

萬物美仁

THE UNIVERSE IS BEAUTIFUL AND BENEVOLENT.

Translated and elaborated from the Chinese text of HSUN TZU'S¹ famous essay.

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I. *The Common Man's Viewpoint.**

WE have in every age and country which can be called the least civilized those who live unique lives and by a profound observation of what is obscure and an unwearied practice of what is difficult have become experienced and skilful in peirastic inquiry.² These are our critical thinkers, our scientists and philosophers. They are certainly not those who regard daily affairs as unimportant nor those whose petty purposes value lightly the governing principle of the universe. They aim always to be open-minded and reasonable regarding the essential and recondite ways of nature. And being thus not unfamiliar with the seriousness of external affairs they are also in no wise melancholy over the cares of their inner life. They have no conduct which disdains the use of reason nor yet are they strangers to many dangerous situations. Altho not living outside the danger zones of life yet they are not those who have any personal anxieties.

Melancholy and apprehensive people are constantly complaining about their unfortunate position in life. They do not understand the relish which animals have for hay and grain. Their ears hear bells and drums but they do not understand their sounds. Their eyes see elegant sacrificial garments and beautifully embroidered robes but they do not understand their significance of design. They lightly value the warmth and friendly calm suggested by beautifully

figured bamboo mats and their bodies know not the happiness of tranquillity. Therefore, even though they were inclined to seek the beauties and numerous excellences of the universe, they would still be incapable of holding reverent converse. Pretentious and yet desiring to realize, inquisitive and yet holding truth under cover, they are therefore incapable of either retiring or advancing.

Therefore, seeking to understand the beauty and goodness of the universe, they yet read into it a fulness of sorrow and anxiety. Seeking to comprehend the favors and benefits of the universe, they still consider it to be full of malice and injurious influences. Do people with such a disposition as this really know how to search into things? Do they ever improve their condition of life, seeing that their old age knows no other food than mush (abject poverty)? Is it even expedient to act thus upon the evidence or plea of inquiry?

Therefore pretentious ambition nourishes their desires but leads to a wrong manner of indulging their passions; it nourishes their natural dispositions but endangers their physical welfare. Ambition increases their pleasures in life but attacks their mental powers; it increases their reputation but confuses their righteous conduct. People who are like this, alas, although they may be feudal lords seizing a prince's throne, are veritable robbers, regardless of the apparent differences. Riding in a nobleman's carriage and bearing honor and respect for the time being or even consorting with him is quite insufficient to their covetous ambition. Alas, therefore, it is such as these who may be called self-serving or those who make everything and everybody minister to their selfish desires. Nature provides that they shall never know the ways of Heaven which are beautiful and benevolent.

They show no comparison with the tranquil mind and rejoicing heart peculiar to the laborer's exemplary mode of life, but are allowed to develop the vision necessary to see these qualities, even though lacking the energy and virtue to emulate them. Showing no comparison with the laborer's impartial attention and relish for musical sounds, they are yet able to develop the hearing necessary for such relish. Herbs cannot compare with vegetables and dumplings for food, and yet under the necessity or circumstance an appetite for them can be developed. Clothes of coarse cotton or hemp are common and do not compare with shoes with fine silk cords, but they just as well are capable of protecting the body. Although their residence is a cottage or a temporary covering of thatched bulrushes and straw sprouts they will do well to assume the laborer's humble attitude, esteeming it high and stately like an

elm tree shading a bamboo mat spread for a feast. Thus will they be able to develop a natural manner of life. Thus will they be able to look up to Heaven with a devout mind.

Alas, however, selfish people do not concern themselves about the beauty and goodness of the Universe and seem able only to seek ways and means for increasing their pleasure and ease. Lacking in the power to distinguish what constitutes true social position they seem capable only of increasing the vanity of fame. Folly like this is still being widely promoted throughout the world,—so much so that what indeed will soon become of the world!

Fortunately there are many who agree in regarding mere pleasure as really mean and vulgar. It is people like these who are serious thinkers on the affairs of life and whose sagacity leads them to decline the tempting rewards of government service. Without ascertaining what they say in expression of private opinions we never observe their good deeds and never hear of their plans for serving mankind. All princely men are sincere and considerate, acting carefully in regard to these principles.

II. *The Philosopher's Viewpoint.**

The universe is rational in every individual particle. It makes a path for everything and every creature to realize if it will the possibilities of its nature. The universe regards this path as quite singular, even onesided, while the individual thing or creature regards the universe as partial to its needs. Stupid people regard the individual creature or thing as onesided and act as though its very existence depended upon the partiality of the universe. Thence they themselves are unable to exercise energy to the utmost in any single duty or affair although considering themselves to understand the principle involved when they are really ignorant of it. Thence if they use such partiality regarding their understanding of the path of duty, how indeed can they have any true knowledge at all?

Shen Tzu³ has made observations on subsequent sages but did not look into the ways of the ancients. Lao Tzu⁴ has made some worthy observations on how to straiten out difficulties but did not adequately look into the meaning of faith. Mo Ti Tzu⁵ has made keen observations on uniformity and the principle of equality but did not look into the significance of odds and ends. Sung Tzu⁶ has made several remarks regarding the small and the few but has nothing to say about the great and the many. Therefore, under

* 儒師見

these several viewpoints, we have attention to later thinkers but not to the ancients, signifying that the multitudes of men have no school or profession in common; we have the overcoming of difficulties but no sincerity, showing that there is inability to distinguish the worthy from the ignoble; we have a doctrine of uniformity which overlooks the many crucial inequalities of life, proving that government administration nowadays is not permitted to distribute goods or give relief to the needy; and we have attention given to the small and few but not to the great and many, showing that the multitude of people are not readily reformed.⁷ In regard to these things the Shu King (Book of Records) says:⁸

"People who have not yet become good should be docile and follow obediently the principles laid down by the ancients, while those who have not yet become evil should follow the simple and virtuous ways of living practiced by the ancient rulers."

This is what the principle involved may be called. This is the vantage ground from which to view the beauty and goodness of the universe.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTES.

¹ The philosopher Hsün Tzu,¹ or Hsün Ch'ing (Minister Hsün) as he is often called, lived approximately between the years 280-212 E. C. thus coming in contact with the reactionary aftermath of Mencius's influence as represented in the doctrines of "those two antithetical heretics," the epicurean Yang Chu and the altruist Mo Ti, whose opinions he commonly opposed. Hsün Tzu was a native of the Chao State but left there at 50 years of age, going to the Ch'i State seeking the association of philosophers and scholars. He there became chief libationer but through some covetous rival's intrigue he was impeached and withdrew to the Ch'u State where he was appointed magistrate of Lan Ling by Prince Ch'un Shen and in the comparative peace of his new post he became a teacher of philosophy and classical learning, and had as pupils the mystic Han Fei Tzu² and the jurist Li Ssu³ who subsequently became his great opponent, almost his nemesis. His numerous troubles and the career of periodical dismissals, intrigues and disgraces had made him a misanthrope, however, and perhaps accounts for his most famous essay arguing that "Human Nature is Evil at Birth." But the essay from which the present translation is a major selection serves as part of the preliminary argument, and according to Huang Chen

¹ 荀子

² 韓非子

³ 李斯

Fu (one of the editorial collaborators on the *Pai Tzu Chin Tan*⁴ "All Philosophers' Noble Precepts," reprint of June, 1904, Shanghai) it is "a critical examination of education and the proper conduct of life which contains some of his best thoughts and arguments relative to the beauty and benevolence of the universe. Hence what is herein recorded should be regarded as of chief importance in the regulation of human affairs." In both the translation and these notes I have incorporated some of the principal commentary remarks of Chia Shan Hsieh⁵ whose critical edition (1786) of Hsün Tzu's philosophical writings is now included in a twenty volume set entitled "Twenty-Five Philosophers"⁶ (Shanghai, 1893).

²The two words *ch'ang shih*,⁷ ordinarily meaning "to try by tasting," are used by the Taoists and office-holding literati in the sense of testing one's skill as in performing tricks or at an examination. But with Hsün Tzu, Han Fei Tzu and their more philosophical followers the phrase is dignified with a usage which resembles that of our "inductive logic," "empirical science," or "critical philosophy," and always implies that there is or has been much sampling, trial and experiment bolstering the bare hypotheses of man's inquisitive speculation. Therefore I believe I am translating simply and yet adequately by using our term "peirastic inquiry" in the sense of Baconian or philosophical induction.

³Shen Tzu⁸ (c. 390-337 B. C.) was minister under Prince Chao of the Han State and became famous as an authority on criminal law, interstate jurisprudence and ancient codes of government administration. He also wrote learned interpretations of the mystic speculations of the Yellow Emperor and Lao Tzu, but it seems that the great flaw in his works on these two ancient sages was that of too much legal doubt, whence he devoted more attention to what later writers had to say than to the simple words and ways of the mystics. On this account, after harking back to the intelligent principles and clearcut precepts of Lao Tzu⁹ and his imperial predecessor, Shen Tzu was strangely sidetracked and claimed neither to esteem them as virtuous men nor would he countenance the appointment to office of any man whose abilities were tinged with the least sympathy for Taoism. Thus, in commenting on Shen Tzu's scholarly attainments, Chuang Tzu,¹⁰ the great contemporary champion of

⁴ 百子金丹

⁵ 嘉善謝

⁶ 二十五子

⁷ 嘗試

⁸ 慎子

⁹ 老子

¹⁰ 莊子

Lao Tzu's doctrines, said: "If such a doltish person as I do not neglect Tao, why should such a great scholar (as Shen Tzu) not strive to emulate the thoughts and motives of the ancients?" This refers directly to what Hsün Tzu a century later called "observing the subsequent but overlooking the previous." According to a work entitled "I Wen Chih"¹¹ (Collected Records of Arts and Crafts) published in the Han period about 100 B. C., Shen Tzu's work first appeared in 42 sections, but later editions reduced this number to 34. And Pan Ku,¹² the famous historian (native of An Ling, c. 20-92 A. D.), says that "the influence of the ancients extended unaltered to the time of the Han State (403-273 B. C., and hence nearly contemporary with Hsün Tzu's time), but since then and especially in our own Han Dynasty many scholars have arisen to challenge and weigh their claims." Thus it seems that Hsün Tzu was clearly anticipating what was subsequently proven.

⁴ I do not understand what sort of view of Lao Tzu's teachings could have led Hsün Tzu to say that he did not "adequately look into the meaning of faith (sincerity)." If I read his "Tao Teh King" rightly and am not mistaken about the very scholarly and delightful interpretations of Henri Borel, Dr. Paul Carus, and C. H. A. Bjerregaard, sincerity and various other articles of faith were the very cornerstones of Lao Tzu's philosophy. I have counted the word *hsin*¹³ (sincerity, faith, believe) no less than 15 times, and its several approximate synonyms about 25 times throughout his famous book. "It is a common necessity both to realizing the way of Heaven and following the footsteps of the sages."

⁵ Mo Ti Tzu,¹⁴ a younger contemporary of Mencius, was an impractical utilitarian who believed in universal love and utter self-abnegation. His views were in almost diametrical opposition to those of Yang Chu, and Hsün Tzu considers them to be simply the two horns of the same dilemma—that either selfish hedonism or self-sacrificing altruism will get us anywhere that is still not a worldly vale of folly and delusion. There may be a general uniformity of principles and moral imperatives but there are certainly few of the world's ephemeral details which do not hinge on injustice, falsehood, and the odds and ends of finite interest. And Hsün Tzu criticizes Mo Ti for attending only to the ideal uniformity while overlooking

¹¹ 藝文志

¹² 班固

¹³ 信

¹⁴ 墨翟子

the more immediate problem of inequality and heterogeneity both in nature and in human life.

⁶ Sung Tzu¹⁵ was another younger contemporary of Mencius who regarded man's feelings as that which served to moderate his ambitions, whence if one's feelings are few and his power of sympathy is small (although he may quite possibly regard them as many and magnanimous), his private desires and public ambitions will become great and overbearing. The historian Pan Ku says that Hsün Tzu discussed this doctrine with Sung Tzu and pointed out that its principle had long ago been explained by the Yellow Emperor and Lao Tzu.

⁷ Chia Shan Hsieh's note on this point seems to try to reverse the situation, and yet in a way his comment carries the speculation further and can be considered permissible. He says:

"However, if a certain sort of desire (that for personal virtue or world-betterment, for instance) is enlarged and importance is given to its realization then it will be possible for us to use exhortations and kindly advice to influence and encourage such people to become good. But if everyone's desires are vulgar and their ambition small, who then will be able to reform them?"

In this remark I believe Chia shifts the meaning of the word *to*¹⁶ from "many" to "great and magnanimous," and of the word *shoa*¹⁷ from "few" to "small and mean," for they are common words and have a very liquid usage which allows commentators too much latitude sometimes.

⁸ This quotation is from that chapter in the Shu King which embraces the ancient Viscount Chi Tzu's *Hung Fan*¹⁸—"Great Plan" which was the model system of just government which Chi Tzu¹⁹ bequeathed to Wu Wang upon the latter's conquest of the Shang dynasty. One of its provisions explains that if our virtue is partial and our love for the good is onesided then we will not be likely to follow the principles laid down by the ancients.

As a supplementary note I would like to remind readers of this magazine that if they wish a further and more general account of Early Chinese Philosophy just such a survey may be had in *The Monist* for July 1907, April and October 1908. It is capably and entertainingly written under the collaboration of D. T. Suzuki and Dr. Paul Carus.

¹⁵ 宋子

¹⁶ 多

¹⁷ 少

¹⁸ 大範

¹⁹ 箕子