A BRIEF HISTORY OF EARLY CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

Author(s): Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki

Source: *The Monist*, JULY, 1907, Vol. 17, No. 3 (JULY, 1907), pp. 415-450

Published by: Oxford University Press

Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/27900050

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INTRODUCTION.

A TOLERABLY authentic history of Chinese civilization dates back as early as three thousand years before the Christian era, when the Three Rulers[1] and the Five Emperors[2] began to govern well-settled communities along the Yellow River. The Shu King,[3] one of the oldest books extant in China, contains among others some important documents issued by Yao and Shun,[4] whose imperial reigns flourished presumably in the twenty-fourth century before Christ. These documents contain some interesting religious material shedding light on the early Chinese conception of nature, which is still prevalent with only slight modifications down to the present day. But the real awakening of philosophical inquiry in China must be said to be in the time when the Chou dynasty (1122-255 B. C.) began to show signs of decline in the seventh century be-

[1] The "Three Rulers," generally known as the Heavenly, Earthly, and Human Sovereigns, are perhaps personifications of the three powers of nature. Their age belongs to the mythological era of Chinese history.

[2] The "Five Emperors" are always mentioned, but their names differ. A most popular enumeration is Fuh Hi, Shên Ming, Huang Ti, Kin T'ien, and Chuan Hü, covering the period 2852-2355 B. C.

[3] The Shu King is one of the five canonical books called *King*, which are: Yi King (Book of Changes), Shih King (Book of Odes), Shu King (Book of History), Li Ki (Records of Rites), and Ch'un Ch'iu (Spring and Autumn.) See the *Sacred Books of the East*, vols. III, XVI, XXVII, XXVIII, and also *Chinese Classics* by Legge, vols. III, IV, V.

[4] The two ideal sage-kings of ancient China. Yao reigned 2356-2255 B. C., and Shun, 2255-2205. B. C.

fore Christ. The Chinese intellect, however, must have been in operation for a long time before this, and the results of it, though imperfect and fragmentary, found their way in some of the appendices of the Yi King and in Laotze's Tao Te King and in other ancient books.

Beginning with the seventh century B. C., a galaxy of philosophical and ethical thinkers led by Laotze and Confucius continued most brilliantly to illuminate the early stage of Chinese philosophy. It was as though one would walk in springtime, after the confinement of a long, monotonous winter, into the field, where flowers of various hues and odors greet him on all sides. Thus, this epoch comprising about four hundred years was one of the most glorious periods in the whole history of Chinese civilization; and because it was suddenly cut short by the Ch'in dynasty, it is commonly known as the Ante-Ch'in period. The Chinese mind may have developed later a higher power of reasoning and made a deeper study of consciousness, but its range of intellectual activities was never surpassed in any other period. If, later on, it gained in precision, it lost sadly in its freedom which sometimes turned to pure wantonness. It had many problems to busy itself with at this awakening stage of national intellectual life. The universe was yet new to the thinking mind, which was able to find problems to grapple with wheresoever its attention was directed, it was so plastic and so creative. But after this there set in a time of induration, whereby the intellectual blood was doomed to run along the old stiffened veins.

An unhappy end came quite abruptly to this glorious Ante-Ch'in period. When in the year 221 B. C. the First Emperor (Shih Huang Tî) of the Ch'in dynasty (221-206 B. C.) succeeded in consolidating the small kingdoms and dukedoms of feudal China into one empire, he took the most drastic measures ever conceived by an absolute monarch

to suppress the spirit of liberty which was just beginning to bloom. He would not tolerate a single thought that did not agree with his. He would not countenance scholars and thinkers who dared to assume an independent air and voice their own opinions. He silenced all criticism by burying his critics alive, and put an end to the discord of beliefs by burning all the books and documents that were not in sympathy with the new administration (213 B. C.). The effects of such radical measures were just what the Emperor desired. He suppressed all independence of thought and reduced the spirit of the nation to a comatose condition, which lasted for a millennium. During these times, China produced not a single original thinker. The cyclone was so destructive, leaving desolation in its wake, that the people did not venture building any new structure of thought, but were constantly endeavoring to recover what they had lost. They made a diligent search among the literary remains. Whatever discoveries they made were carefully studied, and commentaries were written by various hands. Those which could not be found, though their traditional existence was known, were manufactured and came out boldly with the old labels on them. So, this period proved a fruitful season for literary forgery.

Buddhism was introduced during this lethargic period of Chinese thought (213 B. C.—959 A. D.). In spite of the strong conservative spirit of the Celestials, the new doctrine did not meet with great opposition. Finding a similar vein of thought in the teachings of Laotze, the Buddhists utilized his terminology to the best advantage, and also coined a number of new words to express ideas hitherto unknown to the Chinese. A gradual and steady spread of Buddhism among the scholars paved the way for a renaissance under the Sung dynasty (960-1279 A. D.). The people were not observing the propagation of

the foreign doctrine with their characteristic indifference, but gradually recognized the superiority in many respects of the Hindu intellect, especially in metaphysics and methodology. This recognition of the merits of Buddhism was a great impulse to the pedantic disciples of Confucius.

Though the Confucians were not inclined in those days to do anything more than merely editing and commenting upon some lately discovered classics, Chinese Buddhists busily occupied themselves with the elaboration of their sutras. They not only rendered many Sanskrit texts into their own language, but also produced some original religio-philosophical works. Their inspiration, of course, originally came from the Buddhist canons, but they assimilated them so perfectly that Chinese Buddhism can be said to stand on its own footing. Their philosophy was more profound than that of Confucius. Their world-conception penetrated more deeply into the nature of things. We generally understand by the history of Chinese philosophy that of Confucianism, for it is nothing more than that except in the Ante-Ch'in period when other thoughts than those of Confucius appeared in the arena. But if we want to thoroughly understand the train of thought that was prevalent during the renaissance, we cannot ignore the significance of the development of Buddhism during the hibernation period of Confucianism.

The re-awakening of Chinese philosophy under the Sung dynasty marked a clearly defined period in its history. Speculation which was refreshed after its long slumber of one thousand years, now grappled with the questions of the Sphinx more intelligently, if not more boldly, than it did during the Ante-Ch'in period. Buddhism stirred up the Chinese nerve to respond to the new stimuli. It furnished the Chinese stomach with more food to digest and assimilate into its system. But the Chinese did not swallow the new food just as it came to them. They in-

tuitively discarded what they thought was not profitable for their practical nature. They drew inspiration from Buddhism in those problems only which Confucius set up for their intellectual exercise. It may, therefore, be properly said that this period of Chinese renaissance did not bring out any new philosophical problems outside of the narrow path beaten by the earlier Confucians. During the Ante-Ch'in period Confucianism was not yet firmly established, and there were rival doctrines which struggled for ascendancy and recognition. The thinkers of the time felt a strong aversion to being yoked to one set of teachings. But the philosophers of the Sung dynasty would never think of deviating from the old rut. They became conscious of many new thoughts introduced from India, and endeavored to utilize them only so far as they were available for a fuller interpretation of the Confucian doctrines, which, like the will of the Almighty, were to them irrevocable and infallible. They never dreamt of repudiating or contradicting them in any way. All their new acquisitions, from whatever source they might have come, were invariably made use of for the discovery of something hidden in the old doctrines and for a fuller analysis of them. What was original with them was the interpretation of the old system in a new light.

Strictly speaking, the Chinese are not speculative people as the Greeks and Hindus were. Their interests always center in moral science. Whatever subtlety is in reasoning, and whatever boldness in imagination, they never lose sight of the practical and moral aspect of things. They refuse to be carried up to a heaven where inhabitants "neither marry nor are given in marriage." They prefer to be tied down in earthly relations wherever they may go. They would deride those star-gazers whose legs are fatally chained to the earth; for to whatsoever soaring heights man's speculation may climb, he is utterly unable to change

his destiny here below. This must always be kept in mind when we peruse the history of Chinese thought. The practical nature and conservatism of Confucianism put an eternal seal on it, forever forbidding it to wander in a cometary orbit.

The Sung dynasty is followed by the Yin (1271-1363), which did not contribute anything worth especial consideration to the history of Chinese philosophy. This short Mongolian dynasty left its pages opened where it found them. Its successor, the Ming dynasty (1363-1663), however, produced one great moral and intellectual character in the person of Wang Yang-ming (1472-1529). He was a worthy heir to the thoughts that stimulated and rejuvenated the Chinese mind at the time of the Sung renaissance. Though he was not an independent philosopher in the sense of being non-Confucian, he was original enough to find a new path to the confirmation and realization of the old, time-honored doctrines. After the passing of this luminary, the Chinese intellectual heavens have again been overcast with clouds; and from his time until the present day nothing significant and deserving mention has ever stirred the Chinese serenity. Under the present Manchurian dynasty (reigning since 1644), China enjoys a dreamy inactivity induced by the excessive use of the opium of conservatism.

Some time has elapsed since the introduction of Western culture and thought into the Far East, but only a handful of scholars among hundreds of millions of souls have condescended to have a shy look at it, while the remainder are contentedly living in company with their time-worn, thread-bare usages and traditions and superstitions. Any one who knows the Chinese mode of thinking will admit that it may take some five hundred years more to waken the sleeping giant of the Orient intellectually from

his eternal slumber and to make him contribute something of his own to the world-treasury of thought.

GENERAL CHARACTER OF ANTE-CH'IN LITERATURE.

The Ante-Ch'in period yields the richest harvest of original thought in the whole history of Chinese philosophy. As the tide of civilization had then advanced far enough and the general social and political environment of the time was very favorable, the Chinese mind plunged itself unreservedly into a bold speculation on life and the universe. It had nothing so far in the past that would distract it from fully expressing itself. It was ushered into a field whose virgin soil had not yet been touched by human hands. Natural selection had not yet set her stamp on any definite conception of life that seemed universally acceptable to the national intellectual idiosyncrasy. The competition for supremacy was keen and free, and time had not yet announced the survival of the fittest. Confucianism was found still struggling for its existence; Taoism was not yet recognized as a distinct system; the so-called *I-twan*,[5] heterodox teachings, were boldly standing on a level with the orthodox, *Chang-tao*[6]. Enjoying the utmost freedom of speech and unhampered by the tyranny of tradition, every man of intelligence ventured his own opinion and could find a hearing. If the facilities of printing and distribution were such as they are to-day, we can imagine what a spectacular sight the Chinese world of thought would present in this Ante-Ch'in period.

The Chinese mind seems to have exhausted itself in this period, for through the entire course of its history no further original thoughts appeared, than were expressed at this time either explicitly or by implication. Some of the thoughts that were then uttered audibly

[5] 異端 [6] 正道

enough had even to suffer the sad fate of being almost entirely ignored by later philosophers. As soon as the Confucian teachings gained a strong hold on the people, no doctrines were encouraged to develop that did not help to elucidate Confucius in a better light or in a popular form. The history of Chinese thought after the Ch'in closely resembles in this respect that of the European Mediæval philosophy, only the former assumed a milder form; for Confucianism did not favor superstition, fanaticism, and irrational vagaries such as we meet with in the Middle Ages. It was practical to a fault, moralizing and positivistic, and refused to be thrown into the abysmal depths of metaphysics. Consequently, the train of thought found in Taoism could not make any further development even after its contact with Hindu speculation represented in Buddhism. Chwangtze was practically the climax of the Laotzean philosophy, with no system, with no method, but pregnant with mystic suggestions and vague assumptions. Thus, it can be said that the Chinese philosophy of the Ante-Ch'in period was richer in thought, broader in scope, and bolder in speculation than that in any succeeding age.

One thing at least that prevented the Chinese from making headway in their philosophy, is their use of ideographic characters. Not only are the characters themselves intractable, inflexible and clumsy, but their grammatical construction is extremely loose. The verbs are not subject to conjugation, the nouns are indeclinable, no tense-relations are grammatically expressible. Now, language is the tool of reason, and at the same time it is the key to the understanding. When we cannot wield the tool as we will, the material on which we work fails to produce the effects we desire; and the reader is at a loss to understand the real meaning which was intended by the author. How could thinkers of the first magnitude

express themselves satisfactorily in such a language as Chinese? Terseness, brevity, strength, and classical purity are desirable in certain forms of literature, and for this purpose the Chinese language may be eminently adapted. But while logical accuracy and literal precision are the first requisites, those rhetorical advantages mean very little. More than that, they are actually an inconvenience and even a hindrance to philosophical writings.[7]

Another thing that is sadly lacking in the Chinese mind is logic. This fact shows itself in the Ante-Ch'in philosophy and throughout its succeeding periods. In India as well as in Greece, when intellectual culture reached a similar height to that of the Ante-Ch'in period in China, they had their logic and *hetuvidya* (science of causes). They were very strict in reasoning and systematic in drawing conclusions. Their minds seem to have been made of much finer fiber than the Chinese. The latter were filled with common sense and practical working knowledge. They did not want to waste their mental energy on things which have apparently no practical and immediate bearings on their everyday life. They did not necessarily aim at distinctness of thought and exactitude of expression, for in our practical and concrete world there is nothing that can claim absolute exactness. As long as we are moving on earth, the Chinese might have unconsciously reasoned, there was no need for them to get entangled in the meshes of verbal subtlety and abstract speculation. Therefore, when their philosophy did not

[7] We can well imagine what a difficult task it was for the first Chinese Buddhists to render their highly abstract and greatly complicated canonical books into the native tongue. They could never be transformed and compressed into the classical model of Chinese philosophy; and the result was that even to-day after more than one thousand years of intercourse and intermixture with the native thoughts, Buddhist literature forms a distinct class by itself. Those scholars who are versed only in general Chinese classics are unable to understand Buddhist writings. Even Buddhist monks themselves who could not read the Sanskrit or Pali originals must have experienced almost unsurmountable difficulties in understanding the translations of their sacred books.

vanish in the mist of vague mysticism as in the case of Taoism, it tenaciously clung to the agnosticism of every-day experience, in which there was no absolute being, no miraculous revelation, no eternal individual continuity after death.

Now let us see what were the principal thoughts that were being elaborated by the Chinese mind during the Ante-Ch'in period of Chinese philosophy. They will be broadly treated under "Philosophy," "Ethics," and "Religion."

PHILOSOPHY.

The philosophy of the Chinese has always been practical and closely associated with human affairs. No ontological speculation, no cosmogonical hypothesis, no abstract ethical theory, seemed worthy of their serious contemplation unless it had a direct bearing upon practical morality. They did, indeed, speculate in order to reach the ultimate ground of existence, but existence as they conceived it did not cover so wide a realm as we commonly understand it, for to them it meant not the universe in general, but only a particular portion of it, that is, human affairs, and these only so far as they are concerned with this present mundane life, political and social. Thus, we do not have in China so much of pure philosophy as of moral sayings. The Chinese must be said to have strictly observed the injunction: "Know then thyself, presume not God to scan; the proper study of mankind is man." And this fact must be borne in mind when we investigate the history of Chinese philosophy. Though here I have devoted a special chapter to philosophy, it must be understood that the subject was treated by the Chinese somewhat as a side-issue.

Dualism, or the Yin and Yang.

Two antagonistic currents of thought manifested themselves at an early date in the history of Chinese philosophy and run throughout its entire course. One is represented by the Yi King and Confucius (B. C. 551-479),[8] the other by Laotze.[9] The former advocated a dualism and showed agnostic, positivistic, and practical tendencies, while the latter was monistic, mystical, and transcendental.

Dualism was the first speculative philosophy ever constructed by Chinese thinkers. It is set forth in one of the oldest writings called Yi King, "Book of Changes." The book is, however, the most unintelligible, most enigmatical document ever found in Chinese literature. Many conflicting theories have been advanced as to its real value and meaning, and we have not yet come to any definite settlement. As far as I can judge, its true significance had been entirely lost even as early as the beginning of the Chou dynasty. Not being able to determine its exact nature, King Wen (B. C. 1231-1135) and Lord Chou (who died B. C. 1105) took it for a sort of general treatise on natural phenomena and human affairs, and upon this surmise they

[8] What was done by Confucius along the line of literary work, was mostly the compiling and editing of old records and traditions. Of the Five Canonical Books thus edited by him, the Spring and Autumn undoubtedly comes from his own pen, but certain parts of the Book of Changes (*Yi King*) known as "Appendices" and usually ascribed to his authorship are denied by some scholars to be indisputably his. The best book that gives his unadulterated views is the Analects (*Lun Yü*) compiled probably by his immediate disciples after his death. It also throws light on his personality. It is the New Testament of Confucianism. An English translation (second edition) by Legge was published in 1893. The volume also contains his translation of the other two of the Four Books (*shu*), that is, The Great Learning (*Tai Hsiao*) and The Doctrine of the Mean (*Chung Yung*). The Mencius, the fourth book of the Four Books, was also translated by Legge, and forms the second volume of *Chinese Classics*.

[9] The life of Laotze is almost lost in a legendary mist, but one thing that is authentically known is that he was an older contemporary of Confucius and flourished during the sixth century before Christ. The Tao Teh King, "Canon of Reason and Virtue," is the title of his only work, which is said to have been written by him through the request of his friend and disciple, Kwan Yin-hi, when the old philosopher was leaving his own country. More about the book below.

wrote some commentary notes which imply suggestions of practical wisdom and moral instructions. Some four hundred years later, Confucius again struggled hard to arrive at a definite and true estimate of the book. He seems to have been not wholly satisfied with the practical interpretation of it by Wen and Chou. He wished to find a speculative philosophical foundation in the apparently confusing and enigmatic passages of the Yi King. He is said to have expressed his earnest desire to have his life prolonged several years, so that he could devote them exclusively to the study of this mysterious literature. The "Appendices"[10] popularly ascribed to Confucius contain some philosophical reflections, and on that account some later exegetists declare that the Yi King was primarily a philosophical treatise and later transformed into a book of divination. Whatever the true nature of the book, it is from this that early Chinese thinkers derived their dualistic conception of the world.

Some lexicographers think that the character *yi*[11] is made of "sun"[12] and "moon"[13]. Whether this be the real origin of the character or not, the interpretation is very ingenious, for *yi* means change in any form,—the change from daylight to moonlight night, the change from blooming springtime to harvesting autumn, or the change from fortune to ill luck and *vice versa*. Change is a predominant characteristic of all existence; and this is caused by the interplay of the male (*yang*) and the female (*yin*) principles in the universe. According to the interaction of these opposite forces, which in the Yi King proper are called *Chien*[14] and *K'un*[15] and represented respectively by a whole line and a divided line, beings now come into exist-

[10] We do not know certainly whether Confucius really wrote those "Appendices." They may contain some of his own words and thoughts, especially in such passages as introduced by "The Master said"; but the "Appendices" as a whole were evidently written by many hands, as their styles and expressions and points of view vary widely from one another.

[11] 易 [12] 日 [13] 月 [14] 乾 [15] 坤

ence and now go out of it, and a constant transformation in the universe takes place.

So it is said in the Appendix III, (cf. Legge, p. 348 et seq.): "Heaven is high, earth is low; and [the relation between] the strong (*chien*) and the weak (*k'un*) is determined. The low and the high are arranged in order, and [the relation between] the noble and the lowly is settled. Movement and rest follow their regular course, and [the relation between] the rigid and the tender is defined.

"Things are set together according to their classes; beings are divided according to their groups; and there appear good and evil. In the heavens there are [different] bodies formed; and there take place changes and transformations.

"Therefore, the rigid and the tender come in contact; the eight symbols interact. To stimulate we have thunder and lightning. To moisten we have wind and rain. The sun and moon revolve and travel, which give rise to cold and warmth.

"The strong principle makes the male, and the weak principle makes the female. By the strong the great beginning is known, and weak brings beings into completion. The strong principle becomes intelligible through changes, the weak principle becomes efficient through selection. The changing is easy to understand. Selection is easy to follow. As it is easy to understand, there grows familiarity: as it is easy to follow efficiency is gained. That which is familiar will last: that which is efficient will be great. Lasting is the virtue of a wise man; great is the accomplishment of a wise man. Through change and selection is obtained the reason of the universe. When the reason of the universe is obtained, the perfect abides in its midst."

Again, Confucius says in Appendix IV (cf. Legge, p. 395): "The strong and the weak are the gates of change.

The strong is the male gender, and the weak is the female gender. When the male and the female are united in their virtues, the rigid and the tender are formulated, in which are embodied all the phenomena of heaven and earth, and through which are circulated the powers of the spirits bright."

To make another quotation, in which the gist of the dualistic conception of the Yi King is more concisely stated (Appendix VI, cf. Legge, p. 423): "In olden times when the wise men made the Yi, they wanted it to be in accord with the nature and destiny of things, which is reason. Therefore, they established the heavenly way in Yin and Yang; they established the earthly way in tenderness and rigidness; they established the human way in humaneness and righteousness. Thus, each of the three powers of nature was made to be controlled by a set of two principles."

Whatever we may call them, the strong and the weak, or the rigid and the tender, or the male and the female, or heaven and earth, or Yang and Yin, or Chien and K'un, there are according to the Yi King two independent principles, and their interplay governed by fixed laws constitutes the universe. And these fixed laws are nothing else than the sixty-four trigrams (*kua*)[16] as defined and explained, however enigmatically, in the Yi King proper. The practical Chinese mind, however, did not see this numerical conception of the world in its widest philosophical significance as Pythagoras did, but confined it to the vicissitudes of human affairs. Even when Confucius attempted to see a natural philosophical basis in the composition of the Yi King, he could not ignore its ethical bearings and plunged himself deeply into bold speculations. The most prominent trait of the Chinese mind is to moralize on every imaginable subject. They could not but betray this

[16] 卦

tendency even with the apparently nonsensical whole and divided strokes of the eight trigrams.[17]

Positivism.

Along with a dualistic conception of nature, what is most characteristic of Chinese thought is its strong aversion to metaphysics. Avowed assertions of this sentiment have been repeatedly made by Confucius and his school, who later on proved to be the typical representative of the Chinese national mind. They persistently refused to go beyond our everyday experiences. Their prosaic intellect always dwelt on things human and mundane. The discovery of two contrasting principles in nature satisfied their speculative curiosity, if they had any; they did not venture into a realm beyond the interaction in this visible universe of the Yin and Yang. And it was through this interaction that some definite laws have come to be established in the physical world as well as in the moral, and these laws are curiously set forth in the Book of Changes. Therefore, what we have to do here on earth is to put ourselves in harmony with these laws. When this is done, our life-program as human being is completed. Why shall we go beyond these observable and intelligible laws of nature and morality, only to find out something transcendental and therefore necessarily having no practical bearings on our earthly life? Are we not sufficient unto ourselves without making our imagination soar high? This is the most characteristic attitude of Confucius.

Says Confucius, "How could we know death when

[17] I shall not venture my opinion concerning the nature and significance of the Yi King proper, as this does not particularly concern us here. The "Appendices" are more important and interesting as embodying an early system of Chinese speculation and as forecasting the development of Chinese philosophy in the Sung Dynasty. For further information concerning the *kua* (trigrams) and *yao* (lines) of the Yi King, see Dr. Carus's *Chinese Philosophy* and *Chinese Thought*, p. 25 ff. (Open Court Publishing Co., Chicago) and Legge's Yi King in the *S. B. E.*, vol. XVI.

life is not yet understood?" (An., bk. XI.) Again, "Do not trouble yourselves with things supernatural, physical prowess, monstrosities, and spiritual beings." (Bk. VII.) Again, "How could we serve spiritual beings while we do not know how to serve men?" (Bk. XI.) In the Doctrine of the Mean (*Chung Yang*), however, Confucius expresses himself much more plainly concerning spiritual beings, (Chapter XVI): "How glorious are the virtues of spiritual beings! Our eyes cannot perceive them, our ears cannot hear them, yet they embody themselves in all things, which cannot exist without them. Yet, [the spirits] make all the people in the world regulate themselves, cleanse themselves, and, clad in the ceremonial dress, attend to the sacrificial ceremony. How full and pervading they are! They seem to be above us, they seem to be with us. It is said in the Odes that the coming of the spirits is beyond [human] calculation, and much more beyond a feeling of aversion. The reason why the invisible are so manifest is that sincerity can never be concealed."

According to these passages, the Confucian doctrine is quite apparent. There might be something on the other side of this life. All these natural phenomena and moral doings might have something underneath them, from which they gain their evidently inexplicable energy. Indeed, we feel the existence of something invisible, we are compelled to acknowledge this fact as at the time of the sacrificial ceremony. But we do not know its exact nature and signification, which are too deep or too hidden for the human understanding to unravel. As far as its apparent recognizable laws and manifestations are concerned, they are, however enigmatically, stated in the Book of Changes, and all that we mortals have to do in this world is to understand these knowable phenomena and leave alone the unknowable. This line of argument seems to have appealed most strongly to the Confucian mind.

Indeed, the Confucians and other philosophers speak of T'ien[18] or Heaven, or Heavenly Destiny (*t'ien ming*),[19] or the Great Limit (*t'ai chi*)[20]; but they never seem to have attempted any further investigation of the nature of this mysterious being or principle called T'ien.

* * *

It is in the Yi King that we can trace, though very sporadically, an idealistic, monistic, and mystical tendency, which finally developed into the speculative philosophy of the Sung dynasty, but which was almost completely neglected by the early advocates of the Confucian school. I shall quote here some passages from the Yi King to illustrate my point. Before quoting, however, it will be opportune to remark here that the term "Yi" sometimes has the force and signification of an abstract principle itself rather than the actual phenomenon of mere transformation or interaction, and again that it sometimes designates a system of philosophy which most truthfully explains the reason of all changes in this dualistic world.

"The Yi[21] is not conscious, nor does it labor; it is quiet and does not stir. It feels and then communes with the wherefore of the universe. If it were not the most spiritual thing in the universe, how could it behave this wise?

"It is through the Yi that holy men fathom the depths [of being] and explore the reason of motion (*chi*).[22] Deep it is, and therefore it is able to comprehend the will of the universe. It is the reason of motion, and therefore it is able to accomplish the work of the universe. It is spiritual, and therefore it quickens without being speedy, it arrives without walking."

Further, we read (cf. Legge, p. 373): "Therefore, the Yi has the great origin (*t'ai chi*), which creates the two principles; and the two principles create the four symbols (*hsiang*); and the four symbols create the eight trigrams

[18] 天 [19] 天命 [20] 太極 [21] Cf. Legge, p. 370. [22] 幾

(*kua*). The eight trigrams determine the good and evil; and the good and evil create the great work."

In the first of the so-called Confucian Appendices (Hsi Tz'u),[23] we have:

"The Yi is in accord with Heaven and Earth, and therefore it pervades and is interwoven in the course of Heaven and Earth.

"Look upward, and it is observable in the heavenly phenomena; look downward, and it is recognizable in the earthly design. And it is for this reason that the Yi manifests the wherefore of darkness and brightness.

"As it traces things to their beginning and follows them to their end, it makes known the meaning of death and birth.

"Things are made of the subtle substance (*ching ch'i*)[24] and changes occur on account of the wandering spirits (*yu 'hun*).[25] Therefore, the Yi knows the characters and conditions of the spiritual beings (*kuei shan*).[26]

"The Yi seems to be Heaven and Earth themselves, and it therefore never deviates. Its wisdom penetrates the ten thousand things. Its way delivers the world, and it therefore never errs. It rejoices itself in heavenly [ordination] and knows its own destiny; therefore, it never grieves. It rests in its own abode, and its lovingkindness is sincere, and therefore it is capable of its love. It moulds and envelops all the transformations in Heaven and Earth; and it never errs [in its work]. It thoroughly brings all the ten thousand things into completion, and there is nothing wanting in them. Its wisdom passes through the course of day and night. Therefore, the spirits have no quarters, and the Yi has no materiality."

Finally, Yi seems to be used in the sense of *Gesetzmässigkeit*. For instance (cf. Legge, p. 377):

"When Ch'ien (male) and K'un (female) are ar-

[23] 繫辭上傳 Cf. Legge, p. 353 [24] 精氣 [25] 游魂 [26] 鬼神

ranged in order, the Yi is established between them. When Ch'ien and K'un are destroyed, there is no way of recognizing the Yi. When the Yi is no more recognizable, Ch'ien and K'un may be considered to have altogether ceased to exist."

All these are interesting thoughts, and if Confucius was the real author of these Appendices to the Yi King, from which these quotations are taken, they will prove that Confucius was not after all merely a moral teacher, but was capable of delving deep into the mysteries of life and existence; and we can say that what made the latter-day Confucianism such as it is, is more or less due to the emphasis by its followers of certain practical features of the Confucian doctrine at the expense of its more speculative side. If the master were followed more faithfully and his teachings were developed in all their diverse features, there might have been a much earlier reconciliation between Laotzeanism and Confucianism.

* * *

Mencius[27] who was the most brilliant and most militant of all the Confucians of the Ante-Ch'in period, and through whom Confucianism can be said to have been finally and definitely established in such form as we understand it now, speaks of the *Hao jan chi ch'i*[28] as filling the universe. (Bk. III.) This Ch'i can freely be translated "universal energy" or "impulse that awakens, stim-

[27] 孟 子 His date is not exactly known. He seems to have lived somewhere between B. C. 379 and 294. Mencius is the Latinized form of Mangtze. His work which bears his own name consists of seven chapters or books. Similar to the Confucian Analects, it is mainly composed of the dialogues which took place between the author and the feudal lords of his days whom he visited, and also of those between him and his followers as well as contemporary scholars. Legge's English translation of the Mencius is included in the *Chinese Classics*. Arthur B. Hutchinson published in 1897 an English translation of Farber's *Mind of Mencius* which is written in German. The subtitle of the book is "Political economy based upon moral philosophy, a systematic digest of the doctrines of the Chinese philosopher."

[28] 浩然之氣

ulates, and accelerates activity"; it is a kind of psychical agency which animates life on this earth; it is a nervous system of the macrocosm. But Mencius did not use the term in such a broad sense, he limited its sphere and value of activity to our moral life. It is more definite, more psychical, and therefore nearer to humanity than the Confucian conception of T'ien or T'ien Ming, which seems to be a vestige, though considerably refined, of natural religion as professed in the Shu King or Shih King. None the less Mencius's Ch'i was too practical, too ethical, to be elevated to the dignity of a universal principle of existence. He did not apparently take any interest in the metaphysical side of the Yi system. He developed only the ethicalism of his great predecessor, though not in its entirety and completeness. He was truly the representative of the Confucian positivism.

Monism.

There were not lacking, however, in the Ante-Ch'in period certain tendencies that counterbalanced the ultra-practical, positivistic train of thought as represented by Confucianism. Though these tendencies did not attain a full manifestation at any time in the history of Chinese thought, they showed a strong front at this incipient stage to their antagonistic systems. They sprang mainly from the teachings of the Tao Te King,[29] and may be characterized as monistic, mystic, transcendental, and sometimes pantheistic. Laotze, however, was not the first and sole expounder of these thoughts. He doubtless had many predecessors whose words and lives are scatteringly re-

[29] There exist several translations of this most widely known book of Taoism in the English as well as other European languages. It is a short work consisting of some five thousand Chinese characters. It is divided into eighty-one chapters as we have it now, but the division was not the author's own, and it sometimes distracts us from an intelligent reading of the book as a whole, which may best be considered a compilation of epigrams and aphorisms.

corded by Confucius, Mencius, Chwangtze, Liehtze, and others, including Laotze himself. What was most meritorious in the author of the Tao Te King was that he gave to these thoughts a literary form through which we are able to trace the history of the Chinese monistic movement to its sources.

When we pass from Confucius to Laotze, we experience an almost complete change of scenery. Confucius, in whom the Chinese minds are most typically mirrored, rarely deviates from the plain, normal, prosaic, and practical path of human life; and his eyes are steadily kept upon our earthly moral relations. Laotze occasionally betrays his national traits, but he does not hesitate to climb the dizzy heights of speculation and imagination. The very first passage of the Tao Te King shows how different his mode of thought is from that of the Confucian school.

"The reason (*tao*) that can be reasoned is not the eternal reason. The name that can be named is not the eternal name. The unnamable is the beginning of heaven and earth. The namable is the mother of the ten thousand things. Therefore, in eternal non-being I wish to see the spirituality of things; and in eternal being I wish to see the limitation of things. These two things are the same in source but different in name. Their sameness is called a mystery. Indeed, it is the mystery of mysteries. It is the door to all spirituality."

According to Laotze, there is only one thing which, though indefinable and beyond the comprehension of the human understanding, is the fountain-head of all beings and the norm of all actions. Laotze calls this Tao. The Tao is not only the formative principle of the universe, it also seems to be the primordial matter. For he says in Chapter XXV of the Tao Te King:

"There is a thing, chaotic in its composition, which was born prior to Heaven and Earth. How noiseless!

How formless! Standing in its solitiude, it does not change. Universal in its activity, it does not relax; and thereby it is capable of becoming the mother of the world."

Again, in Chapter XIV, "We look at it, but cannot see it; it is called colorless. We listen to it, but cannot hear it; it is called soundless. We grasp it, but cannot hold it; it is called bodiless. The limits of these three we cannot reach. Therefore, they are merged into one.

"Its top is not bright, its bottom is not murky; its eternity is indefinable; it again returns into nothingness. This I call the shapeless shape, the imageless form; this I call the obscure and vague. We proceed to meet it, but cannot see its beginning; we follow after it but cannot see its end."

In what follows (Chap. XI), Laotze again seems to conceive his Tao at once the formative principle of the universe and the primordial matter from which develops this phenomenal world.

"The nature of the Tao, how obscure, how vague! How vaguely obscure! and yet in its midst there is an image. How obscurely vague! and yet in its midst there is a character. How unfathomable, how indefinite! yet in its midst there is an essence, and the essence is truly pure, in it there is faith. From of old till now, its name never departs, it reviews the beginning of all things."

The Tao, as the reason of the universe and as the principle of all activity, is something unnamable and transcends the grasp of the intellect. The Tao as primordial matter from which this world of particulars has been evolved, is a potentiality; it has a form which is formless; it has a shape which is shapeless; it is enveloped in obscurity and utter indeterminateness. According to what we learn from the Tao Te King, Laotze seems to have comprehended two apparently distinct notions in the conception of Tao. He was evidently not conscious of this

confusion. The physical conception, as we might call it, developed later into the evolution-idea of the *T'ai Chi*[30] by the early philosophers of the Sung dynasty, who endeavored to reconcile the Yi philosophy with the Taoist cosmogony. The metaphysical side of Laotze's Tao-conception not only was transformed by his early followers into pantheism and mysticism, it also served as an electric spark, as it were, to the explosion of the famous controversy of the Sung philosophers concerning Essence (*hsing*)[31] and Reason (*li*).[32] Whatever this be, Laotze was the first monist in Chinese philosophy, as the Yi King was the first document that expounded dualism.

Laotze's[33] philosophical successors in the Ante-Ch'in period, whose literary works have been fortunately preserved down to the present day, are Liehtze, Chwangtze, and perhaps Kwanyintze. They all developed the monistic, mystical, idealistic thoughts broadly propounded in the Tao Te King. Being ushered into the time when the first speculative activities of the Chinese mind had attained to their full vigor, those Taoist philosophers displayed a depth of intellectual power, which has never been surpassed by later thinkers in its brilliancy and freshness.

[30] The term "T'ai Chi" 太極 first appears in one of the Confucian appendices to the Yi King: "In the system of the Yi there is the Great Limit [or source, *t'ai chi*]. It produces the two principles."....This passage has been quoted elsewhere. Here, however, the term *t'ai chi* does not seem to have had a very weighty significance. It merely meant what it literally means, "great limit." The important philosophical sense it came to bear, originates with a thinker of the Sung dynasty called Chou Tun-i (A. D. 1017-1073). According to him, "The Limitless is the Great Limit. The Great Limit moved, and it produced Yang (male principle. At the consummation of the motion there was a rest in the Great Limit. While resting it produced Yin (female principle). At the consummation of the rest it resumed motion. Now moving, now resting, each alternately became the root of the other. With this division of the Yin and the Yang, there were permanently established the two principles."

[31] 性 [32] 理

[33] The character *tze,* which is found in connection with most of the Chinese philosophers' names, has an honorary significance. It primarily means a child, then son, then any male, young or adult or old, and finally gentleman. It also means teacher, sage, philosopher. As a term of address it is equivalent to sire or sir.

What most distinguishes Liehtze[34] in the galaxy of Taoists is his cosmogony. According to him, this namable world of phenomena evolved from an unnamable absolute being. This being is called Tao, or the Spirit of Valley (*ku shên*),[35] or the Mysterious Mother (*hsuan p'in*),[36] all these terms being used by his predecessor, Laotze. The evolution did not take place through the direction of a personal will, that has a definite, conscious plan of its own in the creation or evolution of a universe. Liehtze says that the unnamable is the namable, and the unknowable is the knowable. Therefore, he did not see the need of creating a being or power that stands independent of this namable and knowable world. It was in the very nature of the unnamable that it should evolve a world of names and particulars. It could not do otherwise. Its inherent nature necessitated it to unfold itself in the realm of the Yin and Yang.

To speak more definitely in the author's own words: "There was at the beginning Chaos (*hun tun* or *hun lun*),[37] an unorganized mass. It was a mingled potentiality of Form (*hsing*),[38] Pneuma (*ch'i*),[39] and Substance (*chih*).[40] A Great Change (*tai yi*)[41] took place in it, and there was a Great Starting (*tai chi*),[42] which is the beginning of Form. The Great Starting evolved a Great Beginning (*tai shih*),[43] which is the inception of Pneuma. The Great Beginning was followed by the Great Blank (*tai su*),[44] which is the first formation of Substance. Substance,

[34] 列子 Liehtze, otherwise called Lieh Yü-kou, is generally known to have lived between the times of Laotze and Chwangtze, that is, sometime in the fifth century before the Christian era. The work which goes under his name seems to have been compiled by his disciples. It consists of eight books or chapters and was first edited in the fourth century A. D. by Chang Chên of the Tsin dynasty. I have no knowledge of any English translation of the Liehtze. My quotations here are mostly taken from Book I, in which his ontological views are comprehensively presented. It is very desirable that some one will undertake the task of translating the entire work, for that will throw much light on the significance of the Taoistic thought.

[35] 谷神 [36] 玄牝 [37] 渾沌 or 渾淪 [38] 形 [39] 氣
[40] 質 [41] 太易 [42] 太初 [43] 太始 [44] 太素

Pneuma, and Form being all evolved out of the primordial chaotic mass, this material world as it lies before us came into existence."

In these statements Liehtze appears to have understood by the so-called Chaos (*hun lun*) only a material potentiality. But, as we proceed, we notice that he did not ignore the reason by which the Chaos was possible to evolve at all. The reason is the Tao, or as he calls it, the Solitary Indeterminate (*i tuh*),[45] or the Going-and-Coming (*wang fuh*),[46] or Non-activity (*wu wei*).[47] The Solitary Indeterminate is that which creates and is not created, that which transforms and is not transformed. As it is not created, it is able to create everlastingly; as it is not transformed, it is able to transform eternally. The Going-and-Coming neither goes nor comes, for it is that which causes things to come and go. Those that come are doomed to go, and those that go are sure to come, but the Coming-and-Going itself remains forever, and its limitations can never be known.

"What comes out of birth is death, but what creates life has no end. What makes a concrete object is substance, but what constitutes the reason of a concrete object has never come to exist. What makes a sound perceptible is the sense of hearing, but what constitutes the reason of sound has never manifested itself. What makes a color perceptible is its visibility, but what constitutes the reason of color has never been betrayed. What makes a taste tastable is the sense of taste, but what constitutes the reason of taste has never been tasted. For all this is the function of non-activity (*wu wei*), that is, reason."

Will there be no end to this constant coming and going of things? Is the world running in an eternal cycle? Liehtze seems to think so, for he says: "That which has life returns to that which is lifeless; that which has form

[45] 疑獨 [46] 往復 [47] 無爲

returns to that which is formless. That which is lifeless does not eternally remain lifeless; that which is formless does not eternally remain formless. Things exist, because they cannot be otherwise; things come to an end, because they cannot be otherwise; just as much as those which are born, because they cannot be unborn. They who aspire after an eternal life, or they who want to limit their life, are ignoring the law of necessity. The soul is heavenly and the bones are earthly. That which belongs to the heavens is clear and dispenses itself. That which belongs to the earth is turbid and agglomerates itself. The soul is separated from the body and returns (*kwei*)[48] to its own essence. It is, therefore, called spirit (*kwei*).[49] Spirit is returning, that is, it returns to its real abode."

Liehtze thus believes that the cycle of birth and death is an irrevocable ordeal of nature. This life is merely a temporary abode and not the true one. Life means lodging (or sojourning or tenanting) and death means coming back to its true abode. Life cannot necessarily be said to be better than death or death than life. Life and death, existence and non-existence, creation and annihilation, are the inherent law of nature, and the world must be said to be revolving on an eternal wheel. The wise man remains serene and unconcerned in the midst of this revolving; he lives as if not living.

The following passage taken from the Liehtze will throw light on his transcendental attitude toward life and the universe.

"A man in the state of Ch'i was so grieved over the possible disintegration of heaven-and-earth and the consequent destruction of his own existence that he could neither sleep nor eat.

"A friend came to him and consolingly explained to him: 'Heaven-and-earth is no more than an accumulated

[48] 歸 [49] 鬼

pneuma, and the sun, moon, stars, and constellations are pure luminary bodies in this accumulation of pneuma. Even when they may fall on the ground, they cannot strike anything. The earth is an accumulation of masses filling its four empty quarters. Treading on it will not cause it to sink.'

"With this both were satisfied.

"Chang-Tutze heard of it and said, 'The clouds and mist, the winds and rains are accumulated pneuma in the heavens, and the mountains and plains, the rivers and seas are accumulated forms on earth; and who can say that they will never disintegrate?

" 'Heaven-and-earth is merely a small atom in space, though the hugest among all concrete objects. It goes without saying that we are unable to survey its end or its limits; it goes without saying that we cannot have its measurement and know its nature.

" 'He who grieves over its possible disintegration must be considered truly great, and he who thinks of it as indestructible is not quite right. Heaven-and-earth must suffer a disintegration. There must surely be the time when it falls to pieces. And how could we be free from apprehension when it actually begins to fall?'

"When this was communicated to Liehtze, he laughed, saying, 'It is as great a mistake to assert that heaven-and-earth is falling to pieces, as to deny it. Whether it falls to pieces or not, we have no means to tell. But that is one thing, and this is another. Therefore, life does not know of death, nor does death know of life. Coming does not know of going, nor does going know of coming. To go to pieces or not to go to pieces,—this does not at all concern me.' "

Transcendentalism.

Chwangtze,[50] who appeared a little later on the stage of philosophical speculation, was the most brilliant Taoist China has ever produced. Liehtze might have been deeper in one sense than his successor, but he was not such a brilliant genius as the latter. The main philosophical problems handled by Chwangtze were those of Laotze, but in many points he extended and detailed what was merely vaguely suggested by his predecessors. He maintained with Laotze that the world started from the Nameless, but Chwangtze's Nameless is more absolute and transcendental, if we could use the expression, than that of Laotze; for Chwangtze declares that when we say there was non-existence (*wu*) before existence, this non-existence somewhat suggests the sense of relativity and conditionality, but in truth there cannot be any such existence as non-existence; and therefore it is better to say that there was in the beginning a "non-existence of non-existence" (*wu wu*), that is, not conditional non-existence, but absolute non-existence. ("The Inner," Book II.) Thus Chwangtze delighted in subtle dianoetic argument.

At the time of Chwangtze, there was such a confusing and contradicting philosophical controversy as to awaken him from the transcendental enjoyment of a self-forgetting trance. Chwangtze was convinced of the ultimate unreality of this phenomenal world, in which he did not

[50] Chwangtze was a contemporary of Mencius and must have flourished toward the end of the fourth century B. C. He was a great classic writer and his writings are considered among the best specimens of early Chinese literature. His work which we have now is divided into three parts, "Inner," "Outer," and "Miscellaneous," altogether consisting of thirty-three books. As it is said that originally it was made up of fifty-three books, twenty of them are missing now. About the genuineness of the writings, a concensus of opinion is that the first "Inner" part undoubtedly comes from his own hand, but that the remaining two parts are so interlaced with spurious passages that it is difficult to distinguish one from the other. But, generally speaking, even those spurious parts are no more than a development of Chwangtze's own thoughts. We have two English translations of the Chwangtze, one by Giles and the other by Legge in the *Sacred Books of the East.*

know whether or not he was a dream-existence of the butterfly.[51] He argued that as long as things in this world are conditional and limit one another, there is no avoidance of controversy and contradiction. Each individual mind has its own idiosyncrasy. One and the same truth is reflected therein, perhaps, but each responds differently according to its inner necessity. Suppose a gale sweeps over a mountain forest. The trees resound with their various notes according to all possible differences of the cavities which may be found in them. Some sound like fretted water, some like the arrow's whiz, some like the stern command of a military officer, some like the gruff roar of a lion, and so on *ad infinitum*. ("The Inner," Bk. II.) And what need would there be to pass a judgment on these multitudinous notes and declare that some and not others are correct representations of the truth?

Chwangtze, therefore, says that no good can come out of engaging in a controversy of this nature. As long as this is a relative and conditional existence, there must be good and evil, affirmation and negation, coming and going. It is the height of foolishness to argue that as I am walking one way every man must and ought to walk the same way. Has not everybody the will and right to go his own way? As I should not be compelled by others to deny my own nature, they have the same privilege to follow their own inclinations. What is good to me is not necessarily so to others, and *vice versa*. Chwangtze thus insists in giving every one his freedom and the right to think and act as he sees fit, and thereby wishes to reach the point where all controversies are eternally settled.

[51] "Formerly, I, Chuang Chou, dreamt that I was a butterfly, a butterfly flying about, feeling that it was enjoying itself. I did not know that it was Chou. Suddenly I awoke and was myself again, the veritable Chou. I did not know whether it had formerly been Chou dreaming that he was a butterfly, or whether it was now a butterfly dreaming that it was Chou. But between Chou and the butterfly there must be a difference. This is a case of what is called the transformation of things." ("The Inner," Book II.)

But how can we find out what is the real intrinsic nature of each individual existence? Chwangtze seems to think that the Tao is present in every being, and that the reason why we are in the wrong habit of confusing what is right with what is not right, is because we do not let the Tao work its own way, and, therefore, if we rid ourselves of all the subjective prejudices that we may possess and freely follow the course of the Tao, every being would enjoy his own inherent virtue, and there would be no controversies and altercations, but our life would be blessed with the transcendental bliss of the Infinite Tao. It is thus simple enough, believes Chwangtze, to find the real nature of things. Befree yourself from subjective ignorance and individual peculiarities, find the universal Tao in your own being, and you will be able to find it in others too, because the Tao cannot be one in one thing and another in another. The Tao must be the same in every existence because "I" and the "ten thousand things" grow from the selfsame source, and in this oneness of things we can bury all our opinions and contradictions. He says: "Let us make our appeal to the infiniteness [of the Tao] and take up our position there." We observe here a subjective tendency of Taoism, which distinguishes itself so characteristically from its rival doctrine, Confucianism.

In the following passage we notice a characteristic tendency of the Taoist philosophers:

"Why is the small man so restive? Why is he hampered by his medium intelligence, and why can he not attain to a larger view of things? Because he is entangled by his passions: joy, anger, grief, satisfaction, worry, despondency, unsteadiness, ardor, wildness, indulgence, suggestibility, destructiveness, and willingness; but they are all empty in their nature, they are like so many musical notes that come from the hollowness of an instrument, or like the fungi that grow from the moisture of a tree. They are

suddenly born and suddenly die, they do not abide even for a moment. Thus, they are changing day and night as I witness them, and I know not whence they are born. Is it due to a universal impulse in nature? But if there were nothing changing before me, my own existence might also cease. If I were non-existence, they too would not stand by themselves. Then it must be said that they and I are mutually conditioning that to which we owe our effectiveness.

"But what is that which makes us such as we are? I do not know. May I assume the existence of an absolute Ruler who makes things as they are? Yet I am unable to grasp his peculiarities. All that I know of him is that his working is practicable though his features are hidden. He has indications but no forms.

"Looking over my body I find a hundred bones, nine orifices, and six visceras, and I feel no partiality or specific inclination toward any of them. They are making of one another servants and maids. When these servants and maids are unable to govern one another, they finally assume the relation of master and servant. By ruling others and by being ruled by them in turn, the nourishment of the body is effected.

"Judging from this standpoint, it is reasonable to conceive of the existence of an absolute Master, yet it would not make a particle of difference to this absolute Master whether our intelligence is allowed to catch a glimpse of his signs or not. We are such as he made us."

Pantheistic Mysticism.

When speculation reaches this point, it naturally turns toward pantheistic mysticism. Intellectual discrimination and the analytical process of reasoning give way to a mystic contemplation of the Absolute. It is peculiar to the human mind that while the intellect is ever struggling

to attain to a definite conception of the universe and to state it in most positive terms, the imagination and faith, poetic and religious, insist on concretely and immediately grasping that something which is so slippery as to defy all rationalistic apprehension and yet presents itself with annoying persistence before our inner eyes. The intellect sometimes gains ascendency, and then we have an outspoken expression of positivism. When its days are gone, as the history of thought proves everywhere, we have the predominance of mystic tendencies in philosophy. We find the mystic culmination of Taoism in Kwanyintze.

Kwanyintze, according to Ssu Ma-ch'ien's Historical Records (*Shi Chi*),[52] seems to have been acquainted with Laotze, who was requested by him to write a book on Taoism. Kwanyintze, therefore, is earlier than Liehtze and Chwangtze, but the work ascribed to him and still in our possession is evidently a later production, though it may contain some of his own sayings scattered in the book. Strictly speaking, it may not be proper, therefore, to classify the Kwanyintze[53] with the Chwangtze and the Liehtze as Ante-Ch'in literature, but it contains many characteristic Taoist thoughts which can be regarded as a direct and unbroken linear development of Chwangtze and Liehtze. Hence its place here as the last of the Taoist thinkers.

That the Kwanyintze is a later production than the Chwangtze, can be seen in a comparison of their conceptions of the Tao. According to Chwangtze (Part I, Sect. VI): "This is the Tao:—there is in it Emotion and Sincerity,[54] but it does nothing and has no bodily form. It

[52] 史記

[53] 關尹子 This book has not been translated, so far as I know, into any European language. It is doubtless a much later production, but contains a great deal of profound philosophical reflection worth studying by Occidental sinologues.

[54] No original text is accessible here and I am unable to ascertain the exact meaning of these words "Emotion" and "Sincerity." The translation

may be handed down [by the teacher], but may not be received [by the scholar]. It may be apprehended [by the mind], it can not be perceived [by the senses]. It has its root and ground in itself. Before there were heaven and earth, from of old it was securely existing. From it came the mysterious existence of spirits, from it came the mysterious existence of God. It produced heaven, it produced earth. It was before the T'ai Chi and yet could not be considered deep. [It was above time and space.] It was produced before heaven and earth, and yet could not be considered to have existed long. It was older than the highest authority, and yet could not be considered old."

Now, according to the Kwanyintze, the Tao is that which is above all thinkability and explicability. When this Tao is evolved, there appear heaven and earth and the ten thousand things. But the Tao in itself does not fall under the categories of freedom and necessity, of mensuration and divisibility. Therefore, it is called Heaven (*t'ien*),[55] Destiny (*ming*),[56] Spirit (*shên*),[57] or the Mysterious (*hsüen*).[58] It is each and all of these. As thus the one Tao asserts itself and manifests itself in all possible existences, there is nothing that is not the Tao. All things are the Tao itself. It is like the relation between fire and fuel. One flame of fire burns all kinds of fuel. But the fire is not independent of the fuel. When all the fuel burns out, there is no more fire left, as neither is separable from the other. So, one breath of Tao penetrates throughout the ten thousand things. They are in it and it is in them, they are it, and it is they. Find it in yourself and you know everything else, and with it the mystery of heaven and earth. (Book I.)

by Legge, whose interpretation of Chinese philosophical thought, though generally acceptable, is not always in accord with my own.

[55] 天 [56] 令 [57] 神 [58] 玄

Therefore, the essence of heaven and earth is the essence of my self; the spirit of heaven and earth is the spirit of my existence. When one drop of water is merged into the waters of a boundless ocean, there is no distinction between the two, but a complete homogeneity. Therefore, the holy man recognizes unity in multiplicity and multiplicity in unity. The multitude may change, may go through an endless series of transformation, but the one is eternally unchangeable. Shadows come and go, but the water which reflects them remains forever tranquil. The wise live in this tranquillity of the one and serenely look at the coming and going of the many. (Book V.)

As is seen here, the Kwanyintze is filled with the Mahâyâna Buddhist thoughts which held sway over the Chinese minds during the Sung dynasty, when almost all notable thinkers of the day rapped at the monastery door at one time or another. The justifiable supposition, therefore, is that the Kwanyintze might have been produced by one of the Buddhist Taoists of those days, especially when we know that the book is ostensibly declared to have then been recovered, though its existence was known during the Han dynasty (B. C. 206—A. D. 23).

I shall conclude the mention of this Taoist philosopher by quoting the following passage, in which the gist of the Taoist mode of thinking is very clearly enunciated, though there is here an unmistakable trace of the Hindu pantheistic speculation.

"It is one Essence (*ching*)[59] that becomes the cold in heaven, the water on earth, and the essence (*ching*) in man. It is one Spirit (*shên*)[60] that becomes the heat in heaven, the fire on earth, and the spirit (*shên*) in man. It is one Animal Soul (*po*)[61] that becomes the drought in heaven, the metal on earth, and the animal soul (*po*) in

[59] 精 [60] 神 [61] 魄 [62] 魂

man. It is one Soul (*hun*)[62] that becomes the wind in heaven, the wood on earth, and the soul (*hun*) in man.

"Let my essence be merged in the essence of heaven and earth and all things, as all different waters could be combined and made into one water.

"Let my spirit be merged in the spirit of heaven and earth and all things, as all different fires could be united and made into one fire.

"Let my animal soul be merged in the animal soul of heaven and earth and all things, as all different metals could be melted and made into one metal.

"Let my soul be merged in the soul of heaven and earth and all things, as one tree could be grafted on another and made into one tree.

"It is thus that heaven and earth and all things are no more than my essence, my spirit, my animal soul, my soul. There is nothing that dies, there is nothing that is born." (Book IV.)

"To the wise there is one mind, one substance, one reason (*tao*), and these three are conceived in their oneness. Therefore, they do not repress the not-one with the one, nor do they injure the one with the not-one." (Bk. I.)

"To illustrate, such changes as cold, heat, warm and cool are like those in a brick: when it is placed in fire it is hot, when put in water it is cold; blow a breath on it, and it is warm; draw a breath from it and it is cool. Only its outward influences are coming and going, while the brick itself knows neither coming nor going. To illustrate, again: see the shadows cast in the water, they come and go, but the water itself knows no coming nor going." (Book II.)

"All things change, but their nature (*ch'i*)[63] is always one. The wise know this oneness of things and are never disturbed by outward signs. Our hair and nails are grow-

[63] 氣

ing every minute, but the multitude of people recognize the fact only when they become visible, they fail to know it through its potential signs. For this reason they think things change, and are born and die, while the wise look at them through their inner signs and know that there is no change whatever in their ultimate issuance." (Book VII.)

"To illustrate, in the great ocean, there are millions of millions of fishes large and small; but only one body of water. I and this external world with its multitudinousness are existing in the midst of Great Evolution, but their essence is one. To him who knows the oneness of essence, there are neither men, nor death, nor life, nor I. The reasoning of this world may turn the true into the untrue, and the untrue into the true; and again, it may make enemies of friends and friends of enemies. Therefore, the wise, abiding in the eternality of things, think of their changeability." (Book VII.)

DAISETZ TEITARO SUZUKI.

LA SALLE, ILLINOIS.