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# YIN CHIH WEN

THE TRACT OF THE QUIET  
WAY WITH EXTRACTS FROM  
THE CHINESE COMMENTARY

TRANSLATED FROM THE CHINESE BY  
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WITH FRONTISPIECE

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## INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION.

THE *Yin Chih Wen* is a religio-ethical tract, which, in spite of its popularity all over the Middle Kingdom, has not as yet, so far as we know, been translated into any Western language. Next to the *Kan-Ying P'ien* it is read and studied and taught both in schools and at the home, and there is probably no family in China without it; but its contents are very little known in the Western world, and we have only once met with references to it by Professor Douglas in his *Confucianism and Taouism* under the title of "Book of Secret Blessings."\*

### YIN CHIH.

It is difficult to translate the title of the book. All we can say is that the rendering by Douglas, "Book of Secret Blessings," does not recommend itself; but the truth is that an exact translation which would be as terse and as expressive as is the Chinese, appears to be all but impossible.

We have long been in doubt as to what English words would best express the term *Yin Chih*, and we

\* Professor Douglas's book is one in the series of *Non-Christian Religious Systems* published by the Society for the Advancement of Christian Knowledge. His reference to the *Yin Chih Wen* is made on pp. 256 and 272.

have seriously considered the following three possibilities: "secret virtue," "heaven's quiet dispensation," and "mysterious workings." None of these versions would be incorrect, but they do not sufficiently express the full meaning of the term. The first and second express two meanings which ought to be combined into one such as is the third, in order to serve as an equivalent of this peculiar expression; and we have finally decided to render our title *The Tract of the Quiet Way*, which, however, though it is sufficiently broad and brief, is not intelligible without further explanation.

The word *chih* is used both as verb and as noun. As a verb it means "to determine," "to raise"; as a noun it may be defined by "principle," "rule," "method," "dispensation," "way."\* The word *yin* means "in secret," either in the sense of "unheeded" or "unostentatious." It also conveys the idea of anything possessed with a deeper meaning, anything mysterious; and the two words together, *yin chih*, denote the quiet way of Heaven, which works out the ends of divine dispensation, invisibly yet unflinchingly, to the awe and astonishment of every sapient observer, as says the Christian hymn:

"God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform."

If we had to translate these lines into Chinese, we

\* The character is presumably phonetic. It consists of the radical "horse," which is modified by the symbol "to ascend," "to go up higher," the latter being a compound of "higher" and "to step up." In common language the word *chih* means "stallion," but we may be sure that this is an accidental homophony. A sameness of sound led to the use of the same character, an occurrence which is very frequent in the Chinese language.

might render the words "a mysterious way" very appropriately by *yin chih*.

It is an old maxim of the traditional wisdom of China which is most emphatically insisted upon by Lao Tze and all the sages of his school, that these quiet ways of Heaven should be imitated by man. As Heaven lets its sun shine upon good and evil, without discrimination and also without expecting reward or advantages; so man should do good to his fellows, perform acts of rectitude, of justice, and of mercy, show benevolence and kindness toward all in an impartial spirit without cherishing ulterior motives, without hope of reward, and without desire for praise. The man who thus imitates "Heaven's quiet way" in unostentatiously realizing the ideal of heavenly goodness is truly virtuous, and so *yin chih* has also come to denote a condition which may be characterized as, and translated by, "secret virtue," reminding us of Christ's injunction not to let our right hand know what the left hand is doing (Matt. vi. 1-4).

In the title of the book the words *Yin Chih* cover the general idea of the "secret ways" both as they are working in the divine dispensation and in human action, and if either meaning predominates we should say that it is certainly the former—the quiet ways of Heaven which determine the destiny of man and which are described by Shakespeare as

"A divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough-hew them how we will."

—Hamlet, VI, 1-4.

The word *chih* occurs for the first time in Chinese literature in the "Great Plan" of the *Shu King*, and there it is used in the verbal sense "to regulate, to rule,



to determine." The commentator of the *Yin Chih Wen* explains the title in the following words:

"In the 'Great Plan,' a chapter of the *Shuh King*, we read: '*wei tien yin chih hsia min.*' [Only | Heaven | mysteriously | rules | below | the people] and a gloss explains the word *chih* by *ting*, 'to determine.'"

The quoted passage means that "Heaven alone, in a quiet or mysteriously unnoticeable way, directs the affairs of mankind living below on earth."

The commentator continues:

"The human soul is most intelligent and its essential nature is intrinsically good. All our moral relations and daily actions have their reasons why they should be so. When Heaven above created these beings it mysteriously endowed them with something to guide (*ting*) them, and this something appears when the people practise goodness. Indeed it is the guiding (*ting*) principle of creation that good men never lose an opportunity to do what is good. If you really practise it (i. e., the good) in your heart it is not necessary that others should know of it, for there is something in the unseen which fully regulates and determines (*ting*) your affairs. Those who deny this fact commit a secret (*yin*) sin (*o*) and their retribution will be speedy. Therefore this book is called *Yin Chih.*"

The words *Yin Chih* ("the quiet way," or more explicitly, "the mysterious dispensation of Heaven showing itself in man's unostentatious virtue") are opposed to *yin o*, i. e., "the hidden evil in the bad man's heart." The word *o* (a compound of "crookedness" and "heart") is the common term for evil or badness.

The contrast in which *yin chih* stands to *yin o* explains how far it would be proper to translate our title by "secret virtue."

Considering the fact that the word "way" in English is as broad as the meaning of *chih* in Chinese, and that the former is widely used with a deep religious significance, we have finally chosen as a translation of our title the term "the quiet way." We are fully conscious of the shortcomings of our rendering, but our readers will bear in mind the original sense and become accustomed to our translation by associating it with its right interpretation.

#### WEN CH'ANG TI CHÜN.

Our frontispiece, drawn by Shen Chin-Ching, represents Wen Ch'ang Ti Chün, one of the highest divinities of China, revealing himself to the author of the tract. Wen Ch'ang is the name of the god, and Ti Chün his title.

The picture represents the god as accompanied by two attendants. The white charger on which he has come down from heaven stands in the foreground. The god is seated on a stool and the scribe of the book reverently kneels before him holding the *Yin Chih Wen* in his hands.

The inscription of the picture reads *Ti tze Shen Chin-Ching hui*, which means "the humble disciple Shen Chin-Ching pinxit." *Ti* means "younger brother," and *tze* "child," here used as a diminutive. "Little younger brother" is the usual term meaning "disciple," or "devotee," by which title the artist here calls himself to indicate that he is a follower of the religious doctrines taught in the *Yin Chih Wen*.

Wen Ch'ang means "scripture glory."

The word *wen* is the same character which occurs in the last word of the title of our book. It denotes writing in general, and is especially applied to short exhortations of a religious nature such as are commonly called in Western terminology "tracts." Hence we translate "The Tract of the Quiet Way," not "the book," as Douglas has it. With reference to the god's name, we translate *wen* by "scripture," because in English the term scripture refers mainly to religious literature and is similar to the Chinese original in so far as it has a devotional ring.

*Ch'ang* means "glory" or "radiance," the character being composed of two suns, indicating an intensified brightness of light.

To characterize the god Wen Ch'ang or "scripture glory" as god of literature (as is sometimes done) is, to say the least, misleading. He is the god of learning in general, and in Chinese high schools a hall is dedicated to him as the patron saint of education, refinement, and especially moral instruction through religious books. *Belles lettres* form only one and in fact an insignificant branch of his department. He is, above all, the god of divine revelation through scripture.

The rank of Wen Ch'ang in the world of gods, is "Emperor" or "Ti," and the word Ti Chün, "the higher emperor," is commonly translated by "lord superior."

The word *chün* means "superior," or "master"; and so "Ti Chün" (Lord Superior) might also be translated "imperial master." Chün is the term by which *chün tze* the "higher man" is denoted in Lao Tze's *Tao Teh King*, an anticipation of Nietzsche's

“superman,” only with this difference that Lao Tze’s “higher man” bears a great resemblance to Christ and Buddha, while Nietzsche’s “superman” is more like Kubla Khan, or Attila, or Napoleon. The term *chün* is commonly applied also to leading thinkers such as Lao Tze and Confucius.

#### KWAN TI AND WEN CH’ANG.

The title Ti, “emperor,” is also borne by the god of war, Kwan Ti, and if the latter is compared to the archangel Michael, the former, Wen Ch’ang, should be likened to Gabriel. In fact, we cannot deny that there is a strong probability of historical connection between these highest princes among the angels, for the conception of both may have been derived from Babylonian prototypes, Michael being represented by Marduk and Gabriel by Nebo.

Michael means literally “who is like God,” and seems to designate that divine presence (viz. the ineffable name) which is believed to be equal to God; but in the classical period of Jewish monotheism the word Michael was explained not as a characterization of the archangel as being like God, but as expressing faith in monotheism, implying the proposition that there is no second to God. Michael, according to the angel lore of the Hebrews, is the representative of God, and so he is identified with God’s cause. He is the guardian angel of Israel, the chosen people, and also commander-in-chief of the angelic hosts. As Marduk fought with Tiamat, so Michael wages war against the dragon (Rev. xii. 7).

Gabriel is as different in character from Michael as Wen Ch’ang is from Kwan Ti. Gabriel means

"the man of God." He is deemed superior to all other angels except Michael and is generally represented as the angel of God's special revelation and the interpreter of God's intentions. Thus, it is Gabriel who explains Daniel's vision; nor can we doubt that the angel with an inkhorn by his side, mentioned in Ezekiel x. 2-3, was Gabriel, the scribe of God. Old Testament scholars have pointed out his resemblance to the Babylonian god Nebo, who in the monuments is depicted in human form with an inkhorn at his side, differently from the Cherubim (the human-headed winged bulls), which fact throws light on the vision of Ezekiel, alluded to above, and shows that there is a specific meaning in the name "man of God."

In the New Testament Gabriel continues to represent God's revelation. It is he who announces the birth of John the Baptist and of Jesus. There is no figure in Christian tradition which would resemble Wen Ch'ang more closely than Gabriel.

#### CHANG-O.

As Kwan Ti, the god of war, was represented to have lived on earth as a man, so Wen Ch'ang, or "scripture glory," is said to have been an ancient Chinese sage, but little is known of the man to whom the Chinese tradition refers.

According to the commentator, "he lived during the T'ang dynasty (620-950 A. D.), and his secular name was Chang-O. Yüeh was his native province, but later he moved to Tzu T'ung in the district of Shu. We are told that his personality was distinguished by nobility and piety. His writings were clear, luminous, and forcible. He began to exercise a moral power

over the people, who unconsciously felt his spirituality. He entered for a while upon an official career, but, not satisfied with the course of politics, he resigned his government position and lived as a saintly recluse. The people of Shu showed great affection for him, and, when he died, built a temple in his honor calling it 'Temple of the Sage of Tzu T'ung.' People far and near came to offer prayers which were remarkably well responded to by the sage. Everybody, then, said, 'There is in the heavens a star called Wen Ch'ang; the sage [i. e., Chang-O] must have been its incarnation.'

Our tract bears the name of the god Wen Ch'ang, and accordingly he is regarded as its author, or at least as the divinity who has guided the pen of the man who composed it; but (unless we assume that Chang-O was the author which is not positively impossible) the name of the scribe who made himself the mouthpiece of Wen Ch'ang and who in human consideration ought to be regarded as its author, is not recorded.

#### THE CHINESE TITLE.

We reproduce the complete title of the *Tract of the Quiet Way* in its original Chinese characters on the fly leaf preceding our translation, and there it reads: "*Wen-Chang Ti-Chün Yin Chih Wen Shih-Hsün.*" This means in a verbatim translation, "[Of] Scripture Glory, [the] Imperial Master, [the] Quiet-Way-tract, normal instruction." The last two words form one idea which might be translated "educational." *Shih* means "model," "norm" or "pattern"; and *hsün*, "instruction." In their combination the two denote that the present book is intended to serve educational pur-

poses, and that it contains the established or orthodox standard of conduct.

#### THE AGE OF THE YIN CHIH WEN.

The date of the *Yin Chih Wen* can only approximately be determined. It appears that it cannot be older than Chang-O and must not therefore be dated earlier than the time of the T'ang dynasty. In the days of Kang-Hi, however, the pamphlet was not only well known, but commented upon and supplied with explanatory stories. Accordingly we cannot stray far from truth when we look upon the *Yin Chih Wen* as approximately simultaneous with the *Kan-Ying P'ien* which in many respects it greatly resembles, and so we would say that we should certainly not set the date of its composition later than about 1600 A. D.

Specialists of Chinese literature will probably be able to ascertain the age of the *Yin Chih Wen* more accurately by pointing out quotations from it in other books whose date of composition is unquestionable.

The original *Yin Chih Wen* consists (1) of the tract itself which is here translated, (2) of glosses added by commentators, and finally (3) of a great many stories which are similar to the stories of the *Kan-Ying P'ien*, except that they are more rational and appear to avoid all reference to miracles and superstitious agencies. The book has apparently appealed more to the rationalistic Confucianists or *literati*, who, while upon the whole agnostic, exhibit at the same time due respect for the officially recognized religions.

## EDITORIAL COMMENTS.

The sinological part of the present version is more exclusively the work of Mr. Teitaro Suzuki than in our edition of the *Kan-Ying P'ien*; and in our own version of terms and other details we have not been satisfied until we had his assent.

In addition to the text of the *Yin Chih Wen*, the editor has picked out from the Notes of the Chinese Commentator those passages that appealed to him, and has abstained from publishing any one of the stories, because he thought that Western readers would not take a great interest in them. The general tenor of these moralizing tales is sufficiently indicated in the stories of the *Kan-Ying P'ien*.

## L'ENVOI.

We hope that the publication of this book will help Western readers to understand better the Chinese character and especially its undeniable fervor for moral ideals. Though the Chinese mind, especially among the uneducated classes, is filled with superstitious notions, we cannot help granting that the character of their moral maxims ranges very high; and we must confess that among all the nations of the world there is perhaps none other so seriously determined to live up to the highest standard of ethical culture.

An appreciation of the virtues of the Chinese will help Western people to treat them with more consideration, and so we contribute our interpretation of this treatise as a mite towards a better understanding between the East and the West, between the white races of Europe and America and the natives of Asia. We



hope that the day will come when the mutual distrust will disappear, and when both in reciprocal appreciation of their natural good qualities, will be anxious to treat each other with fairness and brotherly kindness.

P. C.

文昌帝君陰騭文式訓

## THE TRACT OF THE QUIET WAY.

The Lord says:<sup>CC1</sup>

For seventeen generations I have been incarnated<sup>1</sup> as a high mandarin, and I have never oppressed my people nor maltreated my subordinates. I have helped them in misfortune; I have rescued them from poverty; I have taken compassion on their orphans; I have forgiven their transgressions; I have extensively practised secret virtue (*yin chih*<sup>2</sup>) which is attuned to heaven above.<sup>CC2</sup> If you are able to keep your hearts as I have kept mine, Heaven will surely bestow upon you blessings. Therefore, these are the instructions I declare unto mankind:<sup>3</sup>

He who wants to expand the field of happiness,<sup>4</sup> let him lay the foundation of it on the bottom of his heart.<sup>CC7</sup>

Practise benevolence<sup>5</sup> wherever you find an opportunity, and let your deeds of merit be unheeded (*yin*).

Benefit all creatures<sup>6</sup>; benefit the people.<sup>CC8</sup>

Practise goodness: acquire merit.

Be honest like Heaven in conducting your affairs.

Compassionate and auspicious, the state government must be devoted to the salvation of the people.

Let your heart be impartial<sup>7</sup> and wide of range.<sup>CC9</sup>

Fulfil the four obligations<sup>8</sup>; impartially observe the three doctrines.<sup>9</sup>

Be faithful and reverential to the ruler. Be filial and obedient to parents.<sup>CC10</sup> Be congenial and friendly to brothers. Be sincere in your intercourse with friends.<sup>10</sup>

Let some worship the Truthful One,<sup>11</sup> and revere the Northern Constellation,<sup>CC11</sup> while others bow before the Buddha and recite sutras.<sup>CC12</sup>

By discoursing on morality and righteousness, convert both the cunning and the dull. By preaching on the canonical books and histories, enlighten the ignorant and the benighted.

Relieve people in distress as speedily as you must release a fish from a dry rill [lest he die]. Deliver people from danger as quickly as you must free a sparrow from a tight noose.

Be compassionate to orphans and relieve widows. Respect the old and help the poor.

Promote the good and recommend the wise.  
Be lenient with others and exacting with yourself.

Save your clothing and provisions that ye may befriend the hungry and cold on the road.

Give away coffins and cases lest the dead of the poor be exposed.

Build charitable graveyards for unclaimed corpses.

Establish philanthropic institutions for the education of children.

If your own family is well provided, extend a helping hand to your relatives. If the harvest fails, provide for and relieve your neighbors and friends.

Let measures and scales be accurate; and be neither chary in selling nor exacting in buying.

Treat your servants with generosity and consideration. Do not expect perfection nor be too strict in your demands.

Publish and make known sutras<sup>12</sup> and tracts. Build and repair temples and shrines.

Distribute medicine to alleviate the suffering of the sick. With tea or water relieve the distress of the thirsty.

Light lanterns in the night to illuminate where people walk. Keep boats on rivers to ferry people across.

Buy captive animals and give them freedom.<sup>13</sup> CC<sup>13</sup>

How commendable is abstinence<sup>14</sup> that dispenses with the butcher!

While walking be mindful of worms and ants.

Be cautious with fire and do not set mountain woods or forests ablaze.

Do not go into the mountain to catch birds in nets,<sup>15</sup> nor to the water to poison fishes and minnows.

Do not butcher the ox that plows thy field.

Do not throw away paper that is written on.<sup>16</sup>

Do not scheme for others' property.

Do not envy others' accomplishments.

Do not approach thy neighbor's wife or maids.

Do not stir thy neighbors to litigation.

Do not injure thy neighbor's reputation or interest.

Do not meddle with thy neighbor's conjugal affairs.

Set not, for personal malice, brothers at variance with one another.

Set not father and son at variance for trifles.

Never take advantage of your power, nor disgrace the good and law-abiding.

Presume not, ye that are rich; nor deceive the needy and suffering.

While attending to your duty,<sup>17</sup> be humble and modest.

Live in concord with your relatives and clansmen.

Let go hatred<sup>18</sup> and forgive malice.

Those that are good, seek ye for friends; that will help you to practise virtue with body and soul. Those that are wicked, keep at a distance; it will prevent evil from approaching you.

Pass in silence over things wicked, but promulgate all that is good.

Do not assert with your mouth what your heart denies.\*

Always have in mind helpful sayings.

Do not use improper language.

Cut the brambles and thorns that obstruct the highway. Remove bricks and stones that lie in the path.

Repair the defiles though for many hundred years they have remained unimproved.

Build bridges to be traversed by thousands and ten thousands of people.

\* This recalls the fact that in Babylon "to say 'yea' with the mouth, and 'nay' with the heart. . . was repeatedly branded as a sin." See Delitzsch, *Babel and Bible: Two Lectures*, p. 47, and "Third and Last Lecture" in *The Open Court*, XX, p. 151. Cf. also the Biblical expression in Ezek. xxxiii. 31.

Expound moral maxims to correct the people's faults.

Supply the means to give instruction to people of talent.

Let your work conform to Heaven's reason,<sup>CC14</sup> and let your speech express humanness.

Keep the ancient sages before your eyes even when at supper or while looking over the fence.<sup>19</sup>

Be mindful when you are alone<sup>CC14</sup> in the shadow of your coverlet.<sup>20</sup>

Anything evil refrain ye from doing;<sup>CC14</sup> all good deeds do!<sup>21</sup> So will you be released forever from the influence of evil stars, and always be encompassed by good guardian angels.<sup>22</sup>

Rewards may be immediate, and you will receive them in person, or rewards may be remote, and will devolve upon your posterity.

Blessings come a hundredfold in loads as if drawn by horses; good fortune is piled up a thousandfold like a mass of clouds.

Do not all these things accrue to the heart of the quiet way?



NOTES OF THE CHINESE COMMENTATOR

## NOTES OF THE CHINESE COMMENTATOR.

### 1. MAN'S INDEBTEDNESS TO THE LORD.

The Lord Superior takes compassion on the ignorance of all sentient beings, who are unable to liberate themselves from the curse of their *karma*. So he proclaims these moral instructions, thereby to lead to enlightenment the generations to come.

His love is greater than that of a father who instructs his children; his discipline is greater than that of a master who trains his disciples. How sincere, earnest, and kindhearted are his words! They are surely the road that leads to sainthood and enlightenment, the best method that avoids misfortune and rescues us from evil.

May people who receive these instructions exert all their mental energy to put them in practice and be attuned to the Great Lord's boundless love to save the world.

### 2. HEAVEN AND EARTH.\*

Chou-tze says: "Heaven and Earth are constantly at work to regenerate the ten thousand things. That

\* The term "heaven and earth" stands for the two divine principles, also called *yang* and *yin*, which shape all conditions in the world including the destinies of human affairs.

is their purport. If the thought of a person is always bent on benefiting others, then he becomes himself Heaven and Earth.

"It is not sufficient for an officer of high position to refrain from coveting promotion and from seeking wealth. He should employ his benevolence so as to benefit his fellow men; otherwise the purpose for which Heaven has created us will be altogether lost."

#### A GOOD JUDGE.\*

In olden times, Yü King, judge of the criminal court, was held in such high esteem [on account of his virtue] that a gateway for four-horse carriages was erected in his honor.

Yü King of the Han dynasty (206 B. C. to A. D. 23) was judge of a criminal court on the eastern shore of China. In his district there was a young widow who, on account of her parental devotion, showed no disposition to marry again, lest her mother-in-law be left without support. The aged woman, however, was so much distressed over her helplessness that finally she hanged herself to release her daughter-in-law from the duty of self-sacrifice. Her own daughter hearing of the incident went to court and charged her sister-in-law with murder, and the latter, unable to vindicate herself, was condemned to death in spite of Yü King's

\*The words printed in large type in the present and the three following notes belong in all original Chinese editions to the text of the *Yin Chih Wen* proper. Accordingly we have set them in the same type in which our translation of the text is set, but have removed them to the Chinese Commentary, because they appear to be out of place in the text. Compare note 3 on page 39.

protest. After this tragedy, Heaven failed to give rain all along the eastern coast for a period of three years. When a new governor was installed, Yü King explained to him the cause of the long drought. Thereupon the grave of the dutiful daughter-in-law was officially decorated, and then at last it started to rain.

Yü King showed his humane disposition in many other trials. When the elder people in his district proposed to repair his family gate which was dilapidating, Yü King advised them to have it raised and enlarged, so that a four-horse carriage could be driven through it, saying: "I have a great many times in my official life practised secret virtue (*yin teh*) and have never condemned the innocent. Among my descendants there will surely be some one who will rise high and will occupy important positions." And so things came to pass. His son became prime minister and was created a noble, and his grandson, too, was promoted to a responsible position in the government.

#### HUMANENESS REWARDED.\*

The Tou family saved people and thus nobly obtained the five-branched olea.<sup>1</sup>

Tou Yü-Chün was not yet favored with a son when he was thirty years old. One night his grandfather appeared to him in a dream and said: "You may not have any issue at all, nor may you live long, unless you are diligent in performing benevolent deeds."

\* See footnote on page 26, and note 3, page 39.

<sup>1</sup> Olea or cassia is *kwei* in Chinese and symbolizes success, prosperity, and honor.

Yü-Chün was a well-to-do man and could afford to do many benevolent things. One of his servants stole a considerable sum of money from his chest. When the fact was exposed, the guilty one fled leaving his daughter thirteen years old, to whom a note was attached which read: "Offer this girl and my house for sale. With the money thus realized I wish to pay my debt."

Yü-Chün burned the note, took the girl to his own house, and had her reared by his wife. When she reached maturity he gave her a large dowry and chose for her a good husband. When her father heard of it he was greatly affected and returned home full of repentance. His old master forgave him and did not say anything about his former crime.

Yü-Chün did many other good things. The poor who could not afford funeral services for their dead, were liberally assisted by him, and those who could not, on account of a lack of dowry, give their daughters in marriage, were handsomely supplied with gold. Poor children were educated and the helpless taken care of, while he himself lived most frugally. He also built a large library and gave employment to many learned men.

In the meantime he saw again his grandfather in a dream, who said: "You were originally destined not to have any offspring and to live only a few more years. But on account of your humane deeds, your merits have been recorded by the Heavenly Lord. Your life will be prolonged and you will have five children who will be very prosperous."

"The way of Yin and Yang," the spirit added, "is like the law of Karma. The reward may become manifest either in this life or in succeeding lives. The

heavenly net is vast and hangs loosely, but it never permits things to escape. You must cherish no doubt about this."

Yü-Chün's five sons successfully passed the literary examinations and were promoted to high official positions.

#### 5. SAVING MANY LIVES.\*

He who took pity on ants attained the highest literary honor.

Sung Chiao and Sung Ch'i (eleventh century A. D.) were brothers. When they were both at college, a strange Buddhist monk examined their physiognomy and prophesied: "The younger Sung will be the first on the list of literary graduates, and the elder, too, will unfailingly pass."

Ten years later, the elder Sung again happened to meet the monk on the road. The monk showed great astonishment, exclaiming: "Your fortunes have suddenly changed. You look as if you had saved millions of lives." Sung said, laughing: "How could I, a poor follower of Confucius, achieve such a feat as that?" "Yes," replied the monk, "Even the meanest creatures are enjoying their lives you know." Reflecting a little while, Sung said: "I remember that about ten days ago I found an ants' nest under my porch in danger of being flooded. I took a few bamboo sticks and made a bridge over the water to let the poor ants cross over it. May this be it?" "Exactly," answered the monk, "the younger Sung is now leading the list but you will not be second to him."

When the order of literary graduates was declared,

\* See footnote on page 26, and note 3, page 39.

the younger Sung was found to be the first and the elder Sung the second. But the Empress Chang Hsien decreed that the younger brother should not precede the elder, and Sung Chiao was put at the head of the list.

#### 6. THE DOUBLE-HEADED SNAKE.\*

He who buried [out of sight] the snake [of bad omen] was deemed worthy of the honor of premiership.

Shun Shu-Ao, of Chu state, when a boy, used to go out very frequently. One day he saw a double-headed snake which he killed and, to put it out of sight, buried it in the ground. He came home in gloom and showed no appetite at the table. An anxious inquiry of his mother brought him to tears, and he said mournfully: "People say, those who have seen a double-headed snake are doomed to die soon. I saw one to-day and fear that before long I shall die, mother, and will have to leave you alone." The mother then asked him, "Where is the snake now?" "Fearing that others might see it too, I killed and buried it." "Never mind then," replied the mother, "you will not die. I understand that secret virtue (*yin teh*) brings rewards that are open. Where there is virtue, thither will be gathered a thousand blessings. Where there is benevolence, a hundred evils are distanced. Heaven above attends to affairs below. You are sure to become eminent in this state."

When Shun was a man, he was made a minister of state.

\* See footnote on page 26, and note 3, page 39.

## 7. THE FOUNDATION OF BLISS

All deeds originate in the heart.<sup>2</sup>

All the good acts that are enumerated below begin in the heart and are completed, too, in the heart. The heart's inmost recess is the very spot where there is Heaven and where there is Hell.

The difference between sages such as Yao and Shun and wretches such as Chieh or Chou, simply pivots here around this puny little thing. Unexpected blessings grow, as it were, in a very actual field, which can be ploughed and harvested. The heart, though spiritual and mysterious, yet possesses a solid, tangible soil, which can be watered and tilled.

The soul of a true, earnest gentleman<sup>3</sup> has its root in this obscure recess, which he examines and purifies in solemn silence and privacy. Merely this, a heart to save the world; not one mote of a heart for worldliness. Merely this, a heart to love mankind; not a mote of a heart for hatred of people. Merely this, a heart to have respect for others; not a mote of a heart for making light of the world. Merely this, a heart earnestly to promote one's conversion; not a mote of a heart for indulgent self-delusion. This is the way of self-purification and the sure foundation of bliss.

<sup>2</sup>This passage resembles the first line of the *Dhammapada* and may be a translation of it.

<sup>3</sup>*Shih*. The term literally means "scholar," but it is also used in the sense of "gentleman," being a title given to persons of distinction, sometimes equivalent to the English "Esquire." It covers the ideal of a truly respectable man who deserves the esteem of his fellow-citizens.



## 8. SEEK TRUTH FOR THE SAKE OF SALVATION.

Ch'ang-tze says: "If a respectable gentleman is at all disposed towards lovingkindness, he cannot help doing things beneficial to others." Supplementing this, Ch'en An-Shan says: "If a villain is ever bent on selfishness, he will surely do things harmful to others." Both of these sayings are indisputably true.

Those who are able to think of others are called superior men, and those who think of themselves are called small men. The difference is in one's own fundamental thought, whether it is of the ego or not. Some incessantly accumulate evils, others good deeds; and when we see the result, it is the difference between Heaven and Earth.

Li Kwang-Yüen, an eminent seeker of truth, was once warned by a strange saintly personage, thus: "I see thou art seeking truth. But wouldst thou have it for thy private self, saints and gods will have no regard for thee." Are not gods and saints<sup>4</sup> as well as sages and holy men<sup>5</sup> bent on saving the world? Some seek saintliness in their pursuit of life everlasting and immortality; but if their hearts are tainted with a single thought of egotism, they are grievously at fault, though it be hidden and they know it not; and there is no thought of their ever attaining to saintship.

## 9. THE DISEASE OF EGOTISM.

Mother Cheng used to instruct her children to this effect: "When others do good, fall in line as if it were your work and be sure to bring it to completion. Treat

<sup>4</sup> The ideals of Taoism.

<sup>5</sup> The ideals of the Confucians.

others' property as if it were your own, so you will be thoughtful in using it."

Hsieh Wen-Ching says: "The reason why a man has thousands of troubles is because he clings to the idea of self; therefore, he schemes and contrives in ten thousand different ways. He alone wants to be rich, he alone wants to be honored, he alone wants to be easy, he alone wants to be happy, he alone wants to enjoy life, he alone wants to be blessed with longevity; and to others' poverty, misery, danger, or suffering, he is altogether indifferent. It is for this reason that the life-will<sup>6</sup> of others is disregarded and Heaven's Reason neglected. Only be cured of the disease of egotism, and your heart will be broadened even to the vastness of infinite space, so that wealth, honor, happiness, comfort, health, longevity could all be enjoyed with others. And, then, the will to live will have its way, everything will have its natural longings satisfied, and Heaven's Reason will be displayed in an untold exuberance.

#### 10. FILIAL PIETY.

Filial piety is the guide of all actions. It is the ultimate root of humaneness; and is it possible that the root be rotten while the branches and leaves grow luxuriously?

<sup>6</sup> The term *sheng i*, i. e. "life-will," is a noteworthy anticipation of Schopenhauer's idea of the "will to live." The commentator insists that our egotism and vanity is the main cause of evil in the world,—an idea apparently imbibed from Buddhism, and he declares that we should let *sheng i*, the "will to live," as it exists in other creatures, develop without hindrance, which will result in an untold exuberance of the display of *T'ien Tao*, Heavenly Reason.

Yao-Jao Hou says: "The four essential elements of filial piety are: (1) To be established in virtue; (2) To keep up the family; (3) To keep the body unimpaired; (4) To cultivate the character."

Pious children will not let their parents' hearts be roused to thoughts of cold indifference. They will not let their parents' hearts be annoyed or harassed. They will not let their parents' hearts be alarmed or filled with fear. They will not let their parents' hearts be grieved or embarrassed. They will not let their parents' hearts be perplexed. They will not let their parents' hearts feel ashamed or indignant.

#### 11. SEVERAL WAYS.

In his anxiety lest all people might not be induced to goodness, the Lord Superior invites them to come to him in any way they may be pleased to follow. They may pay homage at the Taoist sanctuary; they may worship the Northern Constellation; they may bow before the Buddha and recite his Sutras: if they only do so with singleness and sincerity of heart, these roads will lead to goodness; but there should be no thought of attaining blessings or acquiring rewards.

#### 12. BUDDHISM AND CONFUCIANISM.

P'an Ch'ung-Mou says:

"What is to be avoided most in our life is vacillation and frivolity (*wang nien*); and what is most excellent is a reverential heart. Therefore, we Confucians endeavor to preserve sincerity of heart and consider reverence as most essential. It is needless

to say that sincerity and reverence make us companions of heaven and earth, gods and spirits.

"There is, however, another class of people who adopt Buddhism as their guidance. They bow before the Buddha and recite his Sutras, always bent on preserving reverence and awe. They will never relax their vigilant guard over the heart, which will by degrees become pure and bright, free from evil thoughts and ready to do good. This enlightenment is called their most happy land.<sup>7</sup> What is necessary, then, for Buddhists as well as Confucians is to avoid vacillation and frivolity, which will render you unreliable. Keep the heart always restrained by reverence and awe. Otherwise what can be the use of the recitation of Sutras or the discourses of Confucius?"

### 13. A SYMPATHETIC HEART.

The great virtue of heaven and earth is to create, and all living beings, men and animals alike, derive their vitality from this one and the same source. Nowhere under the sun is there a being that dislikes life and embraces death with joy.

To buy up captive animals for the sake of setting them free is nothing but an outburst of a sympathetic heart. Thoughtless people make light of puny creatures such as ants, spiders, etc., and wantonly kill them, having no thought of pity or remorse; but pious hearts refrain from such cruelty.

<sup>7</sup> The commentator refers to the Western Paradise (*su-khâvati*) of the Pure Land sect, which is here interpreted as a state of mind.

## 14. THE VOICE WITHIN.\*

"Heaven's Reason consists of two words; but they are in your own heart. If when you do a thing, there remains in your heart some misgiving, then your deed is against Heaven and contrary to Reason. A virtuous man punctiliously guards himself when alone, solely to retain Heaven's Reason<sup>9</sup> and to calm human desires. Therefore says Tung Ch'ung-Shu [a famous Confucian]: "Attend to your duty and scheme not for gain. Look after what you ought to do and measure not your merit."

\* \* \*

The source of good and evil is in the heart, and the best method of controlling it is a reverential attitude of the heart.

Ever turbulent is the heart of him who does evil; ever wakeful is the heart of him who does good.

The teachings of holy men are written in the six canonical books. There are thousand gates and ten thousand doors; through which shall we enter? The main thing is to guard oneself when alone, lest one go astray; then you will see how one's strength grows.

\* \* \*

Proceed in goodness for a thousand days and there will be not enough; proceed in evil for half a minute and you will have too much.

\* These three passages dealing with the same subject are three consecutive comments as indicated by the references.

<sup>9</sup> Heaven's Reason is here not *T'ien Tao*, but *T'ien Li*, which means "reason" or "rationality" in the commonly accepted sense.

## TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

## TRANSLATOR'S NOTES.

<sup>1</sup> The doctrine of reincarnation is not indigenous in China. We must consider this opening passage as showing a strong Hindu influence which was introduced to China through Buddhism. The *Jâtaka Stories* tell us that Buddha appeared a great many times as a Bodhisattva on this earth, again and again practising the six virtues of perfection (*pâramitâ*). The Taoist *Book of Incarnations (Hua Shu)*, contains narrations of the previous lives of Lord Scripture Glory, written in the same tone as the Buddhist *Jâtaka*.

<sup>2</sup> For the exact meaning of this word see the Preface.

<sup>3</sup> We omit here a few lines which to the English reader, not familiar with Chinese ways, would appear to interrupt the context. In the opening sentence of the Chinese text, Lord Scripture Glory alludes to a number of moral stories, well known among the Chinese, as instances of rewards of virtue. We have removed the lines here omitted to the Chinese Commentary, where they are printed in the same type as our translation of the text of *Yin Chih Wen*, so as to render them easily recognizable. For all we know the passages may be a later addition which has crept into the text, but even then, of course, they must be older than the commentaries belonging to them in which the stories alluded to are told. For further details see the Chinese Commentary 3-6, entitled "A Good Judge," "Humaneness Rewarded," "Saving Many Lives," and "The Double-Headed Snake."

<sup>4</sup> "Bliss of happiness" is a Buddhist term and its Sanskrit original is probably *punyakshetra*.

<sup>5</sup> The word benevolence translates the Chinese *fang pien* literally "deeds of benevolence," which is the common version

of the Buddhist term *upāya* and means "method" or "successful way of attaining an end." It is especially applied in the literature of the Mahayana, in the sense which the English word "method" has acquired among Wesleyan Methodists. *Prajñā*, "wisdom," is in itself insufficient because it is enlightenment in the abstract. In order to become efficient for salvation it must be applied, and the method of applying *prajñā* is *upāya*, commonly designated *kausala*, i. e., "good or excellent." The method of salvation according to Buddhist teachers is by "deeds of benevolence" as indicated by its Chinese translation.

The commentator interprets the term *fang pien* in a popular sense and takes it for "any deed that is beneficial to others." In Buddhism this word plays a very important part, and its adoption here shows how strongly the author of this short treatise was influenced by Indian thought.

\* "Creatures" should be understood in the broadest sense, for it refers to all objects about us.

\* "Impartiality of heart" again belongs to Buddhist phraseology. The Sanskrit original is *samatācitta* or *samatāhri-daya*. The commentator, however, understands it in the sense of the Confucian Golden Rule, that whatever you do not desire to have done to you, you should not do to others (the *Lun Yü*, XII, 21), and also in the Buddhist sense that a Bodhi-sattva (intelligent being) should be free from the thought of an ego (*atmasamjñā*). (*The Diamond-Cutter Sutra*.)

\* According to a Chinese Buddhist sutra, the first obligation is to the parents, the second to all sentient beings, the third to the ruler of the country, and the fourth to the Triple Treasure (*triratna*) of Buddhism. Though the author must have borrowed the idea from Buddhism, the commentator's enumeration does not agree with the latter. He puts teachers and elders in place of the Triple Treasure, and Heaven and Earth, for all sentient beings.

\* The three doctrines are Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. The commentator evidently thinks humaneness (*jên*) to be the essence of Confucianism, compassion (*karunā*) that



of Buddhism, and response and retribution (*kan ying*) that of Taoism, and declares that they all come out of the human heart, which is one and the same in all three religions.

<sup>19</sup> It is strange that the author does not say anything here about the relation between husband and wife, while he is manifestly referring to the five eternal virtues (*wu chang*) of Confucianism.

<sup>20</sup> The term "the Truthful One" (i. e., *chen*) refers to the religion of the Taoists. *Chen* may denote Lao Tze, or the doctrine in general, or Taoist saints, or the Taoist sacred book, *T'ai-Shang Kan-Ying P'ien*.

<sup>21</sup> The term "Sutras" originally refers only to Buddhist books, but the commentator does not wish to have the phrase interpreted in that sense, and says: "Though they seem specifically to denote Buddhist literature, we may better understand them as virtually including all the classical books belonging to the three religions."

<sup>22</sup> This is a Buddhist custom, for the saving of lives is considered to be very meritorious. The Buddhist theory is that if in this life we do not act humanely we are sure to be born in the form of a lower animal and to suffer for what we have done. We may perchance find some of our own ancestors among horses or dogs or birds whom we now treat carelessly and contemptuously, forgetting the good they did for us.

<sup>23</sup> This is also distinctly a Buddhist sentiment, not originally found in China.

<sup>24</sup> In the *Lun Yü* (Confucian Analects) we read: "The Master angled, but did not use a net. He shot, but not at birds perching." (XII, 27.) The passage is understood to mean that Confucius was so tender-hearted as not to take advantage of animals when hunting, and that he killed them only when it was necessary for the sustenance of human life.

<sup>25</sup> The Chinese show great respect for writing and writing materials, because, they say, by them we become acquainted with the virtues, wisdom and sayings of ancient sages. Any

writing, to the Chinese, partakes of the nature of spirit, and there is a special order of monks who make it their duty to collect written scraps of paper and burn them, to save them the disgrace of any disrespectful treatment.

<sup>27</sup> Says a Taoist sage, according to the commentator: "I have three canonical books, which altogether consist of only six characters. The one-character book reads, 'Meekness'; the two-character book, 'Good-will'; and the three-character book, 'Do your duty.' These three sacred books are not found in the Great Tripitaka [collection of Buddhist literature], but in your own heart."

<sup>28</sup> "Let go hatred" translates the words *hsieh yüan*. "To owe a grudge" is called in Chinese, "Tieing (the knot of) hatred or enmity," that is, *chieh yüan*; and so to return to an amicable relation is conceived as a loosening, or untying.

<sup>29</sup> This means not to forget for a moment the deeds or instructions of wise men of old, "to be always on guard lest the heart might go astray." Says Confucius (*Lun Yü*, IV, 5): "The superior man does not, even for a space of a single meal, act contrary to virtue. In moments of haste his mind dwells on it. In time of danger his mind dwells on it." In the *Chung Yung*, (*Doctrine of the Mean*), it is said that the *tao* ("path," or "doctrine") is not for a moment to be ignored, for that which can be ignored is not the *tao*.

<sup>30</sup> This is decidedly Confucian. The *Great Learning* (*Tai Hsiao*) as well as *The Doctrine of the Mean* (*Chung Yung*) teach one to be watchful over himself when he is alone. This watchfulness is not merely intellectual, but full of religious feelings. In spite of their agnostic tendencies, the Confucians show a great earnestness and solemn reverence toward Heaven's Reason (*T'ien Tao*).

<sup>31</sup> This is one of the noblest injunctions given by the Buddha. (The *Dhammapada*, verse 183). In Pali it reads:

"Sabba pâpassa akaranam,  
Kusalassa upasampadâ."

Niao Che, a Buddhist recluse who lived in Hang Chou about 800 A. D., declares: "Even a three year old child can

say this, but even a gray-haired man finds it difficult to practise." Cf. also Psalm xxxiv, 14 and xxxvii, 27.

<sup>28</sup> The Chinese word *shen* means god or any spiritual being, and according to the context would here best be translated by "angel."

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