

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY IN ANCIENT CHINA.

BY HARDIN T. MCCLELLAND.

(Continued).

III. CONFUCIUS TO HSUN TZU (551-212 B. C.)³³

ON his own confession and as we can readily see otherwise, Confucius³⁴ was not an original thinker, but professed only to be a transmitter of the maxims of the ancient sages, of whom he was a very eager and conscientious editor and admirer. Nor did he need to be any different than this in view of the place which he sought to fill in the history of Chinese religion, philosophy and literature. His only original work was the "Ch'un Ch'iu Ch'uan"³⁵—Spring and Autumn Records", some loosely put together annals and anecdotes of his native Lu state. He kept always before his mind's eye the practical aim to instruct the rulers of the feudal states to which he travelled; and thus, by rendering the governments of the various departments more tranquil, just and peacefully in-

³³ The period between the birth of Confucius and the death of Hsün Tzu, being perhaps significantly enough the three centuries leading up to the Burning of the Books, covers the lives of most all the original Chinese philosophers—original in the sense that nearly all subsequent sages have become famous thru taking part pro and con in the controversies arising from the numerous doctrines which were promulgated during this period. That these doctrines were of the most radical diversity, and yet had a subtle thread of common purpose and rationality connecting them, we may readily observe from mere mention of names and viewpoints, thus: Confucius and his Chesterfield ethics in government policy; Mencius the apostle of moral dignity and adversary of the mystics; Chuang Tzu the romanticist of Taoism; Yang Chu the incorrigible Schopenhauer-Walter Pater of Chinese hedonism; Mo Ti the all-suffering altruist; and Hsün Tzu the misanthrope of Divine Law.

孔夫子
see note 29.

³⁴ Literally, The Teacher K'ung. For a recent exposition of the general viewpoint of the Confucian system,

春秋傳

³⁵ They cover, none too thoroly, the period 722-481 B. C.

clined, the people of the empire as a whole could be more easily ruled and ennobled. Like Plato, his ideal man was a combination of the king and the sage into one harmonious soul. The philosopher-king would make no unseemly assumptions of power or authority in administering the sacred functions of his office, heavenly not personal disposition being his holy covenant and avowed responsibility. Such a kingly sage is thus considered the son of Heaven and, on taking over the rule of a state, will choose equally enlightened men for his superior officers; the superior officers will then select talented men of similar character for the inferior offices, and so on down to the general population who would thereby have a complete cycle of example, as well as a just, peaceful and prosperous government, after which to pattern their own lives. The manner in which this was to be accomplished was worked out in the Ta Hsüeh ³⁶ or "Great Learning", where it is laid down that nothing can compare with the honor and happiness of him who places all his thoughts on the three cardinal virtues ³⁷ of wisdom, humaneness, integrity; while trusting all his actions to accord with the five practical virtues ³⁸ of sincerity, courage, conciliation, justice and courtesy.

Above all natural gifts and unaided accomplishments, Heaven has decreed that by nature man should be predisposed toward good; that perversity is not human nature, it is atavism, it is submission to animal propensity; and that it is only because of sloth, inertia, dullness or downright sensual desire in the individual himself if some slight betterment of the original birthright is not pursued and in some measure realized. This is also the main argument to be traced through the Lun Yu ³⁹ or Analects, as they are called in Dr. Legge's translation, where it is constantly reiterated that everyone in the empire has sufficient strength to attain to a virtuous life if he only exert it in that direction. In this work there appears a fine example of how Confucius would put into practice his theory of state instruction. It is a dialogue in which a certain ruler named Chi K'ang asked "What do you say to my killing off the unprin-

大學 ³⁶ A study whose *greatness* consists in lofty moral sentiments and political rationalia which are universally applicable to the affairs of empire, state, family and personal life.

³⁷ 三常智仁中

³⁸ 五德信勇和義禮

論語

³⁹ Literally, expository discussions (with disciples).

cipled for the good of the principled?" Confucius answered him, saying: "Sir, in carrying on your government why should you use killing at all? Let your evinced desire be for what is good, and the people will be good. . . . The relation between superiors and inferiors is like that between the wind and the grass: when the wind blows the grass must bend". (Is it any more than a strange coincidence that our own New England philosopher Thoreau has almost the identical words in the eighth chapter of "Walden"?)

The Confucian ethic of ceremony and respect for tradition, however, was the direct opposite to that of Lao Tzu; and the agnostic attitude which he obstinately professed against metaphysics did not encourage any inquiry as to the existence of God or any other superhuman beings or powers. There are only a few straggling allusions which only mention a divinity of merely passive functions. One of these appears in the *Chung Yung*⁴⁰ where Tzu Ssu speaks of the Supreme Ruler receiving sacrificial offerings which are made at the equinoxial ceremonies in reverence of Heaven and Earth. It is almost a measure of pathos to find that Confucius had a great reverence amounting almost to a worship, not of God and things divine, but for things aged or associated in any symbolical way with the past. And yet he preserved an attitude of strict reserve in regard to religion, and only emphasized the analogy between the way physical nature was ruled from Heaven and the way a kingdom should be ruled by the sovereign-sage. He revered, not so much a God conceived ideally in his own mind, as the one that his fathers and other preceding sages had revered and made sacrifices to. Accordingly then, he came to advocate a religious doctrine of the divinity of man's neighborly service to his fellow man—a notion under which, being so narrowly concerned in finite interests, any direct worship or duty toward God was superfluous if not foolish and futile. He allowed, however, that the highest degree of divinity can only be that purity of spirit, that specific genuineness of heart to which men at best can only approximate. He did not seem capable of objectifying this conception, and consider that there was a regnant spirit of Reality and Truth which is the governing principle of the Cosmos.

子思中庸

⁴⁰ Literally, middle course (of meritorious conduct). A brief but scholarly resume of the Confucian viewpoint in relation to Western thought was written as a thesis for the Chüjen degree by Wu Tun-I who took first honors at the Chekiang provincial examination in 1903. A translation of this essay, together with many other interesting features, appeared in the "East of Asia" magazine for June, 1904, an educational number.

Some of the more famous disciples of Confucius, and those of his immediate followers who expanded and championed his institutions, were first the group called "the four associates of the Master", consisting of his grandson, Tzu Ssu, or K'ung Chi, who was author of the *Chung Yung*, Ts'eng Ts'an, who wrote the *Hsiao King*,⁴¹ Mencius "the second holy sage", and Yen Hui or Yen Yüan,⁴² who was one of Confucius' favorite disciples and upon the event of whose death Confucius lamented: "Alas, alas! Heaven is ruining me, Heaven is ruining me!" Yen Yüan, who wrote a preface to the "*Spring and Autumn*",⁴³ is remembered for serenity and thrift, having worn the same fox skin robe for thirty years. Yen Wang, governor of Wu Ch'eng, who advocated music and ceremonial as a means to social reform, and who is now rated one of the "twelve wise men" in the Confucian Temple at Peking. Tzu Kung, magistrate of Hsing Yang and one of the "four friends", who is noted as a debater of quick perception and who did not believe in the actual sovereignty of Heaven because of the evil and misery in the world. Another of the Four Friends was named Tzu Lu, the brusque but capable magistrate of P'u I, considered rashly brave but yet filial, frugal and generous whence he is ranked one of the 24 examples of filial piety. It is said that he had a fondness for periodically retiring to some shady nook in the woods and humming over the lines of the Ode beginning: "Unhampered by aversion and envy, what else besides good can we do?" Then there were Tzu Yu and Tzu Hsia, the students of literature and history, who pledged themselves to the joint purpose of teaching that "wide research and steadfast decision, eager questioning and close reflection—these are the ultimate principles of ethics which serve to civilize mankind."

Mencius,⁴⁴ who lived two centuries later, was the most able

曾子孝經 ⁴¹ Was written about 475 B. C. Ts'eng Tzu is also said to be the author direct of the "Great Learning" which he wrote as a posthumous memoir of the Confucian aims and principles.

顏回子 ⁴² Lived about 514-483 B. C.: "The good die young".

晏嬰子春秋序 ⁴³ Lived about 537-493 B. C. I have a copy of Commissioner Sun Huang Yen's standard edition with notes, Shanghai, 1893.

孟軻子 ⁴⁴ About 372-289 B. C. There are two extant phases of Mencius' intellectual labors which make up the seven books of his "Works". One is the Wan Chang (three books), named after a contemporary philosopher with whom, and a few other disciples, Mencius discussed the virtues, wisdom, ways, and experiences of the ancients. The other, entitled Liang Hui Wang chuan chu (Chao Ch'e is editor of the standard edition), is in four books and contains discussions with King Hui of Liang, capital of the Wei state.

and loyally industrious of all the followers. He was a sturdy exponent of the Confucian doctrine of human goodness at birth, arguing from the assumption that the four virtues, charity of heart, ethical duty, integrity and wisdom are innate. Into nearly all events and incidents he read the sacred dispensations of God, providing, however, that any evil or inauspicious occurrence was largely a result of some sort of humanistic tampering with the divine will,—a nobly aspirational (for that time) but still largely anthropomorphic provision, to be sure. He pointed out that the moral dignities of God, which are essential to the balance and preservation of life, survive through the turmoil of the material world only because of our “good birth”, although they are very often obscured and even lost occasionally in the mad struggle to acquire the temporal or political dignities of man. The fact is that this latter worldly ambition is the curse of all human existence; it throws sand in our eyes and then leads us astray; it corrupts us with the bribe of immediate reward and then cheats us out of the eternal integrity which is our birth-right. In the Works, I, vi, 2-4 Mencius gives an illustration of this all too universal folly by hinging his argument on that false conception of a humanistic satisfactorism, the notion of *profit*, and intimates that it is totally unnecessary in the just and righteous conduct of affairs both of the state and of the individual.

Hui Wang of the Liang Capital of Wei State⁴⁵ welcomes Mencius, saying: “Venerable Sir, since you have not counted it far to come here, a distance of a thousand li, may I presume to ask if you are likewise provided with counsels that will profit my kingdom?” To this Mencius surprises the king by answering him with a counter question and exhortation thus: “Why must your majesty speak of profit? There are benevolence and righteousness, and any sincere practice of these should suffice. If your majesty continue to say, ‘What can I do to profit my kingdom?’, the superior officers will take example to say, ‘What can we do to profit our families?’, and the inferior officers will then hold it no more than expedient for them to say, ‘What can we do to profit ourselves?’. Superiors and inferiors will then try to snatch this profit the one from the other, while the opportunist ruler watches to see who shall prove the winner, and the state is endangered. There never has been a man trained to benevolence who neglected

梁惠王 ⁴⁵ About 368 or 366-319 B. C., was the famous patron of Mencius (see preceding note). It is said he had a ready ear for slander and plans which bordered on unscrupulous expediency, as witness his treatment of the astronomer Tsou Yen.

his parents; there never has been a man trained to righteousness who made his sovereign an after-consideration. Let your majesty rather say, 'Benevolence and righteousness, and these only'. Again Sir, I ask, why must you use that word profit?"

And further on, in Book III, he lays it down that "a man's impulse is to do good, for his nature is good. That he does not do good is not to be considered the fault of his natural faculty, but as the result of some external persuasion. . . . Humaneness, the sense of justice, propriety, and the sagacity of intelligence⁴⁶ are not what may be molded or instilled into us from without. They are inherent in us, only people are not conscious of their presence". In view of this confident appreciation of human nature, Mencius was yet sufficiently belligerent and controversial to entertain a strong feeling against the egoist pleasure-seeker, Yang Chu, and the all-suffering altruist, Mo Ti, urging in Section 14 that the "refutation of the specious arguments of Yang and Mo should be like the taming of wild hogs: after they have been put in a pen, they should be bound fast and silenced". Truly a strange remark from an ethical teacher!

Like his great predecessor, Confucius, Mencius gave little quarter to metaphysical doctrines, and with the exception of a few passages in book three where he remarks that Ch'i the prime mover, aether, spirit, pneuma or animated air, is for him the psychical magician of the Cosmos,⁴⁷ there is little thought given to theorizing about such things as before his time had delighted and fascinated Kuan Chung, Lao Tzu, Wang Hsu, and the other mystics and rationalists. His favorite literary model was the Chung Yung of Tzu Ssu, after whose style he developed most of his ethical notions, arguing that the qualities known as benevolence, righteousness, propriety and wisdom are irreducible from empirical conditions alone, but must rather be recognized as arising from the inherent constitution of our feelings and the freewill of moral choice. The nature of the propensities with which we are born are appointed of Heaven, are therefore good, and must be developed and matured in the proper way if we expect no evil to be known or practiced afterward.

In keeping with this divine origin, human nature is to be conceived as a co-operating organism jointly ruled by mind and

⁴⁶ 仁義禮智

⁴⁷ 天都有浩然之氣

spirit,⁴⁸ the first to judge and guide us through the ever darkening world, the other to energize and enthuse us with the aspiration toward our goal where we will ultimately realize our sacred heritage. Accordingly then, each of us is responsible for the degree of his nobility and the moral growth to which he has attained; and this responsibility confers the right and authority of instruction in how those of lesser attainment may make further progress past their lowly station. Outside of the filial duties of children to parents, of wife and husband, and of all men to their ancestors, this qualification for moral instruction is to be had only through a supreme fidelity to the service of Heaven, the delight and constancy of men living for the Truth, for the sake of God's domain and the encouragement of all humanity.

A slightly younger contemporary and rival of Mencius was the mystic philosopher Chuang Sheng,⁴⁹ who explained and defended the positions taken up by his traditionary master Lao Tzu, trying thereby to supplant Confucius as the popular idol and moral arbiter of the day. His work, originally in 53 chapters, survives at present in 33 well commented chapters entitled "*The Sacred Book of Nan Hwa*", this last being the name of a hill in modern Shensi to which he retired from official life. It is a document devoted to a degree to refuting the too hypocritical ethics of Confucius and the utilitarian love notions of Mo Ti, not so much by any direct logic of opposition, as by means of a more subtle style of expressing his more speculative and suggestive thoughts. Chuang was as much a mystic perhaps as Lao Tzu; he was certainly more romantic and prolific in imagination, although he did not pronounce with as much cryptic emphasis the necessity of the clearest moral virtues resulting from the practical Tao.

Lao Tzu's *T'ien Tao* and *Jen Tao*, the heavenly reason and human reason, became for Chuang simply T'ien and Tao. In Chapter 13 where this subject is discussed he shows that the former remains the First Cause while the latter becomes a conception more relative and personal like what we popularly conceive as God. To

⁴⁸ 志氣

莊生子庚筆聖經 ⁴⁹ (c. 350-300 B. C.) this is Chuang Tzu's name and the title of the standard edition of his writings, first collected together and published in 1005 A. D. by order of Emperor Chen Tsung. Even before that, during the early part of the eighth century, considerable prestige was attached to his doctrines, as there was an imperial decree requiring the civil examinations to cover questions relative to Taoism as presented in his expositions. Lin Hsi Chung and Yao Nai are his foremost modern interpreters.

Chuang not this personal being, but T'ien the Heavenly Way was more truly God, for it was the sole universal Reality. And though it was considered the first principle of all things, yet it was a less abstract conception and stood in need of Tao as its practical possibility, and later as supplying also the method itself of the T'ien's manifestation. Thus the absolutism of Lao Tzu's Tao is transferred to T'ien, and as all else depends upon the variations of the Tao-method, so does a through and through relativity obtain in the Universe which has resulted from it and which we seek to know.⁵⁰ This theory is charmingly illustrated in the famous Chapter 17 entitled *Ch'iu Shui* (Autumn Floods) where he explains his idea of the cosmic relativity, using the allegory of the Ocean Spirit speaking to the River Spirit about knowledge, dimensions, time, and the fallacy of absolutist criteria in human thought and science. Again, in a section in the Hidden Spring, he tells that "The ultimate end is God. He is manifested in the laws of Nature. He is the Hidden Spring of all existence. At the beginning He already was; in the end He will continue to be. This, however, is inexplicable; it is unknowable. And yet from the unknowable we reach the knowable."

Chuang Tzu conceived the human personality of soul to be of the divine essence a portion which suffers the misfortunes of birth and worldly life and relishes the release of death; but withal a goodly portion quite capable of that smooth polish which will reveal to us the truth as in a mirror. But it must be recognized as spiritual not sensual. Its development requires a training and a constant care apart from the hearing of the ears, the vision of the eyes, the travel of the feet, or the selfish thinking of the finite mind. It requires the diligent attention of the fasting heart, the contemplative stillness of the philosophic retreat, and a steady emulation of the noble deeds and doctrines of the worthy men of old. There seemed to be a tincture of Buddhist asceticism in this spiritual advice. Thus too, in the chapter (32) on the mystery and imminence of Tao, he uses the imaginary philosopher Lieh Tzu to illustrate the superiority of the Tao-sage over the mere magic of earthly or humanistic shrewdness. Chuang's ethical theory then had a sort of "beyond good and evil" notion holding that our dualism of vir-

天道人道 ⁵⁰ "Heavenly Reason and human reason" as a phrase of profound philosophical importance has had quite a history, not only from Lao Tzu's original use and the mysticism attached to it by Kuei Ku Tzu and Chuang Tzu, but by the several masonic and monastic orders of Taoism. "Faith in God and devotion to the Righteous Way secure the Seven Jewels in the human heart".

tue and vice, pleasure and pain, wisdom and folly, is but a one-sided attitude. The true philosophic view looks upon the situation from an impersonal standpoint; it is therefore one of natural tranquility and passive intellectual calm, free from any consciously directed motive, and acts only in a selfless sphere of non-moral content.

His cosmology too, as presented in Chapter 12, might be summed up in the sentence: "All things are One, and that One is God", thus departing from the teaching of the Odes in which God is held aloof, in fact too far away from human affairs to afford us any practical assistance in times of dire need. It was also a departure from the anthropomorphic notions of the more secular-minded religionists, for his unique instruction was that God, being One, is all embracing and therefore leaves no room for differences or distinctions of quality or attribute. Nevertheless, at a later period of his life Chuang came to see Lao Tzu's Tao a greater-than-God, i. e., the spirit of growth and betterment which supplies our aspirations and keeps even God Himself from going into worldly discard. Accordingly then Tao, being the Way and the Word, soon came to be looked upon as the only really eternal and omnipresent law in the Universe, whereby all beings draw their spirituality and all things attain to their co-ordinate oneness of value and destiny among the divine evidences.

Chuang Tzu also had the flower-name Hu Tieh (Butterfly) derived from his famous dream in which he believed himself to be a butterfly, and on awakening from which he wondered if it were not highly possible that his wakeful state was itself a deeper dream in which he believed himself a man. The account of this dream, ridiculed by Hui Tzu, Chuang's sophist opponent and minister of Liang, has been given charming interpretation by Hsiang Hsiu⁵¹ (3rd Century A. D.) and is considered a fine piece of philosophical allegory by Kuo Hsiang, his latest editor (1893). At any rate it is a conception which might remind us of the Byzantine Greeks of a contemporaneous period who used the design of a butterfly as a symbol of the soul, its bipartite symmetry of form, its beauty, innocence, elusiveness of capture, and the mystery of its metamorphic birth.

As above mentioned Mencius had another contemporary rival

向秀 ⁵¹ Was one of the Seven Sages of Bamboo Grove near modern Tientsin. Hsiang Hsiu says that the Hui Tzu here mentioned is not King Hui, but his minister, albeit of similar disposition.

named Yang Chu⁵² who was a native of Lian, Capital of Wei State. He was an egotist and pessimist in many respects very similar to Schopenhauer. But in his doctrine of virtue he made it a point to "steer clear of culture" consistently almost as if he had been a disciple of Epicurus himself. Though an industriously busy thinker and exhorter, yet he wrote nothing so far as has been recorded, and excepting a few anecdotes in Chuang Tzu's writings, the only surviving account of his opinions is a lonely chapter (7) in the pseudo-authoritative *Lieh Tzu*. We are there instructed that all truth and wisdom and merit are but relative qualities, in that our individual natures are so made up that what one recognizes and aspires to as being true, prudent and honorable, another will deny and condemn as being false, foolish and vicious; and also that individual relish and ability are such that what is easy and natural for one to do, is found difficult and disagreeable to another. Thus is the principle introduced that we should follow our own natural talents and propensities regardless of others' notions about what is best for us to do. Any attempt at criticism or advice being largely an automorphism anyway.

Herein we find that Yang Chu was a philosopher of sense-
validity and with keen discrimination took Man and Nature as found at first hand and free of the secondary metaphysical subtleties and suppositions which, down through the ages of personally biassed speculation, have become so strongly attached to them. He preached also the validity of true egoism which looks on men and things as *separate* from one's self, totally independent not only in their life-functions, but even in their ideals, their chosen activities, aversions, work-motives, and sense-judgments of what constitutes propriety in ethics and religious ceremony. Hence it is to be considered not only unphilosophical and irreligious, but also as bad governmental theory for us to assume the care or control of others, or to take sufficient presumption to lay down a code of laws which the people of a whole kingdom are expected to conform to without question and without any expression of personal choice. Individ-

揚朱 ⁵² In a prefatory note to *Lieh Tzu*'s seventh chapter we read that Yang Chu was a younger contemporary of Mo Ti; that their doctrines were diametrically opposite; and that while the latter was so full of brotherly love that he would sacrifice all to save the world one item of sorrow, the former was so full of self-love that he would not injure a single hair even tho it were of service to the whole world. Thruout the chapter Yang Chu appears to be anti-religious, anti-ritual, anti-ancestral, anti-everything except self-serving pleasure and whatever else would minister to his hedonistic conception of life and Nature.

ualism can save a state if let alone, but autocracy and despotism lead to ruin.

The far wiser and more natural course, according to Yang Chu, is to look to our own heart and mind and soul for the simplest solution to life's problems,—these problems being in general little more than difficult personal or family affairs in which another's way of thinking and living will neither fit absolutely nor serve economically. And furthermore, we would never be content to express our individual talents in the way best suited to another nor according to any foreign code; no more readily than a musical genius would attempt to do his composing in a shambles or a boiler-shop. Thus there are as many answers to the riddle of life as there are individual minds and organisms to share its experience. They all vary and are uncertain of any universal specific. No particular one is the absolute decision; and so accordingly we should conceive of the world as a pluralism of living motive, independent in both the structure and function which are sufficient to the carrying out of whatever the individual motive is to which they may belong. On the other hand, if we should once find that all was certitude, that every one of our actions was already blocked off in strict and miserly economy, and that the ten-thousand-things in the Universe had no individual reality or freedom of moral choice, there would then be no more room nor even necessity for aspiration in our religion nor speculation in our philosophy.

With this note of individualism constantly on his lips, Yang Chu taught that the practice of virtue is of no tangible avail in this world, grown as it has so divergent from the Way of Heaven and the benevolent way of the ancients, grown weak-hearted and careless by natural process of years and now being fast made worse by the evildoings of cunning but unscrupulous men. Virtue is not even its own reward in the vulgar world, for cleverness, seeking the reward first, will make a sham pretence and spoliates the virtue. As often as not the wicked are the most fortunate while the virtuous are the most afflicted and miserable; and it is a constant hazard whether or not this discouraging circumstance shall ever be reversed and put into its proper proportion. Therefore with happiness in a hopeless minority, the best plan of life is to shun all idle and vain pursuits, such as fame, wealth, social prestige, official preferment and left-handed (i. e. mercenary) altruism; seeking only that form of conduct of content of life which shall make for the most security, simple loyalty and tranquil thought.

With all his sage pessimism Yang Chu did not exercise the same influence against the Confucian Canon as did the more thorough-going misanthrope Hsün K'uang or Hsün Tzu⁵⁶ magistrate of Lan Ling in the Ch'u state. If, as we have agreed, it was Mencius who developed the humanism involved in the Confucian teachings, so can it also be said that Hsün emphasized the ceremonial side, holding not that the end justifies the means, but that the proper means are required in order that the end may be justified. The end that is sought is the improvement and rectification of man's nature, which though evil at birth, may yet be redeemed and purified through the good graces of time if we will but employ the proper methods for so doing. Thus then, it is first laid down that human nature is primarily bad, a structure from its very dedication standing in need of numerous vital repairs; and that the purpose, not only of ethics, but of all our cultural efforts both sacred and secular, is how to intelligently devise ways and means of rectifying the crookedness. Two principal disillusionments are to be sooner or later accomplished. First, the social illusion must be destroyed because it serves no really useful purpose: society being a purely artificial growth on the face of the earth, and even the so-called superior man is merely the highest type of such artifice. Second, self-culture unaided by example or instruction is impossible, owing to the inherent tendency toward reversion and the evident limitations of individual power and initiative faculty.

Were society not an illusory organism of artifice, and if man were of a nature good at birth, personal culture would then be quite possible and in proportion to its relish would also be a most useful and practical pastime. But with the condition of things as they are at present constituted, we must also do away with the illusion that the ego has powers above itself or that it can secure a latitude beyond its original endowment. There are, however, relative degrees of goodness to be found in the State which existed as an organized and law-abiding community long before the birth of the individual. It was the peculiar purpose of these relative degrees of goodness to have given us the rules of propriety primarily meant to hold in abeyance the evil tendencies surviving in every man, but which have been thinly glossed over with a veneer of what we are pleased to call civilization. Herein then was shown the supreme function of the State, which was to so apply its rules of propriety

荀况子⁵⁶ About 280-212 B. C. See my translation in the *Open Court* for June, 1921. The standard edition of his writings was published by Chia Shan Hsieh, Shanghai, 1893 (32 chapters).

that a man, who in his original nature was uncouth and rough-hewn, could be rendered more shapely and more nearly akin to moral symmetry. If from no other evidence than this we were to judge the perfection of a State, we could readily see the degree of goodness to which it had attained and that for which it was seeking.

The fundamental viewpoint on which Hsun Tzu's whole apparatus revolved was expressed in his famous essay⁵⁴ on the innate depravity of human nature. He argued that "If man's nature were inherently good he would not need to be continually taught and governed; he would do right spontaneously. No one lives a virtuous and noble life without constant self-denial; but if man is naturally good as Mencius claims, why do his natural inclinations require that he exercise denial and repression, replacing them with the artificial manners of etiquette and external law? No tenable answer being offered I conclude that man's nature is therefore crooked and perverse, always in need of the everlasting instruction of the sages, and the constant restraint of wise rulers". Hence, although his attempt to prove that human nature is evil at birth was in direct contradiction to the notions held by Confucius and Mencius, yet he also opposed them indirectly with an objectivistic hypothesis which seemed to be intended to undermine the whole structure of ancestral aid and the much-sought reward for being properly filial in their presence. He tacitly set forth "that a man who is not erect by nature has a stupid and vulgar (monkey) heart, and all the penalties of retribution will not completely restrain what the example of sages fails to inspire. Moral practices do not progress by any means of retrospection; rather must a man consistently apply himself to the immediate discipline, neither seeking pleasure nor fearing pain."

This limitation of the moral development to processes of the immediate present served to show how badly in need all men were, and how urgently they required both the ethical regulations of the State and the patient instructions of qualified teachers if a moral end or any degree of good were ever expected to result from their life. But even with this high ideal, the intended improvement was not to be made for the glory of God's domain, for God himself was conceived as a being merely improvised for the sake of leading us on, encouraging us with a sense of divine succor and security, and aiding our realization of happiness, goodness and truth. According-

人之性惡其善者偽也

⁵⁴ This is the first sentence of chapter 23 which now includes both the original essay and Hsun Tzu's subsequent remarks in rebuttal of certain critics and opponents. It means that: "Man's natural disposition is evil; his goodness is artificial".

ly then, man's theological invention is a personal God who is to be distinguished from the guardian spirits of Nature, because they are subject to the vicissitudes of time and space, while God is subject only to reverence and supplication. Hsün still seems also to conceive an impersonal God who is unchangeable and omnipresent, while yet remaining a Being who is knowable through the justice and moral economy of His Laws. Thus, like Chuang's Tao, He is not to be blamed if failure and calamity follow upon transgression, on our part, of those laws. If we contract a loan we should not expect it never to fall due.

Altho Hsün Tzu met his death at the hands of some law-breakers who were taking advantage of the First Emperor's decree that all the classical books should be burned, and many native scholars place a charge of ingratitude upon his two famous pupils, Li Ssu and Han Fei Tzu, for counselling such a decree, we still have a few tokens of their regard for his stern justice and versatile learning. The latter⁵⁵ was the most sorry of the two, altho he shared with Hsün a well developed sense of sternness and official dignity. In his writings, which are preserved to us in 55 chapters, we find such notions as follows: that the Lord Tao is the First Reality and, unobserved by men, governs the Universe; that this government covers the world of man and is carried on by means of inexorable laws (6, 40, 54); that useful men take pattern from antiquity and watch the five degrees of reverence (27); that learned men are of two sorts—philosophers and literati (50); that the proper exercise of authority is difficult (36 to 40); that laws of mind are sublimations of physical laws (51, 54); and six chapters on the various aspects, causes, uses, and opinions concerning the inner life and external affairs (30-35). In this latter discussion he claims that we might have ten Yellow Emperors, but if there is no popular regard for benevolence and rectitude our governmental efforts will be futile.

(To be continued.)

七 非 韓⁵⁵ Lived about 290-233 B. C. One outstanding contrast between Han Fei Tzu and his master Hsun Tzu is that he lacked the pessimism and misanthropy of the latter; he was rather a mystic with sympathies for Taoism and antiquarian lore. In Ch'ien Tao's revised edition (1893) of his writings, chapter 20 is devoted to "explaining Lao Tzu". After analyzing the internal and external economy attending virtue, benevolence, rectitude, propriety, and sincerity, he says that: "These qualities are the human version of Tao. Understanding their nature constitutes wisdom. Practicing them constitutes virtue. Virtue is Tao realized. Charity of heart is the glory of virtue. Rectitude is benevolence privately applied. Courtesy is the ornament of duty. And sincerity binds the whole. . . . This is the Law and the Covenant".