

I'm not robot!



[illegible]



They loved their mother, they loved their body but the thing that moved her body. When a man has just taken a wife, he is kept in a room outside the palace and is no longer seen on (Huangdi Histories 6 If so much care is taken to keep the body whole, how much more in the case of a man whose virtue is whole? Now Ai Tai is to say nothing and is trusted, accomplishes nothing and is loved, so that people want to turn over their states to him and are only afraid he won't accept. It must be that his powers are whole, though his virtue takes no form.""What do you mean when you say his powers are whole?" asked Duke Ai.Confucius said, "Life, death, preservation, loss, failure, success, poverty, riches, worthiness, unworthiness, slander, fame, hunger, thirst, cold, heat - these are the alternations of the world, the workings of fate. Day and night they change place before us and wisdom cannot spy out their source. Therefore, they should not be allowed to destroy your harmony; they should not be allowed to enter the Spirit Storehouse.7 If you can, harmonize and delight in them, master them and never be at a loss for joy, if you can do this day and night without break and make it be spring with everything, mingling with all and creating the moment within your own mind - this is what I call being whole in power.""What do you mean when you say his virtue takes no form?" "Among level things, water at rest is the most perfect, and therefore it can serve as a standard. It guards what is inside and shows no movement outside. Virtue is the establishment of perfect harmony. Though virtue takes no form, things cannot break away from it." "Some days later, Duke Ai reported his conversation to Min Tzu." "At first, when I faced south and became ruler of the realm, I tried to look after the regulation of the people and worried that they might die. I really thought I understood things perfectly. But now that I've heard the words of a Perfect Man, I'm afraid there was nothing to my understanding - I was thinking too little of my own welfare and ruining the state. Confucius and I are not subject and ruler-we are friends in virtue, that's all."Mr. Lame-Hunchback-No-Lips talked to Duke Ling of Wei, and Duke Ling was so pleased with him that when he looked at normal men he thought their necks looked too lean and skinny.9 Mr. Pitcher-Sized-Wen talked to Duke Huan of Ch'i, and Duke Huan was so pleased with him that when he looked at normal men he thought their necks looked too lean and skinny. Therefore, if virtue is preminent, the body will be forgotten. But when men do not forget what can be forgotten, but forget what cannot be forgotten - that may be called true forgetting. So the sage has his wanderings. For him, knowledge is an overshoot, promises are glue, favors are a patching up, and skill is a peddler. The sage hatches no scheme - so what use has he for knowledge? He does no carving, so what use has he for glue? He suffers no loss, so what use has he for favors? He hawks no goods, so what use has he for peddling? These four are called Heavenly Cruel. Heavenly Cruel is the food of Heaven, and if he's already gotten food from Heaven, what use does he have for men? He has the form of a man but not the feelings of a man. Since he has the form of a man, he bands together with other men. Since he doesn't have the feelings of a man, right and wrong cannot get at him. Puny and small, he sticks with the rest of men. Massive and great, he perfects his Heaven alone.Hui Tzu said to Chuang Tzu, "Can a man really be without feelings?"Chuang Tzu: "Yes."Hui Tzu: "But a man who has no feelings-how can you call him a man?"Chuang Tzu: "The Way gave him a face; Heaven gave him a form - why can't you call him a man?"Hui Tzu: "But if you've already called him a man, how can he be without feelings?"Chuang Tzu: "That's not what I mean by feelings. When I talk about having no feelings, I mean that a man doesn't allow likes or dislikes to get in and do him harm. He just lets things be the way they are and doesn't try to help life along."Hui Tzu: "If he doesn't try to help life along, then how can he keep himself alive?"Chuang Tzu: "The Way gave him a face; Heaven gave him a form. He doesn't let likes or dislikes get in and do him harm. You, now - you treat your spirit like an outsider. You wear out your energy, leaning on a tree and moaning, slumping at your desk and dozing - Heaven picked out a body for you and you use it to gibber about 'hard' and 'white'!" 10Section SIX - THE GREAT AND VENERABLE TEACHERHE WHO KNOWS WHAT IT IS that Heaven does, and knows what it is that man does, has reached the peak. Knowing what it is that Heaven does, he lives with Heaven. Knowing what it is that man does, he uses the knowledge of what he knows to help out the knowledge of what he doesn't know. And lives out the years that Heaven gave him without being cut off midway - this is the perfection of knowledge.However, there is a difficulty. Knowledge must wait for something before it can be applicable, and that which it waits for is never certain. How, then, can I know that what I call Heaven is not really man, and what I call man is not really Heaven? There must first be a True Man! before there can be true knowledge.What do I mean by a True Man?The True Man of ancient times did not rebel against want, did not grow proud in plenty, and did not plan his affairs. A man like this could commit an error and not regret it, could meet with success and not make a show. A man like this could climb the high places and not be frightened, could enter the water and not get wet, could enter the fire and not get burned. His knowledge was able to climb all the way up to the Way like this.The True Man of ancient times slept without dreaming and woke without care; he ate without savoring and his breath came from deep inside. The True Man breathes with his heels; the mass of men breathe with their throats. Crushed and bound down, they gasp out their words as though they were retching. Deep in their passions and desires, they are shallow in the workings of Heaven.The True Man of ancient times knew nothing of loving life, knew nothing of hating death. He emerged without delight; he went back in without a fuss. He came brisley, he went brisley, and that was all. He didn't forget where he began; he didn't try to find out where he would end. He received something and took pleasure in it; he forgot about it and handed it back again. This is what I call not using the mind to reel the Way, not using man to help out Heaven. This is what I call the True Man.Since he is like this, his mind forgets;2 his face is calm; his forehead is broad. He is chilly like autumn, balmy like spring, and his joy and anger prevail through the four seasons. He goes along with what is right for things and no one knows his limit. Therefore, when the sage calls out the troops, he may overthrow nations but he will not lose the hearts of the people. His bounty enriches ten thousand ages but he has no love for men. Therefore he who delights in bringing success to things is not a sage; he who has affections is not benevolent; he who looks for the right time is not a worthy man; he who cannot encompass both profit and loss is not a gentleman; he who thinks of conduct and fame and misleads himself is not a man of breeding, and he who destroys himself and is without truth is not a user of men. Those like Hu Pu-hsieh, Wu Kuang, Po Yi, Shu Chi, Chi Tzu, Hsu Yu, Chi T'o, and Shen'u Ti all of them slaved in the service of other men, took joy in bringing other men joy, but could not find joy in any joy of their own.3This was the True Man of old; his bearing was lofty and did not crumble; he appeared to lack but accepted nothing; he was dignified in his correctness but not insistent; he was vast in his emptiness but not ostentatious. Mild and cheerful, he seemed to be happy; reluctant, he could not help doing certain things; annoyed, he let it show in his face; relaxed, he rested in his virtue. Tolerant,4 he seemed to be part of the world; towering alone, he could be checked by nothing; withdrawn, he seemed to prefer to cut himself off; bemused, he forgot what he was going to say.5He regarded penalties as the body, rites as the wings, wisdom as what is timely, virtue as what is reasonable. Because he regarded penalties as the body, he was benign in his killing. Because he regarded rites as the wings, he got along in the world. Because he regarded wisdom as what is timely, there were things that he could not keep from doing. Because he regarded virtue as what is reasonable, he was like a man with two feet who gets to the top of the hill. And yet people really believed that he worked hard to get there.6Therefore his liking was one and his not liking was one. His being one was one and his not being one was one. In being one, he was acting as a companion of Heaven. In not being one, he was acting as a companion of man. When man and Heaven do not defeat each other, then we may be said to have the True Man.Life and death are fated - constant as the succession of dark and dawn, a matter of Heaven. There are some things which man can do nothing about - all are a matter of the nature of creatures. If a man is willing to regard Heaven as a father and to love it, then how much more should he be willing to do for that which is even greater!7 If he is willing to regard the ruler as superior to himself and to die for him, then how much more should he be willing to do for the Truth!When the springs dry up and the fish are left stranded on the ground, they spew each other with moisture and wet each other down with spit - but it would be much better if they could forget each other in the rivers and lakes. Instead of praising Yao and condemning Chieh, it would be better to forget both of them and transform yourself with the Way.The Great Clod burdens me with form, labors me with life, eases me in old age, and rests me in death. So if I think well of my life, for the same reason I must think well of my death.8You hide your boat in the ravine and your fish net9 in the swamp and tell yourself that they will be safe. But in the middle of the night a strong man shoulders them and carries them off, and in your stupidity you don't know why it happened. You think you do right to hide little things in big ones, and yet they get away from you. But if you were to hide the world in the world, so that nothing could get away, this would be the final reality of the constancy of things.You have had the audacity to take on human form and you are delighted. But the human form has ten thousand changes that never come to an end. Your joys, then, must be uncountable. Therefore, the sage wanders in the realm where things cannot get away from him, and all are preserved. He delights in early death; he delights in old age; he delights in the beginning; he delights in the end. If he can serve as a model for men, how much more so that which the ten thousand things are tied to and all changes alike wait upon!The Way has its reality and its signs but is without action or form. You can hand it down but you cannot receive it; you can get it but you cannot see it. It is its own source, its own root. Before Heaven and earth existed it was there, firm from ancient times. It gave spirituality to the spirits and to God; it gave birth to Heaven and to earth. It exists beyond the highest point, and yet you cannot call it lofty; it exists beneath the limit of the six directions, and yet you cannot call it deep. It was born before Heaven and earth, and yet you cannot say it has been there for long; it is earlier than the earliest time, and yet you cannot call it old.Hsi-wei got it and held up heaven and earth.10 Fu Hsi got it and entered into the mother of breath. The Big Dipper got it and from ancient times has never wavered. The Sun and Moon got it and from ancient times have never rested. K'an-pi got it and entered K'un-lun. P'ing-i got it and wandered in the great river. Chien Wu got it and lived in the great mountain.11 The Yellow Emperor got it and ascended to the cloudy heavens. Chuan Hsu got it and dwelt in the Dark Palace. Yu-ch'iang got it and stood at the limit of the north. The Queen Mother of the West got it and took her seat on Shaokuang - nobody knows her beginning, nobody knows her end. P'eng-tsu got it and lived from the age of Shun to the age of the Five Dictators.12 Fu Yueh got it and became minister to Wu-tung, who extended his rule over the whole world; then Fu Yueh climbed up to the Eastern Governor, straddled the Winning Basket and the Tail, and took his place among the ranks of stars. 13Nan-po Tzu-k'uei said to the Woman Crockback, "You are old in years and yet your complexion is that of a child. Why is this?" "I have heard the Way!" "Can the Way be learned?" asked Nan-po Tzu-k'uei. "Goodness, how could that be? Anyway, you aren't the man to do it. Now there's Pu-liang Yi - he has the talent of a sage but not the Way of a sage, whereas I have the Way of a sage but not the talent of a sage. I thought I would try to teach him and see if I could really get anywhere near to making him a sage. It's easier to explain the Way of a sage to someone who has the talent of a sage, you know. So I began explaining and kept at him for three days, 14 and after that he was able to put the world outside himself. When he had put the world outside himself, I kept at him for seven days more, and after that he was able to put life outside himself. After he had put life outside himself, he was able to achieve the brightness of dawn, and when he had achieved the brightness of dawn, he could see his own aloneness. After he had managed to see his own aloneness, he could do away with past and present, and after he had done away with past and present, he was able to enter where there is no life and no death. That which kills life to life does not die; that which gives life to life does not live. 15 This is the kind of thing it is: there's nothing it doesn't send off, nothing it doesn't welcome, nothing it doesn't destroy, nothing it doesn't complete. Its name is Peace-in-Strife. After the strife, it attains completion."Nan-po Tzu-k'uei asked, "Where did you happen to hear this?" "I heard it from the son of Aided-by-ink, and Aided-by-ink heard it from the grandson of Repeated-Recitation, and the grandson of Repeated-Recitation heard it from Seeing-Brightly, and Seeing-Brightly heard it from Whispered-Agreement, and Whispered-Agreement heard it from Waiting-for-Use, and Waiting-for-Use heard it from Exclaimed-Wonder, and Exclaimed-Wonder heard it from Dark-Obscurity, and Dark-Obscurity heard it from Participation-in-Mystery, and Participation-in-Mystery heard it from Copy-the-Source!" 16Master Ssu, Master Yu, Master Li, and Master Lai were all four talking together. "Who can look upon nonbeing as his head, on life as his back, and on death as his rump?" they said. "Who knows that life and death, existence and annihilation, are all a single body? I will be his friend!" The four men looked at each other and smiled. There was no disagreement in their hearts and so the four of them became friends.All at once Master Yu fell ill. Master Ssu went to ask how he was. "Amazing," said Master Yu. "The Creator is making me all crookedly like this! My back sticks up like a hunchback and my vital organs are on top of me. My chin is hidden in my navel, my shoulders are up above my head, and my pigtail points at the sky. It must be some dislocation of the yin and yang, yet I see no ill. Master Yu said, "I've seemed call at heart and unconcerned. Dragging himself haltingly to the well, he looked at his reflection and said, "My, my! So the Creator is making me all crookedly like this!""Do you resent it?" asked Master Ssu. "Why no, why would I resent it? If the process continues, perhaps in time he'll transform my left arm into a rooster. In that case I'll keep watch on the night. Or perhaps in time he'll transform my right arm into a crossbow pellet and I'll shoot down an owl for roasting. Or perhaps in time he'll transform my buttocks into cartwheels. Then, with my spirit for a horse, I'll climb up and go for a ride. What need will I ever have for a carriage again?"I received life because the time had come; I will lose it because the order of things passes on. Be content with this time and dwell in this order and then neither sorrow nor joy can touch you. In ancient times this was called the 'freeing of the bound.' There are those who cannot free themselves, because they are bound by things. But nothing can ever win against Heaven - that's the way it's always been. What would I have to resent?"Suddenly Master Lai grew ill. Gasping and wheezing, he lay at the point of death. His wife and children gathered round in a circle and began to cry. Master Li, who had come to see him, said, "Shoo! Get back! Don't disturb the process of change!"Then he leaned against the doorway and talked to Master Lai. "How marvelous! The Creator is! What is he going to make of you next? Where is he going to send you? Will he make you into a rat's liver? Will he make you into a bug's arm?"Master Lai said, "A child, obeying his father and mother, goes wherever he is told, east or west, south or north. And the yin and yang - how much more are they to a man than father or mother! Now that they have brought me to the verge of death, if I should refuse to obey them, how perverse I would be! What fault is it of theirs? The Great Clod burdens me with form, labors me with life, eases me in old age, and rests me in death. So if I think well of my life, for the same reason I must think well of my death. When a skilled smith is casting metal, if the metal should leap up and say, 'I insist upon being made into a Mo-yeh!' 17 he would surely regard it as very inauspicious metal indeed. Now, having had the audacity to take on human form once, if I should say, 'I don't want to be anything but a man! Nothing but a man!', the Creator would surely regard me as a most inauspicious sort of person. So now I think of heaven and earth as a great furnace, and the Creator as a skilled smith. Where could he send me that would not be all right? I will go off to sleep peacefully, and then with a start I will wake up."Master Sang-hu, Meng-tzu Fan, and Master Chin-chang, three friends, said to each other, "Who can join with others without joining with others? Who can do with others without doing with others? Who can climb up to heaven and wander in the mists, roam the infinite, and forget life forever and forever?" The three men looked at each other and smiled. There was no disagreement in their hearts and so they became friends.After some time had passed without event, Master Sang-hu died. He had not yet been buried when Confucius, hearing of his death, sent Tzu-kung to assist at the funeral. When Tzu-kung arrived, he found one of the dead man's friends weaving frames for silkworms, while the other strummed a lute. Joining their voices, they sang this song:Ah, Sang-hu!Ah, Sang-hu!You have gone back to your true form/While we remain as men.O'Lu! Lu! You hastened forward and said, "May I be so bold as to wander in a little corner of them "Impossible!" said Hsu Yu. "Eyes that are blind have no way to tell the loveliness of faces and features; eyes with no pupils have no way to tell the beauty of colored and embroidered silks."Yi Erh-tzu said, "Yes, but Wu-chuang forgot her beauty. Chu-liang forgot his strength, and the Yellow Emperor forgot his wisdom - all were content to be recast and remolded. 22 How do you think that the Creator will not already away my tattoo, stick my nose back on again, and let me ride on the process of completion and follow after you, Master?" "Ah - we can never tell," said Hsu Yu. "I will just speak to you about the general outline. This Teacher of mine, this Teacher of mine - he passes judgment on the ten thousand things but he doesn't think himself righteous; his bounty extends to ten thousand generations but he doesn't think himself benevolent. He is older than the highest antiquity but he doesn't think himself long-lived; he covers heaven, bears up the earth, carves and fashions countless forms, but he doesn't consider himself skilled. It is with him alone I wonder."Yen Hui said, "I'm improving!"Confucius said, "What do you mean by that?" "I've forgotten benevolence and righteousness!" "That's good. But you still haven't got it." "Another day, the two met again and Yen Hui said, "I'm improving!" "What do you mean by that?" "I've forgotten rites and music!" "That's good. But you still haven't got it." "Another day, the two met again and Yen Hui said, "I'm improving!" "What do you mean by that?" "I can sit down and forget everything!"Confucius looked very startled and said, "What do you mean, sit down and forget everything..."Yen Hui said, "I smash up my limbs and body, drive out perception and intellect, cast off form, do away with understanding, and make myself identical with the Great Thoroughfare. This is what I mean by sitting down and forgetting everything."Confucius said, "If you're identical with it, you must have no more likes! If you've been transformed, you must have no more constancy! So you really are a worthy man after all! 23 With your permission, I'd like to become your follower."Master Yu and Master Sang were friends. Once it rained incessantly for ten days. Master Yu said to himself, Master Sang is probably having a bad time, and he wrapped up some rice and took it for his friend to eat. When he got to Master Sang's gate, he heard something like singing or crying, and someone striking a lute and saying:Father?Mother?Heaven?Man!It was as though the voice would not hold out and the singer were rushing to get through the words.Master Yu went inside and said, "What do you mean - singing a song like that?"I was pondering what it is that has brought me to this extremity, but I couldn't find the answer. My father and mother surely wouldn't wish this poverty on me. Heaven covers all without partiality; earth bears up all without partiality - heaven and earth surely wouldn't single me out to make me poor. I try to discover who is doing it, but I can't get the answer. Still, here I am - at the very extreme. It must be fate."Section SEVEN - FIT FOR EMPERORS AND KINGSNIEH CH'UEH WAS QUESTIONING Wang Ni. Four times he asked a question and four times Wang Ni said he didn't know. Nieh Ch'ueh proceeded to hop around in great glee and went and told Master Pu-i. Master Pu-i said, "Are you just now finding that out? 1 The clansman Yu-yu was no match for the clansman Tai.2 The clansman Yu-yu still held on to benevolence and worked to win men over. He won men over all right, but he never got into [the realm of] 'notman.' The clansman Tai, now - he lay down peaceful and easy; he woke up wide-eyed and blank. Sometimes he thought he was a horse; sometimes he thought he was a cow. His understanding was truly trustworthy; his virtue was perfectly true. He never entered [the realm of] 'not-man.'" 3Chien Wu went to see the madman Chieh Yu. Chieh Yu said, "What was Chung Shih telling you the other day?" 4 Chien Wu said, "He told me that the ruler of men should devise his own principles, standards, ceremonies, and regulations, and then there will be no one who will fail to obey him and be transformed by them."The madman Chieh Yu said, "This is bogus virtue! To try to govern the world like this is like trying to walk the ocean, to drill through a river, or to make a mosquito shoulder a mountain! When the sage governs, he takes his stand on what is on the outside? He makes sure of himself first, and then he acts. He makes absolutely certain that things can do what they are supposed to do, that is all. The birds fly high in the sky where it can escape the danger of stringed arrows. The field mouse burrows deep down under the sacred hill where it won't have to worry about men digging and smoking it out. Have you got less sense than these two little creatures?"T'ien Ken was wandering on the sunny side of Yin Mountain. When he reached the banks of the Liao River, he happened to meet a Nameless Man. He questioned the man, saying, "Please may I ask how to rule the world?"The Nameless Man said, "Get away from me, you peasant! What kind of a dreary question is that! I'm just about to set off with the Creator. And if I get bored with that, then I'll ride on the Light-and-Lessened Bird out beyond the six directions, wandering in the village of Not-Even-Anything and living in the Broad-and-Borderless field. What business5 do you have coming with this talk of governing the world and disturbing my mind?"But T'ien Ken repeated his question. The Nameless Man said, "Let your mind wander in simplicity, blend your spirit with the vastness, follow along with things the way they are, and make no room for personal views then the world will be governed."Yang Tzu-ch'uef went to see Lao Tan and said, "Here is a man swift as an echo, strong as a beam, with a wonderfully clear understanding of the principles of things, studying the Way without ever letting up - a man like this could compare with an enlightened king, couldn't he?"Lao Tan said, "In comparison to the sage, a man like this is a drudging slave, a craftsman bound to his calling, wearing out his body, grieving his mind. They say it is the beautiful markings of the tiger and the leopard that call out the hunters, the nimbleness of the monkey and the ability of the dog to catch rats' that make them end up chained. A man like this - how could he compare to an enlightened king?"Yang Tzu-chu, much taken aback, said, "May I venture to ask about the government of the enlightened king?"Lao Tan said, "The government of the enlightened king? His achievements blanket the world but appear not to be his own doing. His transforming influence touches the ten thousand things but the people do not depend on him. With him there is no promotion or praise - he lets everything find its own enjoyment. He takes his stand on what cannot be fathomed and never changes. In Ch'eng there was a shaman of the gods named Chi Hsieh. He could tell when men would live or die, survive or perish, be fortunate or unfortunate, live a long time or die young, and he would predict the year, month, week,8 and day as though he were a god himself. When the people of Ch'eng saw him, they dropped everything and ran out of his way. Lieh Tzu went to see him and was completely intoxicated. Returning, he said to Hu Tzu,9 "I used to think, Master, that your Way was perfect. But now I see there is something even higher!"Hu Tzu said, "I have already showed you all the outward forms, but I haven't yet showed you the substance-and do you really think you have mastered this Way of mine? There may be a flock of hens but, if there is no rooster, how can they lay fertile eggs? You take what you know of the Way and wave it in the face of the world, expecting to be believed! This is the reason men can see right through you. Try bringing your shaman along next time and letting him get a look at me."The next day Lieh Tzu brought the shaman to see Hu Tzu. When they had left the room, the shaman said, "I'm so sorry - your master is dying! There's no life left in him - he won't last the week. I saw something very strange-something like wet ashes!"Lieh Tzu went back into the room, weeping and drenching the collar of his robe with tears, and reported this to Hu Tzu. Hu Tzu said, "Just now I appeared to him with the Pattern of Earth - still and silent, nothing moving, nothing standing up. He probably saw in me the Workings of Virtue Closed Off.10 Try bringing him around again."The next day the two came to see Hu Tzu again, and when they had left the room, the shaman said to Lieh Tzu, "It certainly was lucky that your master met me! He's going to get better - he has all the signs of life! I could see the stirring of what had been closed off!"Lieh Tzu went in and reported this to Hu Tzu.Hu Tzu said, "Just now I appeared to him as Heaven and Earth - no name or substance to it, but still the workings, coming up from the heels. He probably saw in me the Workings of the Good Met me! Try bringing him again."The next day the two came to see Hu Tzu again, and when they had left the room, the shaman said to Lieh Tzu, "Your master is never the same! I have no way to physiognomize him! If he will try to steady himself, then I will come and examine him again."Lieh Tzu went in and reported this to Hu Tzu.Hu Tzu said, "Just now I appeared to him as the Great Vastness Where Nothing Wins Out. He probably saw in me the Workings of the Balanced Breaths. Where the swirling waves12 gather there is an abyss; where the still waters gather there is an abyss; where the running waters gather there is an abyss. The abyss has nine names and I have shown him three.13 Try bringing him again."The next day the two came to see Hu Tzu again, but before the shaman had even come to a halt before Hu Tzu, his wits left him and he fled "Run after him!" said Hu Tzu, but though Lieh Tzu ran after him, he could not catch up. Returning, he reported to Hu Tzu, "He's vanished! He's disappeared! I couldn't catch up with him."Hu Tzu said, "Just now I appeared to him as Not Yet Emerged from My Source. I came at him empty, wriggling and turning, not knowing anything about 'who' or 'what,' now dipping and bending, now flowing in waves - that's why he ran away."After this, Lieh Tzu concluded that he had never really begun to learn anything.14 He went home and for three years did not go out. He replaced his wife at the stove, fed the pigs as though he were feeding people, and showed no preferences in the things he did. He got rid of the carving and polishing and returned to plainness, letting his body stand alone like a clod. In the midst of entanglement he remained sealed, and in this oneness he ended his life.Do not be an embodiment of fame; do not be a storehouse of schemes; do not be an undertaker of projects; do not be a proprietor of wisdom. Embody to the fullest what has no end and wander where there is no trail. Hold on to all that you have received from Heaven but do not think you have gotten anything. Be empty, that is all. The Perfect Man uses his mind like a mirror - going after nothing, welcoming nothing, responding but not storing. Therefore he can shun out over things and not hurt himself.The emperor of the South Sea was called Shu [Brief], the emperor of the North Sea was called Hu [Sudden], and the emperor of the central region was called Hun-tun [Chaos]. Shu and Hu from time to time came together for a meeting in the territory of Hun-tun, and Hun-tun treated them very generously. Shu and Hu discussed how they could repay his kindness. "All men," they said, "have seven openings so they can see, hear, eat, and breathe. But Hun-tun alone doesn't have any. Let's try boring him some!"Every day they bored another hole, and on the seventh day Hun-tun died.Section EIGHT - WEBBED TOESTwo TOES WEBBED TOGETHER a sixth finger forking off - these come from the inborn nature but are excrescences as far as Virtue is concerned.1 Swelling tumors and protruding flaps - these come from the body but are excrescences as far as the inborn nature is concerned. Men overnice in the ways of benevolence and righteousness try to put these into practice, even to line them up with the five vital organs! 2This is not the right approach to the Way and its Virtue. Therefore he who has two toes webbed together has grown a flap of useless flesh; he who has a sixth finger forking off of his hand has sprouted a useless digit; and he who imposes overnice ways, webs and forked fingers, upon the original form of the five vital organs will become deluded and perverse in the practice of benevolence and righteousness and overnice in the use of his hearing and sight. Thus he who is web-toed in eyesight will be confused by the five colors, bewitched by patterns and designs, by the dazzling hues of blue and yellow, of embroidery and brocade - am I wrong? So we have Li Chu.3He who is overnice in hearing will be confused by the five notes, bewitched by the six tones, by the sounds of metal and stone, strings and woodwinds, the Huang-chung and fa-lu pitch pipes - am I wrong? So we have Music Master K'uang.4 He who is fork-fingered with benevolence will tear out the Virtue given him and stifle his inborn nature in order to seize fame and reputation, leading the world on with pipe and drum in the service of an unattainable ideal - am I wrong? So we have Tseng and Shih.5 He who is web-toed in argumentation will pile up bricks, knot the plumb line, apply the curve,6 letting his mind wander in the realm of "hard" and "white," "likeness" and "difference," huffing and puffing away, lauding his useless words - am I wrong? So we have Yang and Mo.' All these men walk a way that is overnice, web-toed, wide of the mark, fork-fingered, not that which is the True Rightness of the world. He who holds to True Rightness8 does not lose the original form of his inborn nature. So for him joined things are not webbed toes, things forking off are not superfluous fingers, the long is never too long, the short is never too little.9 The duck's legs are short, but to stretch them out would worry him; the crane's legs are long, but to cut them down would make him sad. What is long by nature needs no cutting off, what is short by nature needs no stretching. That would be no way to get rid of worry. I wonder, then, if benevolence and righteousness are part of man's true form? Those benevolent men-how much worrying they do!The man with two toes webbed together would weep if he tried to tear them apart; the man with a sixth finger on his hand would howl if he tried to gnaw it off. Of these two, one has more than the usual number, the other has less, but in worrying about it they are identical. Nowadays the benevolent men of the age lift up weary eyes,10 worrying over the ills of the world, while the men of no benevolence tear apart the original form of their inborn nature in their greed for eminence and wealth. Therefore I wonder if benevolence and righteousness are really part of man's true form? From the Three Dynasties on down,11 what a lot of fuss and hubbub they have made in the world!If we must use curve and plumb line, compass and square to make something right, this means cutting away its inborn nature; if we must use cords and knots, glue and lacquer to make something firm, this means violating its natural Virtue. So the crouchings and bendings of rites and music, the smiles and beaming looks of benevolence and righteousness, which are intended to comfort the hearts of the world, in fact destroy their constant naturalness.For in the world there can be constant naturalness, things are arced not by the use of the curve, straight not by the use of the plumb line, rounded not by compasses, squared not by T squares, joined not by glue and lacquer, bound not by ropes and lines. Then all things in the world, simple and compliant, live and never know how they happen to live; all things, rude and unwitting,12 get what they need and never know how they happen to get it. Past and present it has been the same; nothing can do injury to this [principle]. Why then come with benevolence and righteousness, that tangle and train of glue and lacquer, ropes and lines, and try to wander in the realm of the Way and its Virtue? You will only confuse the world!A little confusion can alter the sense of direction; a great confusion can alter the inborn nature. How do I know this is so? Ever since that man of the Yu clan13 began preaching benevolence and righteousness and stirring up the world, all the men of the world have dashed headlong for benevolence and righteousness. This is because benevolence and righteousness have altered their inborn nature, is it not?Let me try explaining what I mean. From the Three Dynasties on down, everyone in the world has altered his inborn nature because of some [external] thing. The petty man? - he will risk death for the sake of profit. The knight? - will risk it for the sake of fame. The high official? - he will risk it for family; the sage? - he will risk it for the world. All these various men go about the business in a different way, and are tagged differently when it comes to fame and reputation; but in blighting their inborn nature and risking their lives for something they are the same.The slave boy and the slave girl were out together herding their sheep, and both of them lost their flocks. Ask the slave boy how it happened: well, he had a bundle of writing slips and was reading a book.14 Ask the slave girl how it happened: well, she was playing a game of toss-and-wait-your-turn. They went about the business in different ways, but in losing their sheep they were equal. Po Yi died for reputation at the foot of Shou-yang mountain; Robber Chih died for gain on top of Eastern Mound. 15 The two of them died different deaths, but in destroying their lives and blighting their inborn nature they were equal. Why then must we say that Po Yi was right and Robber Chih wrong?Everyone in the world risks his life for something. If he risks it for benevolence and righteousness, then custom names him a gentleman; if he risks it for goods and wealth, then custom names him a petty man. The risking is the same, and yet we have a gentleman here, a petty man there. In destroying their lives and blighting their inborn nature, Robber Chih and Po Yi were two of a kind. How then can we pick out the gentleman from the petty man in such a case?He who applies his nature to benevolence and righteousness may go as far with it as Tseng and Shih, but I would not call him an expert. He who applies his nature to the five flavors may go as far with it as Yu Erh.16 But I would not call him an expert. He who applies his nature to the five notes may go as far with it as Li Chu, but I would not call this good eyesight. My definition of expertness has nothing to do with benevolence and righteousness; it means being expert in regard to your Virtue, that is all. My definition of expertness has nothing to do with benevolence or righteousness.17 It means following the true form of your inborn nature, that is all. When I speak of good eyesight, I do not mean listening to others. I mean simply listening to yourself. When I speak of good eyesight, I do not mean looking at others; I mean simply looking at yourself. He who does not look at himself but looks at others, who does not get hold of himself but gets hold of others, is getting what other men have got and failing to get what he himself has got. He finds joy in what brings joy to other men, but finds no joy in what would bring joy to himself. And if he finds joy in what brings joy to other men, but finds no joy in what would bring joy to himself, then whether he is a Robber Chih or a Po Yi he is equally deluded and perverse. I have a sense of shame before the Way and its Virtue, and for that reason I do not venture to raise myself up in deeds of benevolence and righteousness, or to lower myself in deluded and perverse practices.Continued









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