

■ CHAPTER TWO ■

MOZI

Introduction

Mozi 墨子, "Master Mo" (c. 480–390 B.C.E), founded what came to be known as the *Mojia* "Mohist School" of philosophy and is the figure around whom the text known as the *Mozi* was formed. His proper name is Mo Di 墨翟. Mozi is arguably the first true philosopher of China known to us. He developed systematic analyses and criticisms of his opponents' positions and presented an array of arguments in support of his own philosophical views. His interest and faith in argumentation led him and his later followers to study the forms and methods of philosophical debate, and their work contributed significantly to the development of early Chinese philosophy. Mozi himself was probably of quite humble origins. He may have been a member of the craft or artisan class, and his philosophy is distinctively antiaristocratic. Early in life, he may have studied with followers of Confucius. However, he went on to become a serious critic of the emerging Confucian tradition.¹



¹During Kongzi's life and after his death, people began to declare themselves followers of Kongzi and his Way. At this point, it makes sense to describe these people as constituting a "Confucian" tradition or "Confucianism."

Mozzi was not just a philosopher. He led an organized utopian movement whose members engaged in direct social action, including the military defense of states and cities that he judged to be victims of wars of expansion. He was a strong and charismatic leader who inspired his followers to dedicate themselves to his unique view of social justice. This required them to lead austere and quite demanding lives under his direct control and command. Mozzi could tax his followers, judge, and punish them; under certain circumstances he could even put them to death. The discipline that defined his movement is reflected in a number of his philosophical positions. His ideal state is highly centralized, orderly, and ideologically unified.

Mozzi saw ideological differences and the factionalism they spawned as the primary source of human suffering. Therefore, he sharply criticized the family-based ethical and political system of Kongzi for its inherent partiality and advocated a strict chain of command leading up through a monarchy and resting in Heaven. In place of Confucian *ren* 仁, "benevolence," he advocated a form of state consequentialism, which sought to maximize three basic goods: the wealth, order, and population of the state. As an alternative to Confucian familial love, he argued for *jian'ai* 兼愛, which is often translated as "universal love" but is better understood as "impartial care."² In Mozzi's view, the central ethical problem was excessive *partiality*, not a lack of *compassion*. His primary goal was to change and shape behavior—in particular the way people are treated—not to cultivate emotions, attitudes, or virtues. He showed little interest in what one would call moral psychology and embraced a simple and highly malleable view of human nature. This led him away from the widely observed Chinese concern with self-cultivation. His general lack of appreciation for psychological goods and the need to control desires and shape dispositions and attitudes also led him to reject categorically the characteristic Confucian concern with culture and ritual. These views are expressed in his arguments against elaborate funerals and musical performances, two mainstays of Confucianism.

While Mozzi was not a self-cultivationist, he believed that human beings can change even apparently deeply held attitudes and dispositions quickly and easily. For a variety of reasons, he maintained that people could be induced to take up almost any form of behavior, even behavior that was suicidal. He shared a commonly held early Chinese belief in a psychological tendency to respond in kind to the treatment one receives. He further believed that in an effort to win the favor of their rulers, many people are inclined to act as their rulers desire. Those who do not respond to either of these influences can be motivated and controlled by a system of strict

rewards and punishments, enforced by the state and guaranteed by the support of Heaven, ghosts, and spirits. Most important of all, Mozzi believed that properly crafted rational arguments provide strong if not entirely compelling motivation to act for anyone who is able to understand them; presented with a superior argument, thinking people act accordingly.

Mozzi's later followers lasted until the time of the short-lived Qin dynasty when the movement seems to have suddenly come to an end. The reasons for this are not well documented, but most likely a paramilitary group such as the Mohists would never have been tolerated by and could not survive during the centralized and militarized regime of the Qin. There is some irony in this as several prominent ideas in the *Fuzi* "Legalist" thought that served as the state ideology of the Qin find clear precedents in Mozzi's philosophy. The later Mohists continued Mozzi's early interests and developed sophisticated systems of logical analysis, mathematics, optics, physics, defensive warfare technology and strategy, and a formal ethic based upon calculations of benefit and harm. All of these philosophical concerns can be found in the early strata of the *Mozzi* that are represented in the following selections.

Chapter Eight: Honoring the Worthy?

Our teacher Mozzi³ says, "The kings, dukes, and great officials who now rule the various states all want their states to be wealthy, their populations great, and their administrations orderly, and yet instead of wealth they get poverty, instead of great populations they get meager ones, and instead of order they get chaos. In this way they fundamentally miss what they desire and get what they dislike."

²There are multiple versions of many of the central chapters of the *Mozzi*; these probably reflect the views of the three different sects of Mohism, which appeared after Mozzi's death. I have chosen what I consider to be the most interesting version of each chapter translated here. Our chapter headings refer to the primary divisions in standard editions of the complete text.

³The *Mozzi* is unique among early Chinese philosophical texts in the manner in which it refers to its author. Most philosophers of the period were referred to as "Master so-and-so" by adding the honorific *zi* 子 after the person's surname (see *Important Terms*). In the case of Mo Di 墨翟 this would yield "Mozzi." But the Mohists refer to their master as *zimozi* 子墨子. This probably meant "Our teacher Master Mo." A similar prefixed use of *zi* is found in the *Gongyang* commentary to the *Spring and Autumn Annals*.

What is the reason for this?⁴

Our teacher Mozi says, "This is because the kings, dukes, and great officials who rule the various states are not able to honor the worthy and employ the capable in carrying out their rule. And so in a state where there are many worthy men, good order will be secure, and in a state where there are few worthy men, good order will be tenuous. This is why it is the proper work of kings, dukes, and great officers to increase the number of worthy men in their states."

Since this is the case, what is the best way to go about increasing the number of worthy men?

Our teacher Mozi says, "It is analogous to the case of wanting to increase the number of good archers or charioteers in one's state. One must reward and esteem them, revere and praise them; then one can succeed in increasing the number of good archers or charioteers in one's state. How much more should this be done in the case of worthy men—those who are well versed in virtuous conduct, discrimination in discussion, and broadly knowledgeable! Such men are state treasures, guardians of the altars to the soil and grain.⁵ They too must be rewarded and esteemed, revered and praised; then one can succeed in increasing the number of worthy men in one's state."

"This is why in ancient times, when the sage-kings ruled, they announced that:

Those who are not righteous, I shall not enrich.

Those who are not righteous, I shall not esteem.

Those who are not righteous, I shall not regard as kin.

Those who are not righteous, I shall not get close to.

When the wealthy and eminent in the state heard this they retired and thought to themselves, 'At first, we could rely on our wealth and eminence, but now the king promotes the righteous and does not turn away the poor and the humble. This being the case, we too must be righteous.' When the

⁴The *Mozzi* often employs the literary device of an unnamed interlocutor to carry forth the dialogue.

⁵The site of important state sacrifices and often used as a metaphor for the foundation and stability of the state. Cf. Mozi's various references to this and other sacrificial sites in "On Ghosts." See *Mozzi*, chapter 31, pp. 94–104.

king's relatives heard this they retired and thought to themselves, 'At first, we could rely on being royal kin, but now the king promotes the righteous and does not turn away the most distant relations. This being the case, we too must be righteous.' When those close to the king heard this they retired and thought to themselves, 'At first, we could rely on being close to the king, but now the king promotes the righteous and does not turn away those far removed from him. This being the case, we too must be righteous.' When those far removed from the king heard this they too retired and thought to themselves, 'At first, we thought that being far removed from the king meant we had nothing to rely upon, but now the king promotes the righteous and does not turn away those far removed from him. This being the case, we too must be righteous.' The word spread to those serving in distant cities and outlying regions, to the sons of nobles serving within the court, to all those within the capital, and on out to the common people throughout the four corners of the kingdom. Hearing this, they all strove to be righteous."

What is the reason for such success?

Our teacher Mozi says, "Because those above employed those below for only one reason and those below served those above in only one way.⁶ This state of affairs can be compared to the case of a rich man who builds a high wall around his house. Once the wall is complete, he has it cut through in one place and uses this for his door. If a thief should enter, the rich man can close the door and search for the thief, knowing that he has no way to escape. Why? Because the rich man has secured what is most vital."

"This is why in ancient times, when the sage-kings ruled, they promoted the virtuous and honored the worthy. Even someone who worked as a farmer, artisan, or merchant, if they had talent they were promoted, given high rank and a handsome salary, entrusted with responsibility, and empowered to have their orders obeyed. The sage-kings said, 'If their rank is not high, the people will not revere them. If their salary is not substantial, the people will not put trust in them. If their orders are not empowered with authority, the people will not hold them in awe.' These three things were given to the worthy not as rewards but in order to help them complete their duties."

"And so, at that time, rank was awarded on the basis of virtue, work was assigned according to office, reward was distributed according to the

⁶That is, people were evaluated and served only on the basis of their righteousness.

amount of labor done, and salary allotted in proportion to the effort expended. And so officials were not guaranteed constant nobility and people did not have to perpetually remain in a humble state. Those with ability were promoted, those without ability were demoted. This is what it means to 'Promote public righteousness and prevent private resentment.'⁷

⁷And so, in ancient times, Yao promoted Shun from southern Fuyang, entrusted him with the administration of his kingdom, and the world was at peace. Yu promoted Yi from central Yin-fang, entrusted him with the administration of his kingdom, and the nine realms were brought to perfection.⁹ Tang promoted Yi Yin from among the cooks in his kitchen, entrusted him with the administration of his kingdom, and his plans all were successful. King Wen promoted Hong Yao and Tai Yi from their work with rabbit snares, entrusted them with the administration of his kingdom, and the western territories submitted peacefully.¹⁰ And so, at that time, even among those ministers with substantial salaries and prestigious positions, none failed to be reverent and cautious in carrying out their duties, and even among the farmers, craftsmen, and merchants, none failed to exert themselves in honoring virtue.

⁹And so good men should be employed as capable assistants and responsible agents. If a ruler is able to retain such men, then his plans will not be frustrated nor his body wearied with work. A ruler's fame shall be assured and his work successfully completed, his best tendencies will flourish and his worst shall not take form all because he retains the support of good men.¹¹

This is why our teacher Mozi says, "When things are going well, you must promote worthy men. When things are not going well, you must promote worthy men. And if you would reverently carry on the Way of

⁷This seems to have been a recognizable political slogan of the time.

⁸A place of uncertain location.

⁹Yi is Bo Yi 伯益 (not to be confused with the brother of Shu Qi—see *Important Figures*). Bo Yi assisted Yu in his flood-control work and served him as an exemplary minister. Yin-fang is a place of uncertain location. According to an ancient system of territorial division, China consisted of "nine realms."

¹⁰Hong Yao and Tai Yi were gamekeepers for King Wen. Technically, "rabbit snares" should be rendered "rabbit nets." See selection # 177 (*Miao* # 278) in Arthur Waley, *The Book of Songs* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1952) for a poem singing the praises of such a gamekeeper, describing him as a fitting companion and confidant for a king. (Note: *The Book of Songs* is Waley's translation of the classic referred to in this volume as the *Odes*.)

Yao, Shun, Yu, and Tang, then you must honor the worthy. Honoring the worthy is the root and basis of good government."

Chapter Eleven: Obeying One's Superior

Our teacher Mozi says, "In ancient times, when people first came into being and before there were governments or laws, each person followed their own norm¹¹ for deciding what was right and wrong.¹² And so where there was one person there was one norm, where there were two people there were two norms, where there were ten people there were ten different norms. As many people as there were, that was how many norms were recognized. In this way people came to approve their own norms for what is right and wrong and thereby condemn the norms of others. And so they mutually condemned each other's norms. For this reason, within families, there was resentment and hatred between fathers and sons and elder and younger brothers that caused them to separate and disperse and made it impossible for them to cooperate harmoniously with one another. Throughout the world, people used water, fire, and poison to harm and injure one another, to the point where if they had strength to spare, they would not use it to help each other, if they had excess goods, they would leave them to rot away rather than distribute them to one another, and if they had helpful teachings, they would hide them away rather than teach them to one another. The chaos that ruled in the world was like what one finds among the birds and beasts.

"Those who understood the nature of this chaos saw that it arose from a lack of rulers and leaders and so they chose the best person among the most worthy and capable in the world and established him as the Son of Heaven. The Son of Heaven was established, but because his strength was not sufficient for the task of ruling the entire world, they chose among the most worthy and capable in the world and installed the best among them as the three imperial ministers. The Son of Heaven and three imperial

¹¹The character *yi* 義 that I here translate as "norm" (for deciding what is right and wrong) is often rendered as "right" or "righteousness" (see *Important Terms*). The senses are clearly related, but the context here argues for "norm" as more appropriate.

¹²Right and wrong" is the translation of the Chinese terms *shuifei* 是非. Below, these terms are rendered verbally as "to approve" and "to condemn." Cf. *Mengzi* 2A6 and n. 27 to that passage.

ministers were established, but because the world is so vast it was impossible for them to know and judge in each case what would be right or wrong, beneficial or harmful for the people of distant states and different regions. And so they divided up the myriad states and established feudal lords and rulers. The feudal lords and rulers were established, but because their strength was not sufficient for the task before them, they chose among the most worthy and capable in the world and installed them as governors and leaders.

"Once the governors and leaders were in place, the Son of Heaven announced his rule to the people of the world saying, 'Whenever you hear of something good or bad, always inform your superior. Whenever your superior approves of something as right you too must approve of it. Whenever your superior condemns something as wrong you too must condemn it. Should a superior commit any transgression, one must offer proper remonstrance. Should your subordinates do anything good, one must widely recommend them. To obey one's superior and to avoid joining together with those in subordinate positions—such conduct will be rewarded by superiors and praised by subordinates. But if you hear of something good or bad and fail to inform your superior, if you are not able to approve of what your superior approves of and condemn what your superior rejects, if you do not offer proper remonstrance when a superior commits a transgression and do not widely recommend subordinates who do good, if you do not obey your superior and you join together with those in subordinate positions—such conduct will be punished by superiors and denounced by the people. This is how superiors shall determine rewards and punishments and they shall make careful examinations to ensure that their judgments are reliable.'

"And so, the leader of each village would be the most benevolent person in the village. When he announced his rule to the people of the village he would say, 'Whenever you hear of anything either good or bad, you must report it to the head of the district. Whenever the head of the district approves of something all of you must also approve of it. Whenever the head of the district condemns something all of you must also condemn it. Eliminate any bad teachings that you may have and study the good teachings of the head of the district. Eliminate any bad practices that you may have and study the good practices of the head of the district. If you do this then how could the district ever become disordered?'

"If we look into how good order was maintained in the district, what do we find? Was it not simply because the leader of the district was able to

unify the norms followed within the district that he was able to maintain good order in it?

"The leader of each district would be the most benevolent person in the district. When he announced his rule to the people of the district he would say, 'Whenever you hear of anything either good or bad, you must report it to the ruler of the state. Whenever the ruler of the state approves of something all of you must also approve of it. Whenever the ruler of the state condemns something all of you must also condemn it. Eliminate any bad teachings that you may have and study the good teachings of the ruler of the state. Eliminate any bad practices that you may have and study the good practices of the ruler of the state. If you do this then how could the state ever become disordered?'

"If we look into how good order was maintained in the state, what do we find? Was it not simply because the ruler of the state was able to unify the norms followed within the state that he was able to maintain good order in it?

"The ruler of each state would be the most benevolent person in the state. When he announced his rule to the people of the state he would say, 'Whenever you hear of anything either good or bad, you must report it to the Son of Heaven. Whenever the Son of Heaven approves of something all of you must also approve of it. Whenever the Son of Heaven condemns something all of you must also condemn it. Eliminate any bad teachings that you may have and study the good teachings of the Son of Heaven. Eliminate any bad practices that you may have and study the good practices of the Son of Heaven. If you do this then how could the world ever become disordered?'

"If we look into how good order was maintained in the world, what do we find? Was it not simply because the Son of Heaven was able to unify the norms followed within the world that he was able to maintain good order in it?

"If the people of the world all obey their superiors on up to the Son of Heaven but do not obey Heaven, then Heavenly disasters still will not cease. Now, the hurricanes and torrential rains that regularly are visited upon the people is how Heaven punishes them for not obeying its will."

This is why our teacher Mozi says, "In ancient times, sage-kings created the Five Punishments¹³ to facilitate good order among their people. These

¹³The Five Punishments are said to be tattooing the face, cutting off the nose, cutting off the feet, castration, and death.

are like the main thread of a skein of silk or the drawing of a net. They are how the sage-kings gathered in those in the world who refused to obey their superiors.”

Chapter Sixteen: Impartial Caring

Our teacher Mozi says, “The business of a benevolent person is to promote what is beneficial to the world and eliminate what is harmful.”

Granted that this is true, what are the greatest harms that are being done in the world today? Our teacher Mozi says, “It is things such as great states attacking small states, great families wreaking havoc with lesser families, the strong robbing the weak, the many doing violence to the few, the clever deceiving the ignorant, and the noble acting arrogantly toward the humble. These are some of the great harms being done in the world. In addition, there are rulers who are not kind, ministers who are not loyal, fathers who are not loving, and children who are not filial. These too are some of the great harms being done in the world. There are also those of low character who use weapons, poison, water, and fire to injure and steal from one another. These too are some of the great harms done in the world.”

If we try to discover the origin of these different harms, where do we find they come from? Do they come from caring for and benefiting people? This clearly must be rejected as the origin of these harms. We must recognize that they come from hating and stealing from people. If we wish to distinguish those in the world who hate and steal from people, do we refer to them as impartial or partial? We clearly must call them partial. And so it is those who are partial in their dealings with others who are the real cause of all the great harms in the world.

This is why our teacher Mozi says, “I condemn partiality.”

Now those who condemn another’s view must offer something in its place. If one condemns another’s view without offering something in its place this is like adding water to a flood or flame to a fire. Such appeals prove to have no merit.

This is why our teacher Mozi says, “Replace partiality with impartiality.”

Since this is what is correct, how then can we replace partiality with impartiality?

Our teacher Mozi says, “If people regarded other people’s states in the same way that they regard their own, who then would incite their own state to attack that of another? For one would do for others as one would do for oneself. If people regarded other people’s cities in the same way that they

regard their own, who then would incite their own city to attack that of another? For one would do for others as one would do for oneself. If people regarded other people’s families in the same way that they regard their own, who then would incite their own family to attack that of another? For one would do for others as one would do for oneself. And so if states and cities do not attack one another and families do not wreak havoc upon and steal from one another, would this be a harm to the world or a benefit? Of course one must say it is a benefit to the world.”

If we try to discover the source of these different benefits, where do we find they come from? Do they come from hating and stealing from people? This clearly must be rejected as the source of these benefits. We must recognize that they come from caring for and benefiting people. If we wish to distinguish those in the world who care for and benefit people, do we refer to them as impartial or partial? We clearly must call them impartial. And so it is those who are impartial in their dealings with others who are the real cause of all the great benefits in the world.

This is why our teacher Mozi says, “I approve of impartiality. Moreover, earlier I said that, ‘The business of a benevolent person is to promote what is beneficial to the world and eliminate what is harmful.’ And now I have shown that impartiality gives rise to all the great benefits in the world and that partiality gives rise to all the great harms in the world.”

This is why our teacher Mozi says, “I condemn partiality and approve of impartiality for the reasons given above. If one takes impartiality as the correct standard and truly seeks to promote and procure what is beneficial to the world, then those with sharp ears and keen eyes will listen and look out for others. Those with stout legs and strong arms will work for others, and those who understand the Way will educate and instruct others. And so men who reach old age without finding a wife and having children will get the support they need to live out their years. Young and helpless orphans, who are without father or mother, will find the support they need in order to reach maturity. Now such benefits can be attained only if impartiality is taken as the correct standard. And so I don’t see what reason any person in the world who has heard about impartiality can give for condemning it.”

Though this is so, there are still people in the world who condemn impartiality, saying, “It is surely a fine thing. Nevertheless, how can it possibly be applied?”

Our teacher Mozi says, “If it could not be applied even I would condemn it! But is there really anything that is fine that cannot be put to use? Let us consider both sides of the matter. Suppose there were two people: one who

maintains partiality and one who maintains impartiality. And so the person who maintains partiality would say, 'How can I possibly regard the well-being of my friends as I do my own well-being? How can I possibly regard the parents of my friends as I do my own parents?' And so when his friends are hungry, the partial person does not feed them. When his friends are cold, he does not clothe them. When his friends are ill, he does not nurture them. And when his friends die, he does not bury them. This is what the partial person says and what he does. But this is not what the impartial person says nor is this how he acts. The impartial person says, 'I have heard that in order to be a superior person in the world, one must regard the well-being of one's friends as one regards one's own well-being; one must regard the parents of one's friends as one regards one's own parents. Only in this way can one be a superior person.' And so when the impartial person's friends are hungry, he feeds them. When his friends are cold, he clothes them. When his friends are ill, he nurtures them. And when his friends die, he buries them. This is what the impartial person says and what he does.

"Now the words of the two people that we have considered contradict each other and their actions are diametrically opposed. Let us suppose, though, that both are trustworthy in what they say and reliable in what they do. And so their words and deeds fit together like the two halves of a tally, and they always follow through and act on what they say. If we grant all of this, there is a further question I would like to ask. Suppose one must put on one's armor and helmet and go to war in a vast and open wilderness where life and death are uncertain; or suppose one was sent by one's ruler or high minister to the distant states of Ba, Yue, Qi, or Jing¹⁴ and could not be sure of either reaching them or ever returning from one's mission. Under such conditions of uncertainty, to whom would one entrust the well-being of one's parents, wife, and children? Would one prefer that they be in the care of an impartial person or would one prefer that they be in the care of a partial person? I believe that under such circumstances, there are no fools in all the world. Even though one may not advocate impartiality, one would certainly want to entrust one's family to the person who is impartial. But this is to condemn impartiality in word but prefer it in deed, with the result that one's actions do not accord with what one says. And so I don't see what reason any person in the world who has heard about impartiality can give for condemning it."

Though this is so, there are still people in the world who condemn impartiality, saying, "It is an acceptable way for choosing reliable people but one can't use it to choose one's ruler."

Our teacher Mozi says, "Let us consider both sides of the matter. Suppose there were two rulers: one who maintains impartiality and one who maintains partiality. And so the ruler who maintains partiality would say, 'How can I possibly regard the well-being of my myriad subjects as I do my own well-being? This is profoundly at odds with the way people in the world feel. How brief is the span of a person's life upon this earth! It rushes by like a galloping team of horses glimpsed through a crack!' And so when his subjects are hungry, the partial ruler does not feed them. When his subjects are cold, he does not clothe them. When his subjects are ill, he does not nurture them. And when his subjects die, he does not bury them. This is what the partial ruler says and what he does. But this is not what the impartial ruler says nor is this how he acts. The impartial ruler says, 'I have heard that in order to be an enlightened ruler in the world, one must first worry about the well-being of one's people and then worry about oneself. Only in this way can one be a enlightened ruler.' And so when the impartial ruler's people are hungry, he feeds them. When his people are cold, he clothes them. When his people are ill, he nurtures them. And when his people die, he buries them. This is what the impartial ruler says and what he does.

"Now the words of the two rulers that we have considered contradict each other and their actions are diametrically opposed. Let us suppose, though, that both are trustworthy in what they say and reliable in what they do. And so their words and deeds fit together like the two halves of a tally, and they always follow through and act on what they say. If we grant all of this, there is a further question I would like to ask. Suppose there were a terrible epidemic in which most of the people suffered bitterly from hunger and cold and many lay dead and unburied in the ditches and gullies.¹⁵ Between these two rulers, which one would the people then follow? I believe that under such circumstances, there are no fools in all the world. Even though one may not advocate impartiality, one would certainly want to follow the ruler who is impartial. But this is to condemn impartiality in word but prefer it in deed with the result that one's actions do not accord with what one says. And so I don't see what reason any person in the world who has heard about impartiality can give for condemning it."

¹⁴Ba, Yue, Qi, and Jing are four ancient states that were far removed from the center of Chinese civilization at the time.

¹⁵People lying unburied in the ditches and gullies was a common trope used to illustrate a state of profound misery. Cf. for example, *Mengzi* 1B12, 2B4 (not in this volume).

Though this is so, there are still people in the world who condemn impartiality, saying, "Impartiality is benevolent and right but how can one practice it? The impossibility of practicing impartiality is like the impossibility of picking up Mount Tai and carrying it across the Chang Jiang or Huang He."¹⁶ And so impartiality is something they want to do but feel is impossible to practice.

Our teacher Mozi says, "As for picking up Mount Tai and carrying it across the Chang Jiang or Huang He, this is something that no human being has ever done. But as for impartially caring for and benefiting one another, this is something that we know the four former sage-kings¹⁷ themselves practiced."

How do we know that the four former sage-kings themselves followed these practices?

Our teacher Mozi says, "I am not of their age or time and so have not personally heard their voices or seen their faces, but I know this by what is written on bamboo and silk, etched on metal and stone, and inscribed on basins and bowls that have passed down to us through succeeding generations. For example, the *Great Oath*¹⁸ says, 'The illumination of King Wen was like the sun and the moon. His brightness reached to the four directions and out to the western regions.' This describes the extensiveness of King Wen's impartial care for the world. It compares his impartiality to the way the sun and the moon impartially illuminate the entire world without showing any favoritism."

Though the impartiality that our teacher Mozi talks about here takes King Wen as its model, it is not just in the *Great Oath* that one finds such examples. The *Oath of Yu*¹⁹ too offers such a model. Yu says,

¹⁶Picking up Mount Tai and carrying it across a vast expanse of water is a common trope for an impossible task. Cf. *Mengzi* 1A7 where the vast expanse of water is the North Sea. The Chang Jiang or "Yangtze River" and the Huang He or "Yellow River" are the largest rivers in central China.

¹⁷Kings Yu, Tang, Wen, and Wu.

¹⁸The "Great Oath" was a speech purportedly given by King Wu. The original was said to be included in the *History* but was lost. A later forgery is included in the present edition of the *History* and part of it is quite similar to what Mozi quotes here. See Legge, *The Shoo King*, pp. 296-97.

¹⁹The *Oath of Yu* is a lost section of the *History* that purportedly recorded the words of the sage-king Yu. Again a passage that is quite similar to what Mozi quotes can be found in the present text. See Legge, *The Shoo King*, pp. 64-65.

Come together all my people and heed my words! It is not that I, the little one,²⁰ dares to bring about such chaos; but the ruler of the Miao²¹ is ever more unreasonable and deserves Heaven's punishment. This is why I now lead you, the rulers of the various states, on a campaign to rectify the ruler of the Miao.

This shows that the reason Yu launched a campaign to rectify the ruler of the Miao was not because he wanted to increase his wealth and honor, earn for himself additional favors and blessings, or because it pleased his eyes and ears, but rather because he wanted to contribute to the benefit of the world and eliminate what is harmful to it. Such was the impartiality of Yu.

Though the impartiality that our teacher Mozi talks about here takes Yu as its model, it is not just in the *Oath of Yu* that one finds such examples. The *Declaration of Tang*²² too offers such a model. Tang says,

I, the little one, Lü,²³ presume to use a dark-colored sacrifice to make my announcement to the Lord of Heaven above. I declare that Heaven's great drought is my responsibility. I do not know if I have committed some offense against those above or below. If there is any merit, I dare not conceal it. If there is any offense, I dare not excuse it. The judgment lies in your mind alone, Lord! If those within my domain have committed any offense, let the responsibility rest with me. If I have committed any offense, let the responsibility not fall upon those within my domain.

This shows that while Tang had the honor of being the Son of Heaven and possessed the wealth of the entire world, he still did not hesitate to present himself as an offering in his sacrificial declaration to the Lord on High, the ghosts, and the spirits. Such was the impartiality of Tang.

²⁰The "little one" (literally, "small child") is a self-deprecating term of self-reference used by virtuous kings.

²¹The Miao are said to be a people who lived to the southeast in the area of present-day Hunan and Hubei.

²²The *Declaration of Tang* is another lost section of the *History* that purportedly recorded the words of the sage-king Tang. However, lines similar to what Mozi here quotes appear in *Analekts*, chapter 20. Also similar lines can be found scattered throughout the present *Announcement of Tang* section of the *History*. See Legge, *The Shoo King*, pp. 184-90.

²³On the "little one" see n. 20. Lü is the personal name of King Tang and in such a public context, this use of the personal name is another humble form of self-reference.

Though the impartiality that our teacher Mozi talks about here takes Tang as its model, it is not just in the *Oath of Yu* and the *Declaration of Tang* that one finds such examples. The *Odes of Zhou*²⁴ too offer such a model. The *Odes of Zhou* say,

The King's Way is broad so broad;
Without partiality or party.
The King's Way is even so even;
Without party or partiality.
Straight as an arrow,
As even as a whetstone.
It is what the noble man follows;
And the common man admires.

What I have been talking about here is not just some notion or theory. In ancient times, when Kings Wen and Wu ruled, they allocated everything equitably, rewarding the worthy and punishing the wicked without showing any partiality to their relatives or brothers. Such was the impartiality of Kings Wen and Wu. And the impartiality that our teacher Mozi talks about here takes Kings Wen and Wu as its models. So I don't see what reason any person in the world who has heard about impartiality can give for condemning it.

Though this is so, there are still people in the world who condemn impartiality, saying, "It does not seek what is beneficial for one's parents, so does it not harm filial piety?"

Our teacher Mozi says, "Let us consider the case of a filial son who seeks what is beneficial for his parents. Does a filial son who seeks what is beneficial for his parents want other people to care for and benefit his parents official for his parents want other people to care for and benefit his parents? Or does he want other people to dislike and steal from his parents? According to the very meaning of filial piety, he must want other people to care for and benefit his parents. Given this, how should one act in order to bring about such a state of affairs? Should one first care for and benefit the parents of another, expecting that they in turn will respond by caring for and

benefiting one's own parents? Or should one first dislike and steal from other people's parents, expecting that they in turn will respond by caring for and benefiting one's own parents? Clearly one must first care for and benefit the parents of others in order to expect that they in turn will respond by caring for and benefiting one's own parents. And so for such mutually filial sons to realize unlimited good results, must they not first care for and benefit other people's parents? Or should they let it be the case that filial sons are the exception and not the rule among the people of the world?

"Let us consider what is said in the writings of the former kings. In the *Elegies*²⁵ it says,

There are no words that are left unanswered,
No virtue that is left without a response.
If you toss me a peach,
I respond with a plum.

According to these lines, anyone who cares for others will receive care from them while anyone who dislikes others will in turn be disliked. And so I don't see what reason any person in the world who has heard about impartiality can give for condemning it.

"Perhaps people will think that impartial care is too difficult to carry out. But things more difficult than this have been successfully carried out. In the past, King Ling of the state of Chu was fond of slender waists.²⁶ During his reign the people of Chu are no more than one meal a day and became so weak that they could not raise themselves up without the support of a cane nor could they walk without leaning against a wall. Curtrailing one's food is something very difficult to do, but masses of people did it in order to please King Ling. Within a single generation the people changed because they wanted to accord with the wishes of their superior.

"In the past, Gou Jian, King of the state of Yue, was fond of bravery. And so he taught his soldiers and subjects to be brave. But since he was not sure if they were really brave he had his ships set aflame and ordered that the drums signal an advance. His troops fell on top of one another in their

²⁴This leads us to look in the *Odes*. However, the present text has only the last four lines quoted here (*Mao* # 203) with slight variation. The first four lines, though, are found with slight variation in the present text of the *History*. For the last four lines, see James Legge, *The Chinese Classics, Volume IV, The She King*, reprint (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1970), p. 353; for the first four, see Legge, *The Shoo King*, p. 331.

²⁵The *Elegies* are a section in the *Odes* (see *Odes* under *Important Texts*). Only the first two lines, with slight variation, appear in the present version of the text. See Legge, *The She King*, op. cit., p. 514.

²⁶This and the following story about the King of Yue are also cited by Han Feizi in "The Two Handles." See *Han Feizi*, chapter 7, pp. 325-26.

forward charge and countless numbers of them perished in the water and flames. Even when they ceased drumming, still the troops did not retreat. We can say that the soldiers of Yue were resolute indeed! Charging into flames is something very difficult to do, but masses of people did it in order to please the King of Yue. Within a single generation the people changed because they wanted to accord with the wishes of their superior.

"In the past, Duke Wen of Jin was fond of rough and simple attire. During his reign the people of Jin wrapped themselves in sheets of cloth, wore sheepskin jackets, hats of raw silk, and hempen shoes. They would dress this way when they had an audience with the Duke and parade around in such attire at court. Getting people to wear rough and simple attire is something very difficult to do, but masses of people did it in order to please Duke Wen. Within a single generation the people changed because they wanted to accord with the wishes of their superior.

"Curraling one's food, charging into flames, and wearing rough and simple attire are among the most difficult things in the world to get people to do, but masses of people did it in order to please their superiors. Within a single generation the people changed. Why? Because they wanted to accord with the wishes of their superiors.

"Now as for impartially caring for and benefiting one another, such things are incalculably beneficial and easy to practice. The only problem is that there are no superiors who take delight in them. If only there were superiors who delighted in them, who encouraged their practice through rewards and praise, and threatened those who violate them with penalties and punishments, I believe that the people would take to impartially caring for and benefiting one another just as naturally as fire rises up and water flows down. One could not stop them from being practiced anywhere in the world.

"And so impartiality is the way of the sage-kings. It offers security to kings, dukes, and great officials and provides ample food and clothing to the myriad people. So for gentlemen there is nothing better than carefully inquiring into the nature of impartiality and working to carry it out. Those who do so are sure to be kind as rulers, loyal as ministers, loving as fathers, filial as sons, good companions as older brothers, and respectful as younger brothers. And so any gentleman who wishes to be a kind ruler, loyal minister, loving father, filial son, a good companion as an elder brother, and respectful as a younger brother cannot but practice the kind of impartiality I have been describing. This is the way of the sage-kings and a great benefit to the myriad people."

Chapter Seventeen: A Condemnation of Aggressive War

[Our teacher Mozi says,] "Now suppose someone enters another's orchard and steals their peaches and plums. When the people hear about this they will condemn such a person, and if those above who administer the government get hold of him they will punish him. Why? Because he takes from others in order to benefit himself. Stealing another's dogs, hogs, chickens, and pigs is even more wrong than entering another's orchard and stealing their peaches and plums. Why? Because more is taken from others; it is even more inhumane and a more serious crime. Entering another person's stable and stealing their horses and cattle is even more wrong than stealing their dogs, hogs, chickens, and pigs. Why? Because more is taken from others. If more is taken from others, it is even more inhumane and a more serious crime. Killing an innocent person, stripping him of his clothes, and taking his spear and sword is even more wrong than entering his stable and stealing his horses and cattle. Why? Because more is taken from others. If more is taken from others, it is even more inhumane and a more serious crime. Up to this point, all the gentlemen of the world know well enough to condemn such actions and declare that they are wrong. But when it comes to the great wrong of attacking another state, they do not know enough to condemn it. Rather, they praise this and declare that it is the right thing to do. Can they be said to understand the difference between right and wrong?"

"Killing someone is wrong and must be punished with execution. But if we extrapolate out from this view, then killing ten people is ten times as bad and must be punished with ten executions, and killing one hundred people is one hundred times as bad and must be punished with one hundred executions. Up to this point, all the gentlemen of the world know well enough to condemn such actions and declare that they are wrong. But when it comes to the great wrong of attacking another state, they do not know enough to condemn it. Rather, they praise this and declare that it is the right thing to do. They really do not understand that this is wrong. That is why they record their praise of such activity and hand down these records to later generations. If they really understood that this is wrong, why would they record their wrongs and hand them down to later generations?"

"Now suppose there is someone who does the following: when they see a little black they say that it is black but when they see a lot of black they say that it is white. We would just have to say that such a person cannot

distinguish between black and white. Or suppose that when they taste a little bitterness they say that it is bitter, but when they taste a lot of bitterness they say that it is sweet. We would just have to say that such a person cannot distinguish between bitter and sweet. But now people see a small wrong and know enough to condemn it but see the great wrong of attacking another state and do not know enough to condemn it. Rather, they praise this and declare that it is the right thing to do. Can they be said to understand the difference between right and wrong? This is how we know that the gentlemen of the world are confused about the difference between right and wrong."

Chapter Twenty: For Moderation in Expenditures

[Our teacher Mozi says,] "When a sage rules a state that state will be twice as well off. When a sage rules the empire the empire will be twice as well off. But they are not made twice as well off by adding territory from without. It is rather by eliminating wasteful expenditures within the state that such rulers are able to make them twice as well off. When sage-kings rule, whenever they issue orders, underrate an enterprise, employ the people or expend their resources, they never do anything that is not useful. And so they never waste their resources or overburden their people yet are able to generate great benefits.

"What is the purpose of clothes? It is to protect us from the cold of winter and the heat of summer. The proper way to make clothes is such that they keep one warm in winter and cool in summer and that is all. Whatever does not contribute to these ends should be eliminated. What is the purpose of houses? It is to protect us from the wind and cold of winter, the heat and rain of summer, and to keep out robbers and thieves. Once these ends are secured that is all. Whatever does not contribute to these ends should be eliminated. What is the purpose of armor, shields, and weapons? It is protect us from bandits, rebels, robbers, and thieves. Should there be bandits, rebels, robbers, and thieves, those who have armor, shields, and weapons will be victorious, while those without armor, shields, and weapons will not. And so sages work to produce armor, shields, and weapons. Whenever they make armor, shields, and weapons they seek to make them as light, sharp, strong, and resilient as they can that is all. What ever does not contribute to these ends should be eliminated. What is the purpose of boats and vehicles? Vehicles are used to travel over land and boats are used to travel over water such that one can bring together and exchange

what is beneficial throughout the world. The proper way to make boats and vehicles is such that they are as light and easy to use as possible and that is all. Whatever does not contribute to these ends should be eliminated. In making these various things, sage-kings never add anything that is not useful. And so they never waste their resources or overburden their people yet are able to generate great benefits.

"If one could eliminate the fondness that kings, dukes, and great officials have for accumulating quantities of pearls and jades, birds and beasts, and dogs and horses, and use this revenue to increase the availability of clothes, houses, armor, shields, weapons, boats, and vehicles—could one double the numbers of these? Doubling the number of such things would not be hard. What then would it be hard to double? Only the number of people. And yet one can also double the number of people. In the past, the sage-kings established a law that said, "No man of twenty can be without a family. No woman of fifteen can be without a husband." Such was the law of the sage-kings. But since the sage-kings have passed away the people have grown remiss. Those who want to start a family at an early age do so at age twenty while those who want to start a family late do so at age forty. If we combine these, it still means that men are starting families on average ten years later than the age decreed by the law of the sage-kings. If all of them have one child every three years, then two or three children should have been born during that ten-year period. And so is it not only by getting people to start families early in life that one can double the population?

"This is the only way to double the population, but those who rule the world today actually work in many ways to lessen the population. They overwork and overtax their people to the point where many lack sufficient resources, with the result that those who die of hunger and cold are more than one can count. Moreover, the great officers encourage rulers to raise armies and attack neighboring states. The longer campaigns take up to a year while the shorter ones last several months. This means that men and women don't see each other for long periods of time, and in this way the population is reduced. During these campaigns, some become ill and die because they lack a stable living arrangement with regular food and water; others die in ambushes, fiery assaults, sieges, and battles. Together, their numbers are beyond reckoning. This is because the rules of today are finding more and more ways to lessen the population. Such things never occurred when the sages ruled. Such is not the way sages rule. They find more and more ways to increase the population."

This is why our teacher Mozi says, "To eliminate everything that is not useful is to carry out the Way of the sage-kings and offer great benefit to the world."

Chapter Twenty-Five: For Moderation in Funerals

Our teacher Mozi says, "The way benevolent people plan on behalf of the world is just like the way filial children plan on behalf of their parents."

Now how is that filial children plan for their parents?

Our teacher Mozi says, "If their parents are poor, they do what they can to enrich them. If the members of their clan are few, they do what they can to increase their numbers. If the family is in chaos, they do what they can to make it well ordered. In pursuing these ends they may find that their strength is insufficient, their resources inadequate, or their knowledge too limited, and that they fall short. But they would never hold back any of their strength or any scheme or advantage and not apply these in their efforts to realize their parents' well-being."

These are the three benefits that filial children plan for on behalf of their parents. And this is way they work to realize these ends. This is also the way that benevolent people plan on behalf of the world.

Our teacher Mozi says, "If the world is poor, benevolent people do what they can to enrich it. If the people are few, benevolent people do what they can to increase their numbers. If the world is in chaos, benevolent people do what they can to make it well ordered. In pursuing these ends benevolent people may find that their strength is insufficient, their resources inadequate, or their knowledge too limited, and that they fall short. But they would never hold back any of their strength or any scheme or advantage and not apply these in their efforts to realize the world's well-being."

These are the three benefits that benevolent people plan for on behalf of the world. And this is the way they work to realize these ends. But now the sage-kings of the three dynasties of old²⁷ have passed away and the world has lost sight of what is right. The gentlemen of later ages are divided in their opinions. Some maintain that lavish funerals and prolonged mourning²⁸ are benevolent and right and the proper task of filial children. Others

maintain that lavish funerals and prolonged mourning are neither benevolent nor right and are not the proper task of filial children.

Our teacher Mozi says, "These two groups contradict each other in word and oppose each other in deed. Both say, 'I am dutifully following the Way of Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, Wen, and Wu,' and yet they contradict each other in word and oppose each other in deed. And so people of later ages have become suspicious of the claims of both groups. If one doubts the claims of both groups then one should turn and consider them in regard to ruling the state and governing the people, to see whether or not lavish funerals and prolonged mourning promote the three benefits discussed earlier. If by following their words and implementing their plans concerning lavish funerals and prolonged mourning one really would enrich the poor, increase the population, bring stability to precarious situations and order to chaos, then these things clearly are benevolent and right the proper task of filial children. Those who offer counsel could not but encourage them. Benevolent people would work to make such practices flourish throughout the world; they would seek to establish them and bring the people to praise them and to follow them, to the end of their days. However, if by following their words and implementing their plans concerning lavish funerals and prolonged mourning one really cannot enrich the poor, increase the population, bring stability to precarious situations and order to chaos, then these things clearly are not benevolent and right or the proper task of filial children. Those who offer counsel could not but discourage them. Benevolent people would work to eradicate such practices throughout the world; they would seek to abolish them and bring the people to condemn them and to never follow them, to the end of their days. And so from ancient times until the present, it has never been the case that bringing the world to a flourishing state and eliminating what is harmful to the world has led the state and the people to disorder."

Now there are many gentlemen in the world who are still in doubt as to whether or not lavish funerals and prolonged mourning are right or wrong, beneficial or harmful. And so our teacher Mozi says, "Let us examine the case. Now if we were to implement the teachings of those who follow and uphold lavish funerals and prolonged mourning, then in mourning for a king, duke, or high official, they prescribe that there be several inner and outer coffins, a deep grave, many layers of burial clothes, elaborately and intricately embroidered funeral shrouds, and a massive burial mound. Among common men and women this would exhaust the resources of entire family. And even a feudal lord would have to empty his entire state

²⁷The Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties.

²⁸Almost certainly, Mozi here has in mind the Confucians who maintained elaborate and prolonged rituals of mourning. See for example, *Analekts* 17.21, *Mengzi* 3A5 and 7A39, and Xunzi's "Discourse on Ritual." See Xunzi, chapter 19, pp. 274-85.

treasury before the appropriate amount of gold, jade, and pearls would adorn the body and the proper quantities of silk, carriages, and horses would fill up the tomb. In addition, since one is to see off the dead as if they were simply changing their abode, it is required that numerous draperies and canopies, offering vessels of various kinds, tables and chairs, pots and basins, spears and swords, feathered banners, and articles made of tooth and hide must be buried along with them. It is also said that when an emperor or feudal lord dies as many as several hundred and no fewer than several tens of retainers are to be sacrificed in order to accompany the deceased.²⁹ When a general or great official dies as many as several tens and no fewer than several are to be sacrificed.”

What are the rules for one who is in mourning?

Our teacher Mozi says, “Mourners are to cry and wail irregularly, at all times of the day and night, and to sound as if their sobs are choked off. They are to dress in sackcloth, allow their tears to run down without wiping them away, and live in a mourning hut made of straw, sleeping upon a rush mat and using a lump of dirt as their pillow. Moreover, they are to encourage each other to refuse food and starve themselves and to wear thin clothing in order to suffer from the cold, so that they come to have sunken faces and eyes, a sallow and darkened complexion, poor hearing and sight, and limbs too weak to function. It is also said that the most noble of people uphold the rites of mourning to the point where they cannot rise up without assistance and cannot walk without a cane and they follow these practices for three years. This is what would happen if the state took such teachings as its model and followed them as its Way. Should kings, dukes, and other great men follow such practices, they will not be able to come early to court and retire late in order to hear litigation and carry out the affairs of the government. Should officers and officials follow such practices, they would be unable to administer the Five Offices and Six Treasuries³⁰ in order to ensure that crops and timber are harvested and the granaries kept full. Should farmers follow such practices, they would be unable to go out to the fields

early and return home late in order to carry out the ploughing, planting, and tending of crops. Should the various craftsmen follow such practices, they would be unable to work on boats and carts and fashion various vessels and utensils. Should women follow such practices, they would be unable to rise at dawn and retire at night in order to complete their work of spinning and weaving. And so lavish funerals entail burying a great deal of wealth, and prolonged mourning entails prohibiting people from pursuing their vocations for an extended period of time. The former takes wealth that has already been created and buries it, while the latter prohibits new members of society from being born for an extended period of time. To pursue wealth in this manner is like seeking a harvest while prohibiting ploughing! Such practices have nothing to offer in regard to explaining how to become wealthy. And so we now know that lavish funerals and prolonged mourning cannot enrich one's state.”

But perhaps it has value for those who wish to increase population of their states?

Our teacher Mozi says, “It has nothing to offer in this regard either. Now consider what would result if lavish funerals and prolonged mourning were adopted as official policy. When one's ruler died, one would mourn him for three years. When one's mother or father died, one would mourn them for three years. When one's wife or eldest son died, one would mourn them for three years. Whenever any of these five people died, one would mourn them for three years. Next, one would mourn for one's paternal uncles, brothers, and other sons, and one's various close relatives for five months. You are to mourn for several months for fraternal aunts, sisters, first cousins, and maternal uncles. And there are set standards describing the proper levels of emaciation mourners must attain. They are to have sunken faces and eyes, a sallow and darkened complexion, poor hearing and sight, and limbs too weak to function. It is also said that the most noble of people uphold the rites of mourning to the point where they cannot rise up without assistance and cannot walk without a cane, and follow these practices for three years.

“This is what would happen if the state took such teachings as its model and followed them as its Way. If the people starve themselves in this manner then they will be unable to withstand the cold of winter or the heat of summer and countless numbers of them will grow ill and die. This greatly diminishes the chances for men and women to procreate. To seek to increase the population in this way is like seeking to increase people's longevity by getting them to fall upon their swords. Such practices have nothing to offer

²⁹This refers to ritual sacrifices, most popular during the Shang but still practiced in Mozi's own time. Mengzi quotes Kongzi as definitively rejecting even the vestiges of such practices. See *Mengzi* 1A4 (not in this volume).

³⁰A list of these offices and their duties can be found in a later work called the *Liji* (“Book of Rites”). See the entry on the *Rites* under *Important Texts*. For a translation, see James Legge, tr., *The Li Chi: Book of Rites*, reprint, vol. 1 (New York: University Books, 1967), pp. 109–10.

with regard to explaining how to increase the population. And so we now know that lavish funerals and prolonged mourning cannot increase the number of people in one's state."

But perhaps it has value for those who wish to bring good order to the government?

Our teacher Mozi says, "It has nothing to offer in this regard either. Now consider what would result if lavish funerals and prolonged mourning were adopted as official policy. The state would be poor, the people few, and the government in chaos. This is what would happen if the state took such teachings as its model and followed them as its Way. If those above were to carry out these practices, they would be unable to attend to their affairs. If those below were to carry out these practices, they would be unable to pursue their various tasks. If those above are unable to attend to their affairs, then the government will be in chaos. If those below are unable to pursue their various tasks, then food and clothing will be in short supply. If these are in short supply, then a younger brother who seeks for such things from his elder brother will be refused and will come to feel unbrotherly. In time he will come to resent his elder brother. Children who seek for such things from their parents will be refused and will come to feel unfilial. In time they will come to resent their parents. Ministers who seek for such things from their rulers will be refused and will come to feel disloyal. In time they will rebel against their superiors. This will lead unruly and depraved people who lack proper clothing and sufficient food to build up resentment and indignation in their hearts and express it in wanton violence that cannot be stopped. And so robbers and thieves will increase while decent and good people grow increasingly scarce. To seek to bring good order to one's state by increasing the number of thieves and robbers and decreasing the number of decent and good people is like asking someone who is standing in front of one to turn around three times without exposing his back to you. Such practices have nothing to offer in regard to explaining how to bring good order to the government. And so we now know that lavish funerals and prolonged mourning cannot bring good order to one's state."

But perhaps it has value for those who wish to prevent large states from attacking small states?

Our teacher Mozi says, "It has nothing to offer in this regard either. Ever since the ancient sage-kings passed away and the world lost a sense of what is right, the feudal lords have relied upon force of arms to attack one another. To the south there are the kings of Chu and Yue and to the north

there are the rulers of Qi and Jin.³¹ They all mercilessly drill and train their troops with the aim of attacking and absorbing one another and thereby gaining control of all the world. And so whenever a large state fails to attack a small one it is only because the small state has an abundant stock of provisions, well maintained fortifications, and harmony between its rulers and subjects. This is why great states do not want to attack it. If its provisions were not abundant, its fortifications not well maintained, or it lacked harmony between its rulers and subjects, then large states would want to attack it. Now consider what would result if lavish funerals and prolonged mourning were adopted as official policy. The state would be poor, the people few, and the government in chaos. If the state is poor, it lacks the means to accumulate abundant provisions. If its people are few, it lacks the labor needed to maintain its walls and moats. If it is in chaos, then it will not be victorious in attack nor secure in defense. And so we now know that lavish funerals and prolonged mourning cannot prevent large states from attacking small ones."

But perhaps it has value for those who wish to win the blessings of the Lord on High, ghosts, and spirits?

Our teacher Mozi says, "It has nothing to offer in this regard either. Now consider what would result if lavish funerals and prolonged mourning were adopted as official policy. The state would be poor, the people few, and the government in chaos. If the state is poor its sacrificial offerings of millet and wine will not be clean and pure. If its people are few, there will not be enough of them to serve the Lord on High, ghosts, and spirits. And if its government is in chaos, then its sacrifices will not be offered regularly and at the proper times. Now suppose this reaches the point where serving the Lord on High, ghosts, and spirits is eventually prohibited and stopped. If such a policy is implemented, the Lord on High, ghosts, and spirits would discuss this among themselves up above saying, 'Which is better? To have or to not have such people? I suppose there is no difference to us whether they exist or not!' Then were the Lord on High, ghosts, and spirits to send down calamities and punishments and abandon such a people, would this not merely be fitting?"³²

³¹The rulers of these particular states were jousting for preeminence in Mozi's time.

³²As seen clearly in the following two chapters, Mozi was a religious conservative and a fundamentalist. He insisted that a belief in and the worship of the Lord on High, ghosts, and spirits was necessary for a stable and flourishing society. He was very much opposed to the more naturalized, psychological interpretations of religious ceremony that were evolving among Confucian thinkers of the time.

"This is why the sages of old prescribed the following methods for burial. They said that a coffin of plain wood three inches thick is enough to house the body as it decays. There should be three layers of funeral clothes, enough to cover up the unpleasantness. As for the depth of the grave, it should not be so deep as to hit water but not so shallow as to allow a stench. The burial mound should rise no higher than three feet. If one followed these methods, the deceased was properly buried. The living must not engage in prolonged mourning but should quickly go about their tasks, each person doing what they are best at in order to mutually benefit one another. These are the methods laid down by the sage-kings."

Now those who advocate lavish funerals and prolonged mourning say, "Although lavish funerals and prolonged mourning cannot enrich the poor, increase a sparse population, stabilize a precarious situation, or bring good order to chaos, nevertheless, such is the Way of the sage-kings."

Our teacher Mozi says, "This is not the case. In ancient times, when Yao went north to instruct the eight Di barbarian tribes³³ he died en route and was buried on the northern slopes of Mount Qiong.³⁴ His corpse was dressed in only three layers of burial clothing and interred in a coffin of plain wood that was bound together with common vines. Mourning began only after the coffin had been lowered into the grave. The grave was then filled in and no burial mound was erected. Once the burial was complete, oxen and horses freely crossed over the grave.³⁵ When Shun went west to instruct the seven Rong barbarian tribes³⁶ he died en route and was buried in the marketplace of Nanji.³⁷ His corpse was dressed in only three layers of burial clothing and interred in a coffin of plain wood that was bound together with common vines. Once the burial was complete, the people in the market freely crossed over the grave. When Yu went east to instruct the nine Yi barbarian tribes³⁸ he died en route and was buried on Mount

³³The name given to various non-Chinese people to the north of Chinese territory.

³⁴The location of this mountain is not clear, though it obviously was located somewhere to the north of what was Chinese territory at the time.

³⁵Showing that it was not accorded any special status.

³⁶The name given to various non-Chinese people to the west of Chinese territory.

³⁷Scholars do not agree about the location of this town. It obviously was located somewhere to the west of what was Chinese territory at the time.

³⁸The name given to various non-Chinese people to the east of Chinese territory. Thus Mozi's narrative purports to report on funeral practices throughout all of China and its three land borders.

Huiji.³⁹ His corpse was dressed in only three layers of burial clothing and interred in a coffin of plain wood only three inches thick. The coffin was bound with common vines; it was not fitted tightly together nor was a ramp needed to lower it into the ground.⁴⁰ The grave was dug to a depth that did not hit water but not so shallow as to allow a stench to escape. Once he was buried, the excess dirt was piled up as a burial mound. It came to no more than three feet in height."

So if we consider the case on the basis of these three sage-kings, lavish funerals and prolonged mourning are not in fact the way of the sage-kings. These three kings each were honored as the Son of Heaven and possessed all the wealth in the world. Is it plausible to suppose that they chose to be buried in the way in which they were buried because they were worried about having enough to spend?

But the way in which kings, dukes, and high officials are buried today is very different from this. There must be outer and inner coffins and a three-layered shroud of embroidered hide. Once the jade disks and stones are prepared, there must also be spears, swords, sacrificial vessels, pots and basins, embroidery, bolts of silk, and thousands of sets of bridles. The deceased must be provided with horses and carriages along with women entertainers and their instruments. There must be ramps leading down to and connecting with the tomb and the burial mound should resemble a hill or small mountain. The extent to which such practices interfere with the work of the people and dissipate their wealth is beyond calculation. But this is the degree to which people are willing to pursue useless endeavors.

This is why our teacher Mozi says, "Earlier, I began by saying that if by following the words and implementing the plans of those who advocate lavish funerals and prolonged mourning one really would enrich the poor, increase the population, bring stability to precarious situations and order to chaos, then these things clearly are benevolent and right and the proper task of filial children. Those who offer counsel could not but encourage them. However, if by following the words and implementing the plans of those who advocate lavish funerals and prolonged mourning one really cannot enrich the poor, increase the population, bring stability to precarious situations and order to chaos, then these things clearly are not

³⁹A mountain located in Shanyin county of present-day Zhejiang province.

⁴⁰This indicates that the grave was of very modest proportions for a king.

benevolent and right or the proper task of filial children. Those who offer counsel could not but discourage them.

"But we have seen that those who seek to enrich their states through these practices will actually impoverish it. Those who seek to increase the population of their states through these practices will actually decrease it. Those who seek to bring good order to their states through these practices will simply throw it into chaos. Those who seek to stop large states from attacking small states through these practices will not succeed. And those who seek to gain the blessing of the Lord on High, ghosts, and spirits through these practices will receive only disaster. If we look up to the way of Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, Wen, and Wu we find they were opposed to such practices. If we look down to the policies of Jie, Zhou, You, and Li we find they accorded with such practices. If we consider things on this basis, then clearly lavish funerals and prolonged mourning are not the way of the sage-kings."

Now those who support lavish funerals and prolonged periods of mourning say, "If lavish funerals and prolonged mourning really are not the way of the sage-kings why is it that the gentlemen of the Middle Kingdom⁴¹ continue these practices without interruption and follow them uncritically?"

Our teacher Mozi says, "This is just a case of people 'following what they are used to and approving of what is customary.'⁴² In ancient times, east of the state of Yue was the state of Kaishu.⁴³ When a first son was born to the people of this state they would carve him up and eat him saying it was beneficial to his future younger brothers. When their father died, they would carry their mothers off to some distant place and abandon them there saying, 'One cannot live with the wife of a ghost!' These practices were both official policy and the popular custom. They were continued without interruption and followed uncritically. But how can this be the way to realize what is benevolent and right? This is just a case of people 'following what they are used to and approving of what is customary.' South of the state of Chu was the state of the people of Yan.⁴⁴ When their parents died, they

⁴¹That is, China.

⁴²This appears to have been a common saying of the times.

⁴³The precise location of this state is uncertain but its location, "east of Yue," connotes a faraway and culturally primitive area.

⁴⁴The precise location of this state is uncertain but its location, "south of Chu," connotes a faraway and culturally primitive area.

would remove and discard the flesh from their bones and then bury the bones.⁴⁵ This was the way to be a filial child. West of the state of Qin⁴⁶ was the state of Yigu.⁴⁷ When their parents died they would gather together kindling and firewood and burn the corpse. As the smoke would rise they would say that their parents were 'ascending far off.' This was the way to be a filial child. These practices were both official policy and the popular custom. They were continued without interruption and followed uncritically. But how can this be the way to realize what is benevolent and right? This is just a case of people 'following what they are used to and approving of what is customary.'

"If we consider the funeral practices of these three states, then clearly they are deficient. If we consider the funeral practices of gentlemen in the Middle Kingdom, then clearly they are excessive. If one were to greatly increase the deficiency of the one and greatly diminish the excess of the latter, then there would be moderation in funerals. Even though it is good to give people clothing and food when they are alive, these things still must be given in moderation. When people die, it is good to give them funerals. But how could it be that in this alone we show no moderation?"

Our teacher Mozi says that this is the proper model for a funeral: "A coffin three inches thick is adequate for the decaying bones. Three layers of clothes are adequate for the decaying flesh. The grave should be dug to a depth that does not strike water but that also does not allow fumes to escape to the surface. The burial mound should only be high enough to clearly mark the spot. There should be crying as one sees the departed off and as one comes back from the grave. But as soon as people have returned to their homes, they should resume their individual livelihoods. There should be regular sacrificial offerings made to extend filiality to one's parents."

And so I say that in this way our teacher Mozi's model neglects the good neither of the living nor of the dead. This is why our teacher Mozi says, "If

⁴⁵Such secondary reburial of bones, while never the dominant practice, is well attested in very early China. There is evidence for the practice in the Central Plains and Northwest as far back as the fifth millennium B.C.E. See David N. Keightley, "Early Civilization in China: Reflections on How It Became Chinese," in *Heritage of China*, Paul S. Ropp, ed. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), p. 24.

⁴⁶Qin was the state farthest to the west and was considered culturally backward in Mozi's time.

⁴⁷In the basic annals section for the state of Qin in Sima Qian's *Shiji* ("Record of the Historian"), there is reference to a state by this name. Its exact location is still a matter of debate.

gentlemen today sincerely wish to be benevolent and right and desire to become superior men, if they want to follow the way of the sage-kings of old, and work for the benefit of the people of the Middle Kingdom today, then they should make moderation in mourning their official policy and must not fail to examine this matter carefully.”

Chapter Twenty-Six: Heaven's Will⁴⁸

Our teacher Mozi says, “Gentlemen in the world today understand small matters but not those that are great. How do I know this? I know this from how they conduct themselves within their families. If one is living at home⁴⁹ and commits some offense against the head of the clan, there are always the homes of neighbors to which one might flee. And yet, one's parents, brothers, and friends will unite and caution one, saying, ‘You must be careful! You must be circumspect! How can you live at home and offend against the head of the clan?’ This is not only how things are in the case of living at home, it is also so in the case of living in a given state. If one is living in a state and commits some offense against the ruler of the state, there are always neighboring states to which one might flee. And yet, one's parents, brothers, and friends will unite and caution one, saying, ‘You must be careful! You must be circumspect! Who can live in a state and offend against its ruler?’

“Since people offer each other such strong admonitions in these cases, where there is still some place to which one might flee, should they not think it appropriate to offer even stronger warnings in a case where there is no place to which one might flee? For there is the saying, ‘Committing offense in broad daylight, where can one flee to?’⁵⁰ The answer of course is that there is nowhere to flee. For Heaven will clearly see you even if you run to the forests, valleys, or hidden places where none lives. But for some reason the gentlemen of the world don't know enough to warn each other about offending Heaven. This is how I know that the gentlemen of the world understand small matters but not those that are great.

⁴⁸The word translated here as “will” is *zhi* 志, which means the settled and persisting intention of an agent. For Mozi, Heaven was less a personality with a capricious or unknowable will and more an established, observable, and predictable set of inclinations.

⁴⁹Mozi has in mind here the practice of living in a family compound, where several generations share a common courtyard but each have their separate quarters.

⁵⁰This seems to have been a common saying of the time but its source is unknown.

“This being the case, what is it that Heaven desires and what does it dislike? Heaven desires what is right and dislikes what is not right. This being so, if I lead the people of the world to act in accordance with what is right, then I will be doing what Heaven desires. And if I do what Heaven desires, then Heaven will do what I desire. Such being the case, what is it that I desire and what do I dislike? I desire good fortune and a substantial salary, and dislike calamities and disasters. If I do not do what Heaven desires but rather what it does not desire, then I will lead people to act in ways that lead them into disaster and calamity. But how do I know that Heaven desires what is right and dislikes what is not right? I say this is so because, throughout the world, wherever there is right there is life, and wherever there is an absence of right there is death. Wherever there is right there is wealth, wherever there is an absence of right there is poverty. Wherever there is right there is good order, wherever there is an absence of right there is disorder. Heaven desires to have life and dislikes death, desires to have wealth and dislikes poverty, desires to have good order and dislikes disorder. This is how I know that Heaven desires what is right and dislikes what is not right.

“Moreover, what is right is what offers a standard of governing. Such a standard is not given by subordinates to govern their superiors but rather must come from superiors to govern subordinates. This is why the people devote themselves to carrying out their various tasks but do not make up their own standard. There are ministers and officials to govern them. Ministers and officials devote themselves to carrying out their various tasks but do not make up their own standard. There are the three high counselors and feudal lords to govern them. The three high counselors and feudal lords devote themselves to administering the government but they do not make up their own standard. There is the Son of Heaven to govern them. The Son of Heaven does not make up his own standard. There is Heaven to govern him. The gentlemen of the world clearly understand that the Son of Heaven governs the three high counselors and feudal lords, the ministers and officials and the people. But that Heaven governs the Son of Heaven is something that people do not yet clearly understand.

“This is why in ancient times the sage-kings of the three dynasties,⁵¹ Yu, Tang, Wen, and Wu, wanted to make clear to the people of the world that Heaven governs the Son of Heaven. And so each of them fattened up oxen and sheep, dogs and swine, and prepared pure offerings of millet and wine

⁵¹The Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties.

as sacrifices to the Lord on High, the ghosts, and spirits and prayed for Heaven's blessings. I have never heard of a case where Heaven prayed for blessings from the Son of Heaven and this is how I know that Heaven governs the Son of Heaven."

The Son of Heaven is the most honored person in the world and the richest person in the world. And so those who desire riches and honors cannot but accord with the will of Heaven. Those who accord with Heaven's will, caring for one another impartially, and benefiting one another in their interactions, will surely be rewarded. Those who oppose Heaven's will, disliking one another out of partiality and stealing from one another in their interactions, will surely be punished. This being so, who has accorded with Heaven's will and been rewarded? Who has opposed Heaven's will and been punished?

Our teacher Mozi says, "In ancient times the sage-kings of the three dynasties, Yu, Tang, Wen, and Wu, were among those who accorded with Heaven's will and were rewarded. In ancient times the vicious kings of the three dynasties, Jie, Zhou, You, and Li, were among those who opposed Heaven's will and were punished."

That being so, how were Yu, Tang, Wen, and Wu rewarded? Our teacher Mozi says, "On high they honored Heaven, in the middle realm they served the ghosts and spirits, and below they cared for human beings. And so Heaven's will proclaimed, 'These men impartially care for those I care for and impartially benefit those I benefit. Their care for the people is extensive and the benefit they bring is substantial.' And so Heaven made it come to pass that they each became the Son of Heaven and were given the wealth of all the world. Their descendants have continued for a myriad of generations, their goodness has been proclaimed throughout succeeding generations and spread throughout the world. They are praised down to the present day and are known as 'sage-kings.'"

That being so, how were Jie, Zhou, You, and Li punished? Our teacher Mozi says, "On high they maligned Heaven, in the middle realm they insulted the ghosts and spirits, and below they harmed human beings. And so Heaven's will proclaimed, 'These men through their partiality dislike those I care for and in their interactions harm those I benefit. Their dislike for the people is extensive and the harm they bring substantial.' And so Heaven made it come to pass that they did not finish out their natural span of life and their line did not even span a single full generation. They are reviled down to the present day and are known as 'vicious kings.'"

That being so, how do we know that Heaven cares for the people of the world?

Our teacher Mozi says, "Because it sheds light upon all impartially."

How do we know that Heaven sheds light upon all equally?

Our teacher Mozi says, "Because it lays claim to all impartially."

How do we know that it lays claim to all impartially?

Our teacher Mozi says, "Because it accepts sacrificial offerings from all impartially."

How do we know that it accepts sacrificial offerings from all impartially?

Our teacher Mozi says, "Within the four seas, all those who live on cultivated grain⁵² fatten up oxen and sheep, dogs, and swine, and prepare pure offerings of miller and wine as sacrifices to the Lord on High, the ghosts, and spirits. Since Heaven lays claim to all people, why would it not care for them? Moreover as I teach, "Those who kill one innocent person will suffer one misfortune."⁵³ Who is it that kills an innocent person? It is a human being. Who is it that bestows misfortune? It is Heaven. If Heaven did not care for the people of the world, then why would it send down misfortunes when human beings kill one another? This is how I know that Heaven cares for the people of the world."

To accord with Heaven's will is to take right as the governing standard. To oppose Heaven's will is to take force as the governing standard. But what does one do who takes right as the governing standard?

Our teacher Mozi says, "Those who control great states will not attack small states. Those who control great families will not plunder lesser families. The strong will not rob the weak. The noble will not act arrogantly toward the humble. The clever will not deceive the foolish. Such things are beneficial to Heaven above, to ghosts and spirits in the middle realm, and to human beings below. Benefiting these three, there is none that is not benefitted, and so the best of names will be accorded to such men and they will be called 'sage-kings.' Those who take force as the governing standard differ from this. They contradict this in word and oppose it in deed, like two men galloping away from one another on horseback. Those who control great states will thus attack small ones. Those who control great families will plunder lesser families. The strong will rob the weak. The noble

⁵²The settled, civilized Chinese as opposed to nomadic, uncivilized "barbarians."

⁵³In addition to occurring in all three versions of "Heaven's Will," this line is also found in chapter 4 (not in this volume).

will act arrogantly toward the humble. The clever will deceive the foolish. Such things are not beneficial to Heaven above, to ghosts and spirits in the middle realm, or to human beings below. Not benefiting these three, there is none that is benefitted, and so the worst of names will be accorded to such men and they will be called 'vicious kings.'"

Our teacher Mozi says, "I hold to the will of Heaven as a wheelwright holds to his compass and a carpenter his square. Wheelwrights and carpenters hold fast to their compasses and squares in order to gauge what is round and square throughout the world saying, 'What is plumb with this is true, what is not is false!' The books of all the gentlemen in the world today are so numerous that they cannot be exhaustively catalogued and their teachings and maxims are more than can be counted. Above they offer their opinions to the feudal lords and below they expound them to various men of worth. But they are far from what is benevolent and right! How do I know this? I say, 'I measure them with the clearest standard in all the world.'"

Chapter Thirty-One: On Ghosts

Our teacher Mozi says, "In the present age, since the sage-kings who ruled during the ancient three dynasties have passed away and the world has lost sight of what is right, the feudal lords all take force as their guiding standard.⁵⁴ As a result, rulers and other superiors are not kind while ministers and other subordinates are not loyal. Fathers are not loving and sons are not filial, elder brothers are not good to their younger brothers, younger brothers are not respectful of their elders, and proper conduct in general is not observed. Those in charge of the government do not exert themselves in their administrative duties, while the common people do not exert themselves in the pursuit of their various tasks. This is also why people abandon themselves to licentiousness, violence, piracy, rebellion, thievery, and robbery, and use weapons, poisons, water, and fire to stop travelers on the roads and byways, and rob their carriages, horses, coats, and furs in order to profit themselves. As a result the world is in great disorder.

"If we ask how this came about we will see that it is all because people have developed doubts concerning the existence of ghosts and spirits and

do not understand that ghosts and spirits can reward the worthy and punish the wicked. Now if we could just persuade the people of the world to believe that ghosts and spirits can reward the worthy and punish the wicked, then how could the world ever become disordered?"

Now those who maintain that there are no ghosts or spirits say, "Ghosts and spirits certainly do not exist!" Day and night they preach such ideas throughout the world and sow suspicion among the masses. They cause the people of the world to develop doubts concerning the existence of ghosts and spirits and as a result the world is thrown into disorder.

This is why our teacher Mozi says, "If the kings, dukes, great officials, and gentlemen of the world today really seek to promote what is beneficial to the world and eliminate what is harmful they must inquire carefully into the issue of whether or not ghosts and spirits exist."

I accept that one must inquire carefully into the issue of whether or not ghosts and spirits exist. Granted this, what is the proper method for pursuing an inquiry into this issue?⁵⁵

Our teacher Mozi says, "You proceed in the same way as in any other case of determining whether anything exists or does not exist; you must take as your standard the evidence provided by the eyes and ears of the people. If there really are people who have heard and seen something, then you must accept that such things exist. If no one has heard or seen anything, then you must accept that such things do not exist. If you intend to proceed in this way, why not try going into a district or village and ask the people there? If, in the course of human history, from ancient times up to the present, there really are people who have seen ghostly or spiritual entities or heard the sounds of ghosts or spirits, then how could one say that ghosts and spirits do not exist? If no one has ever heard or seen them, then how could one say that ghosts and spirits exist?"

Now those who maintain that ghosts and spirits do not exist say, "Throughout the world there are innumerable reports about hearing and seeing ghostly or spiritual entities, but who really can offer testimony about having heard or seen ghostly or spiritual entities?"⁵⁶

⁵⁵Notice that in what follows, Mozi appeals to the "three gauges" discussed in "A Condemnation of Fatalism." See *Mozi*, chapter 35, pp. 110-11.

⁵⁶Mozi wants to distinguish mere hearsay and vague claims about spiritual beings from firm and clear testimony of their existence. In the examples he cites as evidence, the testimony is first hand, detailed, and corroborated by multiple witnesses.

⁵⁴The word translated as "guiding standard" is *zheng* 正, which often means "what is correct" and is related to the word *zheng* 政, which means "to rule." Mozi here is playing on these related senses.

Our teacher Mozi says, "If we are looking for a case where many people have seen and heard [about ghosts and spirits], then in ancient times Du Bo is a good example. King Xuan of Zhou⁵⁷ killed his minister Du Bo even though he was completely innocent. Before he died Du Bo said, 'My lord is killing me even though I am completely innocent. If the dead are indeed unconscious, then that will be the end of it. But if the dead are conscious, within three years' time my lord shall know of this!' Three years later King Xuan and various feudal lords were off hunting in the wilds. There were several hundred chariots and several thousand men on foot; the hunting party filled the entire field. At high noon, Du Bo appeared in a plain chariot pulled by white horses. He was wearing vermilion clothes and a hat, holding a vermilion bow, and clasp[ing] vermilion arrows under his arm. He pursued King Xuan of Zhou and shot him as he rode in his chariot; the arrow pierced the king's heart and splintered his spine. King Xuan collapsed in his chariot and, draped over his own bow case, he died. None of the men from Zhou who were there at the time failed to witness this and none even in remote places failed to hear about it. The event was recorded in the court chronicle of Zhou. Rulers referred to it when instructing their ministers, and fathers referred to it as a warning to their sons, saying, 'Be cautious! Be watchful! Misfortune will surely befall all those who kill the innocent, and they will suffer the punishments of ghosts and spirits in this swift fashion!' And so, if we look at things in terms of what is written in the court chronicle of Zhou, then how can we doubt that ghosts and spirits exist?"

"But it is not just the court chronicle of Zhou that attests to such things, in ancient times, Duke Mu of Qin⁵⁸ was once in his ancestral temple at high noon when a spirit entered through the door. It had the face of a man and the body of a bird, wore a plain white robe with dark edging, and displayed a serious and dignified expression. When Duke Mu saw it he was frightened and started to run away, but the spirit spoke to him saying, 'Do not fear! The Lord is pleased with your shining virtue'⁵⁹ and has dispatched

⁵⁷A king who ruled during the tenth generation of the Zhou dynasty. His reign dates are

827-782 B.C.E.

⁵⁸Ruler of the state of Qin from 659 to 621 B.C.E.

⁵⁹In very early Chinese texts, spirits savored the *mingde* 明德, "shining virtue," of pious worshippers in the same visceral way they were thought to enjoy the smells and flavors of the sacrifice, and the pageantry and music of the ceremony. True virtue would elicit spontaneous feelings of approval and joy while character or behavior that was *e* 惡, "vile,"

me to extend your life by nineteen years.⁶⁰ He shall ensure that your state prospers and that your descendants flourish and hold on to the state of Qin.' Clapping his hands together Duke Mu saluted the spirit several times and bowing his head asked, 'May I inquire as to your name?' The spirit replied, 'I am Gou Mang.' And so if we accept what Duke Mu of Qin saw with his own eyes, then how can we doubt that ghosts and spirits exist?"

"But it is not just this record that attests to such things. In ancient times, Duke Jian of Yan⁶¹ killed his minister Zhuang Zi'yi who was completely innocent. Before he died Zhuang Zi'yi said, 'My lord is killing me even though I am completely innocent. If the dead are indeed unconscious, then that will be the end of it. But if the dead are conscious, within three years' time my lord shall know of this!' After one year had passed Duke Jian was about to set off in his chariot to perform the great sacrifice at Zu.⁶² At high noon, as Duke Jian of Yan was setting off in his chariot on the road to Zu, Zhuang Zi'yi appeared bearing a vermilion-colored staff and beat the Duke to death with it. There were none among the people of Yan accompanying the Duke at the time who failed to witness this and none even in remote places failed to hear about it. The event was recorded in the court chronicle of Yan. Feudal lords passed it on to succeeding generations, saying, 'Misfortune will surely befall all those who kill the innocent, and they will suffer

would give rise to disapproval and disgust. Such ideas can be seen in the later tradition. For example, in chapter 6 of the *Daxue*, "Great Learning," a cultivated person is said to be attracted to the good "as if seeing something beautiful" and repelled by the bad "as if smelling something malodorous."

⁶⁰A span of nineteen years marked a specific astronomical and calendrical period called a *zhong* 章. Unaware of the precession of the equinoxes, ancient Chinese astronomers believed that every nineteen years the winter solstice was the first day of the first month of the year and that on that day the sun would appear at exactly the same place in the zodiac. Hence nineteen years were thought to define a significant period of time, something akin to a generation. Compare the story of the butcher in *Zhuangzi*, chapter 3, pp. 224-25, whose knife remained keen for a period of nineteen years.

⁶¹Ruler of the state of Yan. His reign dates are 504-493 B.C.E.

⁶²The name of a specific sacrificial site in the state of Yan. This adds an ironic cast to the story, for it was commonly held that a state is maintained through the spiritual power of its state sacrifices. The following lines, which are clearly a later note that became incorporated into the text, describe the locations of the state sacrifices of other contemporary states and the fact that many people witnessed these events (and hence the spiritual sighting noted in Mozi's story). "The state of Yan performed its great sacrifice at Zu, while the state of Qi offered its sacrifice at Sheji, Song at Sanglin, and Chu at Yunmeng. Large numbers of men and women would gather to observe these rituals."

the punishments of ghosts and spirits in this swift fashion! And so if we look at things in terms of what is written in the court chronicle of Yan then how can we doubt that ghosts and spirits exist?

"But it is not just the court chronicle of Yan that attests to such things. In ancient times, in the time of Bao,⁶³ Lord Wen of Song, there was a minister, Guan Gu, who served as Chief of Sacrifice. Once while he was carrying out his duties in the temple, a shaman appeared before him holding a staff and said, 'Guan Gu! Why is it that the sacrificial jades are not of the proper size, the offerings of wine and millet not clean and pure, the animals offered not without blemish and fully fattened, and the sacrifices of each season not performed at the proper time? Is this your doing or is Bao responsible?' Guan Gu replied, 'Bao is still a babe in swaddling clothes. How could he be responsible? I, Guan Gu, the minister in charge, am the one who sees to this.' The shaman then raised his staff and clubbed him to death and Guan Gu died upon the offering platform. There were none among the people of Song who were there at the time who failed to witness this and none even in remote places failed to hear about it. The event was recorded in the court chronicle of Song. Feudal lords passed it on to succeeding generations, saying, 'All those who fail to offer sacrifices with reverence and care will suffer the punishments of ghosts and spirits in this swift fashion! And so if we look at things in terms of what is written in the court chronicle of Song, then how can we doubt that ghosts and spirits exist?'"

"But it is not just the court chronicle of Song that attests to such things. In ancient times, among the ministers of Lord Zhuang of Qi⁶⁴ were two named Wang Ligu and Zhong Lijiao. For three years, these two had been engaged in litigation against one another but no definitive judgment could be reached in the matter. The Lord of Qi thought of putting them both to death, but feared killing an innocent man. He thought of acquitting them both, but feared letting a guilty man go free. And so he arranged for them to provide a sheep for sacrifice and to use its blood to swear an oath of innocence upon Qi's sacred altar. The two men agreed to swear the oath, and so the ground was prepared, the sheep's throat was cut, and its blood was sprinkled about to consecrate the sacrifice. Wang Ligu's oath was read through without incident, but before they were even halfway done with Zhong Lijiao's oath, the sheep that had been sacrificed rose up and butted

him, breaking his leg. Then the spirit of the altar appeared and struck Zhong Lijiao, killing him on the very place where he had sworn his oath. There were none among the people of Qi who were there at the time who failed to witness this and none even in remote places failed to hear about it. The event was recorded in the court chronicle of Qi. Feudal lords passed it on to succeeding generations, saying, 'All those who fail to be sincere when they swear an oath will suffer the punishments of ghosts and spirits in this swift fashion! And so if we look at things in terms of what is written in the court chronicle of Qi, then how can we doubt that ghosts and spirits exist?'"

This is why our teacher Mozi says, "Even in the deepest valleys or vast forests, in those hidden places where no one lives, you must always act properly. For the ghosts and spirits will see what you do!"

Now those who maintain that there are no ghosts say, "How can what the multitude claim to have seen and heard be considered adequate for settling doubts about this issue? How can one who aspires to be known as a person of high status or a gentleman throughout the world turn to and trust what the multitude claim to have seen and heard?"

Our teacher Mozi says, "If what the multitude claim to have seen and heard is not enough to win your trust and settle your doubts about this issue, then I am not sure whether you will consider the sage-kings of the three dynasties, or even they together with Yao and Shun, as adequate models.⁶⁵ In this regard, from the average person to nobles alike, all say that the sage-kings of the three dynasties [or even they together with Yao and Shun] are adequate models of conduct. And so if we assume that the three sage-kings of ancient times, or they together with Yao and Shun, are adequate models, then why don't we consider the actions of the former sage-kings?"

"In ancient times, when King Wu had attacked the Yin and executed Zhou, he had the various feudal lords divide up the sacrifices of Yin. He entrusted the interior sacrifices to those who were closely related and the exterior sacrifices to those who were distantly related.⁶⁶ Since he did this,

⁶⁵The text is slightly garbled at this point. But the sense is something like "the sage-kings of the three dynasties (i.e., Yu, Tang, Wen, and Wu) plus Yao and Shun."

⁶⁶The interior sacrifices were to the Yin royal ancestors and hence needed to be carried out by their direct descendants. Mozi's point is that if there were no ghosts and spirits who received these sacrifices and were aware of who was sacrificing to them, there would have been no point in dividing up these religious duties.

⁶³Bao is the personal name of the king whose posthumous name was Lord Wen. He ruled the state of Song from 610 to 589 B.C.E. He was also known as Duke Wen.

⁶⁴Ruler of the state of Qi. His reign dates are 553-548 B.C.E.

King Wu must have believed in the existence of ghosts and spirits. This is why, when he had attacked the Yin and executed Zhou, he had the various feudal lords divide up the sacrifices of Yin. If there were no ghosts and spirits, why would King Wu have bothered to divide up the sacrifices of Yin?

"It is not only the activities of King Wu that bear this out. Whenever the sage-kings of old rewarded anyone, they always did so at the ancestral shrine, and whenever they punished anyone, they always did so at the altar of soil. Why did they reward at the ancestral shrine? In order to announce to the spirits there that rewards were fairly apportioned. Why did they punish at the altar of soil? In order to announce to the spirits there that the cases were decided properly.

"But it is not just what can be found in books that bears this out. In the time of Emperor Shun and in the time of the sage-kings of the three dynasties Xia, Shang, and Zhou, on the very first day that they established their states and set up their capitals, they always selected the most perfectly aligned altar in the capital to serve as their ancestral shrine.⁶⁷ Also, they always chose the place where the trees grew most finely and luxuriantly and established it as the altar of soil. They also chose the most kind, filial, upright, and good from among the elders of their states to oversee and perform their sacrifices. They always chose the most plump, physically perfect, and properly colored of the six domesticated animals as their sacrificial offerings and ensured that the proper type, quality, and number of jade tablets and insignia were used. They always chose the most fragrant and perfectly ripened of the five grains in order to make their sacrificial wine and cakes, and this is why there was seasonal variation in these offerings. In these various ways, the ancient sage-kings ruled the world by putting the ghosts and spirits ahead of the people. This is why they declared that before any of the civil officials were appointed, the sacrificial implements and robes must first be stored away in the royal treasury; those in charge of overseeing and performing the sacrifices must all be presented and invested at court, and those animals to be used as sacrifices must be separated from the rest of their flocks and herds. This is how the sage-kings of

ancient times carried out their rule. In ancient times, sage-kings always showed their devotion to the ghosts and spirits in these ways and their devotion was generous and substantial. But they worried that their descendants would not understand this and so they recorded their activities in books of bamboo and silk and passed these down to succeeding generations. Still they worried that these bamboo and silk books would decay over time and become lost and that their descendants in succeeding ages would have no way to learn of this. And so they repared this knowledge by etching it on basins and bowls and inscribing it in metal and stone. There was still some concern that their descendants in later generations would not be reverent enough to receive blessings and so in the books of the former kings and among the teachings of the sages, within each length of silk text and every book's chapter, one finds numerous and repeated references to the existence of ghosts and spirits. Why is this the case? Because the sage-kings were devoted to the ghosts and spirits. Now when those who maintain that there are no ghosts and spirits say, 'There certainly are no ghosts and spirits!' this opposes what the sage-kings were devoted to. And whatever opposes what the sage-kings were devoted to is not the way one becomes a gentleman."

Now those who maintain that there are no ghosts say, "Exactly what textual sources are there to support your claims that in the books of the former kings and among the teachings of the sages, within each length of silk text and every book's chapter, one finds numerous and repeated references to the existence of ghosts and spirits?"

Our teacher Mozi says, "Among Zhou dynasty writings, such evidence is found within the *Elegies*.⁶⁸ The *Elegies* says,

King Wen is on high,
How he shines in Heaven!
Though Zhou is an ancient land,
Its mandate was just recently granted.
Is not Zhou illustrious!
Is the Lord's mandate not timely!
King Wen ascends and descends,
He moves to the left and the right of the Lord.
How fine, how fine is King Wen!
His fame shall last forever!

⁶⁷Mozi's point here is that the conscious effort to properly align cities to harmonize with spiritual forces also reflects a belief in the existence of ghosts and spirits. For the seminal study of this aspect of Chinese culture, see Paul Wheatley, *The Pivot of the Four Corners: A Preliminary Enquiry into the Origins and Character of the Ancient Chinese City* (Chicago, IL: Aldine Publishing Company, 1971).

⁶⁸The quotation is from the ode "King Wen" in the *Elegies* section of the *Odes* (*Shao* # 235). For a complete translation, see Legge, *The She King*, op. cit., pp. 427-31.

If ghosts and spirits do not exist, then after he had died, how could King Wen move to the left and the right of the Lord? This is how I know that there are records of ghosts in the books of the Zhou.

"However, if only the books of the Zhou contained references to ghosts and one found no such references in the books of the Shang, then one could not take such stories as reliable models. But when we examine works from the Shang we find passages such as the following:

Oh in the Xia of ancient times, before it was visited by misfortune, the various beasts and bugs below and even the soaring birds above—not one behaved in an irregular manner. How much less would one who had a human face have ventured to have a deviant heart! Even among the ghosts and spirits of the mountains and streams, none dared to be unruly.⁶⁹

We see that by being respectful and sincere, the rulers of the Xia united Heaven and earth and protected the earth below. And if we consider why none of the ghosts and spirits of the mountains and streams dared to be unruly, we see that it was in order to assist Yu in his work. This is how I know that there are records of ghosts in the books of the Shang.

"However, if only the books of the Shang contained references to ghosts and one found no such references in the books of the Xia, then one could not take such stories as reliable models. So let us examine works from the Xia. The "Declaration of Yu"⁷⁰ says,

A great battle was being waged at Gan and in its midst the king called for his six commanders of the left and right flanks to gather around him. He then declared to the assembled army below, 'This ruler of Hu⁷¹ has destroyed and reviled the Five

⁶⁹The quoted passage is similar in content to parts of the "Instructions of Yi" section of the *History*. Cf. Legge, *The Shoo King* pp. 193–94.

⁷⁰In the present version of the *History* there is a passage that shares some of the language and general thrust of the text Mozi quotes. This passage is called the "Declaration at Gan" with Gan being the place named in the *Mozai* passage. For the present version, see Legge, *The Shoo King* pp. 152–55.

⁷¹A state ruled by relatives who shared the same surname as the Xia royal line. It was located in present-day Shanxi province.

Phases⁷² and has been remiss and abandoned the Three Spheres.⁷³ Heaven shall cut off his mandate.'

Continuing he said, 'This very afternoon I shall fight the ruler of Hu to decide what this day holds for us. You ministers, high officials, and common men, know that I do this not because I desire his fields and treasures but only to respectfully carry out the punishment decreed by Heaven. If those on the left do not respectfully carry out the duties of the left and those on the right do not respectfully carry out the duties of the right, you will not be respectfully carrying out Heaven's mandate. If you charioteers do not drive your chariots straight, you will not be respectfully carrying out Heaven's mandate. [Today you are carrying out Heaven's mandate.] That is why the rewards for proper performance on this day will be conferred at the ancestral shrine and the punishments for failure will be meted out at the altar of soil.'

Why were the rewards for proper performance conferred at the ancestral shrine? In order to show the ghosts and spirits that they are fairly appointed. Why were the punishments for failure meted out at the altar of soil? In order to show the ghosts and spirits that the cases were decided properly. And so we see that the ancient sage-kings clearly believed that ghosts and spirits could reward the worthy and punish the wicked. This is why rewards were conferred at the ancestral shrine and punishments meted out at the altar of soil. This is how I know that there are records of ghosts in the books of the Xia."

And so, in former times, in the records of the Xia and in the following works of the Shang and the Zhou, there are numerous and repeated references to ghosts and spirits. Why is this the case? Because the sage-kings were devoted to them. How can anyone who considers what these books say still doubt the existence of ghosts and spirits? . . .

⁷²These are the basic phases that the natural and human realms are supposed to pass through in orderly succession. They are wood, fire, earth, metal, and water. While a given phase is in "ascendance," the activities and phenomena associated with that phase are thought to guide the major course of events.

⁷³The realms of Heaven, earth, and human beings.

This is why our teacher Mozi says, "If the ability of ghosts and spirits to reward the worthy and punish the wicked could be firmly established as fact throughout the empire and among the common people, it would surely bring order to the state and great benefit to the people. If state officials are dishonest or corrupt in carrying out their duties or men and women engage in illicit relationships, the ghosts and spirits will see them! If the people turn to licentiousness, violence, rebellion, theft, or robbery and use weapons, poisons, water, or fire to attack travelers on the roads and byways and rob their carriages, horses, coats, and furs in order to profit themselves—there are ghosts and spirits who will see them!"⁷⁴ And so, state officials will not dare to be dishonest or corrupt. When they see good, they will not dare to not reward it and when they see wickedness, they will not dare to withhold punishment.⁷⁵ Thereupon, there will be an end to the common people turning to licentiousness, violence, rebellion, theft, or robbery and using weapons, poisons, water, or fire to attack travelers on the roads and byways and rob their carriages, horses, coats, and furs in order to profit themselves. And so the world will be well-ordered."⁷⁶

Our teacher Mozi says, "... If it were the case that ghosts and spirits do not really exist, then in offering sacrifices, all we would be doing is expending resources of wine and millet. But though we would be expending these resources, we would not simply be pouring the wine into a ditch or gully or throwing the millet away. Primary clan members⁷⁶ and people living out in the villages and towns all have a chance to drink the sacrificial wine and partake of the offerings. And so even if the ghosts and spirits did not exist, these offerings would still be a means for welcoming and bringing together close family and gathering together and increasing fellowship among people living out in the villages and towns."⁷⁷

⁷⁴This line also occurs at the very beginning of the chapter.

⁷⁵Cf. "Honoring the Worthy." See *Mozi*, chapter 8, pp. 61–65.

⁷⁶That is, those who share the father's surname and are in line to continue his family's ancestral sacrifices.

⁷⁷Mozi shows no evidence of doubting the existence of ghosts and spirits, but the more sociological explanation for ritual sacrifice he offers here anticipates Xunzi's rich and wholly secular defense of ritual. Cf. Xunzi's "Discourse on Ritual." See *Xunzi*, chapter 19, pp. 274–85.

Chapter Thirty-Two: A Condemnation of Musical Performances⁷⁸

Our teacher Mozi says, "The benevolent surely are those who devote themselves to finding ways to promote what is beneficial to the world while eliminating what is harmful; this is why they are proper models for human conduct throughout the world. If something benefits the world then they will do it. If it does not benefit the world then they will stop doing it. Moreover, when the benevolent think about the people of the world, if there is something that attracts their eyes, delights their ears, pleases their palates, and gives comfort to their bodies but this thing can only be gotten by sacrificing the people's stock of food and clothing, they will not engage in it."

And so our teacher Mozi does not condemn music because he thinks that the sounds of bells, drums, zithers, and pipes are not pleasing, nor because he thinks that inlaid and carved patterns and designs are not fine, nor because he thinks that roasts of grain- and grass-fed meat are not delicious, nor because he thinks that high towers, lofty halls, and secluded pavilions are not comfortable. Though his body knows the comfort of such places, his mouth the relish of such food, his eye the fineness of such patterns, and his ears the pleasure of such sounds, nevertheless, he sees that it does not accord with the practices of the sage-kings of old and does not promote the benefit of the people in the world today. And so our teacher Mozi says, "Musical performances are wrong!"

Our teacher Mozi says, "These days, when kings, dukes, and other persons of high rank engage in the manufacture of musical instruments as a function of state, it is no simple matter like slicing through water or breaking apart a piece of sod. Rather, they must heavily tax the people in order to enjoy the sounds of bells, drums, zithers, and pipes. If the production of these instruments were truly analogous to the sage-kings' production of boats and carts, then I would not dare to condemn it. In ancient times, the

⁷⁸Mozi criticizes the elaborate musical performances that were sponsored by many states in early China. These events included complex and expensive orchestras, elaborate dancing, and often were accompanied by lavish feasts. He argues that these waste vast resources of time, material, and effort without producing any tangible results. He is not directly criticizing music per se. On the other hand, he shows no sense that music serves any useful purpose in life. For a meticulous and incisive study of the production, performance, ritual, and beliefs regarding ancient Chinese chime bells, see Lothar von Falkenhausen, *Suspended Music: Chime Bells in the Culture of Bronze Age China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993).

sage-kings did indeed heavily tax the people in order to make boats and carts. But once these were completed and the people asked what they could be used for, they were told that the boats could be used for traveling over water while the carts could be used for traveling over land. By using these conveyances, gentlemen could rest their feet while common people could rest their shoulders and backs. And so why did the people give over their resources in order to produce boats and carts without considering it a burden or an imposition? Because they knew they would get something in return that benefited them. Now if musical instruments produced a similar return that benefited the people then I would not dare to condemn them.

"However, the present use of musical instruments imposes three hardships upon the people. Because of the expenditures involved in producing such instruments, those who are hungry are unable to get food, those who are cold are unable to obtain clothing, and those who toil are not afforded a chance to rest. These are the three greatest hardships upon the people. But what if we play the great bells, strike up the drums, sound the zithers, blow the pipes, and dance with shields and battle axes? Will this enable the people to procure food or clothing? I believe that such performances will not produce such results. But let us set aside such concerns for the moment. For now great states attack lesser states and great families assault lesser families, the strong rob the weak, the many do violence to the few, the clever deceive the simple, those of noble rank act arrogantly toward those of humble rank, and rebels and bandits flourish and cannot be stopped. But what if we play the great bells, strike up the drums, sound the zithers, blow the pipes, and dance with shields and battle axes? Will this bring order to the chaos that presently reigns in the world? I believe that such performances will not produce such results."

This is why our teacher Mozi says, "If we look to see whether heavily taxing the people to produce the sounds of great bells, drums, zithers, and pipes promotes the benefit of the people of the world and eliminates what is harmful to them, we see that it offers no such help."

This is why our teacher Mozi says, "Musical performances are wrong!"⁷⁹ Our teacher Mozi says, "These days, when kings, dukes, and great men sit up in their raised halls and broad pavilions and look down upon the great bells, the bells look like nothing more than inverted cauldrons. If there is no one to strike the great bells, how could they take delight in them? The bells must be struck in order to be enjoyed. But they cannot employ the very old or the very young to strike the bells. For the ears and eyes of such people are not sharp and clear, their limbs are not nimble and strong, the

sounds they produce are not harmonious, and they cannot follow the complicated turns in the score. And so kings, dukes, and great men must employ people in their prime, for their ears and eyes are sharp and clear, their limbs are nimble and strong, the sounds they produce are harmonious, and they can follow the complicated turns in the performance. If they employ men to make music, then these men must abandon their work of ploughing, planting, and cultivation. If they employ women to make music, then these women must abandon their work of spinning, weaving, and sewing. These days, when kings, dukes, and great men put on musical performances, they divert such vast resources that could be used to produce food and clothing for the people."

This is why our teacher Mozi says, "Musical performances are wrong!"⁸⁰ Our teacher Mozi says, "Now let us suppose that the great bells, drums, zithers, and lutes have all been properly prepared. What pleasure would kings, dukes, and great men find in reverently listening to them all by themselves? Their enjoyment must come from listening to them in the company of common folk or gentlemen. But if they listen in the company of gentlemen, then those gentlemen must neglect the business of governing. And if they listen in the company of common folk, then those folk must abandon their proper work. These days, when kings, dukes, and great men put on musical performances, they divert such vast resources that could be used to produce food and clothing for the people."

This is why our teacher Mozi says, "Musical performances are wrong!"⁸¹ Our teacher Mozi says, "In ancient times, Duke Kang of Qi⁸² found excitement and delight in the performance of the Dance of Wan.⁸³ The performers of the dance were not permitted to wear coarse and simple clothing nor could they eat plain or common food because it was said that, 'If their food and drink is not fine, their faces and complexion will be unworthy to look at. If their clothing is not fine, their figures and movements will be unworthy of view.' And so their food had to be only the finest grains and meats and their clothing had to be only embroidered silk. They never worked to produce their own food and clothing but always were supported by the work of others."

⁷⁹Ruler of the state of Qi. His reign dates are 404–379 B.C.E.

⁸⁰A choreographed performance with musical accompaniment. For a description, see Waley, *The Book of Songs*, op. cit., pp. 338–40.

This is why our teacher Mozi says, "These days, when kings, dukes, and great men put on musical performances, they divert such vast resources that could be used to produce food and clothing for the people."

This is why our teacher Mozi says, "Musical performances are wrong!" Our teacher Mozi says, "Now human beings certainly are different from the various kinds of birds, beasts, and bugs that one can find in the world today. The various birds, beasts, and bugs rely upon their feathers and fur for their clothing, their hoofs and claws for their leggings and shoes, and grass and water for their food and drink. And so even if the males do not plough and cultivate the land and even if the females do not spin and weave, these creatures are still assured of having food and clothing. Human beings differ in this respect. Those who labor upon the land survive, while those who do not perish. If gentlemen do not exert themselves in pursuing their duties at court, then the laws and administration will fall into chaos. If common folk do not exert themselves in carrying out their work, there will not be enough material goods."

"Now if men of rank and gentlemen in the world today believe that what I say is not true, let us try enumerating the allotted tasks that are pursued throughout the world in order to see the harm done by musical performances.

"Kings, dukes, and high officials begin their work at court early in the day and retire late in the evening, listening to litigation and carrying out the administration of government—these are their allotted tasks. Men of rank and gentlemen exhaust the strength of their limbs and exert every ounce of their wisdom attending to their official duties at court and collecting taxes and levies out in the passes, markets, mountains, forests, lakes, and rivers in order to fill the state's granaries and treasuries—these are their allotted tasks. Farmers go out to the fields at dawn and return at dusk, ploughing, planting, cultivating, and reaping great harvests of grain and other produce—these are their allotted tasks. Women rise at dawn and retire in the evening, spinning and weaving to produce hemp, silk, linen, and other types of cloth—these are their allotted tasks.

"Now if those who serve as kings, dukes, and high officials delight in musical performances and spend their time listening to them, they will not be able to begin their work at court early in the day and retire late in the evening, listening to litigation and carrying out the administration of government. As a result, the state will fall into chaos and the altar of grain will be in jeopardy. If men of rank and gentlemen delight in musical perfor-

exhaust the strength of their limbs and exert every ounce of their wisdom attending to their official duties at court and collecting taxes and levies out in the passes, markets, mountains, forests, lakes, and rivers in order to fill the state's granaries and treasuries. As a result, the granaries and treasuries will not be full. If farmers delight in musical performances and spend their time listening to them, they will not be able to go out to the fields at dawn and return at dusk, ploughing, planting, cultivating, and reaping great harvests of grain and other produce. As a result, the supply of food will be insufficient. If women delight in musical performances and spend their time listening to them, they will not be able to rise at dawn and retire in the evening, spinning and weaving to produce hemp, silk, linen, and other types of cloth. As a result, there will not be an adequate supply of cloth. What is the cause of great men abandoning the administration of the government and the common people neglecting their work? It is music!"

This is why our teacher Mozi says, "Musical performances are wrong!" Our teacher Mozi says, "How do I know that this is so? Among the works of the former kings, there is the following in Tang's *Official Punishments*,⁸¹

To allow constant dancing in one's hall is called *Shamen's Fancy*. If gentlemen commit this offense they are to be fined two bolts of silk. If it is a commoner, the fine is two hundred measures of yellow thread.⁸²

The text goes on to say,

Alas! The dancing goes on and on! The sound of the pipes is loud and clear! The Lord on High no longer supports him. He will lose the nine realms.⁸³ The Lord on High no longer accommodates him and will send down a hundred calamities. His family will be ruined and annihilated.

⁸¹There is no such section in the present *History* but in the chapter called "Instructions of Yin," there is a passage that shares much of the language and general thrust of Mozi's quotation. See Legge, *The Shoo King*, p. 196.

⁸²The text of the last line is garbled and the translation is tentative.

⁸³"He" refers to the tyrant Jie. The point of the passage is that Jie's personal debauchery testifies to his low character, which makes him offensive to Heaven and unfit to rule. Thus it justifies Tang's attack on him.

If we look into why he lost the nine realms, we see it is simply because he promoted musical performances. The *Wu Guan*⁸⁴ says,

Qi⁸⁵ then abandoned himself to lust and music; he drank and ate in the wilds. Qiang! Qiang! The flutes and chimes sounded vigorously! He sank, besotted with wine! He ate gluttonously in the wilds! The Dance of Wan was elegant and fine and its performance was heard in Heaven. But Heaven did not approve.

And so, above, Heaven and the ghosts did not approve and, below, the people were not benefited."

This is why our teacher Mozi says, "If men of rank and the gentlemen of the world really want to promote what is beneficial to the world and eliminate what is harmful to it, then they will prohibit and put an end to this thing called music!"

Chapter Thirty-Five: A Condemnation of Fatalism

Our teacher Mozi says, "The kings, dukes, and great officials who now rule the various states all want their states to be wealthy, their populations great, and their administrations orderly, and yet instead of wealth they get poverty, instead of great populations they get meager ones, and instead of order they get chaos. In this way they fundamentally miss what they desire and get what they dislike."⁸⁶

What is the reason for this?

Our teacher Mozi says, "This is because, among the people, there are so many who maintain a belief in fatalism. Those who believe in fatalism say, 'If the state is fated to be rich, then it will be rich; if it is fated to be poor, then it will be poor. If the state is fated to have a large population, then the population will be large; if it is fated to have a meager population, then the population will be meager. If the state is fated to be well ordered, then it will be well ordered; if it is fated to be in chaos, then it will be in chaos. If

one is fated to live a long time, then one will live a long time; if one is fated to die young, then one will die young. If something is fated to occur, then no matter how hard one tries to change this, what good will it do? Above they use this doctrine to persuade the kings, dukes, and great officials and below they deploy it to interfere with work of the people. Therefore, those who maintain a belief in fatalism are not benevolent and their claims must be carefully examined."

Since this is the case, how are we to go about carefully examining their claims?

Our teacher Mozi says, "When one advances claims, one must first establish a standard of assessment. To make claims in the absence of such a standard is like trying to establish on the surface of a spinning potter's wheel where the sun will rise and set."⁸⁷ Without a fixed standard, one cannot clearly ascertain what is right and wrong or what is beneficial and harmful. And so, in assessing claims, one must use the three gauges."⁸⁸

What are the "three gauges?"

Our teacher Mozi says, "The gauges of precedent, evidence, and application."

How does one assess a claim's precedents?

Our teacher Mozi says, "One looks up for precedents among the affairs and actions of the ancient sage-kings."

How does one assess a claim's evidence?

Our teacher Mozi says, "One looks down to examine evidence of what the people have heard and seen."

How does one assess a claim's application?

Our teacher Mozi says, "One implements it as state policy and sees whether or not it produces benefit for the state, families, and people. These are what are called the three gauges for assessing claims. . . ."

⁸⁴An unknown text.
⁸⁵Qi is the son of Yu, founder of the Xia dynasty. He succeeded his father to the throne. The point of the passage is to illustrate his bad moral character that makes him offensive to Heaven and unfit to rule.

⁸⁷This describes the practice of determining how far from true east and west the sun would rise and set. It consisted of aligning a set of gnomons (see the following note) with the rising and setting sun and using these to triangulate true east and west. It would be impossible to carry out this procedure on the surface of a spinning potter's wheel just as it would be impossible to use such a wheel as a sundial. For a description and discussion of this procedure and other uses of such gnomon, see A. C. Graham, *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics and Science* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1978), pp. 370-71, and Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, vol. 3 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1959), pp. 284-302.

⁸⁸The word I have translated as "gauge" (*biao* 表) is a gnomon used to "gauge" the direction and movement of the sun's shadow. For an illustration, see the discussion in Needham *op. cit.* the web page for this volume.

⁸⁶These same lines occur as the opening of "Honoring the Worthy." See *Mozi*, chapter

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■ CHAPTER THREE ■

MENGZI (MENCIUS)

Introduction

Mengzi 孟子 was a Chinese Confucian philosopher who lived in the fourth century B.C.E. He was born after Kongzi died, so he never studied under Kongzi, or even met him. However, Mengzi tried to teach, practice, and defend the Way of Kongzi as he understood it. Although he is not nearly as well known in the West as Kongzi, Mengzi has long been regarded in China (and throughout East Asia) as second only to Kongzi himself in importance as a Confucian thinker.

The collection of Mengzi's sayings, dialogues, and debates with others is known simply as the *Mengzi* (or, following the Jesuit Latinization of his name, the *Mencius*). It is divided into seven "books," each of which is subdivided into two parts (called the "A" and "B" parts), which are then further divided into "chapters." So, for example, *Mengzi* 1B3 is book 1, second part, chapter 3.

Mengzi saw the main intellectual opponents of the Way of Kongzi as being the teachings of Yang Zhu and Mozi (3B9, 7A26). Mozi, as we saw in Chapter 2, advocated a kind of universalistic consequentialism. There are few, if any, texts that have survived to the present day that we can confidently identify as presenting the teachings of Yang Zhu, so we do not know exactly what his philosophy was. However, it seems clear that Yang Zhu emphasized following one's *xing* 性, "nature" (see *Important Terms*), and claimed that the teachings of both Mohism and Confucianism ask us to act contrary to our natures by making what Yang Zhu saw as excessive sacrifices for others. (See the Supplemental Text on *Yangism* ["Robber Zhi"], pp. 369–75.) On this basis, Mengzi accused Yang Zhu (perhaps unfairly) of being a sort of extreme egoist.



Mengzi agrees with Yang Zhu that humans have a nature, which they should follow. Indeed, he criticizes a rival philosopher, Gaozi, for suggesting that ethical cultivation must involve violating one's nature (*Mengzi* 6A1). However, Mengzi argues against Yang Zhu that there are incipient virtuous inclinations in one's nature (*Mengzi* 6A6). He frequently describes these inclinations using a metaphor of "sprouts," and compares ethical cultivation to tending these sprouts (*Mengzi* 2A6, 2A2, 6A7–8). Mengzi presents various kinds of evidence for the existence of ethical "sprouts" in humans, including the "giveaway" actions of adults who spontaneously manifest these inclinations (such as King Xuan, whose sympathy for an ox being led to slaughter shows his nascent compassion [*Mengzi* 1A7]), and "thought experiments" (such as asking us what our intuitions are about how a normal human would react to the sight of a child about to fall into a well [*Mengzi* 2A6], or to the sight of the corpses of loved ones rotting by the roadside [*Mengzi* 3A5]).

It is important to understand that, although the presence of the sprouts guarantees the goodness of *human nature*, this does not entail that most *humans* are actually good. Mengzi stresses that a bad environment (and failure to cultivate oneself) can almost destroy one's original nature (*Mengzi* 6A8). Furthermore, our compassion for others and disdain to do what is wrong are innate, but only incipient. Thus the task of moral cultivation is to "extend" or "fill out" the reactions from the paradigmatic cases where we already have them to the relevantly similar cases where we do not yet have them, but ought to (*Mengzi* 7A15, 7A17, 7B31).

Mengzi thinks that most people will be unable to develop their nature without having their basic needs for things such as food met (*Mengzi* 7A27). Indeed, Mengzi provides specific advice about proper farm management (*Mengzi* 3A3), showing his concern with the practicalities of governing. Once their fundamental needs are met, basic—but universal—ethical education is crucial (*Mengzi* 1A7, 3A4). However, Mengzi recognizes that, while everyone has the capacity to become a sage, not everyone will realize that ability.

Advanced ethical cultivation requires education under a wise teacher. Mengzi's students pose him questions, often involving conundrums from two works that were already quite old and almost canonical by Mengzi's time: the *History* and the *Odes* (*Mengzi* 5A2, 7B3, see also *Important Texts*). It is significant that much of Mengzi's teaching is based on concrete cases, rather than abstract principles. Although he clearly thinks that there is a best Way to live, and a best choice in every situation (*Mengzi* 4B29), his

approach is "particularistic" in emphasizing the context-sensitivity of virtue (*Mengzi* 4A17). Thus, he tries to cultivate in his students a skill that goes beyond any simple tool or technique (*Mengzi* 7B5). This is perhaps part of his reason for suggesting that you should "seek for in your heart" what "you do not get from doctrines" (*Mengzi* 2A2).

Mengzi uses his particular conception of human nature to provide a response to both Mohism and Yangism. As we have seen, Mengzi agrees with the Yangists that humans have a nature that they should follow, but argues that the Yangists have supplied an impoverished account of the contents of that nature. Against the Mohists, Mengzi argues that there is a natural order of development of human compassion, and that, as a matter of psychological fact, humans must learn to love members of their own family before they can learn to love strangers (*Mengzi* 7A15, 7A45). Some Mohists in Mengzi's era seem to have conceded this point, but argued that the feeling of compassion cultivated in the family should be extended outward to love everyone equally. However, Mengzi claims that, given the way in which our compassion develops out of love of kin, any effort to love everyone equally violates our naturally greater compassion for family members (*Mengzi* 3A5). Finally, Mengzi argues that the effort to base one's actions on *li* 利, "benefit" or "profit," even if it is the profit of one's kingdom as a whole, will be self-defeating (*Mengzi* 1A1).

Book One

1A1 Mengzi had an audience with King Hui of Liang. The King said, "Sir, you have come, not regarding one thousand *li* as too far. Surely you will have something to profit my state?"

Mengzi said in response, "Why must Your Majesty say, 'profit'? Let there be benevolence and righteousness and that is all. Your Majesty says, 'How can my state be profited?' The Counsellors say, 'How can my family be profited?' The scholars and commoners say, 'How can I be profited?' Those above and those below mutually compete for profit and the state is endangered.

"In a case where the ruler of a state that can field ten thousand chariots is murdered, it must be by a family that can field a thousand chariots. In a case where the ruler of a state that can field a thousand chariots is murdered, it must be by a family that can field a hundred chariots. One thousand out of ten thousand, or one hundred out of a thousand, cannot be

considered to not be a lot. But if righteousness is put behind and profit is put ahead, one will not be satisfied without grasping from others.

"There have never been those who were benevolent who abandoned their parents. There have never been those who were righteous who put their ruler last. Let Your Majesty say, 'Benevolence and righteousness,' and that is all. Why must you say 'profit'?"

1A3 King Hui of Liang said, "In relation to the state, We exert our heart to the utmost. When there is a famine in the region inside the river, then We move people to the region east of the river, and move grain to the region inside the river. When there is a famine in the region east of the river, We do the converse. When We examine the government of neighboring states, there is none that exerts itself as We do. Yet the people of neighboring states do not grow fewer, and Our people do not grow more numerous. How is this?"

Mengzi responded, "Your Majesty is fond of war. Allow me to use an illustration from warfare: Thunderingly, the drums beat the soldiers forward; their swords have already clashed; casting aside their armor and trailing their weapons they run away. Some run a hundred paces and then stop; others run fifty paces and then stop. How would it be if those who ran fifty paces laughed at those who ran a hundred paces?"

He responded, "That is unacceptable. They simply did not run a hundred paces. But what they did is running away too."

Mengzi said, "If Your Majesty understands this, then you will not expect your people to be more numerous than those of neighboring states. . . ."

1A7 King Xuan of Qi asked, "May I hear from you of the actions of the Lord Protectors Huan of Qi and Wen of Jin?"

Mengzi said in response, "The disciples of Zhongni [i.e., Kongzi] did not give accounts of the actions of Huan and Wen. Because of this, they were not passed on to later generations, and I, your servant, have not heard of them.¹ But, if you insist, then may we talk about being a genuine king?"² Xuan said, "What must one's Virtue be like so that one can become a king?"

Mengzi said, "One cares for the people and becomes a king. This is something no one can stop."

Xuan said, "Can one such as I care for the people?"

Mengzi said, "He can."

Xuan said, "How do you know that I can?"

Mengzi said, "I heard your attendant Hu He say,

The King was sitting up in his hall.³ There was an ox being led past below. The King saw it and said, "Where is the ox going?" Someone responded, "We are about to consecrate a bell with its blood." The King said, "Spare it. I cannot bear its frightened appearance, like an innocent going to the execution ground." Someone responded, "So should we abandon the consecrating of the bell?" The King said, "How can that be abandoned? Exchange it for a sheep."

Mengzi continued, "I do not know if this happened."

Xuan said, "It happened."

Mengzi said, "This feeling is sufficient to be a king.⁴ The commoners all thought Your Majesty was being stingy. But I knew that Your Majesty could not bear the frightened appearance of the ox."

The King said, "That is so. There really were commoners like that. Although Qi is a small state, how could I be stingy about one ox? It was just that I could not bear its frightened appearance, like an innocent going to the execution ground. Hence, I exchanged it for a sheep."

Mengzi said, "Let Your Majesty not be surprised at the commoners' taking you to be stingy. You took a small thing and exchanged it for a big thing. How could they understand? If Your Majesty were pained at its being innocent and going to the execution ground, then what is there to choose between an ox and a sheep?"

The King laughed, saying, "What was this feeling really? It's not the case that I grudged its value and exchanged it for a sheep. But it makes sense that the commoners would say I was stingy."

³Since ancient times in China, royal palaces have included halls raised above the ground, often looking out onto the courtyard below. See the web page for this volume for an image of such a hall. Cf. *Zhuangzi*, chapter 13, p. 244.

⁴"Feeling," *xin*, 心, here and below, is literally "heart." See *Important Terms*.

¹Mengzi is not being truthful here. In *Mengzi* 4B21 (not in this volume) Mengzi says there are historical records of Huan and Wen. See *Mengzi* 4B11 on honesty.

²Xuan is a king in name only. See *Important Terms*.

Mengzi said, "There is no harm. This is just the way benevolence works. You saw the ox but had not seen the sheep. As for the relation of gentlemen to birds and beasts, if they see them living, they cannot bear to see them die. If they hear their cries, they cannot bear to eat their flesh. Hence, gentlemen keep their distance from the kitchen."
The King was pleased and said, "The *Odes* say,

Another person had the heart,

But I measured it.⁵

This describes you. I was the one who did it. I reflected and sought it out, but did not understand my heart. You spoke, and in my heart there was a feeling of compassion. In what way does this heart accord with being a king?"

Mengzi said, "Suppose there were someone who reported to Your Majesty saying, 'My strength is sufficient to lift five hundred pounds, but not sufficient to lift one feather. My eyesight is sufficient to examine the tip of an autumn hair,⁶ but I cannot see a wagon of firewood.' Would Your Majesty accept that?"

Xuan said, "No."

Mengzi said, "In the present case your kindness is sufficient to reach birds and beasts, but the benefits do not reach the commoners. Why is this case alone different? Hence, not lifting one feather is due to not using one's strength. Not seeing a wagon of firewood is due to not using one's eyesight. The commoners not receiving care is due to not using one's kindness. Hence, Your Majesty's not being a genuine king is due to not acting; it is not due to not being able."

Xuan said, "What is the difference between concrete cases of not doing and not being able?"

Mengzi said, "'Pick up Mount Tai and leap over the North Sea.' If you say, 'I cannot,' this is truly not being able. 'Massage the stiff joints of an elderly person.' If you say, 'I cannot,' this is not acting; it is not a case of not being able. So Your Majesty's not being a king is not in the category of picking up Mount Tai and leaping over the North Sea. Your Majesty's not being a king is in the category of massaging the stiff joints of an elderly person."

"Treat your elders as elders, and extend it to the elders of others; treat your young ones as young ones,⁷ and extend it to the young ones of others; then you can turn the whole world in the palm of your hand. The *Odes* say:

He set an example for his wife,

It extended to his brothers,

And so he controlled his family and state.⁸

This means that he simply took this feeling and applied it to that. Hence, if one extends one's kindness, it will be sufficient to care for all within the Four Seas. If one does not extend one's kindness, one will lack the wherewithal to care for one's wife and children. That in which the ancients greatly exceeded others was no other than this. They were simply good at extending what they did. In the present case your kindness is sufficient to reach birds and beasts, but the benefits do not reach the commoners. Why is this case alone different? Weigh, and then you will distinguish the light and the heavy. Measure, and then you will distinguish the long and the short. Things are all like this, the heart most of all. Let Your Majesty measure it.

"Perhaps Your Majesty can only be happy in his heart by rallying soldiers, endangering his scholars and ministers, and incurring the resentment of the other lords?"

Xuan said, "No. How could I be happy about these things?"

Mengzi said, "Could I hear Your Majesty's greatest desire?" The King smiled and did not speak.

Mengzi said, "Is it because your hearty and sweet foods are insufficient for your mouth? Are your light and warm clothes insufficient for your body? Or yet because the beautiful and charming sights are insufficient for your eyes to look at? The melodies are insufficient for your ears to listen to? The servants are insufficient to order about in front of you? Your Majesty's various ministers *are* sufficient to serve you. Does Your Majesty actually do what you do for these things?"

Xuan said, "No. It is not for the sake of these things."

Mengzi said, "Then Your Majesty's greatest desire can be known. You desire to govern the land, bring to your court the states of Qin and Chu, oversee the Central Kingdom, and dominate the barbarians. By means of

⁷That is, "Treat your elders and young ones as elders and young ones *should* be treated."

⁸*Mao* # 240.

⁵*Mao* # 198.

⁶An animal's hair is most fine (and hence thin) during the autumn.

such things as you do, to seek such things as you desire, is like climbing a tree in search of a fish."

The King said, "Is it as extreme as that?"

Mengzi said, "The danger is greater than that! If one climbs a tree in search of a fish, although one will not get a fish, there will not be any disaster afterward. By means of such things as you do, to seek such things as you desire, if one exhausts the strength of one's heart in doing it, afterward there must be disaster."

Xuan said, "Could I hear of this?"

Mengzi said, "If the people of Zou and the people of Chu fought, who does Your Majesty think would win?"

Xuan said, "The people of Chu would win."

Mengzi said, "So the small definitely cannot match the big, the few definitely cannot match the many, the weak definitely cannot match the strong. The region within the seas is nine thousand square *li*. Qi amounts to one thousand. To take on eight with one, how is this different from Zou marching Chu?"

"Simply return to the fundamentals. Suppose Your Majesty were to bestow benevolence in governing. This would cause all under Heaven who serve others to all want to take their place in Your Majesty's court, those who plough to all want to plough in Your Majesty's uncultivated fields, merchants to all want to place their goods in Your Majesty's markets, those who travel to all wish to use Your Majesty's roads. All under Heaven who wish to complain of their rulers would all desire to report to Your Majesty. If it were like this, who could stop it?"⁹

The King said, "I am ignorant and unable to undertake this. But I am willing for you, Master, to redirect my resolution, enlighten, and instruct me. Although I am not clever, please let me try."

Mengzi said, "To lack a constant livelihood, yet to have a constant heart—only a scholar is capable of this. As for the people, if they lack a constant livelihood, it follows that they will lack a constant heart. And if one simply fails to have a constant heart, dissipation and evil will not be avoided. When they thereupon sink into crime, to go and punish them is to trap the people. When there are benevolent people in positions of authority, how is it possible to trap the people? For this reason, an enlightened ruler, in regulating the people's livelihood, must ensure that it is sufficient,

on the one hand, to serve one's father and mother, and on the other hand, to nurture wife and children. In good years, one is always full. In years of famine, one escapes death. Only when the people have a regulated livelihood do they rush toward the good, and thus the people follow the ruler easily.

"Nowadays, in regulating the people's livelihood, on the one hand it is insufficient to serve one's father and mother, on the other it is insufficient to nurture wife and children. In good years, one is always bitter. In years of famine, one cannot escape death. This is a case in which one fears not having the means to save people from death. How could one have leisure for teaching ritual and righteousness?"

"If Your Majesty wishes to put benevolent government into effect, then simply return to the fundamentals. Plant every household of five *mu* with mulberry trees, and fifty-year-olds can wear silk. Let the nurturing of chickens, pigs, and dogs not be neglected, and seventy-year-olds can eat meat. If you do not disturb the seasonal work in each field of one hundred *mu*, a household with eight mouths to feed need not go hungry. If you are careful about the teachings of the schools, explaining the righteousness of filial piety and fraternal respect, then those with gray hair will not be carrying loads on the roads. For the old to wear silk and eat meat, and the black-haired people¹⁰ to be neither hungry nor cold, yet for their ruler not to become a king—such a thing has never happened."

1B5

... King Xuan of Qi said, "Your teachings are excellent!"

Mengzi responded, "If Your Majesty regards them as excellent, then why do you not put them into practice?"

The King said, "We have a weakness. We are fond of wealth."

He responded, "In former times, Duke Liu was fond of wealth."¹¹ The *Odes* say,

He stacked, he stored,
He bundled up dried meat and grain,
In bags, in sacks,
Thinking to gather together and bring glory.

¹⁰That is, the Chinese people.

¹¹Duke Liu and King Tai (referred to below as Duke Danfu) are ancestors of the Zhou royal family, and are considered paradigms of virtuous rulers.

⁹That is, who could stop such a ruler from eventually becoming king of all the world?

His bows and arrows were displayed,
With shields, spears, and battle-axes,
He commenced his march.¹²

Hence, those who stayed at home had loaded granaries, and those who marched had full provisions. Only then could he "commence his march."
If Your Majesty is fond of wealth but allows the common folk to possess wealth, what difficulty is there in being a genuine king?

The King responded, "We have a weakness. We are fond of sex."
He responded, "In former times, King Tai was fond of sex, and loved his wife. The *Odes* say:

The Ancient Duke Danfu
Came in the morning, riding his horse,
Following the banks of the Western waters,
He came to the foot of Mount Qi,
With his Lady Jiang.
They came and both settled there.¹³

At that time, there were no dissatisfied women in private, or any unmarried men in public. If Your Majesty is fond of sex but accords the common folk the same privileges, what difficulty is there in being a genuine king?

1B6 Mengzi spoke to King Xuan of Qi, saying, "If, among Your Majesty's ministers, there were one who entrusted his wife and children to his friend, and traveled to the state of Chu, and when he returned, he discovered that his friend had let his wife and children become cold and hungry—how should one deal with this?"

The King said, "Abandon him."
Mengzi said, "If the Sergeant-at-Arms is not able to keep order among the scholars, how should one deal with this?"

The King said, "Discharge him."
Mengzi said, "If the region within the four borders is not well ordered, then how should one deal with this?" The King turned toward his attendants and changed the topic.

1B8 King Xuan of Qi asked, "Is it the case that Tang banished Jie, and that Wu struck down Zhou?"

Mengzi responded, saying, "There are such accounts in the historical records."

The King said, "Is it acceptable for subjects to kill their rulers?"

Mengzi said, "One who violates benevolence should be called a 'thief.' One who violates righteousness is called a 'mutilator.' A mutilator and thief is called a mere 'fellow.' I have heard of the execution of a mere fellow 'Zhou,' but I have not heard of the killing of one's ruler."

Book Two

2A2 Gongsun Chou asked, "Suppose that you, Master, were to be appointed to the position of high noble or prime minister in Qi and were able to put the Way into practice there. If it were so, it would not be surprising at all if the ruler of Qi were to become a lord protector or a genuine king. If it were like this, would it perturb your heart or not?"

Mengzi said, "It would not. My heart has been unperturbed since I was forty."

Gongsun Chou said, "In that case, you, Master, have far surpassed Meng Ben."¹⁴

Mengzi said, "This is not difficult. Gaozi had an unperturbed heart before I."¹⁵

Gongsun Chou said, "Is there a way of cultivating an unperturbed heart?"

Mengzi said, "There is. As for Bogong You's cultivation of courage, his body would not shrink, his eyes would not blink. He regarded the least slight from someone like being beaten in the market place. Insults he would not take off of a common fellow coarsely clad¹⁶ he also would not take off of a ruler who could field ten thousand chariots. He looked upon running a sword through a ruler who could field ten thousand chariots as like running through a common fellow. He did not treat the various lords with deference. If an insult came his way he had to return it.

¹⁴The Qing dynasty commentator Jiao Xun reports that "Meng Ben, when traveling by water, did not avoid serpents, and, when traveling by land, did not avoid rhinoceroses and tigers."

¹⁵Gaozi is a rival philosopher whom Mengzi debates in *Mengzi* 6A1 ff.

¹⁶I borrow this well-turned phrase from D. C. Lau's translation.

¹²*Mao* # 250.

¹³*Mao* # 237.

"As for Meng Shishes cultivation of courage, he said, 'I look upon defeat the same as victory. To advance only after sizing up one's enemy, to ponder whether one will achieve victory and only then join battle, this is to be in awe of the opposing armies. How can I be certain of victory? I can only be without fear.'

"Meng Shishe resembled Zengzi. Bogong You resembled Zixia.¹⁷ Now, as for the courage of the two, I do not really know which was better. Nonetheless, Meng Shishe preserved something important.

"Formerly, Zengzi speaking to Zixiang said, 'Are you fond of courage? I once heard about great courage from the Master.'¹⁸

If I examine myself and am not upright, although I am opposed by a common fellow coarsely clad, would I not be in fear? If I examine myself and am upright, although I am opposed by thousands and tens of thousands, I shall go forward.'

Meng Shishes preservation of his *qi* was still not as good as Zengzi's preservation of what is important.²⁰

Gongsun Chou said, "I venture to ask whether I could hear about your unperturbed heart, Master, and Gaozi's unperturbed heart?"

Mengzi answered, "Gaozi said, 'What you do not get from doctrines, do not seek for in your heart. What you do not get from your heart, do not seek for in the *qi*.' 'What you do not get from your heart, do not seek for in the *qi*.' 'What you do not get from doctrines, do not seek for in your heart,' is unacceptable.

"Your resolution is the commander of the *qi*. *Qi* is that which fills up the body. When your resolution is fixed somewhere, the *qi* sets up camp there. Hence, it is said, 'Maintain your resolution. Do not injure the *qi*.'¹⁹

¹⁷On Zengzi, see *Analecs* 8.7. On Zixia, see *Analecs* 3.8, 6.13, and 19.12.

¹⁸By "the Master" he means Kongzi. What follows may be intended as a direct quotation from Kongzi, but it may also be Zengzi paraphrasing the Master's teaching.

¹⁹Recall that, according to Mengzi, the heart (*xin* 心), see *Important Terms*) is the seat of our ethical inclinations (*Mengzi* 2A6 and 6A6). The *xin* 志, "resolution," is not a separate faculty, but is simply the heart directed toward a certain goal or object. Contrast what Zhuangzi suggests in "The Human Realm," about the relationship of what one hears, one's heart, and the *qi*. See *Zhuangzi*, chapter 4, p. 228. (On *qi*, see *Important Terms*.)

Gongsun Chou asked, "Since you have already said, 'When your resolution is fixed somewhere, the *qi* sets up camp there,' why do you add, 'Maintain your resolution. Do not injure the *qi*?'"

Mengzi said, "When your resolution is unified it moves the *qi*. When the *qi* is unified it moves your resolution. Now, stumbling and running have to do with the *qi*, but nonetheless they perturb one's heart."

Gongsun Chou said, "I venture to ask wherein you excel, Master."

Mengzi said, "I understand words. I am good at cultivating my floodlike *qi*."

Gongsun Chou said, "I venture to ask what is meant by 'floodlike *qi*.'" Mengzi said, "It is difficult to put into words. It is a *qi* that is supremely great and supremely unyielding. If one cultivates it with uprightness and does not harm it, it will fill up the space between Heaven and earth. It is a *qi* that unites righteousness with the Way. Without these, it starves. It is produced by accumulated righteousness. It cannot be obtained by a seizure of righteousness. If some of one's actions leave one's heart unsatisfied, it will starve. Consequently, I say that Gaozi never understood righteousness, because he regarded it as external.²⁰

"One must work at it, but do not aim at it directly. Let the heart not forget, but do not help it grow. Do not be like the man from Song.²¹ Among the people of the state of Song there was one who, concerned lest his grain not grow, pulled on it. Wearily, he returned home, and said to his family, 'Today I am worn out. I helped the grain to grow.' His son rushed out and looked at it. The grain was withered. Those in the world who do not help the grain to grow are few. Those who abandon it, thinking it will not help, are those who do not weed their grain. Those who help it grow are those who pull on the grain. Not only does this not help, but it even harms it."²²

Gongsun Chou said, "What is meant by 'understanding words?'"²²

Mengzi said, "If someone's expressions are one-sided, I know that by which they are deluded.²³ If someone's expressions are excessive, I know that by which they are entangled. If someone's expressions are heretical, I know

²⁰On the externality of righteousness, see *Mengzi* 6A4-5.

²¹The people of Song were the butt of many jokes. Cf. *Zhuangzi*, chapter 1, p. 212, and *Han Feizi*, chapter 49, p. 340.

²²Cf. *Analecs* 20.3.

²³The notion that people can be deluded (or "fixated") by seeing only part of the Way also appears in *Analecs* 17.8, and becomes a central notion in Xunzi's thought. See *Xunzi*, chapter 21, "Undoing Fixation," pp. 286-92.

that by which they are separated from the Way. If someone's expressions are evasive, I know that by which they are exhausted. When these states grow in the heart, they are harmful in governing. When they are manifested in governing, they are harmful in one's activities. When sages arise again, they will surely follow what I have said."

Gongsun Chou said, "Zai Wo and Zigong were good at rhetoric. Ran Niu, Minzi, and Yan Yuan were good at discussing virtuous actions.²⁴ Kongzi combined all these excellences, but said, 'When it comes to rhetoric, I am incapable.' In that case, are you, Master, already a sage?!"

Mengzi said, "Oh, what kind of talk is that? Long ago, Zigong asked Kongzi, 'Are you, Master, really a sage?' Kongzi replied, 'As for being a sage, I am incapable of that. I study without tiring and teach without wearying. I am incapable of that. I study without tiring is wisdom; to teach without wearying is benevolence. Being benevolent and wise, the Master is certainly already a sage!' So, to be a sage is not something Kongzi was comfortable with. What kind of talk was what you just said?!"

Gongsun Chou said, "Formerly, I heard the following: Zigong, Ziyou, and Zizhang all had one aspect of a sage. Ran Niu, Minzi, and Yan Yuan had all aspects of a sage, but in miniature. I venture to ask in which group you would be comfortable?"

Mengzi said, "Leave this topic for now."

Gongsun Chou said, "What about Bo Yi and Yi Yin?"

Mengzi said, "Their Ways were different. If he was not his ruler, he would not serve him; if they were not his subjects, he would not direct them; if things were orderly, he would advance; if they were chaotic, he would retreat. This was Bo Yi. Whom do I serve who is not my ruler? Whom do I direct who are not my subjects? If things were orderly, he would advance, and if they were chaotic he would also advance. This was Yi Yin. When one should take office, he would take office; when one should stop, he would stop; when one should take a long time, he would take a long time; when one should hurry, he would hurry. This was Kongzi. All were sages of ancient times. I have never been able to act like them, but my wish is to learn from Kongzi."

Gongsun Chou asked, "Were Bo Yi and Yi Yin at the same level as Kongzi?"

Mengzi said, "No. Since humans were first born there has never been another Kongzi."

Gongsun Chou said, "In that case, were there any similarities?"

Mengzi said, "There were. If any became ruler of a territory of a hundred li , he would be able to possess all under Heaven by bringing the various lords to his court. And if any could obtain all under Heaven by performing one unrighteous deed, or killing one innocent person, he would not do it. In these things they are the same."

Gongsun Chou asked, "I venture to ask wherein they differed?"

Mengzi said, "Zai Wo, Zigong, and You Ruo had wisdom sufficient to recognize a sage. Even if they exaggerated, they would not have done so to the extent of flattering someone they were fond of. Zai Wo said, 'In my view of Kongzi, he is far more noble than Yao and Shun!' Zigong said, 'He sees their rituals and appreciates their government; he hears their music and appreciates their Virtue; from a hundred generations later, through the succession of a hundred kings, nothing gets away from him. Since humans were first born, there has never been another like the Master.' You Ruo said, 'Is it only true of people? The unicorn among beasts, the phoenix among birds, Mount Tai among hills, and rivers and seas among flowing waters, are all of a kind. The sage among people is also of the same kind. Some stand out from this kind; some stick up from the row; since humans were first born, there has never been one who does this more so than Kongzi.'"

2A6 Mengzi said, "Humans all have hearts that are not unfeeling toward others. The former kings²⁶ had hearts that were not unfeeling toward others, so they had governments that were not unfeeling toward others. If one puts into practice a government that is not unfeeling toward others by means of a heart that is not unfeeling toward others, bringing order to the whole world is in the palm of your hand.

"The reason why I say that humans all have hearts that are not unfeeling toward others is this. Suppose someone suddenly saw a child about to fall into a well: everyone in such a situation would have a feeling of alarm and compassion—not because one sought to get in good with the child's parents, not because one wanted fame among their neighbors and friends, and not because one would dislike the sound of the child's cries.

"From this we can see that if one is without the heart of compassion, one is not a human. If one is without the heart of disdain, one is not a

²⁴These people are disciples of Kongzi, as are the additional people in the next list below.

²⁵Similar comments are attributed to Kongzi in *Analekts* 7.2 and 7.34.

²⁶That is, the sage-kings of antiquity, such as Yao and Shun.

human. If one is without the heart of deference, one is not a human. If one is without the heart of approval and disapproval,²⁷ one is not a human. The heart of compassion is the sprout of benevolence. The heart of disdain is the sprout of righteousness. The heart of deference is the sprout of propriety. The heart of approval and disapproval is the sprout of wisdom.²⁸

"People having these four sprouts is like their having four limbs. To have these four sprouts but to say of oneself that one is unable to be virtuous is to steal from oneself. To say that one's ruler is unable to be virtuous is to steal from one's ruler. In general, having these four sprouts within oneself, if one knows to fill them all out, it will be like a fire starting up, a spring breaking through! If one can merely fill them out, they will be sufficient to care for all within the Four Seas. If one merely fails to fill them out, they will be insufficient to serve one's parents."

2B13 Mengzi left the state of Qi.²⁹ While on the road, Chongyu asked, "It seems that you, Master, have an unhappy countenance. The other day, I heard it from you, Master, that [Kongzi said], 'The gentleman does not resent Heaven for his troubles, nor does he cast aspersions upon other people.'³⁰

Mengzi said, "That time [in which Kongzi spoke] is the same as this time. Every five hundred years, there must arise a sage-king. Between them, there must be those whose names are known to a generation for their accomplishments. From the founding of the Zhou dynasty, it has already been more than seven hundred years. Numerically, this is excessive. And if one examines it in terms of the conditions of the world, then it is possible that a new sage-king will arise. Now, Heaven does not yet desire to pacify the world. If it desired to pacify the world, who besides me in the present time is there to help do it? Why would I be unhappy?"

²⁷The words here rendered "approval" and "disapproval" are *shi* 是 and *fei* 非, respectively. A common meaning of these terms is "right" and "wrong" but in this context Mengzi intends not only knowledge but approval of what is right and disapproval of what is wrong.

²⁸Mengzi also discusses these four cardinal virtues in *Mengzi* 4A27 and 6A6. For more on *ren* 仁, "benevolence," see *Mengzi* 1A7. For more on *yi* 義, "righteousness," see *Mengzi* 6A10. For more on *zhi* 智, "wisdom," see *Mengzi* 5A9. On Mengzi's general view of self-cultivation, see *Mengzi* 7A17 and 7B31. "Propriety" here is the same as the character for "ritual" elsewhere. Mengzi is suggesting that an inclination toward ritual activity is innate in us. See *Mengzi* 3A5 for a possible illustration of this.

²⁹Mengzi left the state of Qi because his efforts to persuade the ruler to implement the "benevolent government" policies he advocated had failed. See *Mengzi* 1A7, 1B5, 1B6, and 1B8.

Book Three

3A3

... Mengzi said, "The well-field system takes a one *li* square piece of land, amounting to 900 *mu*.³¹ At its center is the public field. Eight families each keep privately 100 *mu*, and jointly cultivate the public field. Only after the public work is completed do they dare do their private work. This is the distinctive role of the rural people."

3A4 There was a certain Xu Xing who, on account of the doctrines of Shennong, went from the state of Chu to Teng, and, going in person to his gate, told Duke Wen, "People from distant parts have heard that you, My Lord, practice benevolent government. I wish to receive a homestead and become one of your subjects." Duke Wen gave him a place. His followers were a few dozen people, all of whom wore coarse clothing and made sandals and mats for a living.

Chen Liang's disciple Chen Xiang and his younger brother Xin carried their ploughs on their backs and went from Song to Teng, saying, "We have heard that you, My Lord, practice the government of a sage. This is to be a sage. I wish to become the subject of a sage."

Chen Xiang met Xu Xing and was delighted. He completely abandoned his former studies and studied with him instead. Chen Xiang met Mengzi and discoursed on the doctrines of Xu Xing, saying, "The ruler of Teng is truly a worthy ruler. Nonetheless, he has not yet heard the Way. The worthy plough with their subjects and then eat, eating breakfast and dinner with them and then governing. In the present case, Teng has granaries and treasures; this is to harm the people in order to nurture oneself. How can this be worthy?"

Mengzi said, "Xuzi must plant his grain first and only then eat?"

Chen said, "That is so."

Mengzi said, "Xuzi must weave his cloth and only then wear clothes?"

Chen said, "No. Xuzi wears hemp."

Mengzi said, "Does Xuzi wear a cap?"

Chen said, "He does."

Mengzi said, "What sort does he wear?"

Chen said, "He wears plain silk."

³¹The "well-field system" begins with the idea of taking a square region of land and subdividing it into nine equal fields. The boundaries between these regions would then look something like this: #. This happens to be the character for "well" in Chinese, hence the expression "well-field."

Mengzi said, "Does he weave it himself?"

Chen said, "No. He exchanges millet for it."

Mengzi said, "Why does Xuzi not weave it himself?"

Chen said, "That would interfere with farming."

Mengzi said, "Does Xuzi use clay pots for cooking, and an iron plough?"

Chen said, "That is so."

Mengzi said, "Does he make them himself?"

Chen said, "No. He exchanges millet for them."

Mengzi said, "Exchanging millet for tools does not harm the blacksmith.

And when the blacksmith exchanges tools for millet, does this really hurt the farmer? Why does Xuzi not become a blacksmith, and only get everything from his own household to use? Why does he exchange things in such confusion with the various artisans? Why does Xuzi not avoid all this trouble?"

Chen said, "The activities of the various artisans inherently cannot be done along with farming."

Mengzi said, "In that case, can governing the world alone be done along with farming? There are the affairs of great people, and the affairs of lesser people. Furthermore, the products of the various artisans are available to each person. If one can make use of them only after one has made them oneself, this will lead the whole world to exhaustion. Hence it is said, 'Some labor with their hearts; some labor with their physical strength.' Those who labor with their hearts govern others; those who labor with their physical strength are governed by others. Those who are governed by others feed those others; those who govern others are fed by those others. This is righteousness throughout the world.³²

"It is the way of people that if they are full of food, have warm clothes, and live in comfort, but are without instruction, then they come close to being animals. Sage-king Shun was anxious about this too, so he instructed Xie to be Minister of Instruction, and instruct them about human relations: the relation of father and children is one of love, ruler and minister is one of righteousness, husband and wife is one of distinction, elder and younger is one of precedence, and that between friends is one of trust. Yao said, 'Encourage them, draw them forward, straighten them, rectify them, help them, make them practice, assist them, make them get it themselves, and

then benefit them.' Since the sage's anxiousness for his subjects was like this, could he have the free time to farm?" . . .

[Chen said,] "If we follow the Way of Xuzi, market prices will never vary, and there will be no artifice in the state. Even if one sends a child to go to the market, no one will cheat him. Cotton cloth or silk cloth of the same length will be of equal price. Bundles of hemp or silk of the same weight will be of equal price. The same amount of any of the five grains will be the same price. Shoes of the same size will be of equal price."

Mengzi said, "It is the essence of things to be unequal.³³ One thing is twice or five times more than another, another ten or a hundred times more, another a thousand or ten thousand times more. If you line them up and identify them, this will bring chaos to the world. If a great shoe and a shoddy shoe are the same price, will anyone make the former? If we follow the Way of Xuzi, we will lead each other into artifice. How can this bring order to the state?"

3A5 The Mohist Yi Zhi sought to see Mengzi through the help of Xu Bi.³⁴ Mengzi said, "I am definitely willing to see him, but today I am still ill. When my illness improves, I will go and see him. Yi Zhi does not have to come." The next day, he again sought to see Mengzi. Mengzi said, "Today I [still] can [not] see him. [But] if one is not upright, the Way will not be manifest. I will make him upright."³⁵

"I have heard that Yizi is a Mohist. Mohists, in regulating mourning, take frugality as their Way. Yizi longs to change the world to the Mohist Way. Could it be that he honors the Mohist practice, while regarding it as not right? Nonetheless, Yizi buried his parents lavishly, so he served his parents by means of what he demeans."

Xuzi told Yizi this. Yizi said, "As for the Way of the Confucians, the ancients tended the people 'like caring for children.'³⁶ What does this saying

³³Zhuangzi may be implicitly criticizing this passage in "On Equalizing Things." See *Zhuangzi*, chapter 2, pp. 213-24.

³⁴For more on Mohism, see *Mengzi* 3B9 and 7A26, as well as Chapter 2 of this volume, pp. 59-113.

³⁵Notice that the conversation between Mengzi and Yi Zhi—who is referred to below as Yizi ("Master Y?")—is conducted using Xu Bi as an intermediary (presumably because Mengzi is ill). Cf. *Analekts* 10.19.

³⁶What follows in the original text is a historical narrative (similar to that in *Mengzi* 3B9) that explains the achievements of the sage-rulers of old in making civilization possible.

³⁶This is a line from the *History*. See Legge, *The Shoo King*, p. 389.

mean? I take it to mean that love is without distinctions, but it is bestowed beginning with one's parents."³⁷

Xuzi told Mengzi this. Mengzi said, "Does Yizi truly hold that one's affection for one's elder brother's son is like one's affection for one's neighbor's child? There is only one thing to be gleaned from that saying: when a crawling child is about to fall into a well, it is not the child's fault. Furthermore, Heaven, in producing the things in the world, causes them to have one source, but Yizi gives them two sources."³⁷

"Now, in past ages, there were those who did not bury their parents. When their parents died, they took them and abandoned them in a ditch. The next day they passed by them, and foxes were eating them, bugs were sucking on them. Sweat broke out on the survivors' foreheads. They turned away and did not look. Now, it was not for the sake of others that they sweated. What was inside their hearts broke through to their countenances. So they went home and, returning with baskets and shovels, covered them. If covering them was really right, then when filial children and benevolent people cover their parents, it must also be part of the Way."

Xuzi told Yizi this. Yizi looked thoughtful for a moment and said, "He has taught me."

3B2

... Mengzi said, "When a daughter marries, her mother instructs her. Sending her off at the gate, she cautions her, saying, 'When you go to your family, you must be respectful, and you must be cautious. Do not disobey your husband.' To regard obedience as proper is the Way of a wife or concubine."³⁸

3B9 Gongduzi said, "Outsiders all say that you are fond of disputation, Master. I venture to ask why?"

Mengzi said, "How could I be fond of disputation? I simply have no choice. The people of the world were born long ago, and have alternated between being orderly and chaotic. In the time of Yao, the waters overflowed their courses, inundating the central states. Serpents occupied the land, and the people were unsettled. In low-lying regions, they made nests

in trees. On the high ground, they lived in caves. The *History* says, 'The deluge warned us.'³⁹ 'The deluge' refers to the flooding water. Yu was directed to regulate the waters. Yu dredged out the earth and guided the water into the sea, chasing the reptiles into the marshes. The waters flowed out through the channels, and these became the Jiang, Huai, He, and Han rivers. The dangers to people having been eliminated, birds and beasts harmful to humans were destroyed, and only then were humans able to live on the plains.

"After Yao and Shun passed away, the Way of the sages decayed. Cruel rulers arose one after another, destroying homes to make ponds, so that the people had nowhere they could rest.⁴⁰ They made people abandon the fields so that they could be made into parks, so that the people could not get clothes and food. Evil doctrines and cruel practices also arose. As parks, ponds, and marshes became more numerous, the birds and beasts returned. By the time of Zhou, the world was again in great disorder. The Duke of Zhou assisted King Wu in punishing Zhou; he attacked the state of Yan, and after three years executed its ruler; he drove Feilian to a corner by the sea and terminated him; he eliminated fifty states; he drove tigers, leopards, rhinoceroses, and elephants far off, and the whole world rejoiced. The *History* says, 'Splendid indeed were the plans of King Wen! Great indeed were the achievements of King Wu! They assist and instruct us descendants. In all things they are correct, and lack nothing.'⁴¹

"With the decay of the Way, evil doctrines and cruel actions again arose. Ministers murdering their rulers—this happened. Sons murdering their fathers—this happened. Kongzi was afraid, and composed the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. The *Spring and Autumn Annals* is the activity of the Son of Heaven.⁴² For this reason, Kongzi said, 'Those who appreciate me, will it not be because of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*? Those who blame me, will it not be because of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*?'

"Once again, a sage-king has not arisen; the various lords are dissipated; pundits engage in contrary wrangling; the doctrines of Yang Zhu and Mo

³⁹See Legge, *The Shoo King*, p. 60.

⁴⁰The ponds referred to in this line, and the parks referred to in the next, were for the use of the ruler only, and not for the benefit of the people.

⁴¹See Legge, *The Shoo King*, p. 581.

⁴²The Chinese line here is ambiguous. It could mean that the *Spring and Autumn Annals* contains accounts of the activities of the ruler, or that composing it is the prerogative of the ruler.

³⁷Nivison ("Two Roots or One?" in his 1996) argues that the two sources (*ben* 本, literally "roots") Yizi accepts are (1) our innate sense of benevolence, which is first directed at our parents (cf. *Mengzi* 7A15), and (2) a doctrine of universalization that instructs us to extend this innate feeling so that it applies to everyone equally.

³⁸...

Di fill the world.⁴³ If a doctrine does not lean toward Yang, then it leans toward Mo. Yang is 'for ourselves.' This is to not have a ruler. Mo is 'impartial caring.' This is to not have a father. To not have a father and to not have a ruler is to be an animal. Gongming Yi said, 'In your kitchens there is fat meat, and in your stables there are fat horses. Your people look gaunt, and in the wilds are the bodies of those dead of starvation. This is to lead animals to devour people.'

"If the Ways of Yang and Mo do not cease, and the Way of Kongzi is not made evident, then evil doctrines will dupe the people, and obstruct benevolence and righteousness. If benevolence and righteousness are obstructed, that leads animals to devour people. I am afraid that people will begin to devour one another! If we defend the Way of the former sages, fend off Yang and Mo, and get rid of specious words, then evil doctrines will be unable to arise. If they arise in one's heart, they are harmful in one's activities. If they arise in one's activities, they are harmful in governing. When sages arise again, they will certainly not differ with what I have said.

"Formerly, Yu suppressed the flood, and the world was settled. The Duke of Zhou incorporated the barbarians, drove away ferocious animals, and the common people were at peace. Kongzi completed the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, and disorderly ministers and brutal sons were afraid. The *Odes* say,

The barbarians of the west and north, these he chastised.
Jing and Shu, these he punished.

Thus no one dared to take us on.⁴⁴

Those who have no father and no ruler, these the Duke of Zhou chastised. I, too, desire to rectify people's hearts, to bring to an end evil doctrines, to fend off bad conduct, to get rid of specious words, so as to carry on the work of these three sages. How could I be fond of disputation? I simply have no choice. Anyone who can with words fend off Yang and Mo is a disciple of the sages."

⁴³On the philosophy of Mo Di (Mozi), see also *Mengzi* 3A5 and 7A26, as well as chapter 2 of this volume, pp. 59-113. On the philosophy of Yang Zhu, see *Mengzi* 7A26 and the Supplemental Text on *Yangism* ("Robber Zhi"), pp. 369-75.

⁴⁴*Mao* # 300. Jing is another name for the state of Chu. Shu was a small state located in what is now Anhui province.

3B10 Kuang Zhang said, "Wasn't Cheng Zhongzi an uncorruptible scholar?⁴⁵ While living in Wuling, he did not eat for three days, until his ears did not hear, and his eyes did not see. Above a well there was a plum tree whose fruit had been half-eaten by worms. Crawling, he went over to eat from it, and only after three bites could his ears hear and his eyes see."

Mengzi said, "Among the scholars of the state of Qi, Zhongzi is someone I would have to regard as standing out like a thumb among the fingers. Nonetheless, how could Zhongzi be uncorruptible? To fill out what Zhongzi attempts, one would have to be an earthworm.⁴⁶ Now, an earthworm eats dry earth above and drinks muddy water below. The house in which Zhongzi lives, was it built by Bo Yi, or was it in fact built by Robber Zhi? Was the millet that he eats planted by Bo Yi, or was it in fact planted by Robber Zhi? This cannot be known."

Kuang said, "Why is that a problem? He himself weaves sandals of hemp, his wife spinning the hemp, in exchange for these other things."

Mengzi said, "Zhongzi comes from a great family of Qi. His elder brother Dai received a salary of ten thousand bushels of grain from estates at Ge. He regarded his brother's salary as an unrighteous salary, and would not live off of it. He regarded his brothers' dwelling as an unrighteous dwelling, and would not live in it. He left his elder brother, distancing himself from his mother, and lived in Wuling. On a later day, he visited home, and someone had given a live goose to his elder brother as a gift. He knitted his brow and said, 'What will you use this cackling thing for?' After that, his mother killed the goose, and gave it to him to eat. His elder brother came home and said, 'This is the meat of that "cackling thing."' He went out and threw it up. If it comes from his mother, he doesn't eat, but if it comes from his wife, then he eats it. If it's his elder brother's dwelling, then he won't live in it; if it's in Wuling, then he lives in it. Is this really being able to fill out the category of action that he considers righteous? Someone like Zhongzi must be an earthworm in order to fill out what he attempts."

Book Four

4A10 Mengzi said, "One cannot have a discussion with those who are destroying themselves. One cannot act with those who throw themselves away. Those whose words are opposed to propriety and righteousness are

⁴⁵Cheng Zhongzi may be another follower of Xu Xing (see *Mengzi* 3A4).

⁴⁶Compare the notion of "filling out" the sprouts in *Mengzi* 2A6.

who I mean by 'those who are destroying themselves.' Those who say, 'I myself am unable to dwell in benevolence and follow righteousness' are who I mean by 'those who throw themselves away.' Benevolence is people's peaceful abode. Righteousness is people's proper path. For one to vacate one's peaceful abode and not dwell in it, or for one to set aside one's proper path and not follow it—how sad!"

4A11 Mengzi said, "The Way lies in what is near, but people seek it in what is distant; one's task lies in what is easy, but people seek it in what is difficult. If everyone would treat their kin as kin, and their elders as elders, the world would be at peace."

4A15 Mengzi said, "Of what is present within a person, nothing is more ingenious than the pupils of the eyes. The pupils cannot hide one's evil. If, in one's bosom, one is upright, the pupils will be bright. If, in one's bosom, one is not upright, the pupils will be shady. If one listens to people's words and looks at their pupils, how can they hide?"

4A17 Chunyu Kun said, "That men and women should not touch in handing something to one another—is this the ritual?"⁴⁷

Mengzi said, "It is the ritual."

Chunyu Kun said, "If your sister-in-law were drowning, would you pull her out with your hand?"

Mengzi said, "To not pull your sister-in-law out when she is drowning is to be a beast. That men and women should not touch in handing something to one another is the ritual, but if your sister-in-law is drowning, to pull her out with your hand is discretion."⁴⁸

Chunyu Kun said, "Currently, the world is drowning! Why is it that you, sir, do not pull it out?"

Mengzi said, "When the world is drowning, one pulls it out with the Way; when one's sister-in-law is drowning, one pulls her out with one's hand. Do you want me save the world with a pull of my hand?"

4A27 Mengzi said, "The core of benevolence is serving one's parents. The core of righteousness is obeying one's elder brother. The core of wisdom is knowing these two and not abandoning them. The core of ritual is to regulate and adorn these two. The core of music is to delight in these two."

⁴⁷Chunyu Kun was a rival philosopher.

⁴⁸*Qian* 權, "discretion," literally means "weighing," as on a balance. On "discretion," see

"If one delights in them then they grow. If they grow then how can they be stopped? If they cannot be stopped, then without realizing it one's feet begin to step in time to them and one's hands dance according to their rhythms."⁴⁹

4B2 When Zichan was in charge of the government of the state of Zheng, he used his own carriage to carry people across the Zhen and the Wei rivers. Mengzi said, "He was kind, but did not understand how to govern. By September, the foot bridges are to be repaired, and by October, the carriage bridges are to be repaired, so the people no longer face the difficulty of wading across the rivers.⁵⁰ If gentlemen are equitable in governing, it is acceptable even to order people out of their way while they travel. How can they carry every single person across? Hence, there will simply not be enough days if, in governing, one tries to make everyone happy."

4B6 Mengzi said, "The propriety that is not propriety, the righteousness that is not righteousness—the great person will not practice these."⁵¹

4B8 Mengzi said, "People must have some things that they do not do, and only then can they really do anything."

4B11 Mengzi said, "As for great people, their words do not have to be trustworthy,⁵² and their actions do not have to bear fruit. They rest only in righteousness."

4B12 Mengzi said, "Great people are those who do not lose the hearts of their children."⁵³

⁴⁹I owe the translation of these last lines to Philip J. Ivanhoe.

⁵⁰The rivers have fords that are shallow enough to wade across on foot, or drive through on a carriage. The bridges are damaged each year by the heavy rains in the spring and summer. Consequently, they must be repaired in the autumn.

⁵¹Cf. *Mengzi* 7B37.

⁵²To illustrate a case in which a great person's words do not have to be trustworthy, the Han dynasty commentator Zhao Qi refers to *Analecs* 13.18 in which upright "sons cover up for their fathers." Compare also *Mengzi* 1A7, n. 1 and *Analecs* 13.20.

⁵³I translate this line according to the interpretation of the Han dynasty commentator Zhao Qi, where "children" is a metaphor for the ruler's subjects. (Cf. 3A5, in which Mengzi says that good rulers treat their subjects like "children," using the same term as in this passage.) However, many interpreters follow the reading of the Song dynasty commentator Zhu Xi: "Great people are those who do not lose their heart of a child," where "heart of a child" refers to one's innate good nature.

4B18 Xuzi said, "Zhongni several times spoke of water, saying, 'Ah water! Ah water!'⁵⁴ What did he find so worthy about water?" Mengzi said, "It gushes from the spring, not letting up day or night, only advancing after filling up the hollows, and going on to the four seas. Things that have a source are like this.⁵⁵ It was simply this that he found so worthy. If it merely fails to have a source, the rain collects during the spring months, and the drainage ditches are all full. However, you can just stand and wait and it will become dry. Hence, gentlemen are ashamed to have their reputation exceed what they genuinely are."

4B19 Mengzi said, "That by which humans differ from birds and beasts is slight. The people abandon it. The gentleman preserves it. The sage-king Shun was insightful about things. He was perceptive about human relationships. He acted out of benevolence and righteousness. He did not act out benevolence and righteousness."

4B24

... Mengzi said, "The people of the state of Zheng sent Zizhuo Ruizhi invade the state of Wei. Wei sent Si of Yugong to pursue him. Zizhuo Ruizhi said, 'Today my illness is acting up. I am unable to hold my bow. I suppose I shall die.' He asked his chariot driver, 'Who is it that chases me?' His driver said, 'It is Si of Yugong.' He said, 'I shall live!' His driver said, 'Si of Yugong is the best archer of the state of Wei. What do you mean, Master, when you say, "I shall live"?' He said, 'Si of Yugong studied archery under Tuo of Yingong. Tuo of Yingong studied archery under me. Now, Tuo of Yingong is an upright person. Those whom he chooses for friends must be upright.' Si of Yugong arrived and said, 'Why do you not hold your bow, Master?' He said, 'Today my illness is acting up. I am unable to hold my bow.' He replied, 'I, petty person that I am, studied archery under Tuo of Yingong. Tuo of Yingong studied archery under you, Master. I cannot bear to take your Way and turn it against you, Master. Nonetheless, what I do today is my ruler's business. I dare not cast it aside.' He pulled out some arrows and hit them against the wheel of his chariot, breaking off their tips. He then shot off a set of four arrows and only then returned."

⁵⁴Cf. *Analecs* 6.23.

⁵⁵On the notion of one's *ben* 本 ("source," or what is "fundamental"), see also *Mengzi* 3A5 and 6A10.

4B28 Mengzi said, "That by means of which gentlemen differ from others is that they preserve their hearts. Gentlemen preserve their hearts through benevolence and through propriety. The benevolent love others, and those who have propriety respect others. Those who love others are generally loved by others. Those who respect others are generally respected by others."

"Here is a person who is harsh to me. A gentleman in this situation will invariably examine himself, saying, 'I must not be benevolent. I must be lacking in propriety. How else could this situation have come upon me?'" If he examines himself and *is* benevolent, and if he examines himself and *has* propriety, yet the other person is still harsh, a gentleman will invariably examine himself, saying, 'I must not be loyal.' If he examines himself and *is* loyal, yet the other person is still harsh, a gentleman says, 'This person is simply incorrigible! What difference is there between a person like this and an animal? What point is there in rebuking an animal?'" ...

4B29 Yu and Hou Ji were in a peaceful era, yet they were so busy governing that they passed the doors of their homes three times without entering. Kongzi deemed them worthy. Yan Hui was in a chaotic era, lived in a narrow alleyway, subsisting upon meager bits of rice and water—other people could not have borne such hardship, and yet it never spoiled Yan Hui's joy. Kongzi deemed him worthy.⁵⁶

Mengzi said, "Yu, Hou Ji, and Yan Hui had the same Way. Yu thought that, if there were anyone in the world who drowned, it was as if he had drowned them himself. Hou Ji thought that, if there were anyone in the world who was starving, it was as if he had starved them himself. Hence, their urgency was like this. If Yu, Hou Ji, and Yan Hui had exchanged places, they all would have done as the others."

"Now, suppose there is someone from your household involved in an altercation outside. It is acceptable to go and help even though you are disheveled and not fully dressed. But if there is someone from your village involved in an altercation outside, it is foolish to go and help when you are disheveled and not fully dressed. Even bolting your door is acceptable in this case."

4B33 There was a man of the state of Qi who lived in a home with his wife and concubine. When the husband went out, he would always return full of wine and meat. His wife asked whom he ate with, and they were those

⁵⁶Cf. *Analecs* 6.11.

of the highest wealth and rank. His wife told his concubine, "When our husband goes out, he always returns full of wine and meat. When I ask whom he ate with, it is always those of the highest wealth and rank. Yet no one noteworthy ever comes here. I shall go and spy on where our husband goes."

Arising early, she discreetly followed where her husband went. Throughout the city, there was no one who stopped to chat with him. In the end, he approached those performing sacrifices among the graves beyond the East Wall of the city, and begged for their leftovers. If this was not enough, he would then look around and approach others. This was his way of getting his fill.

His wife returned home and told his concubine, saying, "A husband is someone whom we look toward till the ends of our lives. And he's like this!" And with the concubine she cursed her husband, and they cried together in the middle of the courtyard. But their husband did not know this, and came happily home, strutting before his wife and concubine.

From the perspective of a gentleman, it is rare indeed that the means by which people seek wealth, rank, profit, and success would not make their wives and concubines cry together in shame!⁵⁷

Book Five

5A2 Wan Zhang asked, "The *Odes* say,

How should one proceed in taking a wife?

One must inform one's parents.⁵⁸

If this saying is trustworthy, it seems that no one would follow it more than the sage Shun. How is it that Shun took a wife without informing them?" Mengzi said, "If he had informed them he would have been unable to take a wife. For a man and a woman to dwell together in one home is the greatest of human relations.⁵⁹ If he had informed them, he would

be abandoning the greatest of human relations, which would have caused resentment toward his parents. Because of this he did not inform them."

Wang Zhang said, "I have now received your instruction regarding Shun's taking a wife without informing his parents. But how is it that the Emperor gave his daughter to Shun as a wife and did not inform them?"

Mengzi said, "The Emperor knew too that if he informed them he would not be able to give his daughter to him as a wife."

Wang Zhang said, "His parents made Shun repair the grain silo, and then they took the ladder away and his father set fire to the silo, but Shun escaped. Then they made him dig a well. He left the well, but, not knowing this, they covered up the well. His brother Xiang said, 'The credit for the plot to kill this ruler is all mine! His oxen and sheep, his granaries and silos shall be my parents', but his spear and shield, his lure, and his bow are mine! And I shall make my two sisters-in-law service me in bed!' So Xiang went into Shun's room, but Shun was on his bed playing his lure. Xiang, looking embarrassed, said, 'I was worried and thinking of you!' Shun said, 'The various ministers of mine—help me to direct them.' But surely Shun did not fail to understand that Xiang planned to murder him?"

Mengzi said, "How could he not understand? But when Xiang was anxious, he was also anxious; when Xiang was happy, he was also happy."

Wan Zhang asked, "In that case, did Shun feign happiness?"

Mengzi said, "No. Formerly, someone made a gift of a live fish to Zichan of the state of Zheng. Zichan had the pondkeeper take care of it in the pond. But the pondkeeper cooked it, and reported back to Zichan, 'When I first let it go, it seemed sickly, but in a little while it perked up, and went off happily.' Zichan said, 'It's where it should be! It's where it should be!' The pondkeeper left and said, 'Whoever said that Zichan was wise! I have already cooked and eaten it, and he says, 'It's where it should be! It's where it should be!' Hence, gentlemen can be tricked by what is in accordance with their practices, but it is hard to ensnare them with what is not the Way. Xiang came in accordance with the Way of one who loves his elder brother. Hence, Shun genuinely trusted him and was happy about him. How could he have feigned it?"

5A9 Wan Zhang asked, "Someone said that the sage Boli Xi sold himself to a herder in the state of Qin for five ramskins, and fed cattle, because he sought to meet Duke Mu of Qin. Is this story trustworthy?"

⁵⁷ A sense of shame is probably related to the "sprout of disdain" (see *Mengzi* 7A7). Consequently, this passage suggests that women, too, have the sprouts or hearts of virtue (see *Mengzi* 2A6). On the ethical status of women, see also *Mengzi* 3B2.

⁵⁸ *Mao* # 101.

⁵⁹ On the "human relations," see also *Mengzi* 3A4 and 4B19.

Mengzi said, "It is not. That is not the case. This was fabricated by those obsessed with taking office. Boli Xi was a person of the state of Yu.⁶⁰ The people of the state of Jin, in exchange for jade from Chui Ji and a team of horses from Qu, gained right of passage through Yu to attack the state of Guo.⁶¹ Qi of Gong remonstrated against this, but Boli Xi did not remonstrate against it. He knew that the Duke of Yu could not be remonstrated with, so he left and went to Qin. He was already seventy years old. If he did not yet know that it would be base to feed oxen in order to seek to meet Duke Mu of Qin, could he have been called wise? He knew that the Duke of Yu could not be remonstrated with so he did not remonstrate with him. Can this be called unwise? He knew that the Duke of Yu was about to perish, so he abandoned him first. This cannot be called unwise. When he was, in good time, raised to prominence in Qin, he knew that Duke Mu was someone with whom he could work, so he became his minister. Can this be called unwise? He was a minister in Qin and made his ruler distinguished throughout the world, so that he is an example for later ages. Is this something he would be capable of if he were not a worthy person? To sell oneself so as to accomplish things for one's lord—even a villager who cared for himself would not do this. Can one say that a worthy person would do it?"

Book Six

6A1 Gaozi said, "Human nature is like a willow tree; righteousness is like cups and bowls. To make human nature benevolent and righteous is like making a willow tree into cups and bowls."⁶²

Mengzi said, "Can you, sir, following the nature of the willow tree, make it into cups and bowls? You must violate and rob the willow tree, and only then can you make it into cups and bowls. If you must violate and rob the willow tree in order to make it into cups and bowls, must you also violate and rob people in order to make them benevolent and righteous? If there

⁶⁰A small state in which the ancestors of Shun were said to be enfeoffed. It was located in what is now the northeast part of Pinglu county in modern Shanxi province.

⁶¹A small state ruled by the descendants of King Wen's younger brother. It was located in what is now Pinglu county in modern Shanxi province.

⁶²Gaozi was a rival philosopher (see also *Mengzi* 2A2). Compare his comment here (as well as his statement in 6A4 below that the desires for food and sex are nature) with Xunzi's remarks in "An Exhortation to Learning" and "Human Nature Is Bad." See *Xunzi*, chapter

is something that leads people to regard benevolence and righteousness as misfortunes for them, it will surely be your doctrine, will it not?"

6A2 Gaozi said, "Human nature is like swirling water. Make an opening for it on the eastern side, then it flows east. Make an opening for it on the western side, then it flows west. Human nature's not distinguishing between good and not good is like water's not distinguishing between eastern and western."

Mengzi said, "Water surely does not distinguish between east and west. But does it not distinguish between upward and downward? Human nature's being good is like water's tending downward. There is no human who does not tend toward goodness. There is no water that does not tend downward."

"Now, by striking water and making it leap up, you can cause it to go past your forehead. If you guide it by damming it, you can cause it to remain on a mountaintop. But is this the nature of water? It is that way because of the circumstances. That humans can be caused to not be good is due to their natures also being like this."

6A3 Gaozi said, "Life is what is meant by 'nature.'⁶³

Mengzi said, "Is *life* is what is meant by 'nature' the same as *white* is what is meant by 'white'?"⁶⁴

Gaozi said, "It is."

Mengzi said, "Is the white of a white feather the same as the white of white snow, and is the white of white snow the same as the white of white jade?"

Gaozi said, "It is."

Mengzi said, "Then is the nature of a dog the same as the nature of an ox, and is the nature of an ox the same as the nature of a human?"

6A4 Gaozi said, "The desires for food and sex are nature. Benevolence is internal; it is not external. Righteousness is external; it is not internal."⁶⁵

⁶³The Song dynasty commentator Zhu Xi remarks, "'Life' refers to that by means of which humans and animals perceive and move." The Han dynasty commentator Zhao Qi suggests that Gaozi's comment means that, "In general, things that are the same in being alive will all be the same in nature."

⁶⁴In ancient Chinese dialectic, "white" was the stock example of a term that functions the same way regardless of the context of its occurrence. See Graham (1989), pp. 150-55.

⁶⁵Cf. Gongduzi's explanation in *Mengzi* 6A5 of what it means for a virtue to be "internal."

Mengzi said, "Why do you say that benevolence is internal and righteousness is external?"

Gaozi said, "They are elderly, and we treat them as elderly. It is not that they are elderly because of us. Similarly, that is white, and we treat it as white, according to its being white externally to us. Hence, I say it is external."

Mengzi said, "[Elderliness] is different from whiteness. The whiteness of a [white] horse is no different from the whiteness of a gray-haired person. But surely we do not regard the elderliness of an old horse as being no different from the elderliness of an old person.⁶⁶ Furthermore, do you say that the one who is elderly is righteous, or that the one who treats another as elderly is righteous?"

Gaozi said, "My younger brother I love; the younger brother of a person from Qin I do not love. In this case, it is I who feel happy [because of my love for my brother]. Hence, I say that it is internal. I treat as elderly an elderly person from Chu, and I also treat as elderly my own elderly. In this case, it is the elderly person who feels happy. Hence, I say that it is external."⁶⁷

Mengzi said, "Savoring the roast of a person from Qin is no different from savoring my roast. So what you describe is also the case with objects. Is savoring a roast, then, also external?"

GA5 Meng Jizi asked Gongduzi, "Why do you say that righteousness is internal?"⁶⁸

Gongduzi said, "I act out of my respect, hence I say that it is internal." Meng Jizi said, "If a fellow villager is older than your eldest brother by a year, then whom do you respect?"

Gongduzi said, "I respect my brother."

Meng Jizi said, "When you are pouring wine, then whom do you serve first?"

Gongduzi said, "I first pour wine for the fellow villager."⁶⁹

⁶⁶Because an elderly person deserves to be treated with deference and respect, while an elderly horse is, in Mengzi or Gaozi's view, almost worthless.

⁶⁷The Song dynasty commentator Zhu Xi explains, "He means that the love is determined by me, hence benevolence is internal; respect is determined by elderliness, hence righteousness is external."

⁶⁸Meng Jizi is a follower of Gaozi. Gongduzi is a follower of Mengzi.

⁶⁹Because ritual dictates that the elder person be served first.

Meng Jizi said, "The one whom you respect is the former, but the one whom you treat as elder is the latter. Hence, it really is external. It does not come from [how you feel] internally."

Gongduzi was not able to answer. He told Mengzi about it. Mengzi said, "Next time, ask him, 'Do you respect your uncle? or do you respect your younger brother?' He will say, 'I respect my uncle.' Then you say, 'When your younger brother is playing the part of the deceased in the sacrifice, then whom do you respect?' He will say, 'I respect my younger brother.' Then you say, 'What happened to the respect for your uncle?' He will say, 'The reason [why my respect changes] has to do with the role my younger brother occupies.' Then you also say, 'In the case you asked about in our previous discussion, the reason why my respect changes has to do with the role the fellow villager occupies. Ordinary respect is directed toward my brother, but temporary respect is directed toward the fellow villager.'"

Meng Jizi, upon hearing all this, said, "If you respect your uncle, then it is respect. If you respect your younger brother, then it is respect. So it really is external. It does not come from [how you feel] internally."

Gongduzi said, "On a winter day, one drinks broth. On a summer day, one drinks water. Are drinking and eating also, then, external?"

GA6 Gongduzi said, "Gaozi says, 'Human nature is neither good nor not good.' Some say, 'Human nature can become good, and it can become not good.' Therefore, when Wen and Wu arose, the people were fond of goodness. When You and Li arose, the people were fond of destructiveness. Some say, 'There are natures that are good, and there are natures that are not good.' Therefore, with Yao as ruler, there was Xiang. With the Blind Man as a father, there was Shun.⁷⁰ And with Zhou as their nephew, and as their ruler besides, there were Viscount Qi of Wei and Prince Bi Gan. Now, you say that human nature is good. Are all those others, then, wrong?"

Mengzi said, "As for their essence, they can become good. This is what I mean by calling their natures good. As for their becoming not good, this is not the fault of their potential. Humans all have the heart of compassion. Humans all have the heart of disdain. Humans all have the heart of respect. Humans all have the heart of approval and disapproval. The heart of compassion is benevolence. The heart of disdain is righteousness. The

⁷⁰See *Mengzi* 5A2 for a story illustrative of the evil of Shun's brother Xiang and his father, the so-called "Blind Man."

heart of respect is propriety. The heart of approval and disapproval is wisdom. Benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom are not welded to us externally. We inherently have them. It is simply that we do not reflect upon them.⁷¹ Hence, it is said, 'Seek it and you will get it. Abandon it and you will lose it.' Some differ from others by two, five, or countless times—this is because they cannot exhaust their potentials. The *Odes* say,

Heaven gives birth to the teeming people.

If there is a thing, there is a norm.

This is the constant people cleave to.

They are fond of this beautiful Virtue.⁷²

Kongzi said, 'The one who composed this ode understood the Way!'⁷³ Hence, if there is a thing, there must be a norm. It is this that is the constant people cleave to. Hence, they are fond of this beautiful Virtue."

GA7 Mengzi said, "In years of plenty, most young men are gentle; in years of poverty, most young men are cruel. It is not that the potential that Heaven confers on them varies like this. They are like this because of that by which their hearts are sunk and drowned.

"Consider barley. Sow the seeds and cover them. The soil is the same and the time of planting is also the same. They grow rapidly, and by the time of the summer solstice they have all ripened. Although there are some differences, these are due to the richness of the soil, and to unevenness in the rain and in human effort. Hence, in general, things of the same kind are all similar. Why would one have any doubt about this when it comes to humans alone? We and the sage are of the same kind. Hence, Longzi said, 'When one makes a shoe for a foot one has not seen, we know that one will not make a basket.' The similarity of all the shoes in the world is due to the fact that the feet of the world are the same.

⁷¹Mengzi also discusses these virtues in *Mengzi* 2A6 and 4A27. For more on *ren* (仁, "benevolence," see *Mengzi* 1A7. For more on *yi* (義, "righteousness," see *Mengzi* 6A10. For more on *zhi* (智, "wisdom," see *Mengzi* 5A9. For more on *si* (思, "reflection" or "concentration," see *Mengzi* 6A15. For all four terms, also consult the appropriate entries under *Imposition Terms*. On Mengzi's general view of self-cultivation, see *Mengzi* 7A17 and 7B31.

⁷²*Mao* # 260.

⁷³No quotation such as this is found in the received text of the *Anlexti*.

"Mouths have the same preferences in flavors. Yi Ya was the first to discover that which our mouths prefer. If it were the case that the natures of mouths regarding flavors varied among people—just as dogs and horses are different species from us—then why is it that throughout the world all preferences follow Yi Ya in flavors? The fact that, when it comes to flavors, the whole world looks to Yi Ya is due to the fact that mouths throughout the world are similar.

"Ears are like this too. When it comes to sounds, the whole world looks to Shi Kiang. This is due to the fact that ears throughout the world are similar. Eyes are like this too. When it comes to a handsome man like Zidu, no one in the world does not appreciate his beauty. Anyone who does not appreciate the beauty of Zidu has no eyes. Hence, I say that mouths have the same preferences in flavors, ears have the same preferences in sounds, eyes have the same preferences in attractiveness. When it comes to hearts, are they alone without preferences in common?"

"What is it that hearts prefer in common? I say that it is fine patterns and righteousness. The sages first discovered what our hearts prefer in common. Hence, fine patterns and righteousness delight our hearts like meat delights our mouths."

GA8 Mengzi said, "The trees of Ox Mountain were once beautiful. But because it bordered on a large state, harchers and axes besieged it. Could it remain verdant? Due to the rest it got during the day or night, and the moisture of rain and dew, it was not that there were no sprouts or shoots growing there. But oxen and sheep then came and grazed on them. Hence, it was as if it were barren. People, seeing it barren, believed that there had never been any timber there. Could this be the nature of the mountain?!

"When we consider what is present in people, could they truly lack the hearts of benevolence and righteousness?⁷⁴ That by which they discard their good heart is simply like the harchers and axes in relation to the trees.⁷⁵ With them besieging it day by day, can it remain beautiful? With the rest it gets during the day or night, and the restorative effects of the morning *qi* 氣, their likes and dislikes are sometimes close to those of others. But then what they do during the day again fetters and destroys it. If the

⁷⁴On "the hearts of benevolence and righteousness," compare *Mengzi* 2A6 and 6A6.

⁷⁵The phrase *liang xin* 良心, "good heart," is reminiscent of the *liang zhi* 良知, "best knowledge," and *liang neng* 良能, "best capability," mentioned in *Mengzi* 7A15.

fettering is repeated, then the evening *qi* is insufficient to preserve it. If the evening *qi* is insufficient to preserve it, then one is not far from a bird or beast. Others see that he is a bird or beast, and think that there was never any capacity there. Is this what a human truly is?!

"Hence, if it merely gets nourishment, there is nothing that will not grow. If it merely loses its nourishment, there is nothing that will not vanish. Kongzi said, 'Grasped then preserved; abandoned then lost. Its goings and comings have no fixed time. No one knows its home.'⁷⁶ Was it not the heart of which he spoke?"

6A10 Mengzi said, "Fish is something I desire; bear's paw⁷⁷ is also something I desire. If I cannot have both, I will forsake fish and select bear's paw. Life is something I desire; righteousness is also something I desire. If I cannot have both, I will forsake life and select righteousness. Life is something I desire, but there is something I desire more than life. Hence, I will not do just anything to obtain it. Death is something I hate, but there is something I hate more than death. Hence, there are calamities I do not avoid. If it were the case that someone desired nothing more than life, then what means that could obtain life would that person not use? If it were the case that someone hated nothing more than death, then what would that person not do that would avoid calamity? From this we can see that there are means of obtaining life that one will not employ. From this we can also see that there are things that would avoid calamity that one will not do. Therefore, there are things one desires more than life and there are also things one hates more than death. It is not the case that only the worthy person has this heart. All humans have it. The worthy person simply never loses it."⁷⁸

"A basket of food and a bowl of soup—if one gets them then one will live; if one doesn't get them then one will die. But if they're given with contempt, then even a homeless person will not accept them. If they'retram-pled upon, then even a beggar won't take them. However, when it comes to a salary of ten thousand bushels of grain, then one doesn't notice propriety and righteousness and accepts them. What do ten thousand bushels add to me? Do I accept them for the sake of a beautiful mansion? for the

obedience of a wife and concubines? to have poor acquaintances be indebted to me? In the previous case, for the sake of one's own life one did not accept what was offered. In the current case, for the sake of a beautiful mansion one does it. In the previous case, for the sake of one's own life one did not accept what was offered. In the current case, for the obedience of a wife and concubine one does it. In the previous case, for the sake of one's own life one did not accept what was offered. In the current case, in order to have poor acquaintances be indebted to oneself one does it. Is this indeed something that one can't stop doing? This is what is called losing one's fundamental heart."⁷⁹

6A12 Mengzi said, "Suppose someone has a ring finger that is bent and will not straighten, and it is not the case that it hurts or that it interferes with one's activities. But if there is something that can straighten it, one will not consider the road from one end of the world to the other too far, because one's finger is not as good as other people's. If one's finger is not as good as other people's, one knows to dislike it. But if one's heart is not as good as other people's, one does not know to dislike it. This is what is called not appreciating the categories of importance."

6A15 Gongduzi asked, "We are the same in being humans. Yet some become great humans and some become petty humans. Why?"

Mengzi said, "Those who follow their greater part become great humans. Those who follow their petty part become petty humans."

Gongduzi said, "We are the same in being humans. Why is it that some follow their greater part and some follow their petty part?"

Mengzi said, "It is not the office of the ears and eyes to reflect, and they are misled by things. Things interact with things and simply lead them along. But the office of the heart is to reflect. If it reflects, then it will get [Virtue]. If it does not reflect, then it will not get it."⁸⁰ This is what Heaven has given us. If one first takes one's stand on what is greater, then what is lesser will not be able to snatch it away. This is how to become a great human."

⁷⁶No quotation like this is found in the received text of the *Analekts*.

⁷⁷A culinary delicacy.

⁷⁸Cf. Xunzi's "On Correct Naming." See Xunzi, chapter 22, p. 297.

⁷⁹"Fundamental" is literally *ben* 本, "root." Cf. Mengzi 3A5.

⁸⁰On 心 思, "reflection" or "concentration," see also Mengzi 6A6 and *Important Terms*.

Book Seven

7A1 Mengzi said, "To fully apply one's heart is to understand one's nature.⁸¹ If one understands one's nature, then one understands Heaven. To preserve one's mind and nourish one's nature is the means to serve Heaven. To not become conflicted over the length of one's life, and to cultivate oneself to await it is the means to stand and await one's fate."

7A3 Mengzi said, "If one seeks, one will get it; if one abandons it, one will lose it."⁸² In this case, seeking helps in getting, because the seeking is in oneself. "There is a way to seek it, and getting it depends on fate." In this case, seeking does not help in getting, because the seeking is external.⁸³

7A4 Mengzi said, "The ten thousand things are all brought to completion by us.⁸⁴ To turn toward oneself and discover integrity—there is no greater delight than this. To firmly act out of sympathetic understanding⁸⁵—there is nothing closer to benevolence than this."

7A7 Mengzi said, "A sense of shame is indeed important for people! Those who are crafty in their contrivances and schemes have no use for shame. If one is not ashamed of not being as good as others, how will one ever be as good as others?"⁸⁶

7A15 Mengzi said, "That which people are capable of without studying is their best capability. That which they know without pondering is their best knowledge."

"Among babes in arms there is none that does not know to love its parents. When they grow older, there is none that does not know to respect

⁸¹This should be read in the light of *Mengzi* 6A6.

⁸²Cf. *Mengzi* 6A6.

⁸³The Song dynasty commentator Zhu Xi says, "In oneself means that benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom are all things that my nature has. . . . 'Is external' means that riches, honor, profit, and success are all external things."

⁸⁴Many other translators follow the reading of the Song dynasty commentator Zhu Xi, according to which the sentence means, "The ten thousand things are all complete within us."

⁸⁵See *Annals* 15.24 on "sympathetic understanding."

⁸⁶The Song dynasty commentator Zhu Xi says, "A sense of shame is the heart of disdain that we have inherently" (cf. *Mengzi* 6A6 and 2A6).

its elder brother. Treating one's parents as parents⁸⁷ is benevolence. Respecting one's elders is righteousness. There is nothing else to do but extend these to the world."⁸⁸

7A17 Mengzi said, "Do not do that which you would not do; do not desire that which you would not desire. Simply be like this."⁸⁹

7A26 Mengzi said, "Yangzi favored being 'for ourselves.' If plucking out one hair from his body would have benefited the whole world, he would not do it. Mozi favored 'impartial caring.' If scraping himself bare from head to heels would benefit the whole world, he would do it. Zimo held to the middle.⁹⁰ Holding to the middle is close to it. But if one holds to the middle without discretion,⁹¹ that is the same as holding to one extreme. What I dislike about those who hold to one extreme is that they detract from the Way. They elevate one thing and leave aside a hundred others."

7A27 Mengzi said, "Those who are starving find their food delicious; those who are parched find their drink delicious. They have no standard for food and drink because their hunger and thirst injure it. Is it only the mouth and belly that hunger and thirst injure? Human hearts too are subject to injury. If one can prevent the injury of hunger and thirst from being an injury to one's heart, then there will be no concern about not being as good as other people."

7A35 Tao Ying asked, "When Shun was Son of Heaven, and Gao Yao was his Minister of Crime, if 'the Blind Man' had murdered someone, what would they have done?"⁹²

Mengzi said, "Gao Yao would simply have arrested him!"

⁸⁷That is, as parents should be treated (including having the proper feelings toward them).

⁸⁸Cf. *Mengzi* 7A17 and 7B31.

⁸⁹This passage should be read in the light of *Mengzi* 7B31.

⁹⁰On Mozi, see *Mengzi* 3A5 and 3B9, as well as Chapter 2 of this volume. On Yangzi (Yang Zhu), see *Mengzi* 3B9 and the Supplemental Text on *Yangzism* ("Robber Zhu"). We know nothing about Zimo beyond what this passage tells us.

⁹¹On "discretion," see *Mengzi* 4A17 and n. 48.

⁹²Tao Ying is a follower of Mengzi. On Shun's father, the "Blind Man," see *Mengzi* 5A2.

Tao Ying asked, "So Shun would not have forbidden it?" Mengzi said, "How could Shun have forbidden it? Gao Yao had a sanction for his actions."

Tao Ying asked, "So what would Shun have done?" Mengzi said, "Shun looked at casting aside the whole world like casting aside a worn sandal. He would have secretly carried him on his back and fled, to live in the coastland, happy to the end of his days, joyfully forgetting the world."

7A39 King Xuan of Qi wanted to shorten the period of mourning. Gongsun Chou said, "Isn't mourning for a year better than stopping completely?"

Mengzi said, "This is like if someone were twisting his elder brother's arm, and you simply said to him, 'How about doing it more gently?' Simply instruct him in filial piety and brotherly respect."

One of the imperial sons had a mother who died. His tutor asked on his behalf to let him mourn for a few months.⁹³ Gongsun Chou said, "How about this case?"

Mengzi said, "In this case, he desires to mourn the full period but he cannot. Even doing it one extra day would be better than stopping completely. What I had been talking about before was a case in which he did not do it, even though nothing prevented it."

7A45 Mengzi said, "Gentlemen, in relation to animals, are sparing of them, but are not benevolent toward them. In relation to the people, they are benevolent toward them, but do not treat them as kin. They treat their kin as kin, and then are benevolent toward the people. They are benevolent toward the people, and then are sparing of animals."⁹⁴

7B3 Mengzi said, "It would be better to not have the *History* than to completely believe it. I accept only two or three passages in the 'Completion of the War' chapter. A benevolent person has no enemies in the world. When the one who was supremely benevolent [King Wu] attacked the one who

was supremely unbenevolent [Tyrant Zhou], how could the blood have flowed till it floated the grain-pounding sticks?"⁹⁵

7B5 Mengzi said, "A carpenter or a wheelwright can give another his compass or T-square, but he cannot make another skillful."

7B11 Mengzi said, "If one is fond of making a name for oneself, one may be able to relinquish a state that can field a thousand chariots. But if one is just not that kind of person, relinquishing a basket of rice or a bowl of soup would show in one's face."

7B16 Mengzi said, "Benevolence is being a human. To bring them into harmony and put it into words is the Way."⁹⁶

7B24 Mengzi said, "The mouth in relation to flavors, the eyes in relation to sights, the ears in relation to tones, the nose in relation to odors, the four limbs in relation to comfort—these are matters of human nature, but they are mandated.⁹⁷ A gentleman does not refer to them as 'human nature.' Benevolence in relation to father and son, righteousness in relation to ruler and minister, propriety in relation to guest and host, wisdom in relation to value, the sage in relation to the Way of Heaven—these are mandated, but they involve human nature. A gentleman does not refer to them as 'mandated.'"

7B31 Mengzi said, "People all have things that they will not bear. To extend this reaction to that which they will bear is benevolence. People all have things that they will not do. To extend this reaction to that which they will do is righteousness. If people can fill out the heart that does not desire to harm others, their benevolence will be inexhaustible. If people can fill out the heart that will not trespass, their righteousness will be inexhaustible. If people can fill out the core reaction⁹⁸ of not accepting being addressed disrespectfully, there will be nowhere they go where they do not do what is righteous. If a scholar may not speak and speaks, this is flattering by

⁹³See Legge, *The Shoo King*, p. 315.

⁹⁴Alternative translation: "To bring them into harmony is called the Way."

⁹⁵That is, they are mandated (or required) by Heaven.

⁹⁶Compare Mengzi 4A27 on the notion of a "core" reaction.

⁹⁷Chinese commentators explain that the son's mother was a secondary wife of the king and the king's primary wife opposed letting him mourn for the full three-year period. On the three-year mourning period, see *Annals* 17.21.

⁹⁸Cf. Mengzi 3A5 and 1A7.

speaking. If one should speak but does not speak, this is flattering by not speaking. These are both in the category of trespassing."

7B37 Wan Zhang asked, "When in the state of Chen, Kongzi said, 'Perhaps I should return home. The scholars of my school are wild and hasty, advancing and grasping, but do not forget their early behavior.'⁹⁹ When in Chen, why did Kongzi think of the wild scholars of his home state of Lu?"

Mengzi said, "Kongzi said, 'If I do not get to associate with those who attain the Way, then must it not be those who are wild or squeamish? Those who are wild advance and grasp. Those who are squeamish have some things that they will not do.'¹⁰⁰ Did Kongzi not want those who attained the Way? He could not be sure of getting them. Hence, he thought of the next best."

Wan Zhang said, "I venture to ask what one must be like, such that one can be called 'wild.'"

Mengzi said, "Those like Qin Zhang, Zeng Xi, and Mu Pi are the ones Kongzi called 'wild.'¹⁰¹

Wan Zhang said, "Why did he call them 'wild?'"
 Mengzi said, "Their resolutions were grand. They said, 'The ancients! The ancients!' But if one calmly examines their conduct, it does not match their resolutions and words. If he also failed to get those who are wild, he desired to get to associate with those who disdain to do what is not pure. These are the squeamish. They are the next best."

"Kongzi said, 'The only ones who pass by my door without entering my home whom I do not regret getting as associates are the village worthies. The village worthies are the thieves of virtue.'¹⁰²

Wan Zhang said, "What must one be like, such that one can be called a 'village worthy?'"

Mengzi said, "The village worthies are those who say,

Why are [the resolutions of the wild scholars] so grand? Their words take no notice of their actions, and their actions take no notice of their words. Then they say, "The ancients! The

⁹⁹Compare *Analecs* 5.22.

¹⁰⁰Compare *Analecs* 13.21.

¹⁰¹Unfortunately, we know almost nothing about these three individuals. However, there is an interesting and revealing anecdote involving Zeng Xi in *Analecs* 11.26.

¹⁰²Cf. *Analecs* 17.13.

ancients!" And why are the actions [of the squeamish] so solitary and aloof? Born in this era, we should be for this era. To be good is enough.

Eunuch-like, pandering to their eras—these are the village worthies."

Wan Zhang said, "If the whole village declares them worthy people, there is nowhere they will go where they will not be worthy people. Why did Kongzi regard them as thieves of virtue?"

Mengzi said, "If you try to condemn them, there is nothing you can point to; if you try to censure them, there is nothing to censure. They are in agreement with the current customs; they are in harmony with the sordid era in which they live. That in which they dwell seems to be loyalty and trustworthiness; that which they do seems to be blameless and pure. The multitude delight in them; they regard themselves as right. But you cannot enter into the Way of Yao and Shun with them. Hence, Kongzi said they are 'thieves of virtue.'"

"Kongzi said, 'I hate that which seems but is not. I hate weeds out of fear that they will be confused with grain.'¹⁰³ I hate cleverness out of fear that it will be confused with righteousness. I hate glibness out of fear that it will be confused with trustworthiness. I hate the tunes of the state of Zheng out of fear that they will be confused with genuine music. I hate purple out of fear that it will be confused with vermilion.¹⁰⁴ I hate the village worthies, out of fear that they will be confused with those who have Virtue.'

"The gentleman simply returns to the standard. If the standard is correct, then the multitudinous people will be inspired. When the people are inspired, then there will be no evil or wickedness."

¹⁰³Note that "grain" is also used in *Mengzi* 2A2 as a metaphor for one's incipient, natural virtues. Compare also the use of "sprouts" in *Mengzi* 2A6.

¹⁰⁴Cf. *Analecs* 17.18 and 15.11.

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■ CHAPTER SIX ■

XUNZI

Introduction

Before the unification of China by the Qin state in 221 B.C.E., which brought to a close the classical period of Chinese philosophy, Confucianism had one last great exponent, Xunzi 荀子, whose work represents the highest development of the school in the Warring States period. Whereas the views of Kongzi and Mengzi are preserved only in piecemeal sayings, Xunzi's thought has come down to the present in the form of tightly constructed essays that give sustained discussion of various topics and together constitute a remarkably coherent system of arguments. Although his writing is not quite as colorful as that of Zhuangzi, his style is extremely elegant and forceful, occasionally bursting into poetry that movingly conveys his passion for the Confucian way of life.

Much of Xunzi's effort is devoted to ardently defending Confucianism against various challenges. For example, he vehemently condemns Mozi's rejection of ritual and music and argues vigorously that these cultural forms are absolutely necessary. He also attacks Laozi and Zhuangzi for advocating that people adopt the perspective of Heaven and abandon conventional values in favor of yielding to the natural flow of things. Xunzi instead stresses the distinctive importance of the human point of view, and in stark contrast to their emphasis on *wuwei* 無為, "nonaction" or "non-striving action," he claims that good things are achieved only through *wei* 為, "deliberate effort." Yet even as he repudiates rival philosophers, Xunzi also learns from them and incorporates their insights. The influence of Zhuangzi on his thought is particularly evident in his characterization of



the heart as mirror-like and in his description of how it comes to know the Way, though the substance of Xunzi's views differs considerably from that of Zhuangzi.

For Xunzi, the threats to Confucianism come not only from outside the tradition, but also from *within* it, in the form of Mengzi's doctrine that human nature is good. In Xunzi's opinion, such a claim undermines the authority of ritual as a guide to behavior, destroys the necessity of learning, and simply flies in the face of the facts. Xunzi makes the opposite declaration that human nature is bad, but this should not be read as saying that people naturally delight in evil. Rather, his point is that people that people naturally guide to right conduct, and that without the external restraint of ritual they will fall into wrongdoing and be reduced to a chaotic, impoverished state strongly reminiscent of the "state of nature" depicted by Thomas Hobbes. Nevertheless, Xunzi shares Mengzi's belief that everyone has the potential to achieve moral perfection. However, since we are not inclined to virtue by nature, the process of self-transformation will be slow and difficult, and this idea is reflected in Xunzi's repeated comparison of learning with the harsh processes involved in bending wood.

In his own day, Xunzi was a well-known scholar and was even given high office at one point. Among his students were Han Feizi and Li Si, who was instrumental in bringing about the Qin state's domination of China. Xunzi may even have lived to witness this event. Other students of his were responsible for preserving classic Chinese texts, including the *Odes*. Despite Xunzi's important position in early Chinese intellectual history, when Mengzi's views later came to be favored, Xunzi was rejected for claiming that human nature is bad, and his works were largely neglected for centuries. Recently, however, there has been a renewal of scholarly interest in Xunzi, and he is once again receiving the attention he deserves.

Chapter One: An Exhortation to Learning

The gentleman says: Learning must never stop. Blue dye is gotten from the indigo plant, and yet it is bluer than the plant. Ice comes from water, and yet it is colder than water. Through streaming and bending, you can make wood straight as a plumb line into a wheel. And after its curve conforms to the compass, even when parched under the sun it will not become straight again, because the streaming and bending have made it a certain way. Likewise, when wood comes under the ink-line, it becomes straight,

and when metal is brought to the whetstone, it becomes sharp.¹ The gentleman learns broadly and examines himself thrice daily,² and then his knowledge is clear and his conduct is without fault.

And so if you do not climb a high mountain, you will not know the height of Heaven. If you do not approach a deep ravine, you will not know the depth of the earth. If you do not hear the words passed down from the former kings, you will not know the magnificence of learning. The children of the Han, Yue, Yi, and Mo³ peoples all cry with the same sound at birth, but when grown they have different customs, because teaching makes them be this way. . . .

I once spent the whole day pondering, but it wasn't as good as a moment's worth of learning.⁴ I once stood on my toes to look far away, but it wasn't as good as the broad view from a high place. If you climb to a high place and wave, you have not lengthened your arms, but you can be seen from farther away. If you shout from upwind, you have not made your voice stronger, but you can be heard more clearly. One who makes use of a chariot and horses has not thereby improved his feet, but he can now go a thousand *li*. One who makes use of a boat and oars has not thereby become able to swim, but he can now cross rivers and streams. The gentleman is not different from others by birth. Rather, he is good at making use of things. . . .

If you accumulate enough earth to form a mountain, then wind and rain will arise from it. If you accumulate enough water to form a deep pool, then dragons will come to live in it. If you accumulate enough goodness to achieve Virtue, then you will naturally attain to spiritlike powers and enlightenment, and the heart of a sage is complete therein.

And so,

If you do not accumulate little steps,

You will have no way to go a thousand *li*.

If you do not accumulate small streams,

You will have no way to form river or sea.⁵

¹Cf. Gaozi's metaphors for self cultivation in *Mengzi* 6A1-2 and *Xunzi*, ch. 23, p. 298.

²Cf. *Analeks* 1.4.

³These are the names of "barbarian" states and tribes.

⁴Cf. *Analeks* 15.31.

⁵In the present translation, passages which rhymed in the original have been translated with rhyming English (though not always exactly according to the Chinese rhyme scheme), or, where this has not been feasible, they have been pointed out in the footnotes.

Even the famous horse Qi Ji⁶ could not go more than ten paces in a single leap, but with ten days of riding even an old nag can equal him, because accomplishment rests in not giving up.⁷ If you start carving and give up, you won't even be able to break rotten wood, but if you start carving and don't give up, then you can engrave even metal and stone. The earth-worm does not have sharp teeth and claws, nor does it have strong bones and muscles. Yet, above, it eats of the earth, and below, it drinks from the Yellow Springs,⁸ because it acts with single-mindedness. In contrast, the crab has six legs and two pincers. Yet were it not for the abandoned holes of water-snakes and eels, it would have no place to lodge, because it is frenetic-minded.

For this reason,

Without Somber intention,
No brilliant understanding can there be.

Without determined efforts,

No glorious achievements will one see. . . .

Where does learning begin? Where does learning end? I say: Its order begins with reciting the classics, and ends with studying ritual. Its purpose begins with becoming a noble man, and ends with becoming a sage. If you truly accumulate effort for a long time, then you will advance. Learning proceeds until death and only then does it stop. And so the order of learning has a stopping point, but its purpose cannot be given up for even a moment. To pursue it is to be human, to give it up is to be a beast. The *History* is the record of government affairs. The *Odes* is the repository of temperate sounds. Rituals are the great divisions in the proper model for things; they are the outlines of the proper classes of things. And so learning comes to ritual and then stops, for this is called the ultimate point in pursuit of the Way and Virtue. In the reverence and refinement of ritual, the balance and harmony of music, the broad content of the *Odes* and

History, the subtleties of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, all things between Heaven and earth are complete.

The learning of the gentleman enters through his ears, fastens to his heart, spreads through his four limbs, and manifests itself in his actions. His slightest word, his most subtle movement, all can serve as a model for others. The learning of the petty person enters through his ears and passes out his mouth. From mouth to ears is only four inches—how could it be enough to improve a whole body much larger than that? Students in ancient times learned for their own sake, but the students of today learn for the sake of impressing others.⁹ Thus the learning of the gentleman is used to improve his own person, while the learning of the petty man is used like gift-oxen.¹⁰ To speak without being asked is what people call being presumptuous, and to speak two things when asked only one is what people call being wordy. Being presumptuous is wrong, and being wordy is wrong. The gentleman is simply like an echo.

In learning, nothing is more expedient than to draw near to the right person. Rituals and music provide proper models but give no precepts. The *Odes* and *History* contain ancient stories but no explanation of their present application. The *Spring and Autumn Annals* is terse and cannot be quickly understood. However, if you imitate the right person in his practice of the precepts of the gentleman, then you will come to honor these things for their comprehensiveness, and see them as encompassing the whole world. Thus, in learning there is nothing more expedient than to draw near to the right person.

Of the paths to learning, none is quicker than to like the right person, and exalting ritual comes second. If at best you cannot like the right person, and at worst you cannot exalt ritual, then you will simply be learning hazardous knowledge and focusing your intentions on blindly following the *Odes* and *History*. If so, then to the end of your days you cannot avoid being nothing more than a vulgar scholar.¹¹ If you are going to take the former

⁶Cf. *Analekts* 14.24.

¹⁰In ancient China, animals were given as gifts to superiors or honored guests. Xunzi's point is that the petty man likewise shows off his learning to ingratiate himself to others and win official position.

¹¹The last word here is 儒, which later came to mean simply "Confucian" (see *Important Terms*). In Xunzi's time it did not yet have such a specific denotation but instead referred more generally to a "scholar."

⁶The horse Qi Ji was famous for his ability to go a thousand li in a single day.

⁷This line was also rhymed in the original.

⁸The Yellow Springs were believed to be deep underground and were thought of as the abode of the spirits of the dead.

kings as your fount and make benevolence and righteousness¹² your root, then rituals are exactly the highways and byways for you. It will be like the action of turning up your fur collar by simply curling your five fingers and pulling on it—it goes smoothly numberless times. If you do not take the regulations of ritual as your way, but instead go at it with just the *Odes* and *History*, then it will be like trying to measure the depth of a river with your finger, or trying to pound millet with a halberd, or trying to eat out of a pot with an awl—you simply will not succeed at it. And so if you exalt ritual, then even if you are not brilliant, you will still be a man of the proper model. If you do not exalt ritual, then even if you are an acute debater, you will be only a dissolute scholar. . . .

One who misses a single shot out of a hundred does not deserve to be called good at archery. One who falls short of going a thousand *li* by a half-step does not deserve to be called good at chariot-driving. One who does not fully comprehend the proper kinds and classes of things, or who is not single-minded in pursuit of benevolence and righteousness, does not deserve to be called good at learning. Learning is precisely learning to pursue them single-mindedly. To depart from it in one affair and enter into it in another is the way of common people. The good men among them are few. The bad men among them are many. Such were Jie and Zhou and Robber Zhi. Make it perfect and complete, and only then is it truly learning.

The gentleman knows that whatever is imperfect and unrefined does not deserve praise. And so he repeatedly recites his learning in order to master it, ponders it over in order to comprehend it, makes his person so as to dwell in it, and eliminates things harmful to it in order to nourish it. He makes his eyes not want to see what is not right, makes his ears not want to hear what is not right, makes his mouth not want to speak what is not right, and makes his heart not want to deliberate over what is not right.¹³ He comes to the point where he loves it, and then his eyes love it more than the five colors, his ears love it more than the five tones, his mouth

loves it more than the five flavors, and his heart considers it more profitable than possessing the whole world. For this reason, power and profit cannot sway him, the masses cannot shift him, and nothing in the world can shake him.¹⁴ He lives by this, and he dies by this. This is called grasping Virtue. When one has grasped Virtue, then one can achieve fixity. When one can achieve fixity, then one can respond to things. To be capable both of fixity and of responding to things—such a one is called the perfected person. Heaven shows off its brilliance, earth shows off its breadth, and the gentleman values his perfection.

Chapter Two: Cultivating Oneself

When you observe goodness in others, then inspect yourself, desirous of studying it. When you observe badness in others, then examine yourself, fearful of discovering it.¹⁵ If you find goodness in your person, then approve of yourself, desirous of holding firm to it. If you find badness in your person, then reproach yourself, regarding it as calamity. And so, he who rightly criticizes me is my teacher, and he who rightly supports me is my friend, while he who flatters and toadies to me is someone who would do me villainy. Accordingly, the gentleman exalts his teachers and loves his friends, so as to utterly hate those who would do him villainy. He loves goodness tirelessly, and can receive admonitions and take heed. Even if he desired not to improve, how could he avoid it?

The petty man is the opposite. He is utterly disorderly, but hates for people to criticize him. He is utterly unworthy, but wishes for people to consider him worthy. His heart is like that of a tiger or wolf, and his conduct like that of beasts, but he hates for people to consider him a villain. To those who flatter and toady to him he shows favor, while those who would admonish him he keeps at a distance. Those who try to be correct he considers laughable, and those truly loyal to him he considers villains. Even though he wishes not to perish, how could he avoid it? The *Odes* says,

They conspire and slander. How greatly lamentable!
Plans worth adopting, they wholly reject.
Plans worth dismissing, they wholly accept.¹⁶

¹⁴Compare the last lines of *Mengzi* 3B2 (not in this volume).

¹⁵Cf. *Analekts* 4.17.

¹⁶*Mao* # 195.

¹²The word here is *yi* 義, an extremely important term for Xunzi. In his writings, it can refer both to a specific set of social standards created by the sages, and to the virtue of abiding by those standards. In the former usage, it is frequently paired with ritual, and the standards to which it refers appear to be higher-order standards for structuring society (e.g., by defining various social roles), from which are derived the more particular directives for behavior contained in ritual. For those contexts, in order to mark that Xunzi is referring to an external set of standards, rather than an internal disposition, it is rendered in this translation as “the standards of righteousness.” See *yi* under *Important Terms*.

¹³Cf. *Analekts* 12.1.

This expresses my meaning.
The measure for goodness in all things is this:

Use it to control your *qi* 氣 and nourish your life,
Then you will live longer than Peng Zu.
Use it to cultivate yourself and establish your fame,
Then you will equal Yao and Yu.
It is fitting in times of prosperity.
It is useful in facing adversity

—truly such is ritual. If your exertions of blood, *qi*, intention, and thought accord with ritual, they will be ordered and effective. If they do not accord with ritual, they will be disorderly and unproductive. If your meals, clothing, dwelling, and activities accord with ritual, they will be congenial and well regulated. If they do not accord with ritual, then you will encounter dangers and illnesses. If your countenance, bearing, movements, and stride accord with ritual, they will be graceful. If they do not accord with ritual, they will be barbaric, obtruse, perverse, vulgar, and unruly. Hence,

In lives without ritual people cannot survive;
In affairs without ritual success does not thrive;
To states without ritual peace does not arrive.

The *Odes* says, "Their rituals and ceremonies completely follow the proper measure. Their laughter and speech are completely appropriate."¹⁷ This expresses my meaning.

To lead others along in what is good is called "teaching." To harmonize with others in what is good is called "proper compliance." To lead others along in what is bad is called "flattery." To harmonize with others in what is bad is called "toadying." To approve of what is right and condemn what is wrong is called "wisdom." To approve of what is wrong and condemn what is right is called "stupidity." To attack a good person is called "slander." To injure a good person is called "villainy." To call the right as right and the wrong as wrong is called "uprightness." To steal goods is called "thievery." To conceal one's actions is called "deceptiveness." To speak too easily of things is called "boastfulness." To be without fixity in one's likes and

dislikes is called "lacking constancy." To abandon righteousness in favor of profit is called "utmost villainy." To have heard many things is called "broadness." To have heard few things is called "shallowness." To have seen many things is called "being learned." To have seen few things is called "boorishness."¹⁸ To have difficulty in progressing is called "indolence." To forget things easily is called "being leaky." For one's actions to be few and well ordered is called "being controlled." For one's actions to be many and disorderly is called "being wasteful."

These are the methods for controlling the *qi* and nourishing the heart: For unyielding *qi*, soften it with harmoniousness. For overly deep thinking, simplify it with easy goodness. For overly ferocious courage, reform it with proper compliance. For expedience-seeking hastiness, restrain it with regulated movements. For small-minded narrowness, broaden it with expansiveness. For excessive humility, sluggishness, or greed for profit, resist it with lofty intentions. For vulgarity or dissoluteness, expunge it with teachers and friends. For indolence or profligacy, illuminate it with the prospect of disasters. For simpleminded recitude or honest integrity, make it suitable with ritual and music, and enlighten it with reflection. In each method of controlling the *qi* and nourishing the heart, nothing is more direct than following ritual, nothing is more important than having a good teacher, and nothing works with greater spiritlike efficacy than to like it with single-minded devotion. These are called the methods for controlling the *qi* and nourishing the heart.

One whose intentions and thoughts are cultivated will disregard wealth and nobility. One whose greatest concern is for the Way and righteousness will take lightly kings and dukes. It is simply that when one examines oneself on the inside, external goods carry little weight. A saying goes, "The gentleman makes things his servants. The petty man is servant to things." This expresses my meaning. If an action ties your body but puts your heart at ease, do it. If it involves little profit but much righteousness, do it. Being successful in the service of a ruler who creates chaos is not as good as simply being compliant in the service of an impoverished ruler. And so, a good farmer does not fail to plant because of drought, a good merchant does not fail to open shop because of losses, and the noble man and the gentleman are not lax in their pursuit of the Way because of poverty.

¹⁷ *Miao* # 209. This same poem is quoted again in the "Discourse on Ritual" chapter. See *Xunzi*, chapter 19, p. 278.

¹⁸ "Boorishness," 陋 陋, is an important term for Xunzi. It is the uncultivated state in which a person has not yet been shown the greatest goods in life (that is, the way of the sages), and so does not properly appreciate them. Cf. *Analekts* 9.14.

If your bearing is reverent and respectful and your heart is loyal and faithful, if your method is ritual and the standards of righteousness and your disposition¹⁹ is concern for others, then you may wander across the whole world, and even if you become trapped among barbarians, no one will not value you. If you are eager to take the lead in laborious matters, if you can give way in pleasant matters, and if you show integrity, honesty, reliability, faithfulness, self-control, and meticulousness, then you may wander across the whole world, and even if you become trapped among barbarians, no one will not employ you. If your bearing is arrogant and obtuse and your heart is stubborn and deceitful, if your method is to follow Mozi²⁰ and your truest essence is polluted and corrupt, then you may wander across the whole world, and even if you reach every corner of it, no one will not consider you base. If you try to put off or wriggle out of laborious matters, if you are grasping and will not yield in pleasant matters, if you are perverse and dishonest, if you are not meticulous in work, then you may wander across the whole world, and even if you reach every corner of it, no one will not reject you. . . .

He who likes the right model and carries it out is a man of good breeding. He who focuses his intentions upon it and embodies it is a gentleman. He who completely understands it and practices it without tiring is a sage. If a person lacks the proper model, then he will act recklessly. If he has the proper model but does not fix his intentions on its true meaning, then he will act too rigidly. If he relies on the proper model and also deeply understands its categories, only then will he act with comfortable mastery of it. Ritual is that by which to correct your person. The teacher is that by which to correct your practice of ritual.²¹ If you are without ritual, then how will

¹⁹The word rendered here as "disposition" is *qing* 情, an extremely important concept in Xunzi's psychological views. In Xunzi's text, *qing* is most often used as a class term for what in English we call "feelings" (or "emotions") and "desires." Xunzi uses it to refer to specific occasions of feeling and desire but also especially for the general *tendency* to feel and desire in various ways. It is to capture this latter sense that I have *qing* rendered as "disposition," and this translation is used throughout, in order to allow readers to track the term, though this sometimes makes for awkwardness, especially when Xunzi is concentrating on the aspect of it that is closer to "emotion." In those cases notes have been added to aid the reader. Xunzi believes that a person's *qing* can be changed through habituation. Accordingly, he sometimes uses *qing* to refer to those reformed dispositions, but more often to people's natural dispositions; when he has the second sense in mind, *qing* is sometimes rendered as "inborn dispositions" to make his point clearer.

²⁰That is to reject ritual.

²¹That is the teacher shows one both the right rituals to practice and how to practice

you correct your person? If you are without a teacher, how will you know that your practice of ritual is right? When ritual dictates thus-and-so, and you are thus-and-so, then this means your disposition accords with ritual. When the teacher explains thus-and-so, and you also explain thus-and-so, then this means your understanding is just like your teacher's understanding. If your disposition accords with ritual, and your understanding is just like your teacher's understanding, then this is to be a sage. And so, to contradict ritual is to be without a proper model, and to contradict your teacher is to be without a teacher. If you do not concur with your teacher and the proper model but instead like to use your own judgment, then this is like relying on a blind person to distinguish colors, or like relying on a deaf person to distinguish sounds. You will accomplish nothing but chaos and recklessness. And so, in learning, ritual is your proper model, and the teacher is one whom you take as the correct standard and whom you aspire to accord with. The *Odes* says, "While not knowing, not understanding, he follows the principles of the Lord on High."²² This expresses my meaning. . . .

In seeking profit, the gentleman acts with restraint. In averting harms, he acts early. In avoiding disgrace, he acts fearfully. In carrying out the Way, he acts courageously. Even if he lives in poverty, the gentleman's intentions are still grand. Even if he is wealthy and honored, his demeanor is reverent. Even if he lives at ease, his *qi* is not lazy. Even if he is weary from toil, his countenance is not disagreeable. When angry he is not excessively harsh, and when happy he is not excessively indulgent. The gentleman retains grand intentions even in poverty, because he exalts benevolence. He maintains a reverent demeanor even when wealthy and honored, because he takes lightly contingent fortune. His *qi* does not become lazy when he is at ease, because he is heedful of good order. His countenance is not disagreeable even when weary from toil, because he is fond of good relations. He is neither excessively harsh when angry nor excessively indulgent when happy, because his adherence to the proper model overcomes any personal capriciousness. The *History* says, "Do not innovate in your fondnesses; follow the Way of the kings. Do not innovate in your aversions; follow the road of the kings."²³ This is saying that through his avoidance of prejudice²⁴ and

²²*Mao* # 241.

²³Cf. Legge, *The Shoo King*, p. 331. These same lines are quoted again in the "Discourse on Heaven" chapter. See Xunzi, chapter 17, p. 274.

²⁴"Avoidance of prejudice" is my translation for *gong* 公. It is a virtue opposite both to prejudice in favor of oneself, that is, selfishness, and to prejudice in favor of certain people or certain views, that is, unfair bias. Stated more positively, it combines both public-spiritedness and impartiality. Cf. *Han Feizi*, chapter 49, p. 344, n. 39.

adherence to righteousness the gentleman overcomes capricious personal desires.

Chapter Five: *Against Physiognomy*

... What is that by which humans are human? I say: It is because they have distinctions. Desiring food when hungry, desiring warmth when cold, desiring rest when tired, liking the beneficial and hating the harmful—these are things people have from birth. These one does not have to await, but are already so. These are what Yu and Jie both share. However, that by which humans are human is not that they are special in having two legs and no feathers, but that they have distinctions. Now the ape's form is such that it also has two legs and no feathers. However, the gentleman sips ape soup and eats ape meat. Thus, that by which humans are human is not that they are special in having two legs and no feathers, but that they have distinctions. The birds and beasts have fathers and sons but not the intimate relationship of father and son. They have the male sex and the female sex but no differentiation between male and female. And so among human ways, none is without distinctions. Of distinctions, none are greater than social divisions, and of social divisions, none are greater than rituals, and of rituals, none are greater than those of the sage-kings.²⁵

But there are a hundred sage-kings—which of them shall one take as one's model? And so I say: Culture persists for a long time and then expires, regulations persist for a long time and then cease. The authorities in charge of preserving models and arrangements do their utmost in carrying out ritual but lose their grasp. And so I say: If you wish to observe the tracks of the sage-kings, then look to the most clear among them. Such are the later kings. The later kings were rulers of the whole world. To reject the later kings and take one's way from furthest antiquity is like rejecting one's own ruler and serving another's ruler. And so I say: If you wish to observe a thousand years' time, then reckon upon today's events. If you wish to understand ten thousand or one hundred thousand, then examine one and two. If you wish to understand the ancient ages, then examine the way of the Zhou. If you wish to understand the way of the Zhou, then examine

the gentlemen that their people valued. Thus it is said: Use the near to know the far; use the one to know the ten thousand; use the subtle to know the brilliant. This expresses my meaning. . . .

Chapter Eight: *The Achievements of the Ru*

The Way of the former kings consists in exalting benevolence. Cleave to what is central in carrying it out. What do I mean by "what is central"? I say: It is ritual and the standards of righteousness. The Way is not the way of Heaven, nor is it the way of earth.²⁶ It is that whereby humans make their way, and that which the gentleman takes as his way.

Chapter Nine: *The Regulations of a True King*

... Water and fire have *qi* but are without life. Grasses and trees have life but are without awareness. Birds and beasts have awareness but are without standards of righteousness. Humans have *qi* and life and awareness, and moreover they have *yi* 義, "standards of righteousness." And so they are the most precious things under Heaven. They are not as strong as oxen or as fast as horses, but oxen and horses are used by them. How is this so? I say: It is because humans are able to form communities while the animals cannot. Why are humans able to form communities? I say: It is because of social divisions. How can social divisions be put into practice? I say: It is because of standards of righteousness. And so if they use standards of righteousness in order to make social divisions, then they will be harmonized. If they are harmonized, then they will be unified. If they are unified, then they will have more force. If they have more force, then they will be strong. If they are strong, then they will be able to overcome the animals. And so they can get to live in homes and palaces. Thus, that people can order themselves with the four seasons, control the ten thousand things, and bring benefit to all under Heaven is for no other reason than that they get these things from social divisions and standards of righteousness. And so human life cannot be without community. If they form communities but are without social divisions, then they will struggle. If they struggle, then there

²⁵Zhuangzi also argues that making normative distinctions sets humans apart from animals, but claims that this tendency is the greatest source of trouble and should be avoided. Here Xunzi turns Zhuangzi's point on its head and glorifies such distinctions as the source of all good. See *Zhuangzi*, chapter 2, pp. 213–24.

²⁶This line is probably intended as polemic against views such as those in *Daodejing* chapter 25 and *Zhuangzi*, chapter 2, pp. 217, 223 that seem to propose the way of Heaven as the model for human beings. Cf. Xunzi's explicit criticism of this approach in chapter 21, p. 287.

will be chaos. If there is chaos then they will disband. If they disband then they will be weak. If they are weak then they cannot overcome the animals. And so they will not get to live in homes and palaces. This is the meaning of saying that "one must not let go of ritual and the standards of righteousness for even a moment."

One who can use these to serve his parents is called filial. One who can use these to serve his elder brother is called a proper younger brother. One who can use these to serve his superiors is called properly compliant. One who can use these to employ his subordinates is called a proper ruler. The true ruler is one who is good at forming a community.²⁷ When the way of forming community is properly practiced, then the ten thousand things will each obtain what is appropriate for them, the six domestic animals will obtain their proper growth, and all the various living things will obtain their proper lifespans. And so, when nurturing accords with the proper times, then the six domestic animals will multiply. When reaping accords with the proper times, then the grasses and trees will flourish. If government commands accord with the proper times, then the common people will be united, and good and worthy men will gladly follow.

These are the regulations of a sage-king: When the grasses and trees are flowering and abundant, then axes and hatchets are not to enter the mountains and forests, so as not to cut short their life, and not to break off their growth. When the turtles and crocodiles, fish and eels are pregnant and growing. When the turtles and drugs are not to enter the marshes, so as not to give birth, then nets and drugs are not to enter the marshes, so as not to cut short their life, and not to break off their growth. Plow in the spring, weed in the summer, harvest in the fall, and store in the winter. These four activities are not to miss their proper times, and then the five grains will not be depleted, and the common people will have a surplus to eat. Be vigilant in the seasonal prohibitions concerning ponds, rivers, and marshes, and then turtles and fish will be fine and plentiful, and the common people will have a surplus to use. Cutting and nurturing are not to miss their proper times, and then the mountains and forests will not be barren, and the common people will have surplus materials.

This is the way a sage-king operates: He observes Heaven above, and applies this knowledge on earth below. He arranges completely everything

between Heaven and earth and spreads beneficence over the ten thousand things. His actions are subtle but illustrious, brief but of long-lasting consequence, narrowly confined but of wide-ranging impact. He has spiritlike powers of intelligence that are broad and vast, yet work by the utmost restraint. Thus it is said: The person who by even the slightest movements always does what is right is called a sage.²⁸

Chapter Twelve: The Way to Be a Lord

There are chaotic lords; there are no states chaotic of themselves. There are men who create order; there are no rules²⁹ creating order of themselves. The rules of Archer Yi have not perished, but not every age has an Archer Yi who hits the target precisely. The rules of Yu still survive, but not every age has a Xia dynasty to reign as true kings. Thus, rules cannot stand alone, and categories cannot implement themselves. If one has the right person, then they will be preserved. If one loses the right person, then they will be lost. The rules are the beginning of order, and the gentleman is the origin of the rules. And so, with the gentleman present, even if the rules are sketchy, they are enough to be comprehensive. Without the gentleman, even if the rules are complete, one will fail to apply them in the right order and will be unable to respond to changes in affairs, and thus they can serve to create chaos. One who tries to correct the arrangements of the rules without understanding their meaning, even if he is broadly learned, is sure to create chaos when engaged in affairs. And so, the enlightened ruler hastens to obtain the right person.

Chapter Seventeen: Discourse on Heaven

The activities of Heaven are constant. They do not persist because of Yao. They do not perish because of Jie. If you respond to them with order, then you will have good fortune. If you respond to them with chaos, then you will have misfortune. If you strengthen the fundamental works³⁰ and

²⁸The text of this paragraph is very difficult, and the translation is tentative.

²⁹The word here is *fa* 法, which generally connotes a rule-like standard for doing things. As such, it can also mean a "method" or "model" or "law." Here it is translated as "rules" to try to cover all these senses, but it is usually rendered elsewhere as "model." Xunzi often describes ritual as a kind of *fa* (cf. pp. 264–65).

³⁰The "fundamental works" are agriculture and textile production.

²⁷Here Xunzi is playing upon the close similarity between the words *jun* 君, "ruler," and *jun* 群, "community," in both pronunciation and written form. (At the time Xunzi was writing, the two may in fact have had the very same sound.)

moderate expenditures, then Heaven cannot make you poor. If your means of nurture are prepared and your actions are timely, then Heaven cannot make you ill. If you cultivate the Way and do not deviate from it, then Heaven cannot ruin you. Thus, floods and drought cannot make you go hungry or thirsty, cold and heat cannot make you sick, and aberrations and anomalies cannot cause you misfortune.

If the fundamental works are neglected and expenditures are extravagant, then Heaven cannot make you wealthy. If your means of nurture are sparse and your actions are infrequent, then Heaven cannot make you sound in body. If you turn your back on the Way and act recklessly, then Heaven cannot make you fortunate. And so, although floods and drought have not yet come, you still will go hungry. Although heat and cold are not yet pressing, you still will become sick. Although aberrations and anomalies have not yet come, you still will have misfortune. Receiving the benefit of the seasons comes along with having an ordered age, but calamities and disasters are incompatible with there being an ordered age. You must not complain against Heaven; its way is simply thus. And so, one who understands clearly the respective allotments of Heaven and humans can be called a person of utmost achievement.

That which is accomplished without your doing it and which is obtained without your seeking it is called the work of Heaven. With respect to what is so, even though he thinks deeply, a proper person does not try to ponder it. Even though he is mighty, he does not try to augment it by his own abilities. Even though he is expertly refined, he does not try to make it more keenly honed. This is called not competing with Heaven's work. When Heaven has its proper seasons, earth has its proper resources, and humans have their proper order, this is called being able to form a triad. To neglect that whereby we form a triad and wish instead for those things to which we stand as the third is a state of confusion. The arrayed stars follow each other in their revolutions, the sun and the moon take turns shining, the four seasons proceed in succession, *yin* and *yang* undergo their great transformations, and winds and rain are broadly bestowed. From harmony of these, the ten thousand things are made alive. Through nurturing by these, they come to thrive. That which one does not see the workings of but sees only its accomplishments—such is called spiritlike power. That which everyone knows how it comes about but no one understands it in its formless state—such is called the accomplishment of Heaven. Only the sage does not seek to understand Heaven.

When the work of Heaven has been established and the accomplishments of Heaven have been completed, then the body is set and spirit arises. Liking, disliking, happiness, anger, sorrow, and joy are contained therein—these are called one's "Heavenly dispositions." The abilities of eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and body each have their respective objects and are not able to assume each other's abilities—these are called one's "Heavenly faculties." The heart dwells in the central cavity so as to control the five faculties—this is called one's "Heavenly ruler."³¹ Using what is not of one's kind as a resource for nourishing what is of one's kind—this is called one's "Heavenly nourishment." To be in accordance with what is proper for one's kind is called "happiness," and to go against what is proper for one's kind is called "disaster"—this is called one's "Heavenly government." To becloud your Heavenly ruler, disorder your Heavenly faculties, abandon your Heavenly nourishment, go against your Heavenly government, and turn your back on your Heavenly dispositions, so that you lose the accomplishments of Heaven—this is called the "greatest misfortune." The sage keeps clear his Heavenly ruler, sets straight his Heavenly faculties, makes complete his Heavenly nourishment, accords with his Heavenly government, and nurtures his Heavenly dispositions, so as to keep whole the accomplishment of Heaven. A person who is thus is someone who knows what he is to do and what he is not to do. Then Heaven and earth will have their proper positions and the ten thousand things will all be servants to him. His conduct will be completely ordered, his nourishment will be completely appropriate, and his life will suffer no harm—this is called "knowing Heaven."

Thus, the greatest cleverness lies in not doing certain things, and the greatest wisdom lies in not pondering certain things. With respect to Heaven, focus only on those manifest phenomena to which you can align yourself. With respect to earth, focus only on those manifest places which are suitable for growing. With respect to the four seasons, focus only on that manifest order by which work is to be arranged. With respect to *yin* and *yang*, focus only on those manifest harmonies that can be used to order things. Let the officials keep watch over Heaven and you keep watch over the Way. . . .

If stars fall or trees cry out, the people of the state are filled with fear and say, "What is this?" I say: It is nothing. These are simply rarely

³¹Xunzi is playing on the fact that the character *guan* 官 (here translated as "faculty") means both "organ" and "official."

occurring things among the changes in Heaven and earth and the transformations of *yin* and *yang*. To marvel at them is alright, but to fear them is not. Eclipses of the sun and moon, unseasonable winds and rain, unexpected appearances of strange stars—there is no age in which such things do not occur. If the superiors are enlightened and the government is stable, then even if all these things come about in the same age, there is no harm done. If the superiors are benighted and the government is unstable, then even if none of these things come to pass, it is of no benefit. The falling of stars and the crying out of trees are simply rarely occurring things among the changes in Heaven and earth and the transformations of *yin* and *yang*. To marvel at them is alright, but to fear them is not.

Of things that come to pass, it is human ill-omens that are to be feared. When poor plowing harms the planting, when the hoeing loses control over the weeds, when the government is unstable and loses control over the people, such that the fields are overgrown with weeds and the planting is bad, buying grain is expensive and the people face famine, and there are corpses lying in the roads—these are called “human ill-omens.” When government orders are not clear, when policies are not timely, when the fundamental tasks are not well ordered—these are called “human ill-omens.” When ritual and the standards of righteousness are not cultivated, when insiders and outsiders are not properly differentiated, when men and women engage in perverse, disorderly conduct, then father and son will be suspicious of one another, superiors and inferiors will desert one another, and bandits and other difficulties will arrive together—these are called “human ill-omens.” Ill-omens thus arise from disorder. . . .

One performs the rain sacrifice and it rains. Why? I say: There is no special reason why. It is the same as when one does not perform the rain sacrifice and it rains anyway. When the sun and moon suffer eclipse, one tries to save them. When Heaven sends drought, one performs the rain sacrifice. One performs divination and only then decides on important affairs. But this is not for the sake of getting what one seeks, but rather to give things proper form. Thus, the gentleman looks upon this as proper form, but the common people look upon it as connecting with spirits. If one looks upon it as proper form, then one will have good fortune. If one looks upon it as connecting with spirits, then one will have ill fortune. . . .

To exalt Heaven and long for it—³²

How can this compare to nourishing things and overseeing them?

To obey Heaven and praise it—

How can this compare to overseeing what Heaven has mandated and using it?

To observe the seasons and wait upon them—

How can this compare to responding to the seasons and employing them?

To follow along with things and increase them—

How can this compare to developing their powers and transforming them?

To long for things and appraise them—

How can this compare to ordering things and never losing them?

To desire that from which things arise—

How can this compare to taking hold of that by which things are completed?

Thus, if one rejects what lies with man and instead longs for what lies with Heaven, then one will have lost grasp of the true disposition of things.

The unchanging element among the reigns of the hundred kings can serve as the thread of the Way. As one thing passes by and another arises, respond to them with this thread. If one has mastered the thread, there will be no chaos. If one does not know the thread, one will not know how to respond to changes. The major substance of the thread has never perished, but chaos arises from falling short of it, whereas order arises from adhering to it meticulously. And so as for what is counted good in light of the Way, courses of action conforming to it may be followed, but those veering from it may not be followed. Those that obscure it will create great confusion. Those who cross waters mark out the deep places, but if the markers are not clear, then people will fall in. Those who order the people mark out the Way, but if the markers are not clear, then there will be chaos. The rituals are those markers. To reject ritual is to bemuddle the world, and to bemuddle the world is to create great chaos. And so, when the Way is in no part unclear, and that which is within the bounds and outside the bounds have different markers, and that which is inglorious and that which is illustrious have constant measures, then the pitfalls of the people will be eliminated.

The ten thousand things are but one facet of the Way. A single thing is but one facet of the ten thousand things. Those who are foolish take a single facet of a single thing and think themselves to know the Way—this is to be without knowledge. Shenzi saw the value of hanging back, but did not

³²From here down to the word “confusion” in the next paragraph, the original text is

see the value of being in the lead.³³ Laozi saw the value of yielding, but did not see the value of exerting oneself. Mozi saw the value of making things uniform, but did not see the value of establishing differences. Songzi saw the value of having few desires, but did not see the value of having many desires. If there is only hanging back and no being in the lead, then the masses will have no gateway to advancing. If there is only yielding and no exerting oneself, then the noble and the lowly will not be distinguished. If there is only uniformity and no difference, then governmental orders cannot be promulgated. If there are only few desires and not many desires, then the masses cannot be transformed. The *History* says, "Do not innovate in your fondnesses; follow the Way of the kings. Do not innovate in your aversions; follow the road of the kings."³⁴ This expresses my meaning. . . .

Chapter Nineteen: Discourse on Ritual

From what did ritual arise? I say: Humans are born having desires. When they have desires but do not get the objects of their desires, then they cannot but seek some means of satisfaction. If there is no measure or limit to their seeking, then they cannot help but struggle with each other. If they struggle with each other then there will be chaos, and if there is chaos then they will be impoverished. The former kings hated such chaos, and so they established rituals and the standards of righteousness in order to allot things to people, to nurture their desires, and to satisfy their seeking. They caused desires never to exhaust material goods, and material goods never to be depleted by desires, so that the two support each other and prosper. This is how ritual arose.³⁵

Thus, ritual is a means of nurture. Meats and grains, the five flavors and the various spices are means to nurture the mouth. Fragrances and perfumes are means to nurture the nose. Carving and inlay, insignias and patterns are means to nurture the eyes. Bells and drums, pipes and chimes, lutes and zithers are means to nurture the ears. Homes and palaces, cushions and beds, tables and mats are means to nurture the body. Thus, ritual is a means of nurture. The gentleman not only obtains his nurturing, but also loves his differentiations. What is meant by "differentiations"? I say: It is for noble

and lowly to have their proper ranking, for elder and youth to have their proper distance, and for poor and rich, humble and eminent each to have their proper weights. And so, in the Grand Chariot of the Emperor there are cushions, as a means to nurture his body. On the sides are carried sweet-smelling angelica, as a means to nurture his nose. In front there is a patterned yoke, as a means to nurture his eyes. The sounds of the attached bells match the tunes *Wu* and *Xiang*³⁶ when proceeding slowly, and they match the tunes *Shao* and *Hu*³⁷ when proceeding quickly, as a means to nurture his ears. There is a dragon pennant with nine tassels, as means to nurture his ability to inspire trust. There are insignias of a crouching rhinoceros and kneeling tiger, serpent-decorated coverings for the horses, silk curtains, and dragon patterns on the chariot hooks, as a means to nurture his awe-inspiring authority. And so, the horses of the Grand Chariot are repeatedly given training to be obedient, and only then will they be harnessed, as a means to nurture his safety.

Know well that to abide by the proper measure even at risk of death is the means to nurture one's life. Know well that to make expenditures is the way to nurture wealth. Know well that reverence, respect, and defence are the way to nurture safety. Know well that ritual, the standards of righteousness, good form, and proper order are the way to nurture one's dispositions. And so, if a person has his eyes only on living, such a one is sure to die. If a person has his eyes only on benefiting himself, such a one is sure to be harmed. If a person takes comfort only in laziness and sluggishness, such a one is sure to be endangered. If a person takes pleasure only in delighting his inborn dispositions, such a one is sure to be destroyed. And so, if a person puts even one measure of effort into following ritual and the standards of righteousness, he will get back twice as much. If he puts even one measure of effort into following his nature and inborn dispositions, he will lose twice as much. And so, the Confucians are those who will cause people to gain twice as much, and the Mohists are those who will cause people to lose twice as much. This is the difference between the Confucians and the Mohists.

Ritual has three roots. Heaven and earth are the root of life. Forefathers and ancestors are the root of one's kind. Rulers and teachers are the root of order. Without Heaven and earth, how would one live? Without forefathers

³³From here down to the quote from the *History*, the original text is rhymed.

³⁴Quoted earlier in the "Cultivating Oneself" chapter. See *Xunzi*, chapter 2, p. 265.

³⁵Cf. *Mozi*, chapter 11, pp. 65–66.

³⁶The *Wu* and the *Xiang* were pieces of music associated with King Wu.

³⁷The *Shao* and *Hu* were pieces of music associated with Shun and Tang, respectively.

and ancestors, how would one have come forth? Without rulers and teachers, how would there be order? Of these three, if even one is neglected there will be no one safe. And so, ritual serves Heaven above and earth below, it honors forefathers and ancestors, and it exalts rulers and teachers. These are the three roots of ritual. . . .

In every case, ritual begins in that which must be released, reaches full development in giving it proper form, and finishes in providing it satisfaction. And so when ritual is at its most perfect, the requirements of inner dispositions and proper form are both completely fulfilled.³⁸ At its next best, the dispositions and outer form overcome one another in succession. Its lowest manner is to revert to the dispositions alone so as to subsume everything in this grand unity.

By ritual, Heaven and earth harmoniously combine;
 By ritual, the sun and the moon radiantly shine;
 By ritual, the four seasons in progression arise;
 By ritual, the stars move orderly across the skies;
 By ritual, the great rivers through their courses flow;
 By ritual, the ten thousand things all thrive and grow;
 By ritual, for love and hate proper measure is made;
 By ritual, on joy and anger fit limits are laid.
 By ritual, compliant subordinates are created;
 By ritual, enlightened leaders are generated;
 With ritual, all things can change yet not bring chaos,
 But deviate from ritual and you face only loss.

Is not ritual perfect indeed! It establishes a lofty standard that is the ultimate of its kind, and none under Heaven can add to or subtract from it. In it, the fundamental and the secondary accord with each other, and beginning and end match each other. In its differentiations of things, it is the utmost in patterning. In its explanations, it is the utmost in keen discernment. Those under Heaven who follow it will have good order. Those who do not follow it will have chaos. Those who follow it will have safety. Those who do not follow it will be endangered. Those who follow it will be

preserved. Those who do not follow it will perish. The petty man cannot fathom it. Deep indeed is the principle of ritual! Investigations into the hard and the white, the same and the different drown when they try to enter into it.³⁹ Vast indeed is the principle of ritual! Those expert in creating institutions and the purveyors of perverse, vulgar doctrines are lost when they try to enter it. High indeed is the principle of ritual! Those who take violent arrogance, haughty indulgence, and contempt of custom for loftiness fall when they try to enter it.

And so, when the ink-line is reliably laid out, then one cannot be deceived by the curved and the straight. When the scale is reliably hung, then one cannot be deceived by the light and the heavy. When the compass and carpenter's square are reliably set out, then one cannot be deceived by the circular and the rectangular. The gentleman examines ritual carefully, and then he cannot be deceived by trickery and artifice. Thus, the ink-line is the ultimate in straightness, the scale is the ultimate in balance, the compass and carpenter's square are the ultimate in circular and rectangular, and ritual is the ultimate in the human way. Those who nevertheless do not take ritual as their model nor find sufficiency in it are called "standardless commoners." Those who take ritual as their model and find sufficiency in it are called "men of standards." To be able to reflect and ponder what is central to ritual is called "being able to deliberate." To be able not to diverge from what is central to ritual is called "being able to be firm." When one can deliberate and be firm, and adds to this fondness for it, then this is to be a sage. Thus, Heaven is the ultimate in height, earth is the ultimate in depth, the boundless is the ultimate in breadth, and the sage is the ultimate in the Way. And so, learning is precisely learning to be a sage—one does not learn solely so as to become a standardless commoner.

Ritual takes resources and goods as its implements. It takes noble and lowly as its patterns. It takes abundance and scarcity as its differentiations. It takes elevating some and lowering others as its essentials. When patterning and order are made bountiful, and the dispositions and implements are limited, this is the most elevated state of ritual. When the dispositions and implements are made bountiful, but the patterning and order are limited, this is the lowest state of ritual. When patterning and order, dispositions and implements are in turn central and peripheral, so that they proceed together and are mixed evenly, this is the intermediate course of ritual. And

³⁸Here and in many other places in this chapter, Xunzi is relying on the sense of *qing* "dispositions," that is closer to our notion of "emotions." In this case, his point seems to be that the perfect form of ritual is one in which inner feeling and outer expression are perfectly balanced and marched. Cf. *Analecs* 6.18. For more on *qing*, see n. 19.

³⁹This refers to debates among members of the so-called *Mingjia*. See *Important Terms*.

so at his greatest, the gentleman achieves the most elevated state of ritual, and at the least he fulfills completely its lowest form, and when in intermediate circumstances, he dwells in its intermediate form. Whether going slowly, quickly, or at full gallop, he never departs from this, for this is the gentleman's home and palace. If a person grasps this, he is a man of good breeding or a gentleman. If he departs from this, he is but a commoner. Thus, to be able to travel everywhere in its midst and in every case obtain its proper arrangement is to be a sage. And so, being generous is due to the accumulated richness of ritual. Being great is due to the vastness of ritual. Being lofty is due to the elevated nature of ritual. Being enlightened is due to the exhaustive nature of ritual. The *Oldes* says, "Their rituals and ceremonies completely follow the proper measure. Their laughter and speech are completely appropriate."⁴⁰ This expresses my meaning.

Ritual is that which takes care to order living and dying. Birth is the beginning of people, and death is the end of people. When beginning and end are both good, then the human way is complete. Thus, the gentleman is respectful of the beginning and careful about the end. When end and beginning are treated alike, this is the way of the gentleman, and the proper form contained in ritual and the standards of righteousness. To treat people generously while alive but stingily when dead is to show respect to those with awareness and show arrogance to those without awareness. This is the way of a vile person and is an attitude of betrayal. The gentleman considers it shameful to use such a betraying attitude in dealing with servants and children—how much more so in the case of those he exalts and those he loves! . . .

For the funeral of the Emperor, one notifies all within the four seas and summons the feudal lords. For the funeral of a feudal lord, one notifies all allied states and summons the grand ministers. For the funeral of a grand minister, one notifies all within his state and summons those distinguished among the well-bred. For the funeral of a distinguished, well-bred man, one notifies all in his county and summons his associates. For the funeral of a common person, one gathers together his family and friends and notifies all within the neighborhood and district. For the funeral of an executed convict one is not allowed to assemble his family and friends but rather summons only his wife and children. The coffin's thickness may be only

three inches. There may be only three layers of burial clothing and coverings. One is not allowed to decorate the coffin. One is not allowed to have the funeral procession during the day but must rather perform the interment at night. One goes out to bury him wearing ordinary clothing, and upon the return, there are to be no periods of crying, no wearing of mourning garb, and no differentiation of mourning periods for closer and more distant relatives. Everyone is to return to their normal ways and revert to their original state. When a person has just been buried, but it is as though there had never been a funeral and the matter has simply come to an end, this is called the greatest disgrace.⁴¹

Ritual takes care that fortunate and unfortunate events do not intrude upon each other. When it comes to the point where one has to place gauze on the person's face⁴² and listen for breathing, then the loyal minister and filial son know that his illness is serious indeed. Even so, they do not yet seek the items for dressing the corpse and the *ying-in-state*. They weep and are filled with fear. Even so, they do not stop in their feelings of hoping that miraculously the person will live, and they do not cease their attempts to maintain the person's life. Only when the person has truly died do they then make and prepare the necessary items.

Thus, even the best equipped households are sure to pass a day before the *ying-in-state*, and three days before the mourning garments are complete. Only then do those sent to notify people far away set out, and only then do those responsible for preparing things get to work. And so, at its longest, the *ying-in-state* is not to last for more than seventy days, and at its quickest, it is not to last less than fifty days. Why is this? I say: It is so that those far away can come, so that many needs can be fulfilled, and so that many matters can be accomplished. The loyalty expressed in this is of the highest sort. The proper regulation involved in this is of the greatest type. The good form displayed in this is of the greatest kind. . . .

The standard practice of funeral rites is that one changes the appearance of the corpse by gradually adding more ornamentation, one moves the corpse gradually further away, and over a long time one gradually returns to one's regular routine. Thus, the way that death works is that if one does

⁴¹Commentators note that Xunzi's description of this last kind of funeral largely resembles the kind of mourning regulations prescribed by Mozi for everyone, and thus this passage serves as a criticism of Mozi by implying that Mozi would have us treat even our dearest loved ones as no better executed criminals.

⁴²*Mao* # 209. These same lines are quoted earlier in the "Cultivating Oneself" chapter.

See *Xunzi*, chapter 2, p. 262.

⁴²*I.e.*, as a means of detecting breath visually.

not ornament the dead, then one will come to feel disgust at them, and if one feels disgust, then one will not feel sad. If one keeps them close, then one will become casual with them, and if one becomes casual with them, then one will grow tired of them. If one grows tired of them, then one will forget one's place, and if one forgets one's place, then one will not be respectful. If one day a person loses his lord or father, but his manner in sending them off to be buried is neither sad nor respectful, then he is close to being a beast. The gentleman is ashamed of this, and so the reason that he changes the appearance of the corpse by gradually adding more ornamentation is to eliminate any disgust. The reason that he moves the corpse gradually further away is to pursue respectfulness. The reason that only over a long time does he gradually return to his regular routine is to properly adjust his life.

Ritual cuts off what is too long and extends what is too short. It subtracts from what is excessive and adds to what is insufficient. It achieves proper form for love and respect, and it brings to perfection the beauty of carrying out the standards of righteousness. Thus, fine ornaments and coarse materials, music and weeping, happiness and sorrow—these things are opposites, but ritual makes use of them all, employing them and altering them at the appropriate times. And so, fine ornaments, music, and happiness are that by which one responds to peaceful events and that by which one pays homage to good fortune. Coarse mourning garments, weeping, and sorrow are that by which one responds to threatening events and that by which one pays homage to ill fortune. Thus, the way ritual makes use of fine ornaments is such as not to lead to exorbitance and indulgence. The way it makes use of coarse mourning garments is such as not to lead to infirmity or despondency. The way it makes use of music and happiness is such as not to lead to perversity or laziness. The way it makes use of weeping and sorrow is such as not to lead to dejection or self-harm. This is the mid-way course of ritual.

Thus, when the changes in disposition and appearance are sufficient to differentiate good fortune and ill fortune and to make clear the proper measures for noble and lowly, close relations and distant relations, then ritual stops. To go beyond this is vile, and even should it be a feat of amazing difficulty, the gentleman will still consider it base. And so, to measure one's food and then eat it, to measure one's waist and then tie the mourning sash, to show off to those in high positions one's emaciation and infirmity—this is the way of a vile person. It is not the proper patterning of ritual and the standards of righteousness; it is not the true disposition of a filial son. It is rather the behavior of one acting for ulterior purposes.

And so, a joyful glow and a shining face, a sorrowful look and a haggard appearance—these are the ways in which the dispositions in good fortune and ill fortune,⁴³ happiness and sorrow are expressed in one's countenance. Singing and laughing, weeping and sobbing—these are the ways in which the dispositions in good fortune and ill fortune, happiness and sorrow are expressed in one's voice. Fine meats and grains and wine and fish, gruel and roughage and plain water—these are the ways in which the dispositions in good fortune and ill fortune, happiness and sorrow are expressed in one's food and drink. Ceremonial caps and embroidered insignias and woven patterns, coarse cloth and a mourning headband and thin garments and hempen sandals—these are the ways in which the dispositions in good fortune and ill fortune, happiness and sorrow are expressed in one's dress. Homes and palaces and cushions and beds and tables and mats, a thatched roof and mourning lean-to and rough mat and earthen pillow—these are the ways in which the dispositions in good fortune and ill fortune, happiness and sorrow are expressed in one's dwelling.

In people's lives originally there are the beginnings of these two dispositions. If you cut them short and extend them, broaden them and narrow them, add to them and subtract from them, make them conform to their proper classes and fully express them, make them abundant and beautify them, cause root and branch, beginning and end all to go smoothly and fit together, then they can serve as the model for ten thousand ages—and just such is what ritual does! None but a devotedly and thoroughly cultivated gentleman can understand it.

Thus, I say that human nature is the original beginning and the raw material, and *wei* 爲, "deliberate effort," is to pattern and order it and make it exalted. If there were no human nature, then there would be nothing for deliberate effort to be applied to. If there were no deliberate effort, then human nature would not be able to beautify itself. Human nature and deliberate effort must unite, and then the reputation of the sage and the work of unifying all under Heaven is thereupon brought to completion. And so I say, when Heaven and earth unite, then the myriad creatures are born. When *yin* and *yang* interact, then changes and transformations arise. When human nature and deliberate effort unite, then all under Heaven is ordered. For Heaven can give birth to creatures, but it cannot enforce distinctions

⁴³Here *qing* "dispositions," seems to refer specifically to people's feeling positive or negative emotions in response to good or bad events. Cf. n. 38.

among creatures. Earth can support people, but it cannot order people. In the world, the ten thousand things and human beings all must await the sage, and only then will they be appropriately divided up. The *Oldes* says, "He mollifies the hundred spirits, and extends this to the rivers and towing peaks."⁴⁴ This expresses my meaning.⁴⁵

For the burial offerings,⁴⁶ among the hats there is to be a helmet but no straps for binding the hair. There are to be various vessels and containers, but they are to be empty and unfilled. There are to be mats but no bedding materials. The wooden utensils are not to be completely carved, the pottery utensils are not to be finished products, and the utensils woven from reeds are not to be capable of holding things. A set of music pipes is to be prepared, but they are not to be harmonized. A lute and zither are to be laid out, but they are not to be tuned. A chariot is to be included in the burial, but the horse returns home. This is to indicate that these things will not be used.

One prepares the utensils used by the person in life and takes them to the tomb, and this resembles the way one acts when moving house. The spirit goods are to be simple and not perfect. They are to have the appearance of the regular items but are not to be functional. One drives a chariot out to the tomb and buries it, but the bit ornaments, bridle, and harness are not to be included. This makes clear that these things will not be used. One uses the symbols of moving house but also makes clear that the things will not be used, and these are all means by which to emphasize sorrowfulness. . . .

To deprive the dead in order to give to the living is called Mohism. To deprive the living in order to give to the dead is called confusion. To kill the living in order to send off the dead is called villainy.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ *Mao # 273.*

⁴⁵ This paragraph does not fit well with the context. Burton Watson (1963) suggests that it may have fallen out of place from chapter 23. Nonetheless, it expresses very important ideas relating to Xunzi's view of human nature.

⁴⁶ In this paragraph, Xunzi speaks mainly of the *mingqi* 明器 or so-called "spirit goods" items made specifically to be buried along with the deceased.

⁴⁷ The term *zei* 賊, here translated as "villainy," often had the connotation of murder in particular. Xunzi here is criticizing the practice of "accompanying burials," in which people were sacrificed to serve the deceased in death.

Among all the living things between Heaven and earth, those that have blood and *qi* are sure to have awareness, and of those that have awareness, none does not love its own kind. Now if one of the great birds or beasts loses its group of companions, then after a month or a season has passed, it is sure to retrace its former path and go by its old home. When it does, it is sure to pace back and forth, cry out, stomp the ground, pause hesitatingly, and only then is it able to leave the place. Even among smaller creatures such as swallows and sparrows, they will still screech for a moment before being able to leave. Thus, among the creatures that have blood and *qi*, none has greater awareness than man, and so man's feeling for his parents knows no limit until the day they die. Will we follow foolish, ignorant, perverse men? Those who have died that morning they forget by that evening. If one gives way to this, then one will not even be as good as the birds and beasts. How could such people come together and live in groups without there being chaos? Will we follow cultivated gentlemen? For them the twenty-five months of the three-year mourning period passes by as quickly as a galloping horse glimpsed through a crack. If one simply acquiesces in this, then mourning would continue without end. Therefore, the former kings and sages accordingly established a middle way and fixed a proper measure for it, such that once mourning is made sufficient to achieve good form and proper order, then one stops it.

That being the case, then how is it divided up? I say: The mourning for those most close is broken off at one year. Why is that? I say: By then, Heaven and earth have already gone through their alterations, the four seasons have already completed their course, and everything in the world changes and begins again. Thus, the sage kings accordingly took this and made it their image. That being the case, then why the three-year mourning period? I say: To add loftiness to it, they accordingly made the period double, and thus it continues for another year. What about the mourning of nine months and below? I say: They accordingly made it not as great. Thus, the three-year mourning period is the most lofty, the *sima* and *xiaogong* mourning periods are the most slight,⁴⁸ and the year-long and nine-month mourning periods are in between. The sage kings took an image from Heaven above, they took an image from earth below, they took a standard from humans in the middle, and then the order by which people are to live together in harmony and unity was complete. . . .

⁴⁸ The *sima* lasted for three months, and the *xiaogong* lasted for five months.

The sacrificial rites are the refined expression of remembrance and longing. To be moved and feel upset are things that cannot but come upon one at times. And so, on occasions when people are happy and join together harmoniously, then a loyal minister or filial son will also be moved and such feelings will come to him. When the feelings that come to him stir him greatly but are deprived of an outlet and stopped, then with regard to the refined expression of remembrance he will feel anguished and unsatisfied, and his practice of ritual and proper regulation will be lacking and incomplete. And so, the former kings accordingly established a proper form for it, and thereby was set what is righteous in venerating those esteemed and loving those intimate. Thus I say: The sacrificial rites are the refined expression of remembrance and longing. They are the utmost in loyalty, trustworthiness, love, and respect. They are the fullest manifestation of ritual, proper regulation, good form, and proper appearance. If one is not a sage, then one will not be able to understand them. The sage clearly understands them. The well-bred man and the gentleman are at ease in carrying them out. The officials take them as things to be preserved. The common people take them as their set customs. The gentleman regards them as the way to be a proper human being. The common people regard them as serving the ghosts. . . .

For the ritual sacrifices, one engages in divination and determines the appropriate day. One fasts and sweeps out the site, sets out tables and food offerings, and has the "announcement to the assistant,"⁴⁹ as if the deceased were attending a banquet. The impersonator of the dead takes the goods and from each of them makes a sacrifice, as if the deceased were tasting them.⁵⁰ No helper raises the toast, but rather the host himself takes hold of the cup, as if the deceased were engaging in the toast. When the guests leave, the host sends them off and bows to them as they go, then returns and changes his clothing.⁵¹ He goes back to his position and cries, as if the deceased had left. How full of sorrow! How full of respect! One serves the dead as if one were serving the living, and one serves the departed as if one

⁴⁹This is a part of the ceremony in which the impersonator of the dead gives blessings to the host of the ceremony. The idea seems to be that just as guests come with expressions of thankfulness for the host of a feast, so the spirit of the dead expresses thanks for the sacrifice.

⁵⁰From here to the end of the paragraph, several of the lines are rhymed in the original.

⁵¹According to commentators, the host changes from the sacrificial robes back into the robes of mourning.

were serving a surviving person. One gives a shape to that which is bodiless and in magnificent fashion accomplishes proper form.

Chapter Twenty: Discourse on Music

Music is joy, an unavoidable human disposition.⁵² So, people cannot be without music; if they feel joy, they must express it in sound and give it shape in movement. The way of human beings is that changes in the motions of their nature are completely contained in these sounds and movements. So, people cannot be without joy, and their joy cannot be without shape, but if it takes shape and does not accord with the Way, then there will inevitably be chaos. The former kings hated such chaos, and therefore they established the sounds of the *Ya* and the *Song*⁵³ in order to guide them. They caused the sounds to be enjoyable without becoming excessive.⁵⁴ They caused the patterns to be recognizable without becoming degenerate. They caused the progression, complexity, intensity, and rhythm of the music to be sufficient to move the goodness in people's hearts. They caused perverse and corrupt *qi* to have no place to attach itself to them. This is the manner in which the former kings created music, and so why is Mozi denouncing it?⁵⁵

And so, when music is performed in the ancestral temple and the ruler and ministers, superiors and inferiors listen to it together, there are none who do not become harmoniously respectful. When it is performed within the home and father and sons, elder and younger brothers listen to it together, there are none who do not become harmoniously affectionate. And when it is performed in the village, and old and young people listen to it together, there are none who do not become harmoniously cooperative. Thus, music observes a single standard in order to fix its harmony, it brings together different instruments in order to ornament its rhythm, and it combines their playing in order to achieve a beautiful pattern. It is sufficient to lead people in a single, unified way, and is sufficient to bring order

⁵²That is, people have a natural tendency to feel joy in response to certain things, and this tendency is sure to manifest itself in such feelings sooner or later. For more on *qing*, "dispositions," see n. 19.

⁵³The names of parts of the *Odes*. See the entry for the *Odes* in *Important Texts*.

⁵⁴Cf. *Analeks* 3.20.

⁵⁵Cf. *Mozi*, chapter 32, pp. 105-10.

to the myriad changes within them. This is the method by which the former kings created music, and so why is Mozi denouncing it?⁵⁶ . . .

Chapter Twenty-One: Undoing Fixation

Almost always, the problem with people is that they become fixated on one angle and are deluded about the greater order of things. If they are brought under control, then they will return to the right standards. If they are of two minds, then they will be hesitant and confused. There are not two Ways for the world, and the sage is not of two minds. Nowadays the feudal lords have different governments, and the hundred schools have different teachings, so that necessarily some are right and some are wrong, and some lead to order and some lead to chaos. The rulers of chaotic states and the followers of pernicious schools all sincerely seek what they consider correct and put themselves into achieving it. They have what they consider erroneous views of the Way, and others are seduced into following their same path. They selfishly favor the approach in which they have accumulated effort and only fear to hear it disparaged. They rely on it when regarding other approaches and only fear to hear those others praised. Therefore, they depart further and further from getting under control and think they are right not to stop. Is this not because they have become fixated on one angle and missed the true object of their search? If the heart does not apply itself to the eyes, then black and white can be right in front of you and the eyes will not see them. If the heart does not apply itself to the ears, then drums and thunder can be right at your side and the ears will not hear them. How much more so in the case of that which is applying itself in the first place!⁵⁷ The person of true Virtue and the true Way is denounced from above by the rulers of chaotic states, and denounced from below by the followers of pernicious schools. Is this not lamentable?

Thus, among the cases of fixation, one can be fixated on desires, or one can be fixated on dislikes. One can be fixated on origins, or one can be fixated on ends. One can be fixated on what is far away, or one can be fixated on what is nearby. One can be fixated by broad learning, or one can

be fixated by narrowness. One can be fixated on the ancient past, or one can be fixated on the present. In whatever respect the ten thousand things are different, they can become objects of fixation to the exclusion of each other. This is the common problem in the ways of human hearts. . . .

Mozi was fixated on the useful and did not understand the value of good form. Songzi was fixated on having few desires and did not understand the value of achieving the objects of desires. Shenzi was fixated on laws and did not understand the value of having worthy people. Shen Buhai was fixated on power and did not understand the value of having wise people. Huizi was fixated on words and did not understand the value of their corresponding objects. Zhuangzi was fixated on the Heavenly and did not understand the value of the human.

Thus, if one speaks of it in terms of usefulness, then the Way will consist completely in seeking what is profitable. If one speaks of it in terms of desires, then the Way will consist completely in learning to be satisfied. If one speaks of it in terms of laws, then the Way will consist completely in making arrangements. If one speaks of it in terms of power, then the Way will consist completely in finding what is expedient. If one speaks of it in terms of wording, then the Way will consist completely in discoursing on matters. If one speaks of it in terms of the Heavenly, then the Way will consist completely in following along with things. These various approaches are all merely one aspect of the Way. As for the Way itself, its substance is constant, yet it covers all changes. No one aspect is sufficient to exhibit it fully.

People of biased understanding observe just a single aspect of the Way and are unable to recognize it as such. So, they think it sufficient and proceed to embellish it. On the inside, they use it to disorder their own lives. On the outside, they use it to confuse other people. As superiors, they use it to transfix their subordinates. As subordinates, they use it to transfix their superiors. This is the disaster of being fixated and blocked up in one's thinking. Kongzi was benevolent, wise, and was not fixated, and so through his study of various methods, he was worthy of being one of the former kings. His one line alone grasped the way of the Zhou and upheld and used it, because he was not fixated by accumulated efforts in any area. Thus, his Virtue equals that of the Duke of Zhou, and his name ranks with those of the three kings. This is the good fortune that comes from not being fixated.

The sage knows the problems in the ways of men's hearts, and sees the disaster of being fixated and blocked up in one's thinking. So, he is neither for desires, nor for dislikes, is neither for the origins, nor for the end results, is neither for what is near, nor for what is far away, is neither for what is

⁵⁶The repetition of this sentence may be meant to mock Mozi's own repetitive style.

⁵⁷That is, just as the heart must apply itself to the sense organs in order for them to perceive correctly, so it must watch over itself in order to avoid obsession and apprehend the truth.

broad, nor for what is shallow, is neither for the ancient past, nor for the present. He lays out all the ten thousand things and in their midst hangs his scales over them. For this reason, the various different things are unable to become fixating and so disorder the proper categories of things.

What am I calling his "scales"? I say: It is the Way. Thus, one's heart must not be ignorant of the Way. If the heart does not know the Way, then it will not approve of the Way, but will rather approve what is not the Way. For what person would wish to be so dissolute as to keep to what they disapprove and reject what they approve? If one chooses people using a heart that does not approve of the Way, then one is sure to accord with people who do not follow the Way, and one will not know to accord with people who *do* follow the Way. To use a heart that does not approve of the Way and to join together with people who do not follow the Way when judging people who do follow the Way—this is the root of chaos.

How will one know [which are the people who follow the Way]? I say: The heart must know the Way, and only then will it approve of the Way. Only after it approves of the Way will it be able to keep to the Way and reject what is not the Way. If one chooses people using a heart that approves of the Way, then one will accord with people who follow the Way, and one will not accord with people who do not follow the Way. To use a heart that approves of the Way and to join together with people who follow the Way when judging what is not the Way—this is the essential thing for good order. What problem of not knowing [which people follow the Way] could there be? Thus, the essential thing for good order rests in knowing the Way.

How do people know the Way? I say: It is with the heart. How does the heart know the Way? I say: It is through emptiness, single-mindedness, and stillness. The heart is never not holding something. Yet, there is a state called being "empty." The heart is never not two-fold. Yet, there is a state being "single-minded." The heart is never not moving. Yet, there is a state called being "still." Humans are born and have awareness. With awareness, they have focus.⁵⁸ To focus is to be holding something. Yet, there is a state called being "empty." Not to let what one is already holding harm what one is about to receive is called being "empty."⁵⁹ The heart is born and has

⁵⁸Reading 志 as it appears in the text. Most commentators and translators read it as 誌, "memory." Cf. Mengzi 2A2; especially n. 19.

⁵⁹From this explanation, it is clear that what Xunzi means by "emptiness" is *not* having no thoughts or clearing out one's mind, but rather the ability to take up new ideas and objects of attention. Thus, his "emptiness" is more akin to what nowadays would be called "receptiveness."

awareness. With awareness, there come awareness of differences. These differences are known at the same time, and when they are known at the same time, this is to be two-fold. Yet, there is a state called being "single-minded." Not to let one idea harm another idea is called being "single-minded." When the heart sleeps, then it dreams. When it relaxes, then it goes about on its own. When one puts it to use, then it forms plans. Thus, the heart is never not moving. Yet, there is a state called being "still." Not to let dreams and worries disorder one's understanding is called being "still."

For those who have not yet grasped the Way but are seeking the Way, I say: Emptiness, single-mindedness, and stillness—make these be your principles. If one who would search for the Way achieves emptiness, then he may enter upon it. If one who would work at the Way achieves single-mindedness, then he will exhaustively obtain it. If one who would ponder the Way achieves stillness, then he will discern it keenly. One who knows the Way and observes things by it, who knows the Way and puts it into practice, is one who embodies the Way. To be empty, single-minded, and still—this is called great clarity and brilliance. For such a one, none of the ten thousand things takes form and is not seen. None is seen and not judged. None is judged and loses its proper position. He sits in his chamber yet sees all within the four seas.⁶⁰ He dwells in today yet judges what is long ago and far away in time. He comprehensively observes the ten thousand things and knows their true dispositions. He inspects and examines order and disorder and discerns their measures. He sets straight Heaven and earth, and arranges and makes useful the ten thousand things. He institutes great order, and the whole world is encompassed therein. So vast and broad is he! Who grasps his true limits? So lofty and broad is he! Who grasps his true Virtue? So active and varied is he! Who grasps his true form? His brilliance matches the sun and moon. His greatness fills all the eight directions. Such a one is called the "Great Man." What fixation could there be in him? The heart is the ruler of the body and the master of one's spirit and intelligence. It issues orders, but it takes orders from nothing: *it* restrains itself, *it* employs itself; *it* lets itself go, *it* takes itself in hand; *it* makes itself proceed, *it* makes itself stop. Thus, the mouth can be compelled either to be silent or to speak, and the body can be compelled either to contract or to extend itself, but the heart cannot be compelled to change its thoughts. What it considers right, one accepts. What it considers wrong, one rejects.

⁶⁰Cf. Laozi, chapter 47.

And so I say: If the heart allows its choices to be without restraint, then necessarily it will display its own objects as broadly varying. Its perfected disposition is to be undivided. The *Odes* says,

I pick and pick then *juan-er* leaves,
but cannot fill my sloping basket.

Oh for my cherished one!
He is stationed on the Zhou campaign.⁶¹

A sloping basket is easy to fill, and the *juan-er* leaves are easy to get, but one must not be divided with thoughts of the Zhou campaign. And so I say: If the heart is split, it will be without understanding. If it deviates, it will not be expertly refined. If it is divided, then it will be confused. If one guides its examinations, then the ten thousand things can all be known together, and if the person thoroughly develops his original substance, then he will be truly beautiful.

The proper classes of things are not of two kinds. Hence, the person with understanding picks the one right object and pursues it single-mindedly. The farmer is expert in regard to the fields, but cannot be made Overseer of Fields. The merchant is expert in regard to the markets, but cannot be made Overseer of Merchants. The craftsman is expert in regard to vessels, but cannot be made Overseer of Vessels. There is a person who is incapable of any of their three skills, but who can be put in charge of any of these offices, namely the one who is expert in regard to the Way, not the one who is expert in regard to things. One who is expert in regard to things merely measures one thing against another. One who is expert in regard to the Way measures all things together.⁶² Thus, the gentleman pursues the Way single-mindedly and uses it to guide and oversee things. If one pursues the Way single-mindedly, then one will be correct. If one uses it to guide one in examining things, then one will have keen discernment. If one uses correct intentions to carry out discerning judgments, then the ten thousand things will all obtain their proper station. . . .

The human heart can be compared to a pan of water. If you set it straight and do not move it, the muddy and turbid parts will settle to the bottom, and the clear and bright parts will be on the top, and then one can see one's

whiskers and inspect the lines on one's face. But if a slight breeze passes over it, the muddy and turbid parts will be stirred up from the bottom, and the clear and bright parts will be disturbed on top, and then one cannot get a correct view of even large contours. The heart is just like this.⁶³ Thus, if one guides it with good order, nourishes it with clarity and nothing can make it deviate, then it will be capable of determining right and wrong and deciding what is doubtful. If it is drawn aside by even a little thing, then on the outside one's correctness will be altered, and on the inside one's heart will deviate, and one will be incapable of discerning the multifarious patterns of things. . . .

In the caves there lived a man named Ji.⁶⁴ He was good at guessing riddles because he was fond of pondering things. However, if the desires of his eyes and ears were aroused, it would ruin his thinking, and if he heard the sounds of mosquitoes or gnats, it would frustrate his concentration. So, he shut out the desires of his eyes and ears and put himself far away from the sounds of mosquitoes and gnats, and by dwelling in retreat and stilling his thoughts, he achieved comprehension. But can pondering benevolence in such a manner be called "true sublimeness"? Mengzi hated depravity and so expelled his wife—this can be called "being able to force oneself."⁶⁵ Youzi⁶⁶ hated dozing off and so burned his palm—this can be called "being able to steel oneself." These are not yet true fondness for it. To shut out the desires of one's eyes and ears can be called "forcing oneself." It is not yet truly pondering it. To be such that hearing the sounds of mosquitoes or gnats frustrates one's concentration is called "being precarious." It cannot yet be called "true sublimeness." One who is truly sublime is a perfected person. For the perfected person, what forcing oneself, what steeling oneself, what precariousness is there? Thus, those who are murky understand only the external manifestations, but those who are clear understand the internal manifestations. The sage follows his desires and embraces all his dispositions, and the things dependent on these simply turn out well ordered. What forcing oneself, what steeling oneself, what precariousness is there? Thus, the person of benevolence carries out the Way without striving, and

⁶¹Cf. *Zhuangzi*, chapter 5, p. 232.

⁶²This person is unattested elsewhere, and the pronunciation of the name is uncertain.

⁶³For an account of this incident, see D. C. Lau, *Mencius* (New York: Penguin Books, 1970), p. 217.

⁶⁴Youzi, also known as You Ruo, was a disciple of Kongzi.

⁶⁵*Mao* # 3.

⁶⁶Cf. *Analekts* 2.12 and the note to that passage.

the sage carries out the Way without forcing himself. The benevolent person ponders it with reverence, and the sage ponders it with joy. This is the proper way to order one's heart.

Chapter Twenty-Two: On Correct Naming⁶⁷

In setting names for things, the later kings followed the Shang in names for punishments, followed the Zhou in names for official titles, and also followed their rituals in names for cultural forms. In applying various names to the ten thousand things, they followed the set customs and generally agreed usage of the Xia. Villages in distant places with different customs followed along with these names and so were able to communicate.

As for the ways the various names apply to people, that which is so by birth is called "human nature." The close connection of response to stimulus, which requires no effort but is so of itself, and which is produced by the harmonious operation of the nature, is also called "human nature." The feelings of liking and disliking, happiness and anger, and sadness and joy in one's nature are called the *qing* 情, "dispositions."⁶⁸ When there is a certain disposition and the heart makes a choice on its behalf, this is called "deliberation."⁶⁹ When the heart deliberates and one's abilities act on it, this is called "deliberate effort." That which comes into being through acculturated deliberations and training of one's abilities is also called "work." Actions performed for the sake of profit are called "work." Actions performed for what is required by the standards of righteousness are called "proper conduct." That by which people understand things is called the "understanding." When the understanding connects to things, this is called "knowledge." That by which people are able to do things is called "ability." When ability connects to things, these are also called "abilities."⁷⁰ When the nature is injured, this is called "illness." When one

⁶⁷Cf. *Analekts* 13.3 and n. 113 to that passage. "Name" in both passages is *ming* 名, which can refer not only to proper names, but to words in general.

⁶⁸For more on *qing*, "dispositions," see n. 19 above. Here Xunzi most clearly has in mind the aspect of *qing* we call "emotions."

⁶⁹That is, when one is disposed a certain way, such as feeling anger, and the heart reflects and chooses whether and how one will act on that feeling, this is to engage in deliberation.

⁷⁰That is, when the potential to do something is manifested in a certain activity, it is called a particular ability (e.g., one is said to have the *ability* to drive when one performs the activities specific to that skill).

encounters unexpected circumstances, this is called *ming* 命, "fate." These are the ways the various names apply to people. These are the ways the later kings set names for things.

So when the kings established names, the names were fixed, and the corresponding objects were thus distinguished. This way was followed, and the kings' intentions were thus made understood. They then carefully led the people to adhere to these things single-mindedly. Thus, they called it great vileness to mince words and recklessly create names so as to disorder the correct names and thereby confuse the people and cause them to engage in much disputation and litigation. This wrongdoing was considered to be just like the crime of forging tallies and measures. Hence, none of their people dared rely on making up strange names so as to disorder the correct names, and so the people were honest and guileless. Since they were honest and guileless, they were easy to employ, and since they were easy to employ, tasks were accomplished. Because none of the people dared rely on making up strange names so as to disorder the correct names, they were unified in following the proper model of the Way and were conscientious in following commands. Because they were like this, the achievements of the kings were long-lasting. To have long-lasting achievements and to complete great accomplishments is the height of good order. Such is the great accomplishment that comes from conscientiously preserving the agreed names.

Nowadays, the sage-kings have passed away, and the preservation of these names has become lax. Strange words have arisen, the names and their corresponding objects are disordered, and the forms of right and wrong are unclear. As a result, even officers who diligently preserve the proper models and scholars who diligently recite the proper order for things are also all thrown into chaos. If there arose a true king, he would surely follow the old names in some cases and create new names in other cases. Thus, one must examine the reason for having names, the proper means for distinguishing like and unlike, and the essential points in establishing names.

When different forms make contact with the heart, they make each other understood as different things. If the names and their corresponding objects are tied together in a confused fashion, then the distinction between noble and base will not be clear, and the like and the unlike will not be differentiated. If this is so, then the problem of intentions not being understood will surely happen, and the disaster of affairs being thereby impeded and abandoned will surely occur. Thus, the wise person draws differences and establishes names in order to point out their corresponding objects. Most importantly, he makes clear the distinction between noble and base, and,

at the least, he distinguishes the like and the unlike. When noble and base are clearly distinguished, and like and unlike are differentiated, then there will be no problem of intentions not being understood, and the disaster of affairs being thereby impeded and abandoned will not occur. This is the reason for having names. . . .

Names have no predetermined appropriateness. One forms agreement in order to name things. Once the agreement is set and has become custom, then the names are called "appropriate," and what differs from the agreed usage is called "inappropriate." Names have no predetermined objects. One forms agreement in order to name objects. Once the agreement is set and has become custom, then they are called "names of objects."⁷¹ There *is* a predetermined goodness for names. If they are straightforward, simple, and do not conflict, then they are called good names.

Some things have a like appearance but reside in unlike classes, and others have unlike appearances but reside in the like class, and these two can be differentiated. For those which have a like appearance but reside in unlike classes, even though they could be combined into one class, they are called two separate objects. If the appearance changes but the object does not become different so as to belong to an unlike class, this is called a transformation. When there is transformation without such difference, it is still called one and the same object. These are what to rely upon in observing the objects and determining their numbers.⁷² This is the essential point in establishing names, and the names established by the later kings must not go unexamined.

Claims such as "To be insulted is not disgraceful,"⁷³ "The sage does not love himself,"⁷⁴ and "To kill a robber is not to kill a man"⁷⁵ are cases of confusion about the use of names leading to disordering names. If one tests them against the reason why there are names, and observes what happens when they are carried out thoroughly, then one will be able to reject them. Claims such as "Mountains and gorges are level,"⁷⁶ "The natural

⁷¹Xunzi's point seems to be that only after usage is set do the names have any meaning, rather than being mere sound.

⁷²Xunzi here seems to be talking about identifying and individuating classes, rather than identifying and individuating particular entities.

⁷³This claim was put forth by Songzi.

⁷⁴It is unknown who put forth this claim.

⁷⁵This is a famous Mohist argument.

⁷⁶This claim was put forth and defended by Huizi.

dispositions and desires are few,"⁷⁷ "Fine meats are not any more flavorful," and "Great bells are not any more entertaining"⁷⁸ are cases of confusion about the use of objects leading to disordering names. If one tests them against the proper means for distinguishing like and unlike, and observes what happens when they are thoroughly practiced, then one will be able to reject them. Claims such as . . . "Both oxen and horses are not horses" are cases of confusion about the use of names leading to disordering the objects. If one tests them against the agreement on names, using the fact that what such people accept goes against what they refuse, then one will be able to reject them. In every case of deviant sayings and perverse teachings that depart from the correct Way and recklessly innovate, they will belong to one of these three classes of confusion. Thus, the enlightened ruler understands their kind and does not dispute with such people.

The people can easily be unified by means of the Way, but one should not try to share one's reasons with them. Hence, the enlightened ruler controls them with his power, guides them with the Way, moves them with his orders, arrays them with his judgments, and restrains them with his punishments. Thus, his people's transformation by the Way is spiritlike. What need has he for demonstrations⁸⁰ and persuasions? Nowadays the sage-kings have all passed away, the whole world is in chaos, and depraved teachings are arising. The gentleman has no power to control people, no punishments to restrain them, and so he engages in demonstrations and persuasions.

When objects are not understood, then one engages in naming. When the naming is not understood, then one tries to procure agreement. When the agreement is not understood, then one engages in persuasion. When the persuasion is not understood, then one engages in demonstration. Thus, procuring agreement, naming, discrimination, and persuasion are some of the greatest forms of useful activity, and are the beginning of

⁷⁷This is another of Songzi's famous claims.

⁷⁸The origin of these last two statements is uncertain.

⁷⁹The text at this point seems corrupt, and the translation is tentative. The claim as presented here appears as an object of analysis in Mohist works.

⁸⁰The word here is *bian* 辨, which literally means "to discriminate among things." This character was interchangeable with another, also read *bian* 辯, which means "to argue, dispute." The text seems to play on a fusion of these senses in the idea that true differences between things will be presented and defended through argument. Therefore, I have rendered it "demonstration" to convey the sense both of pointing out differences and arguing for a position.

kingly works. When a name is heard and the corresponding object is understood, this is for names to be useful. When they are accumulated and form a pattern, this is for names to be beautiful. When one obtains both their usefulness and beauty, this is called understanding names. Names are that by which one arranges and accumulates objects. Phrases combine the names of different objects in order to discuss a single idea. Persuasion and demonstration use fixed names of objects in order to make clear the proper ways to act. Procuring agreement and naming are the functions of demonstration and persuasion. Demonstration and persuasion are the heart's way of representing the Way. The heart is the craftsman and overseer of the Way. The Way is the warp and pattern of good order. When the heart fits with the Way, when one's persuasions fit with one's heart, when one's words fit one's persuasions, then one will name things correctly and procure agreement. One will base oneself on the true disposition of things and make them understood. One will discriminate among things without going to excess, and one will extend by analogy the categories of things without violating them. When listening to cases, one will accord with good form. When engaging in demonstration, one will cover thoroughly all the reasons. One will use the true Way to discriminate what is vile just like drawing out the carpenter's line in order to grasp what is curved and what is straight. Thus, deviant sayings will not be able to cause disorder, and the hundred schools will have nowhere to hide. . . .

All those who say that good order must await the elimination of desires are people who lack the means to guide desire and cannot cope with the mere having of desires. All those who say good order must await the lessening of desires are people who lack the means to restrain desire and cannot cope with abundance of desires. Having desires and lacking desires fall under different categories, namely being alive and being dead, not order and disorder. Having many desires and having few desires also fall under different categories, namely the numbers of people's dispositions, not order and disorder.

The occurrence of desires does not wait upon the possibility of fulfilling them, but those who seek to fulfill them follow what they approve. That the occurrence of desires does not wait upon the possibility of fulfilling them is something which is received from Heaven. That those who seek to fulfill them follow what they approve is something that is received from the heart. When a single desire received from Heaven is controlled by many things received from the heart, then it will be difficult to classify it as something originally received from Heaven.

Life is what people most desire, and death is what people most despise. However, when people let go of life and bring about their own death, this is not because they do not desire life and instead desire death. Rather, it is because they do not approve of living under these circumstances, but do approve of dying under these circumstances.⁸¹ Thus, when the desire is excessive but one's action does not match it, this is because the heart prevents it. If what the heart approves conforms to the proper patterns, then even if one's desires are many, what harm would they be to good order? When the desire is lacking but one's action surpasses it, this is because the heart compels it. If what the heart approves misses the proper patterns, then even if the desires are few, how would it stop short of chaos? Thus, order and disorder reside in what the heart approves, they are not present in the desires deriving from one's dispositions. If you do not seek for them where they reside, and instead seek for them where they are not present, then even though you say, "I have grasped them," you have simply missed them.

Human nature is an accomplishment of Heaven. The dispositions are the substance of the nature. The desires are the responses of the dispositions to things. To view the object of the desires as obtainable and seek for it is something that the dispositions cannot avoid, but to approve the object of desires and guide them is something that the understanding must provide. Thus, even for a gatekeeper, the desires cannot be eliminated, because they are the necessary equipment of one's nature. Even for the Son of Heaven, the desires cannot be completely satisfied. Yet even though the desires cannot be completely satisfied, one can get close to complete satisfaction, and even though desires cannot be eliminated, one's seeking can be regulated. (Even though what is desired cannot be completely obtained, the seeker can approach complete satisfaction. Even though desires cannot be eliminated, when what is sought is not obtained, one who deliberates about matters desires to regulate his seeking.)⁸² When the Way is in ascendance, then one approaches complete fulfillment. When it is in decline, then one regulates one's seeking. In the whole world there is nothing as great as it.

Every person follows that which he approves and abandons that which he does not approve, so there has never been one who knows that nothing is as great as the Way and yet does not follow the Way. Suppose some person

⁸¹Cf. *Mengzi* 6A10.

⁸²The repetitive character of these sentences makes them seem very much like glosses that were miscopied into the main text.

had a boundless desire to go south and an unsparing dislike for heading north. How would it be that, because of the impossibility of going all the way south, he would leave off heading south and instead go north? Now people have boundless desire for some things but have an unsparing dislike for others, so how would it be that, because of the impossibility of completely fulfilling their desires, they would leave the Way that will satisfy their desires and instead take up what they dislike? Thus, if one approves of the Way and follows it, then what could detract from this and so bring one to disorder? If one does not approve of the Way and departs from it, then what could add to this and yet bring one to order? Thus, those with understanding/judge things by the Way and that is all, and the things those petty schools wish for in their prized doctrines can all fade away.

Chapter Twenty-Three: Human Nature Is Bad

People's nature is bad. Their goodness is a matter of deliberate effort. Now people's nature is such that they are born with a fondness for profit. If they follow along with this, then struggle and contention will arise, and yielding and deference will perish therein. They are born with feelings of hate and dislike. If they follow along with these, then cruelty and villainy will arise, and loyalty and trustworthiness will perish therein. They are born with desires of the eyes and ears, a fondness for beautiful sights and sounds. If they follow along with these, then lasciviousness and chaos will arise, and ritual and the standards of righteousness, proper form and good order, will perish therein. Thus, if people follow along with their inborn nature and dispositions, they are sure to come to struggle and contention, turn to disrupting social divisions and disorder, and end up in violence. So, it is necessary to await the transforming influence of teachers and models and the guidance of ritual and the standards of righteousness, and only then will they come to yielding and deference, turn to culture and order, and end up under control. Looking at it in this way, it is clear that people's nature is bad, and their goodness is a matter of deliberate effort.

Thus, crooked wood must await steaming and straightening on the shaping frame, and only then does it become straight. Blunt metal must await honing and grinding, and only then does it become sharp.⁸³ Now

since people's nature is bad, they must await teachers and proper models, and only then do they become correct in their behavior. They must obtain ritual and the standards of righteousness, and only then do they become well ordered. Now without teachers or proper models for people, they will be deviant, dangerous, and incorrect in their behavior. Without ritual and the standards of righteousness, they will be unruly, chaotic, and not well ordered. In ancient times, the sage-kings saw that because people's nature is bad, they were deviant, dangerous, and not correct in their behavior, and they were unruly, chaotic, and not well-ordered. Therefore, for their sake they set up ritual and standards of righteousness, and established proper models and measures. They did this in order to straighten out and beautify people's nature and inborn dispositions and thereby correct them, and in order to train and transform people's nature and inborn dispositions and thereby guide them. Then for the first time they were well ordered and conformed to the Way. Among people of today, those who are transformed by teachers and proper models, who accumulate culture and learning, and who make ritual and the standards of righteousness their path become gentlemen. Those who give rein to their nature and inborn dispositions, who take comfort in being utterly unrestrained, and who violate ritual and the standards of righteousness become petty men. Looking at it in this way, it is clear that people's nature is bad, and their goodness is a matter of deliberate effort.

Mengzi says: When people engage in learning, this manifests the goodness of their nature. I say: This is not so. This is a case of not attaining knowledge of people's nature and of not inspecting clearly the division between people's nature and their deliberate efforts. In every case, the nature of a thing is the accomplishment of Heaven. It cannot be learned. It cannot be worked at. Ritual and the standards of righteousness are what the sage produces. They are things that people become capable of through learning, things that are achieved through working at them. Those things in people that cannot be learned and cannot be worked at are called their "nature." Those things in people that they become capable of through learning and that they achieve through working at them are called their "deliberate efforts." This is the division between nature and deliberate effort.⁸⁴

Now people's nature is such that their eyes can see, and their ears can hear. The keenness by which they see does not depart from their eyes, and

⁸³Cf. Gaozi's metaphor in *Mengzi* 6A1, and opening paragraph of *Xunzi*, chapter 1, pp. 256-57.

⁸⁴Cf. Xunzi's definitions in the opening section of the "On Correct Naming" chapter. See *Xunzi*, chapter 22, p. 292.

the acuity by which they hear does not depart from their ears. Their eyes are simply keen, and their ears are simply acute; it is clear that one does not learn these things. Mengzi says: People's nature is good, but they all wind up losing their nature and original state.⁸⁵ I say: If it is like this, then he is simply mistaken. People's nature is such that they are born and then depart from their original simplicity and their original material; they are sure to lose these things. Looking at it in this way, it is clear that people's nature is bad. The so-called goodness of people's nature would mean that one would not depart from one's original simplicity but would instead beautify it, would not depart from one's original material but instead make use of it. It would be to cause the relation of one's original simplicity and original material to beauty, and the relation of the heart's thoughts to goodness, to be like the way the keenness by which one sees does not depart from one's eyes, and the acuity by which one hears does not depart from one's ears, so that one can say [being good] is just like the way the eyes are bright and the ears are acute. . . .

Someone asks: If people's nature is bad, then from what are ritual and the standards of righteousness produced? I answer: In every case, ritual and the standards of righteousness are produced from the deliberate effort of the sage; they are not produced from people's nature. Thus, when the potter mixes clay and makes vessels, the vessels are produced from the deliberate efforts of the craftsman; they are not produced from people's nature. Thus, when the craftsman carves wood and makes utensils, the utensils are produced from the deliberate efforts of the craftsman; they are not produced from people's nature. The sage accumulates reflections and deliberations and practices deliberate efforts and reasoned activities in order to produce ritual and standards of righteousness and to establish proper models and measures. So, ritual and the standards of righteousness and proper models and measures are produced from the deliberate efforts of the sage; they are not produced from people's nature.

As for the way that the eyes like pretty colors, the ears like beautiful sounds, the mouth likes good flavors, the heart likes what is beneficial, and the bones and flesh like what is comfortable—these are produced from people's inborn dispositions and nature. These are things that come about of themselves in response to stimulation, things that do not need to await being worked at before being produced. Those things that are not

immediate responses to stimulation, that must await being worked at before they are so, are said to be produced from deliberate effort. These are the things that nature and deliberate effort produce, and their different signs. So, the sage transforms his nature and establishes deliberate effort. In establishing deliberate effort, he produces ritual and the standards of righteousness. In producing ritual and the standards of righteousness, he institutes proper models and measures. Thus, ritual and the standards of righteousness and proper models and measures are produced by the sage. Thus, that in which the sage is like the masses, that in which he is no different than the masses, is his nature. That in which he differs from and surpasses the masses is his deliberate efforts.

Liking what is beneficial and desiring gain are people's inborn dispositions and nature. Suppose there were brothers who had some property to divide, and that they followed the fondness for benefit and desire for gain in their inborn dispositions and nature. If they were to do so, then the brothers would conflict and contend with each other for it. However, let them be transformed by the proper form and good order of ritual and the standards of righteousness. If so, then they would even give it over to their countrymen. Thus, following along with inborn dispositions and nature, even brothers will struggle with each other. If transformed by ritual and the standards of righteousness, then they will even give it over to their countrymen.⁸⁶

In every case, people desire to become good because their nature is bad. The person who has little longs to have much. The person of narrow experience longs to be broadened. The ugly person longs to be beautiful. The poor person longs to be rich. The lowly person longs to be noble. That which one does not have within oneself, one is sure to seek for outside. Thus, when one is rich, one does not long for wealth. When one is noble, one does not long for power. That which one has within oneself, one is sure not to go outside oneself for it. Looking at it in this way, people desire to become good because their nature is bad.

Now people's nature is originally without ritual and without the standards of righteousness. Thus, they must force themselves to engage in learning and seek to possess them. Their nature does not know of ritual and the standards of righteousness, and so they must reflect and deliberate and seek to know them. So, going only by what they have from birth, people lack

⁸⁵Cf. Mengzi 6A6, 6A8, 7A15, and 7B31.

⁸⁶This seems to be a reference to the story of Bo Yi and Shu Qi. See *Important Figures*.

ritual and the standards of righteousness and do not know of ritual and the standards of righteousness. If people lack ritual and the standards of righteousness, then they will be chaotic. If they do not know of ritual and the standards of righteousness, then they will be unruly. So, going only by what they have from birth, unruliness and disorder are within them. Looking at it in this way, it is clear that people's nature is bad, and their goodness is a matter of deliberate effort.

Mengzi says: People's nature is good. I say: This is not so. In every case, both in ancient times and in the present, what everyone under Heaven calls good is being correct, ordered, peaceful, and controlled. What they call bad is being deviant, dangerous, unruly, and chaotic. This is the division between good and bad. Now does he really think that people's nature is originally correct, ordered, peaceful, and controlled? Then what use would there be for sage-kings? What use for ritual and the standards of righteousness? Even though there might exist sage-kings and ritual and the standards of righteousness, whatever could these add to the nature's correctness, order, peacefulness, and self-control? Now, such is not the case, because people's nature is bad. Thus, in ancient times the sage-kings saw that because their nature is bad, people were deviant, dangerous, and not correct in their behavior, and they were unruly, chaotic, and not well ordered. Therefore, for their sake they set up the power of rulers and superiors in order to control them. They made clear ritual and the standards of righteousness in order to transform them. They set up laws and standards in order to manage them. They multiplied punishments and fines in order to restrain them. As a result, they caused all under Heaven to become well ordered and conform to the Way. This is the order of the sage-kings, and the transformation from ritual and the standards of righteousness.

Now suppose one were to try doing away with the power of rulers and superiors, try doing without the transformation from ritual and the standards of righteousness, try doing away with the order of laws and standards, try doing without the restraint of punishments and fines. Then stand aside and observe how all the people of the world would treat each other. If it were like this, then the strong would harm the weak and take from them. The many would tyrannize the few and shout them down. One would not have to wait even a moment for all under Heaven to arrive at unruliness and chaos and perish. Looking at it in this way, it is clear that people's nature is bad, and that their goodness is a matter of deliberate effort.

So, those who are good at speaking of ancient times are sure to have some measure from the present. Those who are good at speaking of Heaven

are sure to have some evidence from among mankind. For any discourse, one values it if things conform to its distinctions, and if it matches the test of experience. Thus, one sits and propounds it, but when one stands up then one can implement it, and when one unfolds it then one can put it into practice. Now Mengzi says: People's nature is good. Nothing conforms to his distinctions, and this does not match the test of experience. He sits and propounds it, but when he stands up then he cannot implement it, and when he unfolds it then he cannot put it into practice. Is his error not great indeed! Thus, if human nature is good then one may do away with the sage-kings and put ritual and the standards of righteousness to rest. If human nature is bad, then one simply must side with the sage-kings and honor ritual and the standards of righteousness. . . .

Someone suggests: Ritual and the standards of righteousness and the accumulation of deliberate effort are people's nature, and that is why the sage is able to produce them. I answer: This is not so. The potter mixes clay and produces tiles. Yet, how could the clay of the tiles be the potter's nature? The craftsman carves wood and makes utensils. Yet, how could the wood of the utensils be the craftsman's nature? The relationship of the sage to ritual and the standards of righteousness can be compared to mixing clay and producing things. So, how could ritual and the standards of righteousness and the accumulation of deliberate effort be people's original nature? In every respect, the nature of Yao and Shun was one and the same as that of Jie and Robber Zhi. The nature of the gentleman is one and the same as that of the petty man. Now will you take ritual and the standards of righteousness and the accumulation of deliberate effort to be a matter of human nature? Then for what do you value Yao and Shun? For what do you value the gentleman? Everything that one values in Yao and Shun and the gentleman exists because they were able to transform their nature and to establish deliberate effort. In establishing deliberate effort, they produced ritual and the standards of righteousness. Thus, the relationship of the sage to ritual and the standards of righteousness and the accumulation of deliberate effort is like mixing clay and producing things. Looking at it in this way, then how could ritual and the standards of righteousness and the accumulation of deliberate effort be people's nature? What one finds base in Jie and Robber Zhi and the petty man is that they follow along with their nature and inborn dispositions and find comfort in utter lack of restraint, so that they turn to greed for profit and struggle and contention. Thus, it is clear that people's nature is bad, and that their goodness is a matter of deliberate effort. Heaven did not favor Zengzi, Minzi Qian, and

Xiao Yi⁸⁷ and exclude the masses. Then why is it that only Zengzi, Minzi Qian, and Xiao Yi were rich in the true substance of filial piety and were perfect in their reputation for filial piety? It is because they exerted themselves to the utmost in ritual and the standards of righteousness. Heaven does not favor the people of Qi and Lu and exclude the people of Qin. Then why is it that with regard to the standards of righteousness for father and son, and the proper distinction between husband and wife, they are not as good at filial reverence and respectful good form as those of Qi and Lu? It is because the people of Qin follow along with their inborn dispositions and nature, take comfort in utter lack of restraint, and are lax in regard to ritual and the standards of righteousness. How could it be because their natures are different?

Anyone on the streets could become a Yu. How do I mean this? I say: That by which Yu was Yu was that he was benevolent, righteous, lawful, and correct. Thus, benevolence, righteousness, lawfulness, and correctness have patterns that can be known and can be practiced. However, people on the streets all have the material for knowing benevolence, righteousness, lawfulness, and correctness, and they all have the equipment for practicing benevolence, righteousness, lawfulness, and correctness. Thus, it is clear that they could become a Yu. Now if benevolence, righteousness, lawfulness, and correctness originally had no patterns that could be known or practiced, then even Yu would not know benevolence, righteousness, lawfulness, and correctness, nor would he be able to practice benevolence, righteousness, lawfulness, and correctness. Shall we suppose that people on the streets originally do not have the material to know benevolence, righteousness, lawfulness, and correctness, and that they originally do not have the equipment for practicing benevolence, righteousness, lawfulness, and correctness? If so, then within the family, the people on the streets could not know the standards of righteousness for father and son, and outside the family, they could not know the proper relations of ruler and minister. This is not so. Now it is the case that the people on the streets can all know the standards of righteousness for father and son within the family, and can know the proper relations of ruler and minister outside the family. Thus, it is clear that the material for understanding these things and the equipment for practicing

them is present in the people on the streets. Now if the people on the streets were to use their material for understanding these things and the equipment for practicing them to base themselves upon the knowable patterns and practicable aspects of benevolence and righteousness, then it is clear that the people on the streets could become a Yu. Now if the people on the streets were to submit themselves to the proper arts and practice learning, if they were to concentrate their heart and make single-minded their intentions, if they were to ponder, query, and thoroughly investigate—then if they add to this days upon days and connect to this a long period of time, if they accumulate goodness without stopping, then they will achieve spirit-like powers and understanding, and will form a triad with Heaven and earth.

Thus, becoming a sage is something that people achieve through accumulation. Someone says: Sageliness is achieved through accumulation, but why is it that not everyone can accumulate in this way? I say: They could do it, but they cannot be made to do it. Thus, the petty man could become a gentleman, but is not willing to become a gentleman. The gentleman could become a petty man, but is not willing to become a petty man.⁸⁸ It has never been that the petty man and gentleman are incapable of becoming each other. However, the reason they do not become each other is that while they could do so, they cannot be made to do so. Thus, it is the case that the people in the streets could become a Yu, but it is not necessarily the case that the people in the streets will be able to become a Yu. Even if one is not able to become a Yu, this does not harm the fact that one could become a Yu. One's feet could walk over every place under Heaven. Even so, there has not yet been anyone who has been able to walk everywhere under Heaven. It has never been that craftsmen, carpenters, farmers, and merchants could not do each other's business. However, none have ever been able to do each other's business. Looking at it in this way, one is not always able to do what one could do. Even if one is not able to do it, this is no harm to the fact that one could do it. Thus, the difference between being able and being unable, on the one hand, and could and could not, on the other, is far indeed. It is clear, then, that [the gentleman and the petty man] could become one another.

Yao asked Shun, "What are people's inborn dispositions like?" Shun answered, "People's inborn dispositions are most unlovely! Why ask about

⁸⁷Zengzi and Minzi Qian were both disciples of Kongzi. Xiao Yi (or "Filial Yi") was heir to the throne of Gaizong, ruler of the Shang dynasty. All three were famous for their displays of filial piety.

⁸⁸Cf. Mengzi 6A15.

them? When one has a wife and son, then one's filial piety to one's parents declines. When one's appetites and desires are fulfilled, then one's faithfulness to friends declines. When one's rank and salary are full, then one's loyalty to one's ruler declines. People's inborn dispositions? People's inborn dispositions? They are most unlovely! Why ask about them? Only the worthy man is not like that. . . .

Chapter Twenty-Seven: The Grand Digest

The gentleman dwells in benevolence by means of righteousness,⁸⁹ and only then is it benevolence. He carries out righteousness by means of ritual, and only then is it righteousness. In conducting ritual, he returns to the roots of things and completes the branches of things, and only then is it ritual. When all three are thoroughly mastered, only then is it the Way. . . .

Chapter Twenty-Nine: The Way to Be a Son

To be filial upon entering and to be a good younger brother upon going out is lesser conduct. To be compliant to one's superiors and devoted to one's subordinates is middle conduct. To follow the Way and not one's lord, to follow righteousness and not one's father is the greatest conduct. If one's intentions are at ease in ritual, and one's words are put forth in accordance with the proper classes of things, then the Confucian way is complete. Even Shun could not improve on this by so much as a hair's breadth. There are three cases in which the filial son does not follow orders. When following orders will endanger one's parents, but not following orders will make them safe, then the filial son will not follow orders, and this is having scruples. When following orders will disgrace one's parents, but not following orders will bring them honor, then the filial son will not follow orders, and this is being righteous. When following orders would involve doing something being beastly, but not following orders would involve doing something cultivated and decorous, then the filial son will not follow orders, and this is being respectful. And so, not following orders when it is permissible to do so is to behave as though one is not a son. Following orders when it is not permissible to do so is to lack any scruples. If one understands the proper purposes of following and not following orders, and if one can be reverent,

respectful, loyal, trustworthy, honest, and dedicated so as to carry these out vigilantly, then this can be called the greatest filial piety. A proverb states, "Follow the Way, not your lord. Follow righteousness, not your father." This expresses my meaning.

⁸⁹The wording here recalls *Analekts* 4.1.

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