words, if a person does not restrain the organs of desire, such as ears and eyes, then he will be led astray by profit. If

he can use his mind to think, then he can maintain his good nature. Hence, whether one becomes an exemplary or a petty person depends on one’s own choice.

#### WAYS TO RESOLVE INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT

Xunzi thinks that increasing the material goods and wealth of a society will not resolve the conflict that may arise between people, because human desires will increase along with the increases in wealth and will continue to rise. He advocates using the rationality of the mind to control desires, and he believes that the way to strengthen the rationality of the human mind is to establish social norms (rites).<sup>35</sup> Norms can make human desires reasonable and can also increase the capacity for satisfaction. When desires decrease and the capacity for satisfaction increases, then the two will easily come into balance. Moreover, norms can also distinguish social classes, so people will act according to the norms proper to their class and thus avoid conflict arising. Xunzi’s reliance on external forces to suppress conflict is at one with his philosophical theory of the evil of human nature.<sup>36</sup>

I am in full agreement with what Yan Xuetong says about the role hierarchical norms can play in suppressing domestic and international conflict, but it would seem that he has overlooked one issue: given that norms are implemented and maintained by people (or by states), then how can they be implemented or maintained when there are evil persons (or evil states) that seek their own ends by flouting norms, especially when these people (or states) have considerable force?<sup>37</sup> Although it may be possible to wait in expectation of a true kingly state, such states occur only rarely in history, and when there are none how is one to cope? I fear that one must place one’s hope in the collective response of persons or states with a sense of justice. Then force is simply the support for implementing and maintaining norms.

Mencius’s resolution of international conflict is quite different from Xunzi’s. Since he advocates the goodness of human nature, Mencius believes that the idea of goodness in the human mind will ultimately overcome evil desires. Of course, Mencius believes in the effectiveness of “rites” in suppressing conflict between people, but he is faced with a world in which “rites are dethroned and music is bad.” Therefore, the first thing to be done is to restore the ritual order. Hence he proposes a two-step strategy. The first step is to use persuasion and education to influence the rulers so that the goodness in their minds will suppress the evil. As for who can carry out this task, Mencius believes that it is worthy people like himself. Therefore, Mencius spent his life going from state to state (he visited

Zou, Lu, Qi, Wei, and Teng). On his arrival he would first preach to the rulers the way of benevolence and justice with the aim of transforming them from their tendency to “talk of profit rather than talk of justice.” Through education, he would form and enlighten the goodness of their minds so that the inherent nature of benevolence, justice, rites, and wisdom would shine out and so that benevolent government would lay a foundation for thought.<sup>38</sup>

Once the ruler’s way of thinking has been rectified, the second step is to correct distorted human relationships, that is, to restore the ritual order.<sup>39</sup> Mencius thinks that when the good in human nature is obscured by desire, human nature itself is distorted. When human nature is distorted, the relationships among people are also distorted. When human relationships are distorted, conflict will invariably arise. Therefore, to prevent violent conflict it is necessary to respect human relationships. The distortion of human relationships is shown in the demise of rituals among people. In human relationships there are hierarchical relationships (ruler and minister, father and son) and relationships of equality (between brothers, spouses, and friends). They can all be unified through the principle of benevolence and justice. He says, “Ministers will serve their lords with benevolence and justice; sons will serve their fathers with benevolence and justice; younger brothers will serve their elder brothers with benevolence and justice; so that ruler and minister, father and son, elder and younger brother will expel thoughts of profit and harbor benevolence and justice and draw close together.”<sup>40</sup> With human relationships in order and the ritual order restored, and once the ruler has adopted the way of benevolence and justice, then a state will no longer harbor thoughts of gain against another. The more there are of this kind of kingdom then naturally the less there will be of international conflict.

Mencius’s plan for regulating international relations is for “internal inspection” or “internal reflection.” That is, he asks the individual to look into the goodness in his own mind and, by developing this goodness, to ease conflict, including international conflict. Now, Mencius is a Confucian like Xunzi but whereas Xunzi advocates a restoration of the Western Zhou system of Five Services, Mencius does not stress this. The reasons for this are twofold: first, the previously mentioned difference in their views regarding the goodness or evil of human nature, and second, a change in the times.

Xunzi lived at the end of the Warring States Period. By that time, Qin had already become the undisputed hegemon and had the power to unify China. Hence, the key political question then was in what way Qin would unify all under heaven. The previous unified world (all under heaven) had

been the feudal system of the Western Zhou. Since this system had been idealized by Confucius and other Confucians as the system of Five Services, and its creation ascribed to King Wu of the Zhou and the duke of Zhou, Xunzi was bound to uphold this form of unified world.

Mencius lived in the mid-Warring States era. This was a time when the various states were in chaos and no one state could come to the fore and emerge as a hegemon, as Qin would later do. Mencius also hoped for unity in all under heaven and for a return to the feudal system of the Western Zhou, but given the conditions of international politics in his time it was very difficult to realize this hope. Hence although Mencius himself was confident about this goal, he had to realize that his duty at the time was to make people wake up and stop chaotic war. This can be seen in his dialogue with King Hui of Liang:

Suddenly he asked me, “How can all under heaven be calmed?”

I replied, “It can be calmed by being united.”

“Who can unite it?”

I replied, “One who does not like killing others can unite it.”

“Who can give it to him?”

I replied, “There is nobody in all under heaven who will not give it to him.”<sup>41</sup>

This exchange shows that Mencius was very busy trying to put the idea of benevolence and justice into the ruler’s mind and trying hard to form one ruler or several who could stop international wars. It was not yet the time for establishing international norms, since if peoples’ minds were not first correct, then even if there were norms in place no one would want to implement them with any sincerity.

#### THE MESSAGE OF MENCIUS’S INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY FOR TODAY

Mencius was a scholar of an idealistic moral bent and was used to converting political issues into moral ones. This meant that his political opinions could not become the first political strategic option of any state during his lifetime, when the strong devoured the weak. Xunzi was more realistic than Mencius. In his international political philosophy there is much that can be put into practice. Over time, however, the world of today has come to be unlike the jungle of the Warring States Period. The influence of morality and values cannot be discounted in international relations or in a state’s foreign policy. Hence, Mencius’s international political philosophy with its moral idealism

still has something to contribute to the realization of China's foreign policy and to international relations theory.

Mencius praises humane authority and denigrates hegemony. He thinks that the way to unite all under heaven is by conversion of hearts rather than by force. Even if historically no humane authority has been established that has been able to leave violence behind, Mencius's viewpoint, which does not accord with history, gives us room for reflecting on what sort of great state China will develop into. If in the future China develops into a hegemonic state, then it will be a case of the rise and fall of yet another hegemon. If in the course of its rise, China can develop into a humane authority, then this will be a unique case in history of the rise of a great state. Although in recent years the Chinese government has proposed the political guidelines of "scientific development" and "taking the human being as the basis" (so its policy does have something in common with Mencius's benevolent government), in its foreign policy China lacks a universal moral ideal or high point. The lack of this moral ideal means that many countries view China's rise as that of a state thirsty for power and thus misread it as a serious threat to the stability of the international system. That is to say, China still lacks what can attract the countries of the world to naturally follow it.

Mencius stresses that a humane authority should first be a model political state in the international system. Hence, if China wants become a humane authority, it should establish itself as a model polity for the world. Only in this way will it be possible to attract other states to imitate it. Mencius thinks that the attractive power of a humane authority lies not in riches but in political ideals and in the model of social development founded on these ideals. Even though Mencius's own view of benevolence and justice may not be adopted by the Chinese government in all its details, Mencius's thought can still tell us that today, when China's GDP has already attained a considerably high standard, the Chinese government should be all the more concerned about what kind of political ideal and model of social development should be created. This is not only to build a firm foundation for China's own rapid progress but, even more, to exert sufficient international attraction to transcend the political ideals and social system of the West.

Mencius's opposition to hegemony can still serve as a reference point for the Chinese government today. In fact, the hegemony that Mencius talks about is much more about the policy of strong states and not really a reference to the status of a state in the structure of international power. Hence, while China is rising daily, the Chinese government must, on the one hand, continue to affirm its principle

of opposition to hegemony while, on the other hand, being very prudent and careful and doing everything to avoid other states' thinking that we are pursuing hegemony. This requires China to stress area cooperation and multilateralism, and to uphold the authority of the United Nations and international legal norms.

Mencius's international political philosophy may be summed up in one word as "the benevolent has no enemies."<sup>42</sup> *Enemies* here refers not only to military enemies but also to political enemies. The greatest lesson China can draw from this is that its development should be a process not only of increasing its power but also of expanding its political ideas and model. If power alone is exalted, this will lead people to be afraid and it will not win their admiration. On the contrary, if, when power is elevated, there is creativity in the area of ideas and models, then once China has risen it will become a humane state and that kind of state will win people's admiration and respect.

#### Notes

1. Liang Qichao, *Xianqin Zhengzhi Sixiangshi* [A history of pre-Qin political thought] (Tianjin: Tianjin Guji Press, 2003), 117-118; Xiao Gongquan, *Zhongguo Zhengzhi Sixiangshi* [A history of Chinese political thought] (Beijing: New Star Press, 2005), 73-78; Lü Simian, *Xianqin Xueshu Gailun* [An outline of pre-Qin scholarship] (Beijing: Dongfang Press, 1996), 84.
2. *Mencius 2 Gongsun Chou A3* (cf. Legge, *The Chinese Classics* [London and Oxford: Frowde and Oxford University Press, 1895], 2:196).
3. *Mencius 1 King Hui of Liang A5* (cf. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 2:135, 136).
4. *Mencius 4 Li Lou A7* (cf. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 2:298).
5. *Mencius 2 Gongsun Chou A3* (cf. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 2:196-197).
6. *Mencius 1 King Hui of Liang A7* (cf. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 2:142).
7. *Mencius 3 Duke Wen of Teng B5* (cf. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 2:274).
8. Both think that one can win leadership of a state by seizing it. Mencius says, "There are those lacking benevolence who have acquired states; but there has never been anyone lacking benevolence who acquired all under heaven" (*Mencius 7 Exhausting the Mind B13* [cf. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 2:483]).



9. *Mencius 5 Wan Zhang A5* (cf. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 2:354).
10. *Ibid.* (cf. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 2:356).
11. *Ibid.* (cf. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 2:355-356). Mencius goes on to explain in detail that Shun's taking the place of Yao was due to the mandate of heaven: "Shun served Yao for twenty-eight years. This was not something a human being could do, only heaven. Yao died and after three years' mourning, Shun left Yao's son and went to the south of the South River. The feudal lords of all under heaven came to pay court not to Yao's son but to Shun. Those who had court hearings did not go to Yao's son but to Shun. Those who sang elegies did so not for Yao's son but sang and danced for Shun. Therefore I say, 'This is of heaven.' Later, he went to the central state and took the throne of the Son of Heaven. If he had stayed in Yao's palace and dismissed Yao's son, this would be usurpation rather than a matter of heaven giving it. The *Great Oath* says, 'Heaven sees as my people see; heaven hears as my people hear'" (*ibid.* [cf. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 2:357]).
12. *Mencius 6 Gaozi B2* (cf. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 2:426).
13. The ruler ought also to have a process for selecting good ministers, but Mencius thinks that the type of ruler decides what type of ministers he has; hence, a prince of benevolence and justice will certainly select ministers of benevolence and justice.
14. *Mencius 3 Duke Wen of Teng A4* (cf. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 2:251).
15. *Ibid.* (cf. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 2:252).
16. *Mencius 2 Gongsun Chou A2* (cf. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 2:194).
17. *Mencius 6 Gaozi B8* (cf. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 2:440).
18. *Xunzi 11 Humane Authority and Hegemony*.
19. *Mencius 2 Gongsun Chou A3* (cf. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 2:196).
20. *Mencius 6 Gaozi B4* (cf. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 2:429-430).
21. *Mencius 7 Exhausting the Mind A1* (cf. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 2:477-478).
22. *Mencius 4 Li Lou A3* (cf. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 2:293-294).
23. This is Yan Xuetong's view; see chapter 2, p. 88-89.
24. The term *hegemonism* does not exist in English. English-speaking readers may not understand the official Chinese translation, *hegemonism*. In Chinese, *hegemonism* refers to a strong state (not necessarily a hegemonic state) seeking to humiliate weak states or to a strong state forcing a weak state to do something it does not want to do. Official Chinese texts generally use the three expressions *imperialism*, *hegemonism*, and *great power politics* together to show that they have virtually identical meanings.
25. Both coincide in using the historical case of King Wen becoming king with a territory of only one hundred square kilometers to prove the role of political power in the rise of a state to world leadership.
26. This essay does not specifically discuss the role of armed force insofar as it relates to the state's military power. Regarding the use of armed force, both Mencius and Xunzi support just war. For an analysis of the conditions under which Mencius supports a state's using armed force, see Daniel A. Bell, *Beyond Liberal Democracy: Political Thinking for an East Asian Context* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 49-56.
27. Yang Kuan, *Xizhou Shi* [A history of the Western Zhou] (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Press, 2003), 95.
28. *Mencius 1 King Hui of Liang A5* (cf. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 2:134-136).
29. *Xunzi 19 Rites: A Discussion*.
30. *Mencius 6 Gaozi A9* (cf. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 2:409-410).
31. Yang Zebo, *Mengzi Pingzhuan* [Mencius: A biography] (Nanjing: Nanjing University Press, 1998), 327-331.
32. *Mencius 7 Exhausting the Mind B24* (cf. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 2:489).
33. *Mencius 6 Gaozi A15* (cf. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 2:417-418).
34. *Ibid.* (cf. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 2:418).
35. Although Xunzi does not deny the role of education and moral example, he nonetheless stresses the role of rites.
36. I say that rites are a kind of external force but do not thereby imply that rites are a purely external force

imposed on one. In reference to the human person, rites are an external thing with a certain compulsory role, but rites may also be internalized (by being united with happiness), so that people live gently in a spirit of respect and obedience.

37. According to Xunzi's theory that human nature is evil, evil persons or states will very easily emerge.
38. On this point, Mencius's concept is very like the idea of a "norm entrepreneur" discussed by the constructivist Martha Finnemore. Norm entrepreneurs hope to give leaders of countries norms so that they can accept, inherit, and internalize them to form new norms. Finnemore studies only successful examples of norm entrepreneurs, whereas the *Mencius* records the failures of Mencius in trying to promote norms. Examples of failure in fact are even more deserving of our attention because they can show where the limits of the norm entrepreneur lie. Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, "International Norms Dynamics and Political Change," *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (1998): 887-917.
39. Human relationships are the core of the rites; hence, the restoration of ritual order and respect for human relationships are two sides of the same coin.
40. *Mencius* 6 *Gaozi* B5 (cf. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 2:430).
41. *Mencius* 1 *King Hui of Liang* A6 (cf. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 2:136-137).
42. *Mencius* 1 *King Hui of Liang* A5 (cf. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 2:136).

#### Manyul Im (essay date 2011)

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[In the following essay, Im examines the Mencius in the context of consequentialism, or an ethical theory that evaluates the rightness of an action based on its perceived effects. Chinese characters originally in this essay have been silently removed.]

In this chapter, I lay out the reasons for trying to understand Mencius by attributing a consequentialist moral theory to him. This is meant in part as an oblique criticism of readings on which he is construed as a "virtue ethicist." It is also meant to be something of a reply to Chad Hansen's

(1992) consistently severe dismissals of Mencius as a competent thinker about ethics. However, the scope of my argument here is limited to the positive argument in favor of reading Mencius as a consequentialist.<sup>1</sup> I argue that, on the best systematic sense we can make of the text, Mencius judges the responses and actions of the gentleman, or *jūnzǐ*, to be better or worse according to whether such responses and actions bring about better or worse consequences than other responses, lack of responses, actions, or inactions that might have been brought about. That is not to argue that Mencius himself advocates a consequentialist moral theory. Arguably, he never lays out or advocates a *theory* in any robust sense. At best the account of his sayings and conversations in the *Mencius* indicates certain patterns of concern expressed either to rulers or disciples and occasional bouts of disputation with opponents. Nonetheless, I will argue that a pattern of justification emerges from the text that is primarily consequentialist in structure. In addition, an intended bonus will emerge from my reading of Mencius. We may see from it how a consequentialist theory might look in which an important type of intrinsic moral value might be countenanced among the goods to be promoted.

The entire trajectory of this reading will seem *prima facie* implausible to some because of the traditional, and correct, juxtaposition of Mencius as a philosophical opponent of the Mohists' ethical position, which is standardly—and correctly—characterized as utilitarian, or more recently, as consequentialist.<sup>2</sup> While I take the Mohists to be consequentialists, I argue that the difference between them and Mencius lies not in Mencius being a nonconsequentialist, but in a disagreement Mencius has about two facets of the Mohists' brand of consequentialism. In essence, my argument is that Mencius is critical of the Mohists because following their teachings, as Mencius construes them, is unlikely to result in the best consequences. Mencius argues against the Mohist view that a person should act, in the usual case, *from considerations* of producing a net overall gain of benefit. Instead, Mencius argues, one ought to act from certain motives which themselves contribute to the value of the resulting behavior, value which would be lost if one always acted from the motive of producing benefit.

Characterizing the disagreement in this way, I believe, sufficiently captures the spirit and details of the textual polemic between Mencius and the Mohists. But, as I will argue, that does not commit us to attributing a nonconsequentialist ethical view to Mencius. On the contrary, it makes sense to characterize Mencius himself as a consequentialist, though one of a less straightforward type than the Mohists. After dispatching the concern that a

consequentialist reading of Mencius is at odds with the proper understanding of his relationship to the Mohists, I will fill in the reading with an account of the kinds of things Mencius considers to be goods and the ways in which he thinks one can best bring them about. I then contrast this reading with a prominent consequentialist reading of Mencius, and of early Confucianism more generally, given by P. J. Ivanhoe, one that emphasizes possession of good character as the good to be promoted.

In order to make my case, however, I need to address two preliminary issues. First, we need to be clear about the ways in which an ethical view can plausibly be considered consequentialist, despite being a view far removed historically and culturally from the intellectual context in which the ethical views typically considered consequentialist developed and exist. Also, some clarification about the nature of consequentialism itself as a species of moral theory is necessary in order to construct the proper framework for highlighting Mencius's consequentialist tendencies.

#### FRAMING ANCIENT ETHICAL VIEWS

A very general way of characterizing theories as consequentialist attributes to them views about “the good” and “the right,” wherein the right is defined in terms of the good. So such theories tend to contain:

1. A view about what things or kinds of things are intrinsically and nonmorally valuable or good; and
2. The view that what makes something right—an act, rule, institution, etc.—depends ultimately on its resulting either directly or indirectly in the best outcome available, where the outcome is given in terms of the net nonmoral good that results from the act.

Here, I follow Frankena's characterization, though he calls such theories “teleological” in contrast to “deontological.”

A teleological theory says that the basic or ultimate criterion or standard of what is morally right, wrong, obligatory, etc., is the nonmoral value that is brought into being. The final appeal, directly or indirectly, must be to the comparative amount of good produced, or rather to the comparative balance of good over evil produced.

(1963, 14)

Aside from various kinds of utilitarianism, Frankena includes ethical egoism among teleological theories. On Frankena's analysis, ethical egoism as a teleological theory is distinguished from utilitarianism only by a difference in view about *whose* nonmoral good it is right to promote. If we exclude ethical egoism from his analysis of teleological theories, I think his use of the label “teleological” corresponds to how I wish to use “consequentialist.” The

important feature to notice about consequentialist views is that rightness of acts, rules, or whatever is held to be dependent on the production of nonmoral good. This distinguishes such views from deontological views, in which rightness of acts is thought to be, to various degrees, independent of the production of nonmoral good.

At this point we can distinguish a common way of characterizing “utilitarian” moral theory as a species of consequentialist or teleological theory. Utilitarianism is a form of consequentialism that specifies the nonmoral good to be brought about in terms of well-being, or welfare. What well-being consists of may vary from account to account, from pleasure felt by any sentient being to preference-satisfaction of persons (see Scanlon 1993). An example of the latter is classical utilitarianism, as Rawls understands it (1971, 25). Rawls at the same time characterizes other species of teleological theory according to the way the conception of the good is specified.

Teleological doctrines differ, pretty clearly, according to how the conception of the good is specified. If it is taken as the realization of human excellence . . . we have what may be called perfectionism. This notion is found in Aristotle and Nietzsche. If the good is defined as pleasure, we have hedonism; if as happiness, eudaimonism, and so on.

(1971, 25)

Rawls's characterization of “perfectionism” contributes an important distinction between broadly teleological theories and consequentialist ones. Human excellence, as part of the conception of the good in a teleological theory, may contain goods that are not clearly nonmoral. In particular, if we take Aristotle's case, human excellence must include the virtues, which may sensibly be considered moral goods, at least broadly speaking. By contrast, consequentialist ethical theories are supposed to be concerned with the nonmoral good.

To understand better what consequentialism is—or could be—then, it is necessary to clarify the distinction between *nonmoral* good or value and the other merely suggested category up to this point, *moral* good or value.<sup>3</sup> The reason that this distinction is important to clarify for our purposes here is that ethical theories may attribute value not only to actions but also to traits, motives, and psychological attitudes for the further and final purpose of evaluating a *person* morally, rather than for the purpose of evaluating the value of states of affairs. Such value seems to be the kind that is typical of moral (versus nonmoral) value. But it may seem to those who are familiar with Mencius that it is exactly that kind of value with which he is often concerned.

What I will suggest is that there are at least two quite different distinctions that are glossed in the literature as the

moral/nonmoral value distinction. One distinction has to do with whether or not something is good in a way *derivative* of some standard of rightness. That distinction, I will argue, is essential to the definition of consequentialism. But there is another distinction which some have used—for example, Frankena—to characterize the divide. This second distinction has to do with whether something has value in the sense of being admirable and in some irreducible sense *estimable*, as opposed to being merely desirable. I do not think this latter distinction is essential to the definition of consequentialism, though it may be of some use for describing more clearly the kinds of things a consequentialist theory can be concerned with promoting.

#### RIGHT-DERIVED MORAL GOOD

We can find in Rawls an analysis of the reason why any theory that is act-consequentialist cannot recognize or, at the very least, cannot concern itself in its account of right action with a certain kind of value.

It is essential to keep in mind that in a teleological theory the good is defined independently from the right. This means two things. First, the theory accounts for our considered judgments as to which things are good (our judgments of value) as a separate class of judgments intuitively distinguishable by common sense, and then proposes the hypothesis that the right is maximizing the good as already specified. Second, the theory enables one to judge the goodness of things without referring to what is right.

(1971, 25)

Rawls's analysis has two steps. First, it identifies what is unique about consequentialism as an ethical theory by the way the relationship between what is right and what is good is structured by such a theory. This we have also seen above in Frankena's analysis of "teleological" theories. The point here, again, is that the good is normatively independent—at least by the light of common sense—from the right, according to a teleological theory. Second, Rawls's analysis identifies a class of normative judgment concerning acts or persons that is incompatible with the way a consequentialist theory must structure the relationship between judgments of value and judgments of what is right.

An example, Rawls thinks, is the judgment that the distribution of goods is itself a good. If it is counted as a good—a "higher order" good, perhaps—and hence is counted by our ethical theory as one of the goods among others that it is right to promote, Rawls argues, the theory will not be a teleological theory in the sense specified above. The reason for this is that "The problem of distribution falls under the concept of right as one intuitively understands it" (1971, 25). In other words, the value of the distribution of goods is dependent on the rightness of a fair distribution

of goods. But what is distinctive about teleological, or what I call consequentialist, theories is that the goods to be promoted are thought to have their value independent of what is right. If goods were included that had value that depended on their being right to promote, then there would be a problem of circularity in the theory. For the theory of rightness in a consequentialist theory would recognize goods, some of which were dependent on its being right to promote them. Then the rightness of an act would depend on the goodness of the consequences, but the goodness of some of those consequences would depend on the rightness of the act.<sup>4</sup> So for reasons of circularity, one kind of value that cannot be counted by a consequentialist theory as part of the nonmoral good to be promoted is the value something has in virtue of its being right to promote that thing.<sup>5</sup> Now, although Rawls himself does not call this kind of value "moral good," it is worth calling this *right-derived moral good* so as not to confuse it with another kind of value also distinguishable from nonmoral good.

#### ESTEEM-BASED MORAL GOOD

We can find this other kind in Frankena's discussion of the difference between moral and nonmoral good. Frankena's treatment of the distinction is especially interesting because it reveals an ambiguity, allowing us to see how things that fall under an important construal of "moral value" actually can be of interest to a consequentialist theory. According to Frankena, what distinguishes things that are morally good from nonmorally good things is the connection that the former have to persons and elements of personality. Both in the objects that we tend to call morally good or bad and in the reasons we have for making such judgments, Frankena thinks there is an important link to personhood: "When we judge actions or persons to be morally good or bad we always do so because of the motives, intentions, dispositions, or traits of character they manifest" (1963, 62). Such judgments of moral value, Frankena calls "aretaic judgments."

Aretaic judgments of moral value, according to Frankena, are suggestive of *intrinsic* moral goodness of a sort important to identifying what he calls an "ethics of virtue."<sup>6</sup> Frankena thinks that judgments of moral value are especially and primarily apt when applied to people or features of people such as their motives and dispositions. He identifies moral value that is intrinsic, not derivative of what it is right to do or to promote, as a way of delineating what is distinctive about an ethics of virtue.

What would an ethics of virtue be like? It would, of course, not take deontic judgments or principles as basic in morality, as we have been doing; instead, it would take as basic aretaic judgments like "That was a courageous

deed,” “His action was virtuous,” or “Courage is a virtue,” and it would insist that deontic judgments are either derivative from such aretaic ones or can be dispensed with entirely. Moreover, it would regard aretaic judgments about actions as secondary and as based on aretaic judgments about agents and their motives or traits.

(Frankena 1963, 63)

The moral value of motives or dispositions according to this type of account is not derivative of the concept of right action. Instead, right action is derived, if at all, from the moral value of certain motives or dispositions. On such a view, what is morally good has theoretical primacy over rightness.<sup>7</sup> Intrinsic moral value, just like intrinsic *non*-moral value, must be determined independently of other things of value and, for that reason, independently of the moral value of actions.<sup>8</sup>

How, then, might intrinsic moral value be determined? Though woefully short of presenting a full account, we can suggest how such an account might parallel a powerful way of accounting for *non*moral value. It is sometimes argued that judgments of intrinsic *non*moral value can be grounded in judgments of what we desire or what we would desire under certain conditions.<sup>9</sup> The reason is that *non*moral value seems to have an important intuitive connection to being the object of desire. A parallel way to ground judgments of intrinsic *moral* value might be to exploit a similarly intuitive connection moral value has to being the object of certain favorable attitudes other than desire: for example, moral admiration, esteem, or respect. This way of grounding moral value would be quite similar to Hume’s sentiment-based argument that virtue and vice are distinguishable by certain natural kinds of reaction that we have to certain things: “An action, or sentiment, or character is virtuous or vicious; why? because its view causes a pleasure or uneasiness of a particular kind. In giving a reason, therefore, for the pleasure or uneasiness, we sufficiently explain the vice or virtue” (Hume 1740, 472). Hume also marks a difference in kinds of attitude with which he tries to distinguish the objects of moral esteem from *non*moral.

A good composition of music and a bottle of good wine equally produce pleasure; and what is more, their goodness is determin’d merely by the pleasure. But shall we say upon that account, that the wine is harmonious, or the music of a good flavor? In like manner an inanimate object, and the character or sentiments of any person may, both of them, give satisfaction; but as the satisfaction is different, this keeps our sentiments concerning them from being confounded, and makes us ascribe virtue to the one, and not to the other. . . . ’Tis only when a character is considered in general, without reference to our particular interest, that it causes such a feeling or sentiment, as denominates it morally good or evil.

(1740, 472)

Judgments of intrinsic moral value could, then, be grounded in judgments of what we admire or would admire under certain conditions. Such an account might even give a rationale for Frankena’s claim that only aspects of *persons* have moral value. If that were true, it would be because only such things are objects of moral admiration or esteem. We may call this type of value, then, *esteem-based moral good*.

Important for this distinction is that the esteem, or admiration, upon which judgments of such value are based should not be reducible to further judgments about what is right, for that would not distinguish esteem-based good from right-derived good. We would have to think of esteem or admiration as, in some sense, a primitive or basic natural attitude, perhaps a species of desire, but with a psychological “shape” to it that distinguishes it from other species of desire broadly construed. So, estimability and admirability would track desirability, but under a specific rubric of it that is the basis for calling them species of *moral* desirability rather than *non*moral.

Summarizing, it may be possible to distinguish at least two kinds of moral good: (1) extrinsic, or secondary moral good, which may be derived from a prior concept of right action—or, *right-derived moral good*; and (2) intrinsic, or primary moral good that is based on esteem or admiration. Returning to the structure of consequentialism, we may question if and why things with intrinsic *moral* value cannot be part of the good, along with *non*moral goods, that are right to produce on consequentialist grounds. We have seen why right-derived moral value cannot be included. But what could be the reason for excluding things with intrinsic, *primary* moral value—*esteem-based good*—from a consequentialist theory? The answer to this question depends on an answer to the question of what role intrinsically morally good people, motives, or dispositions are to play in a theory.

Take benevolence as an example. It may be a motive that has moral value because of its admirability. It may even be admired because it moves a person to further the happiness of other people. But a consequentialist need not consider a benevolent motive good solely because of its *instrumental* value to realizing the *non*moral good of happiness. The possession of benevolent motives might also be considered an *intrinsic* moral good that is itself a good thing to be brought about. And this may be for the same sorts of reasons that a consequentialist might have for considering intrinsic *non*moral goods to be brought about, namely, because they are things with which we think the world is better off than without. The difference between benevolence and happiness that differentiates them as different

kinds of good is that benevolence is the object of moral desire—esteem or admiration—while happiness is the object of a broader type of nonmoral desire.

This type of reasoning may provide the basis for including within consequentialist ethical theory certain goods that are thought of as morally valuable—more specifically, thought to be so in the esteem-based way. So dispositions or motives may be thought intrinsically valuable and among the goods which, *if brought about by an act*, contribute to a consequentialist assessment of the act as right.

#### OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE CONSEQUENTIALISM

One last preliminary issue before discussing Mencius's ethical views is the construal of consequentialism according to what it is supposed to provide as a theory. As Bales puts it, one might think of a consequentialist ethical theory as either providing an "account of right-making characteristics" or as providing a "decision-making procedure" (1971, 261).<sup>10</sup> This distinction allows us to see how someone who has a consequentialist ethical view and hence is concerned with bringing about the best consequences could at the same time advocate that we act from considerations other than that of bringing about the best consequences. That will allow us to see how Mencius's criticism of the Mohists can be read as consequentialist criticisms.

To think of an ethical theory as providing an account of right-making characteristics is to suppose that it provides an account of the criterion for whether an act is right. Such an account may tell us how to go about deciding what to do in all or most situations, or in a particular one. How exactly we go about deciding what to do is itself something that can be judged right by applying the criterion of rightness identified by the account. But, so far, this tells us how to determine the right decision procedure—it is not itself the procedure used to decide how to act in some particular situation. So applying the criterion of right action can tell us what decision procedure we ought to use in deciding how to act, but the criterion of right action itself need not be included among the things we ought (according to that very criterion) to consider when deciding what to do.

Following Railton, we can call a consequentialist view *objective* if it only gives its account of right action as a criterion of the rightness of an act, and call it *subjective* if the overall good to be promoted is given in the theory as the object one should consciously take in deciding what to do; i.e., "that whenever one faces a choice of actions, one should attempt to determine which act of those available would promote the good, and should then try to act accordingly" (1984, 113).

#### MENCIUS AND THE MOHISTS

From what we read in the *Mòzǐ*, we know that consequentialist views formed a large part of the ethical and political thought of the Mohists. Mòzǐ's criticisms of Ruist, or Confucian, teachings and practices focus on the bad consequences of adopting those teachings and engaging in those practices. In particular, Mòzǐ targets the Ruist emphasis on observance of traditional ceremonies, especially funerary and mourning rituals. In the chapter "Simplicity in Funeral" (jié zàng xià), he takes to task the expenditure of materials, time, and the sheer physical and emotional energy involved in traditional ceremonies because it is ruinous to the kingdom.

When the sage-kings of the Three Dynasties had passed away, and the world had become ignorant of their principles, some of the gentlemen in later generations regarded elaborate and extended mourning as magnanimous, and righteous, and the duty of a filial son. . . . In my opinion, if, in adopting the doctrine and practicing the principle, elaborate funeral and extended mourning could enrich the poor, increase the few, remove danger, and regulate disorder, it would be magnanimous, righteous, and the duty of a filial son. . . . I have examined the sayings of those who uphold elaborate funeral and extended mourning. If they should be taken seriously in the country, it would mean: when a lord dies, there would be several inner and outer coffins. He would be buried deep. There would be many shrouds. Embroidery would be elaborate. The grave mound would be massive. So then, the death of a common man would exhaust the wealth of a family. And the death of a feudal lord would empty the state treasury. . . .

(Mei 1973, 123-24)

Likewise, practices not necessarily advocated by the Ruists, but apparently carried on by some rulers of his day, are also targets of Mòzǐ's criticism; for example, heavy taxation and corvée, offensive warfare, the building of elaborate palaces and homes, and the performance of elaborate music and dance. To give their views rhetorical weight, the Mohists argue that the actions of historical cultural heroes, the sage kings and others, show the same concern for consequences as the Mohists themselves advocate.<sup>11</sup> So the appeal to consequences in assessing the acceptability of teachings and practices plays a rather prominent role not only in the debates between the Mohists and Ruists such as Mencius but also, it seems, in the Mohist scholars' more general political criticisms and even their interpretations of historical myths.

The description of the consequences with which the Mohists are particularly concerned is "the benefit to the kingdom." Benefit to the kingdom is explicated often in terms of the economic well-being, broadly speaking, of the people. Included in that is the defensibility of the kingdom

from aggression. Given the prominence of consequentialist arguments within Mohist views, it is striking that, in his discussions of Mohist doctrines, *Mencius expresses no objections to justifying particular teachings or practices by consideration of the consequences of adopting them.* There are two main points Mencius argues in those discussions, both of which are compatible with consequentialist positions: (a) that the Mohists have an implausible psychological element in their teachings, and (b) that taking benefit as the goal of one's actions has bad consequences. In the case of the latter, as we will see, Mencius actually argues for the point with a consequentialist argument of his own.

Mencius's explicit discussion of Mòzǐ (i.e., actually referring to Mò by name) is restricted entirely to criticism of Mòzǐ's doctrine of "inclusive concern," *jiān ài* (or as more commonly translated, "universal love"). This was a key element of Mòzǐ's view that one ought not to display exclusivity or favoritism, say, toward the members of one's own family. What is important, in Mòzǐ's view, is not just that one ought to *behave* so, but that one ought to *feel* concern inclusively toward all in the kingdom, as he states in his *Jiān ài* chapter.

But what is the way of universal love and mutual aid? [Mòzǐ] said: It is to regard the state of others as one's own, the houses of others as one's own, the persons of others as one's self. When feudal lords love one another, there will be no more war; . . . when individuals love one another there will be no more injury. When ruler and ruled love each other they will be gracious and loyal. . . . When all the people in the world love one another, then the strong will not overpower the weak, the many will not oppress the few, the wealthy will not mock the poor. . . .

(Mei 1973, 82)

Mòzǐ's ethical view, then, requires concern for all—not just in one's own kingdom but for all humankind regardless of state boundaries. Mòzǐ explicitly contrasts partiality with the inclusivity (*jiān*) of the concern one ought to feel. As Mencius understands it, this means that one ought to take the very same concern one feels for members of one's own family, ruler, or state, and feel that same way inclusively toward all people. Hence, by Mencius's rendering of Mòzǐ, one ought not to have partial feelings at all toward anyone.

This was a mistaken view, as far as Mencius was concerned; he thought it assumed an implausible empirical psychology, requiring a psychologically impossible task of people. It is this point that Mencius objects to in this explicit discussion of Mòzǐ's views. In 3A:5, Mencius discusses the actions and beliefs of a follower of Mòzǐ's teachings, Yí Zhī.<sup>12</sup>

[Mencius said:] I have heard that Yí Zhī is a Mohist. In the matter of funeral arrangements, Mòzǐ teaches that one ought to be sparing. . . . Nevertheless Yí Zhī buried his parents in a rich manner and so he served his parents in a way he disparages.

Xú Bì reported this to Yí Zhī. Yí Zhī said: The Ruists teach that the ancients ruled like they were caring for children. What does this mean? It means that one ought to love without differences of degree. In carrying this out, the starting point is affection for family.

Xú Bì reported this to Mencius. Mencius said: Does Yí Zhī sincerely believe that a man's affection for his brother's child is like his affection for a neighbor's child?

The fact that Mencius's complaint against Mòzǐ really is this—that it is futile to expect people to be able to feel concern impartially—is further supported by the Mohists' own description of their detractors: "But the gentlemen (*jūnzǐ*) of the world say: 'So far so good. It is of course very excellent when love becomes universal. But it is only a difficult and distant ideal'" (Mei 1973, 83).

In the two other places where Mòzǐ is specifically referred to by name,<sup>13</sup> Mencius identifies in passing the objectionable part of Mòzǐ's view by referring to Mòzǐ's principle of inclusive concern, *jiān ài*—not by referring to the motive of benefit, *lì*. So it is clear that Mencius was dubious about the plausibility of humans being *able* to have concern impartially. He does not seem concerned, at least explicitly, with Mòzǐ's consequentialist standards of justifying or criticizing feelings and actions that center on benefit.<sup>14</sup>

It might be thought that Mencius was content only to address the doctrine of inclusive concern and not worry about addressing Mòzǐ's consequentialism, because the latter is founded on the former. Hence, if Mencius can argue against the psychological underpinnings of Mòzǐ's consequentialism, he would undermine it. But there are two obstacles to this argument. First, it is clear that it is the other way around: Mòzǐ's consequentialism underwrites his view about what one ought to feel. Mòzǐ actually gives a consequentialist justification for the view that one ought to feel concern inclusively. Each of the three chapters on inclusive concern compiled in the text of the *Mòzǐ* begins with an analysis of the cause of disorder and argues that the cure for disorder is impartial concern. In the third of these *Jiān ài* chapters we find a nice summing up of the argument of Mòzǐ.

When we come to think about the several benefits [to the world] in regard to their cause, how have they arisen? Have they arisen out of hate of others and injuring others? Of course we should say no. We should say they have arisen out of love of others and benefiting others. If we should classify one by one all those who love others and benefit others, should we find them to be partial or

universal? Of course we should say they are universal. Now, since universal love is the cause of the major benefits in the world, therefore [Mòzǐ] proclaims universal love is right. . . . [We] have found out the consequences of universal love to be the major benefits of the world and the consequences of partiality to be the major calamities in the world; this is the reason why [Mòzǐ] said partiality is wrong and universality is right.

(Mei 1973, 88)

So, on Mòzǐ's view, one ought to feel concern inclusively because that would result in benefit for the world, i.e., better consequences; and one ought to bring about the better consequences. Mòzǐ does not run his argument in the other direction, that one ought to bring about the better consequences because one ought to feel concern impartially. So Mencius would have to have terribly misunderstood the Mohists' position if he thought that he would undermine their consequentialism by arguing against the inclusive concern doctrine. Of course he might have been so confused. But here is where the second obstacle to this argument is relevant.

Mencius does not actually display any objections toward the view that one ought to bring about the better consequences. On the contrary, he himself takes for granted that one ought to do so. The evidence that Mencius does this is somewhat subtle, for two reasons. First, it occurs in passages that do not explicitly mention Mòzǐ or his followers but that do involve the term that is prominent in the Mohist views: *lì*, "profit" or "benefit." Second, there is subtlety in those passages because Mencius ostensibly argues against someone's acting for the sake of benefit. But if we look at the passages, it is clear that Mencius considers the consequences of acting for the sake of benefit to be counterproductive of the goal of attaining benefit, and *that* is the reason not to act with that motive. In **1A:1**, Mencius visits King Huì of Liáng and is greeted by the king with the suggestion that Mencius has come all this way with counsels "to benefit my kingdom" (*lì wú guó*). To this Mencius replies that Huì should not "speak of" benefit (*wáng hé bì yuē lì*). Likewise, in **6B:4**, Mencius corrects a fellow scholar, Sòng Kēng, who is about to try to stop the kingdoms of Qín and Chǔ from their hostilities. Sòng Kēng tells Mencius that his plan is to try to persuade the rulers of the two kingdoms that warfare between them is "not to their benefit" (*qí bù lì yě*). Mencius responds by suggesting that his aim is fine but his plan is flawed.

Your aim is great, but your plan is inadvisable. If you speak of benefit to the kings of Qín and Chǔ, the kings will be pleased with the thought of benefit and stop their armies. . . . Then this will make the ministers [of those kingdoms] to serve their lords while harboring desire for benefit; it will make sons to serve their fathers with

thoughts of benefit. . . . Because of this, lords and ministers, fathers and sons, and elder and younger siblings will discard benevolence and propriety and cherish benefit in their interactions. In such a state, there has never been a kingdom that did not fall to ruin.

In both **1A:1** and **6B:4**, then, Mencius argues that the *widespread adoption* of benefit as a goal is a detriment to the social fabric. His argument seems to rest on an empirical claim, namely, that once people start thinking in terms of benefit, they will end up acting largely for the sake of personal benefit and hence will start to disregard their duties and other moral concerns. Whatever we think of that empirical claim, it is clear that Mencius's objection to acting for the sake of benefit is that it produces bad consequences; far from producing benefit, it produces social chaos by breaking down important hierarchic relationships.

But Mencius does not stop there. In addition to objecting to acting for the sake of benefit because of its bad consequences, Mencius goes further in **6B:4** to recommend acting from benevolence and propriety because doing so brings about *good* consequences.

Take benevolence and propriety and speak to the kings of Qín and Chǔ about them. Then the kings, taking delight in the benevolent and appropriate, will stop their armies. . . . This will cause ministers to serve their lords while cherishing benevolence and propriety, [etc.]. . . . So lords and ministers, fathers and sons, and elder and younger siblings will put aside thoughts of benefit and cherish benevolence and propriety in their interactions. In such a state, there never has been an unsuccessful sovereignty. Why must anyone speak of benefit?

Benevolence and propriety are important because they sustain the relationships that Mencius thinks important for the well-being of a kingdom. They are motives derived from valuable, natural attitudinal responses, as *Mencius 2A:6* tells us: "The heart of compassion is the tip of benevolence; the heart of shame and disgust is the tip of propriety. . . ." <sup>15</sup>

Here, we should seek some clarification. If compassion is the basis of benevolence, then acting with benevolence involves responding with an emotional sensitivity, i.e., compassion, to the benefits or harms of another person. Why is this not acting from the motive of benefit? The proper contrast for Mencius between acting from benevolence and acting with the goal of benefit must lie in the difference between responding to some other particular person or group of people's needs and taking benefit *as such* as the end for which one acts. This would explain why Mencius thinks taking *lì* as one's motive would make one think of one's own benefit. For example, if one takes benefit as such as the goal, it may not matter from the point



of view of the agent whether his or her own benefit is sought or that of another. Propriety, *yì*, bears a more straightforward contrast to the motive of benefit. Shame or disgust at the impropriety, say, of groveling for one's life is the motive for choosing one's own death, for example, in *Mencius 6A:10*.

Life is . . . something I desire, as also is propriety; if these two are offered but I cannot have both, I will forgo life and take being proper. . . . If among the things people desire there were nothing they desired more than life, then what would prevent them from using any means whatsoever to keep their lives? . . . But in fact there are means that they will not use for the sake of life and there are things they will not do to avoid peril.

One might, for the sake of benefit, agree to some impropriety, say, giving one's approval to a ruler for attacking and annexing a neighboring state. But if one were acting instead from shame, one could not allow oneself to do so.

What we see is that, through the things Mencius says both explicitly and implicitly about Mòzǐ's views, the Mencian position relative to the Mohists' is not defined by opposition to consequentialist justification for norms of action and feeling. On the contrary, it is defined by opposition to what we might call the specifically Mohist *strategy* for producing better consequences; and the reason for Mencius's opposition is the ineffectiveness of that strategy for producing a better kingdom or a better world for all under Heaven. For on the one hand, Mencius doubts that people have the ability to feel inclusive concern. On the other hand, he thinks acting with benefit *as such* as the goal is counterproductive.

#### OTHER INDICATIONS OF MENCIAN CONSEQUENTIALISM

In addition to the revealing dialectical position occupied by Mencius relative to the Mohists, there are other examples of Mencius using consequentialist justification for what one ought to do.

In *1A:7*, Mencius recommends that King Xuān take compassion on his own people, because doing so would be a more effective way to attain Xuān's goal of uniting the various kingdoms under one rule than if one were to try attaining it with Xuān's military plans. Mencius's argument there and elsewhere<sup>16</sup> is that ruling benevolently will win the hearts not only of one's own people but also of the people in other kingdoms. Having won their hearts, the battle to unite the kingdoms under one rule would be mostly won, for one's own people would be ready to fight loyally for one, and the people of other kingdoms would defect to the side with the benevolent ruler. Mencius further argues in *2A:3* that mere pretense to benevolence will not be effective for this purpose:

One who uses force and fakes benevolence is a hegemon. A hegemon requires a large kingdom [because he needs a large army]. One who uses the power of exercising benevolence is a true king. A true king doesn't depend on largeness [of his kingdom]. . . . Using force subjugates men, but it doesn't subjugate their hearts. Such force is not adequate. Using the power [of benevolence] to subjugate men is to delight their hearts to the core and achieve genuine submission.

Mencius's view about ruling is that a ruler ought to be benevolent, i.e., rule with compassion for his people, because benevolence is the means to uniting and bringing peace and prosperity to the kingdoms. It is not merely that being benevolent will get a ruler what he wants, but what a ruler *ought* to want is to unite and pacify the land.

By appearances Mencius seems to offer a rather diverse array of arguments for taking particular courses of action. Aside from citing the consequences, he appeals to the authority of traditional odes and the exemplary actions of the sage-kings. However, even these appeals to authority are, in fact, meant to indicate decision-making procedures that take following the authority of the ancients as a rule, but as a rule because doing so brings about good consequences. Consider *4A:1*, which appeals to both kinds of authority:

Presently there are rulers with benevolent hearts and benevolent reputations, yet the people do not receive any benefit from this nor will the rulers leave laws that will last; this because the rulers do not carry out the ways of the sage-kings. . . . The *Odes* say: "No transgressions, no forgetfulness; following the ancient laws." If one follows the laws of the sage-kings, one will not fall into error.

Finally, Mencius even seems to apply consequentialist considerations to his criticism of certain rival ethical teachings. He argues, in ways that the Mohists also do, that the consequences of people believing those teachings would be dire. This is so, he thinks, because of the behavioral implications of those teachings. He argues this in *6A:1* against the philosopher Gào zǐ's view that people can be good, but that it is not in their nature to be so. Likewise in *3B:9* he argues that the teachings of Yáng Zhū and of Mò zǐ are to be rejected because of the way people would act if they accepted such teachings. So, not only does Mencius object to rival views such as Mò zǐ's because he thinks they make implausible assumptions, but he seems also to object to them on grounds of the kinds of consequences that accepting those teachings will have on people's behavior. If that is indeed the import of his statements, Mencius would, of course, have to be appealing to consequences that are bad even on the views that he is criticizing. Otherwise he would simply be begging the question. That is, he would only be arguing against the Mohists, for example,

that if people accept their teachings, the people would then act in ways that the Mohists think are right. But that would hardly count as a criticism of the Mohist view. At any rate, if Mencius is offering such criticisms of rival views, he is further displaying a consequentialist pattern of argument.

#### MENCIAN CONSEQUENTIALISM

The particulars of Mencian consequentialism that we can construct from the various aspects of his teachings are worth exploring, for they reveal the possibility of an ethical theory that has a complex and compelling shape.

A good path into the discussion leads through an alternative consequentialist reading of Mencius's view that is already available.<sup>17</sup> According to Ivanhoe (1991), both Confucius and Mencius hold views best understood if we attribute a special kind of consequentialist view to them, namely, "character consequentialism."<sup>18</sup> Ivanhoe argues that Mencius's concern with elements of one's character can be given a consequentialist treatment. However, there are two ways in which Ivanhoe's view might be superseded by our discussion. First, it should be pointed out that what Ivanhoe argues to be a distinctive and theoretically advantageous set of considerations in character consequentialism fails to distinguish the latter from the more familiar kind of consequentialism: act-consequentialism. Though it might be true that taking certain considerations of character seriously can make the application of act-consequentialism better (and, indeed, may be *required* according to act-consequentialism), this does not give us reason to classify the theory as a special character-centered version of consequentialism. Second, how Ivanhoe describes the kind of value, either intrinsic or instrumental, that elements of one's character have on Mencius's view could use some clarification along a different line of difference—that between having moral and nonmoral value. And as we saw earlier, there are actually two different lines of difference marked out by the moral and nonmoral goods distinction.

Ivanhoe begins to describe character consequentialism by saying that it "concentrates on the future fruits rather than the immediate results of actions . . . and it focuses its attention on the cumulative effects of actions" (1991, 55). So far, this description fails to distinguish character consequentialism from most other forms of consequentialism. A consequentialist theory sticks more closely to the *point* of consequentialism if it does not focus particularly on either immediate or the long-term results but includes both in the calculus of goods which will determine whether something is right or wrong. After all, it is good consequences *overall* that right action is supposed to produce. Ivanhoe's further description of character consequentialism

clarifies things somewhat: "Since individuals carry and manifest the cumulative effects of actions, character consequentialism is primarily concerned with the formation of character" (1991, 55). So character consequentialism is to be distinguished from other forms of consequentialism by its primary concern: the formation of character.

The main reason that it might make sense for a consequentialist theory to focus on the formation of character, Ivanhoe argues, is that:

[C]alculating the total utility of most kinds of action requires that one take into account a vast range of different and often competing factors, weight each factor with a value and assign to each a probability of occurrence. Such calculations can quickly become complex and unmanageable. . . . We have much greater control over the development of our character. It is less complex, more predictable and closer at hand than events in the world at large.

(1991, 61-62)

We should note a couple of points about this. First, Ivanhoe seems concerned with what we have characterized as "subjective" consequentialist theories, i.e., ones that take the consequentialist criterion of rightness to be giving not only the criterion for something being right, but also providing the decision-making procedure for how to act. This makes it clear that act-consequentialism in its "objective" form, i.e., as a theory that only provides the criterion for an act being right, is entirely consistent with what Ivanhoe describes as the primary concern of character consequentialism: focusing on the formation of character. It might be right according to an objective act-consequentialist theory, for us to focus our actions on character formation, *if* that were in fact more effective overall for producing good consequences. To act in such a way as to cause our characters to become effective in producing good consequences would be the right thing to do on an objective act-consequentialist view. Indeed, some of Ivanhoe's discussion seems to take this point of view.

[Confucius] realized that if one believes in and practices his Way, over the course of a lifetime, this practice will bear fruit; it will result in the formation of certain virtues and these will produce certain desirable consequences. These were the consequences that most concerned Confucius.

(1991, 61)

And, according to Ivanhoe, Mencius favors the same ethical program. But then it looks like the view Ivanhoe attributes to Mencius as well as to Confucius is really an objective act-consequentialist view that takes the following to be empirical facts: (1) that formation of character is

more effective in bringing about good consequences than is worrying about calculating the net results of each act, and (2) that having a character of the sort Mencius advocates is productive of the best consequences overall.

It should be noted, however, that both (1) and (2) are empirical claims that require justification through a tackling of the very same kind of complexities as one would have if one were trying to figure out what *act* would produce the best consequences overall in a particular situation. Focusing on formation of character requires one to adopt a plan of action. And showing that such a plan of action will actually produce the best consequences overall is something that requires calculation of the consequences (in all their complexity) of adopting that plan. Likewise, showing that having a particular set of character traits is productive of the best consequences overall requires calculation of the consequences of having such traits. And in either case, there must be an enormous amount of data to warrant generalizations about what types of actions or kinds of character will produce overall best consequences. So what Ivanhoe argues are the distinct advantages of character consequentialism over, say, direct act-consequentialism seem to diminish under scrutiny.

More importantly, however, we have actually seen that Mencius does not despair of making claims about what the consequences of particular acts are. In his advice to kings and to others, it is clear that Mencius judges an act to be advisable or inadvisable based on what he thinks the consequences of the act will be. So perhaps Mencius thinks it is good for people to have good characters, but that hardly makes him a character consequentialist in Ivanhoe's sense. For Mencius himself is not at all shy about assessing the direct and immediate, as well as the long-term, consequences of particular acts. Add to this the fact that Mencius seems to argue sometimes against acting with the overt goal of benefit (*li*) in pursuing good consequences. It then makes most sense to attribute to Mencius an objective act-consequentialist view, along with a very flexible view about the proper decision-making procedures: sometimes he seems to think one ought to worry about weighing or assessing (*quán*) the consequences; other times he thinks one ought instead to act from other considerations, say, those of benevolence or propriety. But in either of these cases, it is because of the goods to be gained or lost as a result that Mencius advises the particular kind of decision-making procedure.

Ivanhoe identifies a certain kind of good, that of "the intrinsic value of enduring and *unique* human relationships, particularly family relationships," which is the "source and center" of Confucian moral philosophy (1991, 64). The

kind of view Ivanhoe attributes specifically to Mencius "places great emphasis on the psychological good associated with certain *unique* human relationships, particularly kinship relationships" (1991, 56).<sup>19</sup> These ways of valuing relationships may indeed be central to Confucian ethics. Ivanhoe's further view is that character consequentialism can give such goods pride of place. Ivanhoe identifies goods such as those of kinship relationships as both intrinsically and instrumentally valuable for Mencius.

That Mencius thinks such goods are instrumentally valuable is clear from his conversations with Huì of Liáng (1A:3, 1A:5) and Xuān of Qí (1A:7). In those conversations, Mencius emphasizes the benefits to be had from proper training in filial and other proprieties. Those benefits are described in terms of such goods as relief from hard labor for the elderly. So filial piety, for example, is instrumentally valuable for bringing about certain goods. We might add that in Mencius's view there are other virtues associated with human relationships that may not be of the kinship variety, which also have this kind of instrumental value. For example, being a good ruler or subject requires being compassionate or loyal, respectively.

How, though, might the intrinsic value of such goods be explicated? Ivanhoe is not quite as clear on this point. It would perhaps help if we put Mencius's ideas in the following way. Virtues associated with various human relationships are instrumentally valuable, but they are valuable not only for bringing about non-moral goods such as comfort or economic well-being but are also valuable as constitutive parts of the human relationships that are themselves intrinsically valuable. So for example, filial piety plays a constitutive role in the *kind* of child-to-parent relationship intrinsically worth having. So filial piety has a certain intrinsic value that it brings *to* a child-parent relationship. Likewise, in the relationship of benefactor to beneficiary, Mencius points out how a certain kind of attitude can add or subtract from the value of the relationship in 6A:10:

A bowl of rice and a portion of soup—receive them and one lives, refuse them and one dies. If they are offered along with an insult, an ordinary pedestrian will refuse them; if they are stepped in and offered, a beggar will not stoop to accept them.

It is possible, as we saw earlier, to include within a consequentialist theory certain "moral" goods, in one sense, as among the goods to be promoted. Those are intrinsic moral goods that are esteem-based, in Hume's and Frankena's sense of being objects of admiration or praise. Something we might call *Mencian* consequentialism may be construed as including such goods among the things one ought to

bring about. In this way, virtues such as benevolence, propriety, or filial piety have both instrumental and intrinsic value (*pace* Căi 1987). Understanding Mencius in such a way produces an interpretation that is textually helpful for providing an organizational center for the diverse forms of justification within which he engages. And, it provides an example of how a consequentialist theory might look in which an important type of intrinsic, moral value might be countenanced among the goods to be promoted.

#### Notes

1. So, for example, Van Norden's (2007) formidable argument in favor of a virtue ethical reading of Mencius is not discussed here. Nor do I consider here the very challenging arguments against an earlier version of my reading provided by Wang (2005). Their arguments deserve better; hence, I will give those views fuller consideration in a future, much longer work on Mencius. Hansen's often edifying analyses of Mencius are sprinkled throughout Hansen (1992).
2. I will say more below about the possible relationships between utilitarian and more generally consequentialist patterns of ethical views.
3. I will use "good" and "value" interchangeably. I do not think anything rests on this.
4. This would not be the same problem as, say, if a consequentialist theory included in an account of the nonmoral good what people have moral preferences for—the kind of account that Harsanyi (1977) argues against. There is a surface similarity in that kind of view: if such preferences were allowed in the account of nonmoral good, then it would be right to promote what an agent prefers specified in terms that depend on what the agent considers morally right. But the problem with such a view would not be the same problem as specifying the good to be promoted in terms of what is independently considered right. Rather, in such a view, the good is specified in terms of people's preferences, whatever the source of their preferences. That is to say, what is to be promoted on that view is *the satisfaction of preferences*. And under that description, at any rate, the good is specified in morally neutral terms, in particular, in terms that do not depend on prior intuitions about what is right.
5. Again, this would reverse the consequentialist viewpoint, namely: it is right to promote a thing *because* it is a good.
6. This is especially interesting for assessing the possibility that Mencius has an ethical view that is best characterized as an ethics of virtue. One might be tempted to say such a thing if one takes virtues of character to be "central" in some way for Mencius's ethical view, as, for example, Yearley (1990) does.
7. Frankena (1963, 63) notes that Hume has such a view. We should notice that Kant also has this kind of view: the moral value of an action "does not depend on the realization of the object of the action but merely on the principle of volition by which the action is done" (Kant 1785, 13). So, it is not only "ethics of virtue" in some Aristotelian or Platonic concern with virtues that is identified by Frankena's description.
8. So, when Frankena asks later (1963, 70) what makes a motive or disposition morally good and then wonders whether motives or dispositions other than the sense of duty are also morally good, he answers those questions in a way that does not do full justice to the notion of intrinsic moral value he himself identifies here. He seems concerned with answering those questions by referring to the "morality-supporting" role of certain motives and dispositions to produce right or morally valuable *action*. That may identify one kind of moral value, but it is not intrinsic moral value.
9. See Railton (1986), for example.
10. Bales (1971). The same distinction is argued for by Railton (1984).
11. This is evident throughout the *Mòzǐ*.
12. *Mencius* translations are my own.
13. *Mencius* 3B:9 and 7A:26.
14. There are places where Mencius addresses the problems with acting in order to produce benefit or profit, *lì*. Those passages will be discussed shortly.
15. The formula is more or less repeated in 6A:6.
16. For example, with King Huì in 1A:5.
17. As far as I know, it is the only other such reading.
18. It should be noted at the outset that Ivanhoe's consequentialist analysis is not given with much textual evidence for the concerns he attributes to Mencius (and to Confucius). However, I will take it that my own discussions given in the two sections above of Mencius and the Mohists and of the other indications of consequentialist views in the text are sufficient to

have made the case for the broad claim that Mencius has a consequentialist ethical view.

19. For some reason Ivanhoe feels compelled to emphasize “unique” each time it is used in this context. It is not clear from his discussion why the uniqueness of these relationships is especially important.

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## FURTHER READING

### Bibliography

Van Norden, Bryan W. “Mencius.” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Stanford U, 3 Dec. 2014. Accessed 18 Jan. 2018.

Includes major English works on Mencian studies divided into four categories: English translations of the *Mencius*, English translations of major traditional Chinese commentaries on the *Mencius*, modern Mencian studies by both native Chinese and Western scholars, and modern scholars’ broader studies on Confucianism and comparative philosophy related to the *Mencius*. This entry also includes an introduction to Mencius’s life and thought.

### Biographies

Lau, D. C. Introduction. *Mencius*, Penguin Books, 1970, pp. vii-xlvi.

Narrates Mencius's life against the social background of his time, the Warring States period of China, and uses it to explain Mencius's philosophical thoughts.

Yang, Zebo. *Meng Zi Ping Zhuan*. Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 1998.

Sheds light on details of Mencius's life regarding his name, birthplace, family history, education, and political career. While explaining how Mencius rose to the status of "the Secondary Sage" honored by later Confucianists, Yang's biography illustrates the great influence of Mencius's thought on Chinese intellectual history. Not available in English.

### Criticism

Angle, Stephen C. "No Supreme Principle: Confucianism's Harmonization of Multiple Values." *Dao*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2008, pp. 35-40.

Analyzes the *Mencius* 5A3 in which Mencius talked about how Shun, a legendary Confucian sage-king, treated his villainous stepbrother. Angle uses the story to point out a distinctively Confucian model for making a decision in the face of conflicting values, which acknowledges that some values may be more significant than others but advocates the situation-specific harmonization of all values in a manner that honors the importance of each distinct value.

Brook, Timothy. "Weber, Mencius, and the History of Chinese Capitalism." *Asian Perspective*, vol. 19, no. 1, Spring-Summer 1995, pp. 79-97.

Investigates the influence of Mencius's apparently contrasting view between profits and righteousness upon the Confucian attitude toward wealth.

Chen, Ning. "The Concept of Fate in Mencius." *Philosophy East and West*, vol. 47, no. 4, Oct. 1997, pp. 495-520.

Studies related passages in the *Mencius* to clarify Mencius's concept of *ming*, which Chen argues can be used to refer to life, moral decree, and fate. Chen finds that Mencius, when speaking of *ming* in these different senses even on the same occasion, upholds the doctrines of both moral determinism and of blind, unalterable fate but tends to apply the former to collective entities and the latter to individual persons.

Guo, Qiyong. "Is Confucian Ethics a 'Consanguinism'?" *Dao*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2007, pp. 21-37.

Debates the scholar Qingping Liu's view (see below) that Confucian ethics is essentially a "consanguinism"

that finds filial piety as the root of ethics, arguing instead that the mainstream Mencian tradition of Confucianism ethics centers on humanity.

Im, Manyul. "Emotional Control and Virtue in the *Mencius*." *Philosophy East and West*, vol. 49, no. 1, Jan. 1999, pp. 1-27.

Clarifies the difference between Mencius's and Aristotle's theories of virtue ethics by demonstrating that Mencius's view of moral development fits less the "perfectibility model," which suggests that moral development requires perfection of certain emotions, than the "natural development model," which finds that moral development can occur naturally if certain minimal conditions necessary for development are met.

Lau, D. C. "Theories of Human Nature in Mencius and Shyuntzy." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, vol. 15, no. 3, 1953, pp. 541-65.

Reflects on classical commentaries furnished by the Chinese Confucian tradition about the apparent contradiction between Mencius's belief in the goodness of human nature and Xunzi's belief that human nature is bad. Lau considers these beliefs from the point of view of disagreement over the nature of, or the way of looking at, morality, revealing a difference in the method of moral education.

Liu, Qingping. "Filiality versus Sociality and Individuality: On Confucianism as 'Consanguinitism.'" *Philosophy East and West*, vol. 53, no. 2, Apr. 2003, pp. 234-50.

Analyzes four classical cases in the *Analects* and the *Mencius* in which Confucius and Mencius weigh the priority among values when facing ethical dilemmas. Liu argues that Confucianism treats filial piety as the supreme virtue over all championed virtues, making it essentially a consanguinitism, which runs counter to the tradition's commitments to moral self-cultivation for individuals and universal humanity for society. Furthermore, Liu asserts, this Confucian consanguinitism has set great obstacles for countries under Confucian influence in modern time to develop a coherent and full-rounded advocacy of the individual and social dimensions of human life.

Perry, Elizabeth J. "Chinese Conception of 'Rights': From Mencius to Mao—and Now." *Perspectives on Politics*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2008, pp. 37-50.

Demonstrates the continuity of Chinese political thought from Mencius until Mao Zedong, which treats the socioeconomic security of people as underpinning the legitimacy of a political regime, and thus,

understands that the good of the people is an essential aspect of human rights.

Van Norden, Bryan W. "The Virtue of Righteousness in Mencius." *Confucian Ethics: A Comparative Study of Self, Autonomy, and Community*, edited by Kwong-loi Shun and David B. Wong, Cambridge UP, 2004, pp. 148-82.

Argues that given the historical and cultural context in which a language of shame is used in the West, it is reasonable to employ the term "a sense of shame" to translate the emotion, known as both *xiu* and *wu*, which is related to the Mencian virtue of righteousness. Distinguishing between conventional shame and ethical shame, Van Norden finds ancient China a better cultural representative of ethical shame than ancient Greece and emphasizes how the studies of Chinese philosophy and Western philosophy can productively inform one another.

Weifang, He. "Mencius on the Rule of Law." *In the Name of Justice: Striving for the Rule of Law in China*, Brookings Institution Press, 2012, pp. 40-59.

Discusses Mencius's legal arguments, examining their role in the development of modern-day China's laws.

Wong, David B. "Is There a Distinction between Reason and Emotion in Mencius?" *Philosophy East and West*, vol. 41, no. 1, Jan. 1991, pp. 31-44.

Considers Mencius's method of ethical deliberation as one not referring to any reason-versus-emotion distinction, which is prevalent in Western ethics. Wong provides a new interpretation of the controversial passages 2A6 and 1A7 in the *Mencius* to argue that Mencius's thought indicates a cognitive dimension to compassion that consists in finding reasons to act directly in the suffering of others, and thus, channeling the motive force of the human instinctual helping response to its full realization.

**Additional information on Mencius's life and works is contained in the following source published by Gale: *Literature Resource Center*.**