

The Story of Chinese Taoism

by Nan Huai-chin

Translated by Dr. William Brown

Copyright

© 2002 Nan Huai-Chin, ISBN 0-9721907-3-2
All Rights Reserved Worldwide in All Media.

Top Shape Publishing, LLC
1135 Terminal Way Suite 209
Reno, Nevada 89502

No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted by any means, including but not limited to electronic, mechanical, digital copying, printing, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without written permission from the author.

For related Top Shape Publishing e-courses, training tapes, coaching and seminars, newsletters and titles on meditation, mind-body phenomena, spiritual experiences, esoteric sciences, naturopathic healing, cutting edge nutraceutical protocols for disease, integrated marketing methods, business growth strategies, national development strategies, cultural commentaries and other related topics, check for us on the web at:

www.MeditationExpert.com
www.TheSkepticalNutritionist.com
www.TopShapeAcademy.com

Table of Contents

Copyright	2
Table of Contents	3
About the Translation	6
Introduction	7
The Origins of the Learning and Thought of the Taoist School and Those of Huang-Lao and Lao-Chuang	9
• The Relationship of the Taoist School with Huang-Lao	
• The Relationship of the Taoist School and Lao-Chuang	
The Relationship of the Thought of the Recluse and the Taoist School	14
• Counter-Evidence to the Legends of Ancient History	
• The Relationship of the Thought of Confucius and the Recluse	
• Relationship of the Recluses and Historical Politics	
The Learning of the Fang-shih (Occultist) and the Taoist School	24
• Early Natural Sciences	
• The Yin-Yang School Evolved Into the Humanities	

- Theoretical Physical Sciences

Origins of the Learning and Thought of the Fang-shih in the Taoist School30

- Ancient Traditional Culture and the Taoist School During the Chou Dynasty
- Cultural Background of the Northern Chinese States of Ch'i, Lu, Yen and Sung During the Warring States Period
- The Culture and Thought of the Southern State of Ch'u During the Warring States Period

Contents of the Learning and Thought of the Taoist School and Taoist Religion63

- Cosmological Theories of Heaven and Man in the Taoist School and Taoist Religion
- Learning and Thought of the Cultivation of Immortals in the Taoist School

The Immortal Alchemical Sect During and After the Han and Wei Dynasties101

- The Originator of Alchemical Texts Wei Po-Yang
- The Alchemical Method of Refining *Ch'i* and Nourishing Life Through the Combination of the Medical Sciences of the *Fang-shih* and the Representations and Numerology of the *Book of Changes*

General Discussion on the Thoughts of the Founders of the Taoist School and Taoist Religion126

- The Meaning of "Heaven" Prior to the Split of the Confucian and Taoist Schools
- The Meaning of "Tao" Prior to the Split of the Confucian and Taoist Schools

• Lao Tzu	
• Chuang Tzu	
• The Influences of the Yin-Yang School and <i>Fang-shih</i> of the Warring States Period	
• The “ <i>Fang-shih</i> ” of the States of Yen and Ch’i and the Origins of the Thought of Immortals During the Ch’in and Han Dynasties	
The Taoist Religion	176
• Reasons for the Formation of the Taoist Religion at the End of the Han Dynasty	
• The Taoist School and Taoist Religion During and After the Chin and Wei Dynasties	
The Ideas of the Taoist School and Taoist Religion and the Educational Spirit of Chinese Culture	198
Other Books by the Author	205

About the Translation

Several years ago I commissioned Thomas Cleary to translate a complete volume by Nan Huai Chin that consisted of the dual history of Taoism and the Zen school in China. Dr. Cleary was only able to translate half the text, which became *The Story of Chinese Zen*, published by Charles E. Tuttle. Dr. William Brown was then commissioned to translate the remaining portions of the text, which is what you now have before you. You will find that this was an extremely difficult text to translate, and it is virtually overflowing with information. Because of the density of contents and insights, for your benefit we have highlighted certain sections to help break up the text and call attention to important information.

For those who are studying Taoism and its instructions regarding spiritual cultivation, rest assured that Nan Huai-Chin's words and views will reveal insights you cannot find elsewhere. As for those professionals in academia conducting research on Taoism and Chinese history, as always Nan Huai-Chin's scholarship presents an entirely different viewpoint than the typical orthodox view, and opens up entirely new areas of dialogue for study.

People ordinarily think it is very easy to find someone to translate Nan Huai-Chin's works, but able translators are rare. A qualified translator must be familiar with a highly specialized Chinese vocabulary that entails a detailed knowledge of Buddhism, Zen, Taoism, Confucianism, history, politics, and quite a few other subjects as well. Buddhist Chinese, all by itself, is considered a specialized area of language study. This does not even go into the necessity for understanding ancient Chinese vernacular, as well as Nan Huai-Chin's flowing literary style which differs from the standard fare found in newspapers, science publications or the business arena. Of those few translators in the nation who are qualified in these areas, most are too busy or just unwilling to take on such a project. Dr. Brown has taken on this formidable task of bringing this Chinese work into the English language, and we hope you will enjoy it and benefit from it.

Bill Bodri

Introduction

The Taoist religion is a religion whose contents are totally based on the learning and thought of the Taoist school. The contents of the learning and thought of the Taoist school are in turn the confluence of the primitive religious thought, philosophical thought, scientific theories, as well as the science and technology of Chinese culture, great achievements which embody and permeate throughout ancient and modern Chinese culture.

Although the Taoist school and Taoist religion are sometimes confused and indistinguishable under the shades of religion, yet in reality, there are great similarities and differences between them. However, it has customarily been the case that the demarcations between the Taoist school and Taoist religion have not been clearly defined, and arbitrarily called superstitious. Thus it has been rendered into a remote island in the middle of the sea which can be viewed but never reached, something abstruse, vague and insubstantial.

In presenting a positive appraisal of the learning and thought of the Taoist school, Chi Hsiao-feng said that it “encompasses a hundred generations, and is extensive and profound.” Naturally, any type of learning and thought is similar to the affairs and things of the world in that both possess positive and negative, as well as good and bad aspects.

The learning and thought of Taoist religion admittedly encompasses a hundred generations extensively and profoundly, and yet it has been preserved and transmitted since ancient times. Given its amalgamous nature, it has become utterly “fragmented, strange and disorderly.” However, we may not refuse to eat for fear of choking and cast aside the boundless treasure of a traditional culture, for that would be an extremely absurd thing to do.

We must now first discuss the origins of the Taoist religion and Taoist school for purposes of brief introduction:

The formation of the learning and thought of the Taoist school can be simply categorized into four sources: (1) Huang-Lao learning; (2) the thought of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu; (3) the thought of the recluse; (4) the learning of the occultists (*fang-shih*).

The formation of the religious learning and thought of the Taoist religion can also be simply categorized into four sources: (1) originating from the learning and thought of the Taoist school; (2) arising as a result of political and social changes; (3) stimulation from foreign religions; (4) infatuation with mysticism.

Chapter 1

The Origins of the Learning and Thought of the Taoist School and Those of Huang-Lao and Lao-Chuang

The Relationship of the Taoist School with Huang-Lao

After the Ch'in (256-206 B.C.) and Han (206 B.C.-220 A.D.) dynasties, the learning and thought of the Taoist school was frequently referred to as Huang-Lao or Lao-Chuang, who were taken as the ancestral patriarchs of the Taoist School. Huang refers to Huang Ti (Yellow Emperor), and Lao of course refers to Lao Tzu. However, whether one says Huang and Lao or Lao and Chuang, we all know that Lao Tzu is actually considered the patriarch of the Taoist school.

If Huang Ti, the Yellow Emperor, is brought in as the patriarch of the Taoist school, there will then be those who believe this and those who do not. Generally speaking, those who have sincere faith in the Taoist school naturally have no doubts about this, but if one does not believe in the Taoist school, they will then find numerous faults with this assertion and laugh at it as being absurd nonsense. Actually, those who sincerely believe in the Taoist school need not acknowledge Huang Ti as the founder of the Taoist religion!

Nevertheless, should Huang Ti, after all, be considered the patriarch of the Taoist school? Moreover, what basis is there for him to be qualified to be the patriarch of the Taoist school? The ancient texts that are cited as evidence and said to be authored by Huang Ti himself have always been widely considered by scholars to be forgeries of later periods. These texts include the *Yellow Emperor's Classic on Internal Medicine (Nei Ching)* dealing with medicine and pharmacology, and the *Yellow Emperor's Classic of Obscure Correspondence (Yin Fu Ching)* transmitted by the Taoist school and applied to military tactics and strategy.

Aside from there being historical records that recognize Huang Ti as the ancient founder of the Chinese nation and people, there is nearly no way of verifying that he left behind any reliable learning and thought. What reason can there then be for saying that Huang Ti is the patriarch of the Taoist school? This is actually the Chinese view on cultural history, and the question has always been a

problem that is easily overlooked.

We must understand ancient scholars, and if we wish to trace back to before Huang Ti in our pursuit of remote history and culture, aside from any folklore materials with a textual basis that are open to doubt, there is actually a lack of reliable documentary evidence about him. But for purposes of academic prudence and truth, we will make the decision to view Huang Ti as the first ancestor [from assuming the traditional Chinese cultural view]. Therefore, when we speak of the origins of Chinese culture and history, we always begin from Huang Ti.

If we base ourselves on what has been handed down by the Taoist school—the so-called materials that are open to doubt—the national history of China can be pushed back to more than one million years ago, and even at least as far back as over 100,000 years ago, which seems to be a little too much. Therefore, if we make determinations using historical writings, then a very modest conclusion is to begin with Huang Ti.

The Taoist school has always spoken of Huang Ti and Lao Tzu together, and maintained that the source of their learning extended back far past Huang Ti. This shows that the learning and thought of the Taoist school is based on the orthodox views passed on from ancient Chinese culture, and they are not a deliberate deceit that attempts to be mystifying. In his chapter entitled “Cultivation and Training (*Hsiu Wu Hsun*),” Huai Nan Tzu said: “Worldly and common people place great value on the old and despise the present. Therefore, the Taoist school always relied upon Shen Nung and Huang Ti and were later able to be influential.”

The famous historian Ssu-ma Ch'ien of the Han dynasty, who lived after Huai Nan Tzu, understood this concept even more so than did Huai Nan Tzu, and therefore, when writing about the *fang-shih* (magicians, specialists in the occult) of the Taoist school, stated in the “Biography of Tsou Yen” that: “Huang Ti has been the most supreme from the past up to the present, the collective learning of the scholars is great but waxes and wanes with the affairs of the world.” This shows that Huang Ti is the common cultural ancestor universally recognized in Chinese scholarship, and not only within the school of Taoism.

The Relationship of the Taoist School and Lao-Chuang

As to Lao Tzu, he was truly a person of great excellence in ancient times. We shall first speak of the comments made by Confucius of Lao Tzu after first meeting him, as recorded by Ssu-ma Ch'ien in his *Record of History (Shih Chi)*. This is a critique that the later designated orthodox Confucians were not willing to

acknowledge. Confucius said of Lao Tzu: "Is he not like a dragon?" thus praising Lao Tzu as an extraordinary individual of impenetrable depth.

Lao Tzu has been the major representative of reclusive thought since ancient times, a reclusive gentleman acquainted with things ancient and modern, possessed with profound and extensive learning, having transcendental cultivation, and one who did not seek after wealth and fame. Therefore, Ssu-ma Ch'ien guessed at the situation without being able to truly ascertain the facts when writing his biographical account of Lao Tzu. He could only record all of the traditions and unusual accounts regarding him. This information he then wrote as a true record.

As to whether Lao Tzu was actually Li Erh, Li Tan, or Lao Lai Tzu cannot be confirmed. Not only did Ssu-ma Ch'ien write about how mysterious and abstruse Lao Tzu was, thus making him into a spiritual dragon of impenetrable depth, but he was later held in high esteem as the patriarch of the Taoist school. He was also hailed up to be the founder of the Taoist religion, whereupon he ascended to the precious throne of the Highest Lord (*T'ai Shang Lao Chun*), and became the most wondrous of spirits.

We must not forget that in Chinese cultural history it was entirely the scholars after the Ch'in and Han dynasties who toyed with their pens and decided to relegate the learning and thought of the Taoist school into Lao Tzu's governing sphere. Only if we are careful of history can we then know that the famous Emperor Wen (179-156 B.C.) and Emperor Ching (156-140 B.C.) at the beginning of the Han dynasty utilized the thoughts of the Taoist school for purposes of political leadership, and then used Huang-Lao to refer to the learning of the Taoist school.

Following Ssu-ma Ch'ien's quotation of his father's (Ssu-ma T'an) discussion on the essentials of the Six Schools in his *Record of History*, there were also Liu Yin's *Seven Epitomes of Literature* (*Ch'i Lueh*), and Pan Ku's *Bibliographical Sketches of the History of the Han Dynasty* (*Han Shu I Wen Chih*) which not only divided the schools of learning during the Chou dynasty (1122-255 B.C.) and Ch'in dynasty (255-206 B.C.) so that they stood against each other and were clearly separated, but also aggressively embraced the Taoist school and determined to place it within the domicile of Lao Tzu. As a result, later scholars tended to refer to Lao and Chuang when speaking of the Taoist school.

The tradition transmitted by those of the Taoist school after the Wei (219-264) and Chin (265-419) dynasties enumerate a succession which states that Lao Tzu transmitted the teaching to Kuan Yin Tzu and Keng Sang Tzu, Keng Sang Tzu passed it on to Hu Tzu, Hu Tzu transmitted it on to Lieh Tzu, and Lieh Tzu passed

it on to Chuang Tzu.

Actually, the followers of both the Taoist school and Taoist religion all accept the explanation of the Grand Historian Ssu-ma Ch'ien and his father, for first impressions are usually the most lasting, and then the mistakes are typically glossed over and allowed to slip by. If we could raise Ssu-ma Ch'ien up out of the nether world and converse with him, it would certainly be quite amusing. In both the *Record of History* as well as his forward to the book, Ssu-ma Ch'ien states that his father and himself held in great esteem the thoughts of the Taoist school, and they also very much revered Lao Tzu.

Later, Pan Ku and his father, who strove arduously to write the *History of the Han Dynasty*, took the view of the Confucians of the Western Han and after. These views also held that Ssu-ma Ch'ien and his father embraced the thoughts of the Taoist school, highly esteemed Lao Tzu, and moreover they made disapproving comments. One would never have thought that Pan Ku had already overlooked the intent of the subtle language written by Ssu-ma Ch'ien, and that the Taoist school which he discussed was the Confucian orthodoxy of the "collective learning of the scholars" handed down through Chinese culture from ancient times.

Pan Ku only used Lao Tzu to provide a positive contrast [in his history] and nothing more. If he considered that Lao Tzu was the patriarch of the Taoist school, then why did he not make a special effort to weave together Lao Tzu's achievements and compose a great biography of him? He could then have carried out an unprecedented breaking of the rules and made a great contribution to his age, for he did write a family history of Confucius, and he did so in an extraordinary and detailed manner.

Is it conceivable that Pan Ku would not write a biography in a style similar to a family history on Lao Tzu, whom he and his father respected so highly? And what was the result? He was very fair in his history and only placed Lao Tzu in the "Collected Biographies of Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu, Shen Tzu, Han Fei Tzu." This was a style of historical writing employed by Ssu-ma Ch'ien, which requires one to search through the entire text to ascertain how he conducted himself in society.

He was not only different from those who followed after the Western Han dynasty and actually propagated Confucianism and obscured Taoism calling themselves orthodox Confucians, but at the same time, he did not agree with the activities of the false Taoist schools that came after the Ch'in and Han dynasties, which actually were *fang-shih* who conjured up spirits and immortals.

It is a pity that we later scholars have fallen within the spell of Ssu-ma Ch'ien's writings and have repeatedly and implicitly been influenced by Liu Yin, Pan Ku, and others. When we add on the abstruse speculations (*hsuan-t'an*) of the Wei and Chin dynasties, then the learning and thought of the Taoist school is strangled within the spheres of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, and we overlook the true contents of the Taoist school which "encompasses a hundred generations, and is extensive and profound." This is the reason why we can take the view of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu being central and representative and make the association when speaking of the Taoist school.

Chapter 2

The Relationship of the Thought of the Recluse and the Taoist School

The thought of the recluse has always occupied the most sublime and important place in the spirit of traditional Chinese culture, and like the recluse, it has always focused on withdrawing from society and living in seclusion wherein “though he may be all unknown and disregarded by the world, he feels no regret.” It has thus been taken lightly and overlooked, and it is quite easily forgotten.

To stress this point a bit further, the thought of the recluse and the recluses throughout history have actually played a major behind-the-scenes role in Chinese culture. Now when we come to speak about the learning and thought of the Taoist school, they are even more so inseparable from the thought of the recluse. It is better to say that the Taoist school originated from the thought of the recluse than to say that it originated from Huang-Lao or Lao-Chuang, and then it evolved into Lao-Chuang or Huang-Lao. This is even more appropriate.

Why do we propose the importance of the thought of the recluse to such an extent? We shall briefly present three reasons as explanation and the principle can easily be understood from them.

Counter-Evidence to the Legends of Ancient History

The history of China, from ancient times up through the Ch'in and Han dynasties, can be said to be official history. Aside from the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (Ch'un Ch'iu) written by Confucius and the three commentaries written for the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (Tso Chuan, Kung Yang, and Ku Liang) as well as the *Kuo Yu*, there are the *Five Classics* (*Book of Changes*, *Book of Rites*, *Book of Odes*, *Book of History*, and *Spring and Autumn Annals*) revised by Confucius and disciples of the Confucian school.

The so-called *Six Classics* spoken of later are all of a historical nature, which is to say that the texts of the *Five Classics* that have been passed down to us all possess very worthwhile historical material, but these texts contain subject matter belonging

to official history. Furthermore, the historical data passed on in legends transmitted and scattered among the populace, as well as by philosophers and authors of ancient times, are counter-evidence for historical background, and it cannot be said that this type of material is completely worthless and unbelievable.

The recluses, of which legends have been handed down throughout history, include Hsu Yu, Chao Fu, K'a Sui, Wu Kuang, and others who lived during a span of three generations. Most of these individuals "viewed wealth and high position as floating clouds," turned their backs on official rank, despised emperors, and would not serve as officials. At the same time, it is also said that their learning, ethics, and character were all of supramundane achievement.

It was just because they regarded wealth and high position as floating clouds, turned their backs on official rank, and "the emperor could not employ them as officials, and the feudal lords could not befriend them" that the sagely and illustrious Emperors Yao (2357-2255 B.C.), Shun (2255-2205 B.C.), Yu (2205-2197 B.C.) and T'ang (1766-1753 B.C.), who were so highly esteemed in Chinese history, were so respectful and admiring of them.

In other words, what the sagely and renowned kings of ancient times, whether in terms of politics or character, had the greatest misgivings about was the criticism and disdain of the recluses. They gave serious attention to whether or not the intellectuals who were not in official office, and whether popular sentiment, were supportive or antagonistic to the attitudes of the recluses.

In his *Record of History*, Ssu-ma Ch'ien placed special emphasis on the importance of the recluse, and portrayed them as having the exalted virtue of modestly declining, and indicated another aspect of the high-minded aspirations of individuals in Chinese culture. It was for this reason that when Ssu-ma Ch'ien wrote his family histories, he utilized the "Family History of Wu T'ai-po" to bring out this theme; when he wrote the collected biographies, he employed the "Biography of Po I" to illustrate this idea. He especially brought out this theme in the "Biography of Po I" to discuss in great length his philosophy of history, and his philosophy on human and social affairs. It was at a level deeper than his "Preface" and [within it] he profoundly revealed his views on culture and philosophy, as well as emphasized the background of the thought of the recluses and their venerated worth.

The Relationship of the Thought of Confucius and the Recluse

Further, everyone knows that Confucius, who is universally acknowledged as

China's great master and sage of ancient times, was dedicated to saving the nation, wished to confront real situations, and opposed avoidance of responsibility. However, throughout his life, he vigorously praised the yielding of the throne and fleeing into seclusion of Po I, Shu Ch'i and Wu T'ai-po, and highly esteemed their characters.

Confucius also spoke of the means of conducting oneself in life, wherein "When the nation is on its proper course, one's speech and actions may be lofty and bold, and when the nation is not on the proper course, one's actions may be lofty and bold but one's speech may be held in reserve." At the same time, he gave the impression of "As for Ning Wu Tzu, when his nation was on its proper course, he acted the part of the wise man. When his nation was not on the proper course, he acted the part of the foolish man. Others may equal his wisdom, but they cannot equal his stupidity."

This explains that although Confucius himself possessed the aspirations of entering into and saving the world, yet he still very much approved of the practice of "some worthies retire from the world, and secondly some retire from particular States." In his way of handling himself in society, Confucius even went to the extent of adopting attitudes similar to the thought of the recluse. Therefore, during his period of traveling throughout the various kingdoms, when he encountered the satire of a gate keeper and a man shouldering a basket of weeds, criticism from Ch'ang Tsu and Chieh Ni, and comprehended the admonishments of the madman Chieh Yu, he could only sigh in an understanding manner, clearly knowing that he could do nothing about it.

When Chieh Ni criticized Confucius: "Swelling and surging is the entire world, and who is he that will change it? Rather than follow one who withdraws from this one and that, would it not be better to follow those who have withdrawn from the world altogether? He then continued with his work of covering up the seeds without stopping," Confucius only commented with a heartfelt sigh: "It is not possible to associate with birds and beasts as if they were the same as us. If I do not associate with these men, then with whom shall I associate? If the world is on its proper course, there would be no use for me to change it."

Later, people took the line "It is not possible to associate with birds and beasts as if they were the same as us" to mean that Confucius was reviling the recluses and giving a nasty and negative critique of their retiring from the world. Actually, this statement was not nasty and vicious as imagined by later people. Confucius was only lamenting that each person has his own disposition and therefore goes his own way. It is because the bird flies and the beast walks that the

so-called far-traveling pessimist and optimist who goes into the world each goes his own way; this revealed that Confucius himself had taken the path of entering into and saving the world.

We only need read Ssu-ma Ch'ien's comments in the "Collected Biographies of Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu, Shen Tzu, and Han Fei Tzu":

I know that the bird can fly, the fish can swim, and the beast can walk. Those that walk can be trapped by nets, those that swim can be caught with lines, and those that fly can be shot down with arrows. As for the dragon, I know that it mounts the winds and clouds to ascend to Heaven. Today I have seen Lao Tzu. Is he not like a dragon?

From this we can understand what Confucius meant when he said, "It is not possible to associate with birds and beasts as if they were the same as us." We can also understand from this Ssu-ma Ch'ien's estimation of the thought of the recluse and his high praise of Lao Tzu as an eminent recluse. As a result, in his elusive "Biography of Lao Tzu," Ssu-ma Ch'ien concludes that "Lao Tzu was a retired scholar."

To sum up, the thought of Confucius and the thought of the two schools of Confucianism and Taoism referred to around the time of the Ch'in and Han dynasties were completely the same in terms of attitude towards establishing oneself in life and handling oneself in society, wherein the "True Gentleman takes the reins when the opportunity avails, and when the time is not fortuitous he dwells in humble surroundings of twisted thorns."

This was especially the case concerning Confucius' latent feelings of "admiration and inclination" for the recluses who "dwelled in humble surroundings of twisted thorns," and for the thought of the recluse.

Relationship of the Recluses and Historical Politics

The relationship between historical politics and the recluses is an extremely interesting problem within our entire Chinese historical system, but everyone has grown accustomed to the practice of not reading history with a respectable and serious countenance, or carrying out research embracing an attitude of half believing and half-doubting. However, regardless of the means of reading history, the value of the role the recluses played behind the scenes in politics throughout history has always been ignored.

I previously stressed the idea that the thought of the recluse, and the recluses themselves, played a major behind-the-scenes part in preserving Chinese culture. However, since ancient times, there has been no way of reliably getting to know of the deeds of the true and thoroughgoing recluses. Some of them have been researched and collected by followers of the Taoist school while others feigned to be so and were included in the indistinct biographies of gods and immortals. The individuals we now speak of, in the relationship between the recluses and historical politics, can only be considered a group of "semi-recluses."

The so-called "semi-recluses" refer to those who lead the lives of recluses either during the first or latter half of their lives. During the other half of their lives, they came out of the mountains and entered the world to participate in real society, and became involved in real politics. We shall utilize a poem written by the Sung dynasty poet Lu Fang-weng (1125-1209 A.D.) to illustrate the "recluse" and "semi-recluse:"

A determined man perches in the mountains regretting that he is not buried
deep enough away
People know of him and then he has already failed to live up to his original
intention
Let us not speak of Yen Kuang-peï,
From Ch'ao Fu and Hsu Yu they have been mistaken to the present.

Lu Fang-weng considers that the true recluse only fears that he is not buried deep enough away in the mountains, and in withdrawing from the world he only fears he is not far enough removed. However, those recluses who are known to people and have become famous have already failed to live up to their original motive of retiring from the world. This is not to mention those [fakers] with ulterior motives, such as Yen Tzu-ling (ca. 25 A.D.), Hsu Yu, and Ch'ao Fu who after having been tracked down, experienced having their reputations as "recluses" who are "high-minded and of superior attainment" revealed as being a mistake after all. Although this is a sentiment expressed by Lu Fang-weng, it is still adequate to represent the general lament concerning the "semi-recluse."

We encounter "semi-recluses" involved in politics throughout history such as I Yin, Fu Yueh, Chiang Shang, and those indirectly involved such as Kui Ku Tzu and Huang Shih Kung, as well as the "semi-recluses" after the Ch'in and Han dynasties such as Chang Liang, Ssu-ma Teh-ts'ao, and Chu-ke Liang. Those listed as Taoist personages after the Northern and Southern Dynasties (420-589), such as Wang Meng and T'ao Hung-ching, Wei Cheng of the T'ang dynasty, Ch'en T'uan of the Sung dynasty, Liu Ping-chung, Liu Chi and Chou Tien of the Ming dynasty, and Fan

Wen-ch'eng of the Ch'ing dynasty, are all clear and major examples, and they are generally very easily recognized individuals.

This formed a unique situation in politics throughout Chinese history. That is, it was generally the case that during phases of dispelling chaos and restoring peace or the period of the founding of a state, those Taoist "recluses" who personally played a behind the scenes role in Chinese culture were entrusted with missions at critical and difficult times, and came forward courageously. They represent the general spirit of individuals with high ideals who were out of office and living in the mountains, scholars of superior abilities who rendered assistance and created new eras and history. When peace and prosperity were restored, they became nameless again, and their achievements and responsibilities were placed in the hands of the Confucians.

We must therefore understand that the evolutionary changes of Chinese history, its rises and falls, successes and failures, and the key to its learning and thought, seem to have an unchanging set pattern. That is, during the phases of dispelling chaos and restoring peace, the majority of meritorious service can be attributed to individuals of the Taoist school as well as the learning and thought of the Taoist school. When the world was again at peace, the period of sitting and discussing philosophical principles, and paying particular attention to studies involved in bringing about a peaceful reign, then became the world of the Confucian school.

The "recluses" of the Taoist school did play such a decisive role in the political situations of past Chinese history, and aside from "those who thoroughly comprehended the changes of the past and present," such as Ssu-ma Ch'ien and a small number of others, most people seem to not understand the real situation. As a result, they have always covered up the true Taoist personages, as well as the true learning and thought of the Taoist school, in documents having wrongful accusations.

We shall now mention one or two types of positive and negative historical documents so as to bring about a new understanding. Given the constraints of time and space, we are unfortunately unable to go into great detail.

The Negative Side of the Historical Fear of the Thought of the Recluse

An example from the Chou dynasty:

T'ai Kung Wang (Chiang Shang whose style name was Tzu-ya

was given the honorary title of T'ai Kung by the Chou Imperial Household owing to his meritorious service) was enfeoffed in the State of Ch'i. At the time, there was an extraordinary scholar who being righteous would not serve the Emperor nor did he befriend the feudal lords, and so people called him a sage. T'ai Kung dispatched an attendant to summon him three times but he did not come. As a result, T'ai Kung ordered that he be executed.

The Duke of Chou asked: 'Why execute this noble-minded person of Ch'i?' T'ai Kung replied: 'He does not serve the Emperor nor does he befriend the feudal lords, and so why is it that Wang looked upon as if he was an official and a friend of the feudal lords? Wang has not been made an official but has been befriended by the feudal lords, and so this is abandoning the people. I summoned him three times and he did not come. This is being contrary to the people. If we honor him as a leader to be emulated, then who is it that can serve as ruler?'

This historical story relates that after Chiang T'ai Kung was enfeoffed in the State of Ch'i, he wanted to kill a "semi-recluse" and extraordinary scholar of Ch'i. This recluse did not serve the Emperor, he did not befriend the feudal lords, he was summoned three times and did not leave his mountain retreat, and it was this manner by the "semi-recluse" that moved Chiang T'ai Kung to want to kill him. Chiang T'ai Kung was an expert, and he understood the formidable position of the "semi-recluse."

Adding on the fact that he had just arrived in Ch'i and the local power had still not be surrendered to him, Chiang T'ai Kung would absolutely not permit the fostering of this type of uncooperative manner. Therefore, the Duke of Chou was very surprised and asked him why he wanted to so randomly put to death a "high-minded scholar." Chiang T'ai Kung then presented his opinion: "If I am going to praise a scholar such as this, then to whom am I to serve as the ruler of Ch'i?" This is a very straightforward explanation of the hardships of a ruler, and at the same time we can also understand the importance in ancient times of the thought of the "recluse."

Another example: At the end of the Warring States Period (403-221 B.C.), the State of Ch'i dispatched an official to the State of Chao. When the Queen of Chao, Wei Hou, had an audience with this ambassador of Ch'i and they had still not discussed the main topic, Wei Hou then asked several questions related to the political situation in the State of Ch'i. She then finally said: "How is it that Yu-Ling Tzu-chung is still living? When conducting his affairs, he does not serve his king, does not manage his family, nor does he pursue relations with the feudal lords.

How is it that he is useless in leading the people and has so far not been killed?"

This story concerning foreign relations maintains the same view as the first story concerning Chiang T'ai Kung's wanting to kill the outstanding scholar. We can see the fear that the "semi-recluses" struck in those having authority during the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods, and the rulers were mortally afraid of their chivalry and strong sense of justice.

Actually, the "semi-recluse" Yu-Ling Tzu-chung of the State of Ch'i was far from being able to be compared with the outstanding scholar of Chiang T'ai Kung's time. The queen, Wei Hou of Chao, possibly provoked the ambassador from Ch'i because she feared the talents of this "semi-recluse" Yu-Ling Tzu-chung, believing that he was someone with hidden powers who could influence the foreign political relations between the states of Ch'i and Chao. She was therefore anxious to remove the mental consciousness of the sage from an enemy state, and so blurted out this type of verbal political and psychological warfare.

The Positive Side of the Historical Fear of the Thought of the Recluse

The Emperor Yao wanted to abdicate the throne to Hsu Yu, at the beginning of the Chou dynasty Chiang T'ai Kung's recommendations were followed, and great respect was offered to Po I and Shu Ch'i. I think everyone is quite familiar with these events. Ch'in Shih Huang buried the disobedient and uncooperative Confucian scholars alive in a rage, and there was thus a great loss of popular sentiment.

Emperor Kao Tsu of the Han dynasty (reigned 206-194 B.C.) wished to replace the prince in his immediate line of succession, and as a result Lu Hou followed the recommendation of Chang Liang to drag four eminent "semi-recluses," who had never paid any mind to Emperor Kao Tsu, down from Mt. Shang to serve as the teachers of the prince. In this way, Emperor Kao Tsu could do nothing but submit and change his plan, and he dared not speak again about replacing the prince. Further, there were successive emperors too numerous to list who went to ask "recluses" dwelling in the mountains about major affairs of state. One example is the famous T'ao Hung-ching (451-536), known as the "Prime Minister Who Dwells in the Mountains."

The "recluses" of ancient times were recorded in the writings on culture in Chinese history. After the Ch'in and Han dynasties they were mentioned as "immortals," during the T'ang and Sung dynasties they were referred to as "high-minded scholars" and "scholars in retirement," epithets derived from their having

been without official position but having gained great notoriety.

This was especially the case during the Sung dynasty when one type of “recluse” achieved instant fame and glory by adopting the manners of the “semi-recluse.” This provoked the ridicule of people later who laughed at the recluses for having “a short cut to glory through the mist and rosy clouds.” Further, the style of engaging in philosophical discourse and not pursuing public office promoted by the Neo-Confucians during the Northern and Southern Sung dynasties (960-1278), grew out of the prestige held by the “recluses” who played such a major behind-the-scenes role in traditional Chinese culture. After the Manchus entered China (ca. 1644), the brilliant Emperor K’ang Hsi (reigned 1662-1723) repeatedly organized philosophical discussions to ensnare those Chinese intellectuals who would not surrender and serve as officials. This was a governmental policy applied to deal with the “recluses.”

We have discussed many questions related to the recluse in order to clearly explain the origins of the learning and thought of the Taoist School. Let us stop here for the moment. It is difficult to explain in great detail, and all at once, the value as well as the advantages and disadvantages of the thought of the “recluse” in the cultural history of China.

To sum up, the highest goals and most fundamental motives of the thought of the “recluses” in the Taoist school as represented by Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, and the thought of the Confucian school as represented by Confucius and Mencius, is that the ideals of saving the world and governing in peace were actually the same. Where they differ is in the methods and attitudes they adopted, each having their own focus.

The means employed by Confucius and Mencius involved active and forceful entry into the world with aspirations to save the world from disaster; the focus of the “recluses” of the Taoist school was to guide one’s actions according to circumstances and manage them imperceptibly. Therefore, the method of the Taoist school was to use the “weak” and the “soft,” but this strategy was frequently utilized incorrectly resulting in weakness and inability to endure. This was one of its harmful aspects. However, in terms of its good and advantageous aspects, it encompasses the spirit of “using the nine” in the *ch’ien* (Heaven) diagram of the *Book of Changes* (*I Ching*), the so-called lines saying “see a group of dragons without heads, auspicious,” and “the virtue of the dragon is that of the recluse.”

It is because he is not in any one line position in the diagram that a recluse can be absolutely calm, perfectly objective, and in a behind-the-scenes manner

guide the ninety-five changes. If he enters a line position, he will naturally be subject to the changes, it will be difficult for him to avoid the changes, and he will be ineffectual in times of trouble. We must understand this spirit when researching the applications of the Taoist school before we can speak of the advantages and disadvantages as well as the value of the Taoist school in Chinese culture.

Chapter 3

The Learning of the *Fang-shih* (Occultist) and the Taoist School

When we speak of the Taoist school in the present age, we find that all learning and thought revolves and is submerged within the waves of science. We therefore have a limited impression when touching upon the topic of the “*fang-shih*.” It is first necessary for me to bring forth an argument concerning the “*fang-shih*,” which is that the so-called true “*fang-shih*” were actually the scientists of ancient China.

Later, owing to the influences of another view of traditional culture—that of the self-professed scholars of the Confucian school—and based on the unfavorable documents written about the “*fang-shih*,” they were disrespected and looked upon with disdain. As a result, the “*fang-shih*,” also referred to as “scholars of occult techniques (*fang-shu chih shih*)” and “scholars of occult arts (*fang-chi chih shih*),” were always viewed by the learned intellectuals as quacks, and lumped together with itinerant performers and salesmen (including acrobatics and magic performances) who traveled throughout China and made just enough to make ends meet.

Actually, on second thought, if the “*fang-shih*” were itinerant performers and salesmen just trying to make ends meet, then although some were scoundrels and cheats, yet they were also nothing more than “those who relied on the multitudes” to earn a living. When compared with those who deceive the public and make a name for themselves, they therefore had nothing to be ashamed about. However, what is most unfortunate is that the overwhelming bias against the “*fang-shih*” in our past history and culture has made it so that the original scientific research which we discover in ancient times has always been buried in places “external to the *fang-shih*,” and submerged under such scornful views.

The most reliable data concerning the origin of the name “*fang-shih*” is first observed in the writings of the scholars of the Warring States Period (403-221 B.C.). There was special mention of this designation, but at that time there was no negative connotation attached to this official name. It was merely a specific designation of one possessed of learning and talent.

Chuang Tzu made mention of the designation “scholar of occult techniques (*fang-shu*),” which reveals that the “*fang-shih*” was a scholar possessed of special skills and learning. During the Ch’in and Han dynasties and afterwards, the designation of “*fang-shih*” gradually came into popular usage. This was very evident in Ssu-ma Ch’ien’s *Record of History (Shih Chi)* where he wrote that Ch’in Shih Huang (221-209 B.C.) believed blindly in the “*fang-shih*” and sought after immortals, and Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty (140-86 B.C.) was deceived by “*fang-shih*” and consequently went to look for immortals in the sea.

The records of rites of worshipping Heaven and Earth on a mountain with the emperor officiating describe the ignorance and superstition of Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty in subtle and profound language, as well as the deceitful and disgraceful manners of the “*fang-shih*.” As a result, the conventional view of later generations was to not even look at the shameful and disdainful “*fang-shih*.”

In actuality, Ssu-ma Ch’ien wrote that it was only the theories and occult techniques and abilities of the “*fang-shih*” of worth that were sufficient to influence popular opinion, and were advantageous to society. He did not despise them nor did he allow them to be passed by. Rather he wrote individual biographies for them such as Tsou Yen of the Yin-Yang School, Ts’ang Kung and Pien Ch’ueh of the School of Medicine, the humorous Tung-Fang Shuo who took nothing in life seriously, and the collected biographies of those who divined with tortoise shells and divining-straws. He also described in great detail the affairs of the wandering chivalrous knights (*yu-hsia*) in conjunction with the “*fang-shih*,” enumerating their special talents and sincere conduct.

Ssu-ma Ch’ien presented even more detailed accounts of, and greatly esteemed those experts involved in the research of astronomy and calculation of the movements of the heavenly bodies. Furthermore, Ssu-ma Ch’ien himself was deeply engrossed in the study of astronomy and calendars. In other words, the strong point of his learning was that he embodied the spirit of Confucius as well as the principles of the Taoist school, he possessed extensive knowledge, cultivated learning, and gave serious attention to the investigation of astronomy and calendars.

On a bit of a witty and humorous note: only first-rate individuals, such as Chuang Tzu and Ssu-ma Ch’ien, were qualified to assess who should be considered true “*fang-shih*” within traditional Chinese culture. This of course is merely a metaphor of something that rarely occurs and cannot be taken as a guide.

Early Natural Sciences

As we have already briefly discussed the inside story of the *"fang-shih,"* let us now sum up the learning encompassed by the *"fang-shih"* since the Chou and Ch'in dynasties so as to gain a general impression of what type of people these so-called *"fang-shih"* actually were.

In ancient times, the duties of the Official Historian included learning related to astronomy and divination, but during the Ch'in and Han dynasties and afterwards, this overall sphere of learning was split up and became increasingly specialized. Thereupon there gradually arose specialists in each field, who generally did not have any notable reputations or still did not have full and advanced knowledge, and they evolved into being *"fang-shih."* Therefore, the learning of the later *"fang-shih"* included astronomy, the study of calendars, astrology, divination, etc.

The field of divination was later divided into separate schools including divination using mathematical calculations, the employment of diagrams, and other methods. There was therefore a distinction made between the use of tortoise shells and divining-straws during and after the Ch'in and Han dynasties, and at the same time there were also methods which combined tortoise shells and divining-straws.

Since it was necessary to utilize mathematics as the basis for the fields of astronomy, the study of calendars, and astrology, this promoted the development of mathematics. At the same time, considering that the learning related to the fields of astronomy, the study of calendars, and astrology was connected not only to learning of a technical nature but also required a theoretical basis, therefore those of the Yin-Yang School who spoke so eloquently of theoretical subjects in cosmic physics came into prominence and flourished.

During and after the Ch'in and Han dynasties, these fields of learning were researched by brilliant individuals who made their appearance and served at court. It is as Ssu-ma Ch'ien stated: "The Emperor employed comedy actors and reared them." Generally, those who did not have great reputations in the world wandered about in destitution among the common folk, and one by one were included within the ranks of the *"fang-shih."*

The Yin-Yang School Evolved Into the Humanities

If we wish to know why the early sciences related to astronomy, the calculation of the movements of the heavenly bodies, etc., were unable to develop in

ancient times, this is connected to the spirit of traditional Chinese culture which has pervaded from very ancient times up to the present and maintained that in all things, particular stress must be placed on a human standard and the cultivation of human life. As a result, the scholars of the past continuously maintained the corrupt practice of not giving serious attention to science, and everyone considered that science was “diabolical tricks and wicked craft,” learning which was not worthy of emulation.

Although there were no stipulations explicitly put in writing, technology such as that applied in astronomy was also relegated as “diabolical tricks and wicked craft.” The thought of the Yin-Yang School, which developed theories of cosmic physics from research on astronomy, was subjected to this view, and was thus unable to be fully tested and verified with actual technical capabilities. We need only understand that Tsou Yen’s theory of the nine regions in the universe was something that scholars laughed uproariously about, and you can just imagine the reception given to other theories. As a result, the study of theoretical physics by the Yin-Yang School was forced to change to research related to human life.

According to the principles of theoretical physics studied by the Yin-Yang School, human life can realize a state where it is not subject to the laws of nature; an individual can learn how to freely control his own life, or create a new life. The Yin-Yang School proponents slowly developed and researched techniques to control a monistic theory of mind and body by investigating physical transformations. Thus they utilized physical instincts to produce the immortal cultivation methods practiced by the “*fang-shih*,” integrated research on physics and chemistry, and then derived inventions in the fields of medicine, pharmacology, and alchemy.

We shall not discuss whether or not the “immortality” of immortal beings can be attained for the moment. However, at the very least, the embryonic forms of the cultivation of life (*yang-sheng*), psychology, pharmacology, and physical therapy were all born from strivings toward this goal. This striving was actually the predecessor of the life sciences, as well as something for which to be proud of the ancients. Why is it that that of later generations and the present are not equal to that of the early periods? That is the responsibility of us good-for-nothing and easily discouraged descendants of the Chinese race, and we should by no means place all faults on the heads of the ancients.

While we are on the subject, I would like to point out that the cultivation of life (*yang-sheng*), which I mentioned, is not at all the same as modern hygienics either in terms of nomenclature or content. So-called hygienics constitutes passive resistance [to illness and death] while the cultivation of life means actively

nourishing the source of life. This is especially the case in modern physiology, which is based on the dissections of human corpses and the study of animal physiology. Its own corrupt practice is that the medical view and medical training used to treat the human body is much the same as the way used to treat an animal, and it even goes as far as viewing people as dead mechanized material. This is because medicine and pharmacology are devoid of the results of the cultivation of philosophical theories.

The changing of all of these views and how to combine them with the spirit of Chinese culture await the efforts of our present generation as well as later generations. Carrying on the past heritage and opening up the future is also the essence of the spirit of traditional Chinese culture, for which we have a solemn moral obligation.

Theoretical Physical Sciences

The theories related to theoretical physics in ancient China include the five elements, ten Heavenly Stems, Twelve Earthly Branches, as well as the later corresponding development into the *na-chia* theory for the fortune-telling computations using the eight trigrams in the *Book of Changes*. They first developed from the relationship between astronomy and the calculation of the movements of the heavenly bodies, and by the two Han dynasties, the Chin and Wei dynasties, and afterwards, it formed into the theoretical model of specialists. Astrology, the study of calendars, astrology, medicine and pharmacology, alchemy, agriculture, technology, divining with tortoise shell and divining-straws, selection of “days” based on whether the *yin* and *yang* are favorable or not—as well as various fields in the humanities—were all influenced to different degrees by the fortune-telling computations of the Yin-Yang School.

Even though the two brothers Ch’eng I (1033-1107) and Ch’eng Hao (1032-1085), Chu Hsi (1130-1200) and other Neo-Confucians of the Sung dynasty rejected Buddhism and Taoism, yet they were continuously enriched by and sauntered within the sphere of the Yin-Yang School. However, what is most regrettable is that we were never able to escape from this traditional custom. It was extended and relegated to the actual firsthand experiences of physical and human life, and also used to investigate the natural sciences of cosmic matter. As a result, many people who did not understand these areas of learning either criticized them as being superstition, or condemned them as being non-scientific.

The spirit of science is to seek verification within reality and to verify theories within facts. Yet if these principles and theories are not even understood yet, and then one frivolously and hastily draws conclusions, this in itself is a major type of

superstition. It is a behavior that does not accord with the spirit of seeking verification we expect in modern science.

My personal response to this type of view is very simple. Firstly, a type of learning that has been transmitted for several thousand years and has not yet been completely repudiated necessarily possesses its own existing principles and value. In addition, the ancients were not all necessarily more ignorant than those living today, and generally when we study those of ancient times of great accomplishment, they were certainly of the most superior intelligence. Can it be said that we are more intelligent than the ancients in drawing conclusions by “pretending to know when we do not know”?

Secondly, even if these areas of learning were completely deceiving and they were able to deceive intelligent people for several thousand years, although it is absolutely deceitful trickery, the deceit was quite objective! Why do you not then try to get at its truth and then make this conclusion? The most important aspect of seeking learning is to study with an open mind, for “knowing what one really understands and admitting what one does not know is real knowing,” and we should deeply reflect within ourselves.

To sum up, we can differentiate the contents of the learning of the “*fang-shih*” during the Chou and Ch’in dynasties into the broad sense and narrow sense. If we speak of the thought of the “*fang-shih*” in the broad sense, aside from the various examples previously cited, it was generally the case that the Yin-Yang, Agricultural, Medicine, and Eclectic Schools can all be categorized within the contents of the learning of the “*fang-shih*.”

In the narrow sense, the learning of the “*fang-shih*” is then related to the study of immortals and alchemy wherein one seeks to live forever, including the specialized learning for “ascending to Heaven and becoming an immortal.” However, we must not forget that this type of specialized learning is the earliest in the cultural history of the world, and it would be truly very regrettable if we were to recklessly belittle the pioneers in physics, chemistry and other natural sciences, as well as pharmacology.

Chapter 4

Origins of the Learning and Thought of the *Fang-shih* in the Taoist School

When studying history, culture and learning in the past, the custom was to not take into consideration Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu in first discussing the Taoist school, but rather to think about immortals and "*fang-shih*." Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu, immortals and "*fang-shih*" were combined into one "complicated and confused" Taoist school.

Every time people would mention "*fang-shih*" they would then very naturally follow the traditional view that there was a group of "*fang-shih*" originating from the States of Yen and Ch'i, during the Warring States Period, who discoursed on absurd theories related to *yin* and *yang* as well as the alchemical refining of cinnabar pills of immortality. As a result, the view that was passed down to the Ch'in and Han dynasties and which was commonly believed was that the cinnabar pills of the "*fang-shih*" could allow one to become an immortal once ingested, and as an immortal one could live forever.

The belief in this view and the common practice of seeking the cinnabar pill of immortality has always, either explicitly or implicitly, permeated society throughout Chinese history. For two thousand years, from the Emperor all the way down to the common people, everyone has been widely influenced by this "superstitious" view, and although "it is something spoken of without proof," yet everyone actually has this "direction of aspiration."

From a historical perspective, we all parrot what others say and maintain that the "*fang-shih*" are the products of the states of Yen and Ch'i during the Warring States Period. However, everyone has forgotten to ask why at that time it was only Yen and Ch'i which were able to produce "*fang-shih*"? Can it be said that the basis of their learning and thought is completely without reliable origins, that it is a complete fabrication, and a deception of the public so as to gain fame?

If this is truly the case, the so-called lies and techniques employed by the "*fang-shih*" to deceive people are certainly enough to make them proud of themselves. This is because they were not only able to deceive the most intelligent

people throughout history, at the same time the influences of their deceptions were surprisingly able to be maintained for several thousand years.

Is this not something that is quite doubtful and strange? We must therefore reexamine the origins of these “*fang-shih*” who appeared in Yen and Ch’i during the Warring States Period.

Ancient Traditional Culture and the Taoist School During the Chou Dynasty

There have always existed two views from the Wei (220-265) and Chin (265-420) dynasties down to the present regarding ancient culture and the Taoist arts. The first is belief in traditional history, and the absolute reverence of and belief in the past. The second is doubt of the legends of ancient history, and doing one’s best to find evidence among the cultural relics left behind by the ancients to repudiate old theories. The later the period and the farther away one is from ancient times, the deeper and more developed are the doubts concerning ancient times.

Culture and history were originally two aspects of one inseparable entity, and since ancient times, we have always combined legendary ancient history with remote antiquity. However, only legends exist as evidence for remote history and there is a serious deficiency of accurate data related to remote antiquity. Therefore, when Confucius—who embodied the attitude of “pass on the ancient culture without adding anything new to it, believe in and love the ancients”—compiled the texts of remote and high antiquity, he was very cautious about revising the *Book of History (Shu Ching)*, and so he cut it off beginning from Emperor T’ang (2356-2255 B.C.) and Emperor Yu (2255-2205 B.C.).

Legends concerning the Five Sovereigns prior to Emperors T’ang and Yu are only sporadically seen in incidental writings on the *Ta Tsai Li* and the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. Although these writings reflect an uncritical love of the ancients, it was after all necessary to utilize materials that were credible, and therefore it began from Emperor Yu and the Hsia dynasty. Later people then settled for credibility and considered that there was standard and reliable historical data for the Hsia, Shang and Chou dynasties. However, when we come to recent and modern times, some adopt the views of Western culture and history, and express doubts about this. That is another problem which we will not discuss for the time being.

Although history was cut off and begun with Emperors T’ang and Yu beginning with Confucius, yet the writings of the ancient philosophers during the

Chou and Ch'in dynasties, which have both dubious as well as credible sections, contain a great deal of historical data transmitted from remote and high antiquity, and this data was totally accepted by the Taoist school and Taoist religion. Moreover, from the time of the two Han dynasties, the Confucian scholars, who engaged in the transmission and annotation of the classics, had in many places within their commentaries overtly praised and in a veiled way censured this traditional thought. How then should we determine the cultural history of remote and high antiquity? I take the view of the thought of the Taoist school, but it is actually difficult to say.

Let us now take another look at the thought system embodied in the *Record of History (Shih Chi)* written by the great historian, cultural philosopher and thinker Ssu-ma Ch'ien. Ssu-ma Ch'ien greatly revered Confucius and professed to be the first individual to continue the tradition of Confucius five hundred years after Confucius wrote the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. In this way we can then understand Ssu-ma Ch'ien's view of the cultural history of high antiquity.

Although Ssu-ma Ch'ien stated in the "Biography of Po I" that: "The records of the scholars are quite extensive, and they are tantamount to having been examined and verified within the six arts. Although it be lacking from the *Book of Odes* and the *Book of History*, writings concerning Emperor Yu and the Hsia dynasty can be known," yet it is very clear that Ssu-ma Ch'ien could not remain indifferent to the legends in the other "quite extensive" ancient texts included outside of the six arts transmitted by Confucius. Therefore, when he wrote the genealogies of the emperors, he wrote basic annals for the Five Sovereigns, and first mentioned the Yellow Emperor (2698-2598 B.C.). This can be compared with Confucius' view, which maintained that there are credible documents for the Three Eras.

This is another attitude and view. Ssu-ma Ch'ien therefore said in his praise at the beginning of his "Annals of the Five Sovereigns":

The scholars all speak of the Five Sovereigns but it is only the *Book of History* that records the events since Emperor Yao. Everyone talks of the Yellow Emperor, the writings are not elegant and refined, and the gentry found it difficult to speak of him. Confucius records an account of Tsai Yu inquiring about the virtues of the Five Sovereigns and Emperor Ti Chih (2365-2356 B.C.), but the Confucians perhaps do not transmit this.

I have been west to Mt. K'ung Tung, north to Mt. Chuo Lu, east as far as the sea, and south to the Huai River, and all of the elders frequently spoke of the places as well as the customs and cultural influences of the

Yellow Emperor, Yao and Shun, and these elders were not very far off from the ancient writings. I inspected the sections in the *Spring and Autumn Annals* and *Kuo Yu* concerning the virtues of the Yellow Emperor and Emperor Ti Chih, and found that they were all correct.

This was missing from the *Book of History*, but related anecdotes are often seen in the writings of others. I studied and pondered these accounts diligently and having come to comprehend the meaning, can confirm that they are not superficial and ill informed hearsay. I have chosen the especially refined sections and written a preface to the basic annals.

We can see the results of his investigations within the praise at the beginning of the "Annals of the Five Sovereigns": "All of the elders frequently spoke of the places as well as the customs and cultural influences of the Yellow Emperor, Yao and Shun." This explains that the older generation everywhere would speak of the legends, places, and traces of the civilizing effects in culture and customs of the Yellow Emperor, as well as the Emperors Yao and Shun. Further, each of these emperors possessed their own special characteristics and were not at all exactly alike.

Actually, not only did the cultural influences of Yao and Shun individually represent the backgrounds of different periods and regions, that is the cultural influences of the Three Eras falling within the reigns of Yao Shun and Yu, each was unique and not entirely of one uniform tradition. Given this fact, how much more so was it the case for the later Hsia, Shang and Chou dynasties!

Although Ssu-ma Ch'ien brought forth the view of historical and cultural periods in the *Record of History*, yet later people who revered and believed in the legends of high antiquity did not feel satisfied. As a result, additions were made of the *Record of History* by Si-ma Chen (8th century) during the T'ang dynasty, whereupon he composed the *Annals of the Three Emperors* (*San-Huang Pen-Chi*) based on the legends of the Taoist school, and he repeatedly pushed history further back to before the Yellow Emperor.

If we take a further look at even later historians, they adopted the view of the Taoist school on the evolution of history and culture, and began from the time of the Three Emperors to the drawing of the trigrams by Fu Hsi and down to the Five Sovereigns. At the least, this is already a period of 12,000 years, and at a higher range this pushes it back to more than one million years ago.

Later, Shao K'ang-chieh (1011-1077) of the Sung dynasty authored the

Supreme Lineage of the Emperors (Huang Chi Ching Shih) where he established a new method of calculation for historical evolution and employed his own rules derived from the thought of the Taoist school. He thereby determined that the period from the Three Emperors down to the *chia-ch'en* year during the reign of T'ang Yao (2356-2255 B.C.) was over 450,000 years.

If we wish to understand the cultural thought of the Taoist school, it is necessary to understand the old theories concerning China's cultural history. I would invite all of you to read the small number of texts cited above. I do not know what your impressions will be, but of course you may say that they are absurd and preposterous. This is your personal ideological freedom, and no one can arbitrarily say that it is not so.

We can now turn our attentions to utilizing Ssu-ma Ch'ien's methodology. Although it embodies the spirit of "The records of the scholars are quite extensive, and they are tantamount to having been examined and verified within the six arts," through further general and extensive discussions of the six arts and the materials of the *Five Classics*, we can then understand the origins of the cultural thought of high antiquity and the learning of the Taoist school. However, given that we now only have materials from the *Five Classics* related to the six arts, regardless of authenticity of their contextual basis, there is no way of carrying out detailed discussion but rather we may only speak in generalizations.

The two most important texts among the *Five Classics* are the *Book of Changes* (*I Ching*) and the *Book of History* (*Shu Ching*). The vast majority of those who have spoken of the *Five Classics* and cultural history since the Han and Wei dynasties always mentioned the *Book of Changes* as the "foremost of all of the classics." Traditional scholars throughout history have maintained that the origins of China's literary and cultural learning stem from the drawing of the eight trigrams by Fu Hsi. They maintain that this was the beginning of writing, and that the *Book of Changes* is a text that evolved from the eight trigrams and advanced into cultural learning and thought. It has also been held that the *Book of Changes*, as well as medical, herbal and other technical books, were similarly fortunate to have been considered first rate divination texts during the burning of the books by Ch'in Shih Huang (213 B.C.) and thus spared from destruction.

According to historical legend, the development of the learning and thought of the *Book of Changes* was divided into the three schools of the *Lien Shan*, *Kuei Ts'ang*, and *Chou I*. However, traces of the *Lien Shan* and *Kuei Ts'ang* versions have been difficult to find for a long time, so that the *Book of Changes* which we now have is only the *Chou I*. So was it this *Chou I* which was not burned by Ch'in Shih Huang,

or was it all three which were not destroyed? This is indeed a major query. We shall not address these questions for the time being, but rather only discuss the cultural evolution of high antiquity following the drawing of the eight trigrams by Fu Hsi.

The eight trigrams were originally a seal that employed eight symbols to represent the physical universe. The eight symbols are signs which embody the interchanging of the *yin* and *yang*, and were used to sum up the changes of all affairs and material things. Consequently, there were produced the sixty-four hexagrams which served as symbols for analyzing and summing up the laws of all human affairs and the innate principles of things. They are the same as the Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches in astrology invented in the time of the Yellow Emperor (2697-2597), as well as the calculations using the five elements from the time of Emperors T'ang (2356-2255 B.C.) and Yu (2255-2205 B.C.) through the Hsia (2205-1766 B.C.), Shang (1766-1122 B.C.) and Chou (1122-255 B.C.). These were all individual and unique systems which spanned from high antiquity during the time of Fu Hsi down through the period of the Five Sovereigns and Three Eras (Emperors Yao, Shun and Yu). Each represents the regional culture of a clan of ancient times. There were differences and similarities between the cultures of the times, and they were originally not uniform.

The eight trigrams, five elements, Heavenly Stems, and Earthly Branches were completely synthesized and mixed together, and adding on the concept of the unity of Heavenly spirits and human affairs as well as calculation methods, there then evolved China's primitive physical and theoretical sciences. At the same time, they also transformed into spiritual and similar religious learning which were actually the masterpieces of the Former and Later Han dynasties (206 B.C.-25 A.D., 25-220 A.D.). This was also the source of divination, prophecy, and other techniques which resulted in the study of the *Book of Changes* becoming even more unclear, entering forever the realm of the mysterious.

We have discovered another problem in the study of the *Chou I*. The problem is adopting the major portion of the contents of this type of primitive cosmic physical and theoretical learning—which encompasses the study of the *Book of Changes* based on the eight trigrams drawn by the ancient sage Fu Hsi, the comments composed by King Wen of the Chou dynasty, and the explanations of his son, the Duke of Chou—and transforming it so as to develop human ethics and lay a foundation for the humanistic ideas regarding standards for human relations.

Approximately five hundred years later, Confucius continued in the footsteps of King Wen and the Duke of Chou in studying the *Chou I*. He achieved mastery through comprehensive study and utilized it to explain the philosophical principles

of human affairs. As a result, the *Book of Changes* discussed by later generations involved the study of principles, images of the diagrams, and numbers. Discussions of the constant rules of the principles of human affairs were relegated to the principles of the *Book of Changes*, and study of astrological, physical, and physiological changes, as well as those of *yin* and *yang*, were included within the sphere of the images of the diagrams and numbers. The Taoist school was foremost in discussion of the images of the diagrams and numbers, and when proponents discoursed on phenomena and principle, they also included contents of the Confucian school.

This became the philosophical basis for the learning and thought of the Taoist school during and after the Wei (220-265 A.D.) and Chin (265-419 A.D.) dynasties, as well as its theory of cultivation and practice. In other words, the scientific and philosophical basis for the learning and thought of the Taoist school during and after the Ch'in and Han dynasties actually arose from the learning of the *Book of Changes*.

We can also go further and state that this went back as far as the traditions of Fu Hsi, the Three Emperors, and the Five Sovereigns. However, aside from the "Hong Fan" chapter in the *Book of Shang (Book of History)* where mention is made of the five elements, no further materials can be found related to the *Book of Changes* among the chapters concerning the Three Eras as recorded by the *Book of History*. What is the reason for this? This is a question which requires tracing the sources of culture during and prior to the Chou dynasty through discussion of the learning and thought of the Spring and Autumn (770-476 B.C.) and Warring States (475-221 B.C.) periods.

We all know that the culture of the Chinese people first began in the Northwestern Plateau, developed to the Lower Reaches of the Yellow River, and by the Three Eras formed the culture of the Middle Plain. The ancestry of this systematic culture can be generally traced back to the drawing of the trigrams by Fu Hsi, the Yellow Emperor [was responsible for its next phase of development], and the end point is the philosophy of the *Book of Changes* as deduced by King Wen in his analysis of the eight trigrams. This laid a foundation for the learning and thought which passed from Fu Hsi through the Yellow Emperor to King Wen.

This system of thought originated in the Northwestern Plateau, and developed into the culture of the Yellow River Valley region. We will temporarily create a hypothetical term and call it the culture and learning of the system of the *Book of Changes*, or the culture and thought of the ancient Northwestern Plateau of China; the former epithet focuses on the study of a classic, while the latter reflects

geography and history.

This system is very much different from the cultural system of the *Book of History*, which is a compilation and editing of political and historical materials of the Three Eras by Confucius. Given the materials on politics, history and culture preserved in the *Book of History*, aside from the great achievements accomplished by the Duke of Chou in formulating the rites, music, culture, education, justice and administrative systems of the Chou dynasty, the culture from T'ang, Yao, Yu Shun, Yu of the Hsia dynasty, T'ang of the Shang dynasty, and down to the Chou dynasty, for the most part it arose from the culture and thought of the Northeastern section of the central Yellow River Valley from the Three Eras down to the time of T'ang of the Shang dynasty. We can thus call it the culture and learning of the system of the *Book of History*, or the culture and thought of the Northeastern section of the central Yellow River Valley of ancient China.

Our proposal for these two major conceptions regarding the culture of highest antiquity passing through the Three Eras, and continuing down to the Chou and Ch'in dynasties, also explains something. It explains that although the culture, learning and thought of each state ruled by the feudal lords during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods honored the Chou system of the Chou Imperial House, owing to the fact that the cultural traditions of each of the clans were different, their individual spirits in conducting government were also manifested.

When we push back even farther into high antiquity from the Chou dynasty, tracing first back from Emperors Yao and Shun and then from Emperor Yu of the Hsia dynasty up until the founding of the Chou dynasty, it is very evident that there was an inherited system, and as a result we can better understand that the unity of Chinese culture is a fact which predominated during and after the Ch'in and Han dynasties.

The affiliations of the learning and thought of the Taoist school of the Chou and Ch'in dynasties and afterwards are closely linked with the origins of the learning of the "*fang-shih*" from the States of Yen and Ch'i, as well as the culture of the Northwestern Plateau during high antiquity. If the traces of this historical evolution are forgotten, then there will naturally be a feeling of unfamiliarity toward the learning and thought of the Taoist school, or it will be considered to have arisen suddenly without cause.

The learning and thought of the later Confucian school, as represented by Confucius, emphasized the culture of human ethics and morals. This was actually influenced by the thoughts of the Duke of Chou on rites, music, culture, education,

justice, and administration and arose from the culture of the Three Eras as reflected in the *Book of History*. This is also very clearly explained in the *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Chung Yung*) written by Confucius' grandson Tzu-szu: "Chung-ni (Confucius) transmitted the doctrines of Yao and Shun as if they were his ancestors, and displayed the regulations of Wen and Wu taking them as his model. Above, he harmonized with the times of Heaven, and below, he accorded with the land and water." Confucius' study of the *Book of Changes* in his later years predominantly focused on humanistic pursuits and he developed the ideological systems of King Wen and the Duke of Chou.

At this point, it is convenient to discuss Fu Hsi, the Yellow Emperor, and data related to the cultural learning and thought of high antiquity.

According to old historical records, Fu Hsi was born on the "Islet of Hua Hsu" and later settled in Ch'en. "Hua Hsu" is in Lan T'ien County near Sian in Shensi Province. Chen refers to the city of Kaifeng in Honan Province. Ancient texts refer to Shen Nung, who followed after Fu Hsi, as Emperor Yen. He was born in Chiang Shui, later he inherited rule from Fu Hsi making his capital in Ch'en, and then moved to Ch'u Fu in Shantung Province. Chiang Shui is located west of Hsi Shan County in Shensi Province.

Fu Hsi was the leader of a society dominated by fishing and hunting, and Shen Nung was the leader of an agricultural society. The society dominated by fishing and hunting underwent a process of development from the Northwestern Plateau to the valleys in the Upper Reaches of the Yellow River. Agricultural society naturally required going on to the plains, and this was the necessary condition for the evolution of civilization from the period of Fu Hsi to that of Shen Nung.

By the time of the Yellow Emperor (Hsien Yuan), culture and civilization had already entered into a period of early collectivization. This was determined by later generations by means of historical artifacts that could be traced back to the Yellow Emperor. The Yellow Emperor was born "on a mountain near Hsien Yuan and was therefore given the name Hsien Yuan." Hsien Yuan refers to the northwest section of the modern Hsin Cheng County in Honan Province.

Later, Shen Nung's clan was defeated during a rebellion led by Chih Yu. The Yellow Emperor was the first to train animals such as bears and tigers to engage in battle, which we can call in modern terminology a mechanized army of animals. It was at Pao An County in Hopei Province (Pan Ch'uan) that he first defeated the brutal and immoral "Yu Wang," and then crushed Chih Yu in the wilds of Chuo Lu, southeast of Chuo Lu County in Chahar Province. As a result, he was selected by the

feudal princes to be Emperor and to continue ruling after Shen Nung.

The Yellow Emperor, common ancestor of the culture of the Chinese people, truly possessed incomparable greatness in primeval times. He not only overcame Chih Yu and brought peace to the nation, but he also personally established standards for the primitive natural sciences in China. He discovered the functions of magnetic fields, made a southward pointing cart, set up the laws of astronomy and mathematics in China, and served as a vanguard for inventions in the field natural sciences in both modern and ancient China and foreign nations.

He created astrological techniques and astronomical instruments, made the heavenly cover instrument, measured the wind direction using climatic phenomena, established a calendar, and utilized fixed timing standards and those for the sun and moon to calculate the movements of the Heavenly bodies. At the same time he ordered Ta Nao to work out the cycle of sixty years as well as the technique of making oneself invisible, and he established the learning of astronomical and cosmic physics theories, studied medicine and pharmacology, and composed the *Classic of Internal Medicine (Nei Ching)*. He also made vessels and vehicles used for transport, formulated a system of clothing, established architecture, currency as well as the demarcation of land, and determined a system of local political rule. His contributions in the field of the natural sciences are truly moving.

We should be aware of the fact that in the past astronomy was at the vanguard and mathematics served as the foundation in the history and knowledge of science; since the invention of astronomy and mathematics by our remote ancestor, the Yellow Emperor, we have always been considered to be at the forefront of science throughout history. However, it should not be said that there has not been any astronomy department in Chinese universities of any consequence in recent times and at the present, and at the same time there has not been a department of mathematics that has been able to truly keep up with the times either.

This has resulted in China's position of having been an advanced nation in astronomy and mathematics in antiquity becoming one of a backward people lacking both expertise and knowledge. We thus have nowhere to hide ourselves when facing our illustrious ancestors, and even more to the point, how many people do we now have or will we have in the future in China who truly understand the astronomy and other fields of knowledge of the Taoist school? This is really discouraging!

The Yellow Emperor not only established a system of primitive science and culture in China, at the same time he also created written language, invented

temperament in music, he created weights and measures, established a political system, and also was the first to set up a system of "official historians." To sum up, the merits and virtues of the Yellow Emperor are voluminous, and generally speaking, based on the records of ancient history, all of the positive aspects of culture and civilization of high antiquity can be completely attributed to the Yellow Emperor. It is actually for this reason that Ssu-ma Ch'ien spoke of "The shared techniques of the Yellow Emperor and the scholars."

Aside from the brief and simple introduction presented above on the Yellow Emperor based on existing historical texts, we can better understand the learning and thought of the Taoist school by examining its traditions regarding the Yellow Emperor, as well as the origins of how the Taoist school inherited the traditional culture of ancient times.

Aside from the reverence displayed for the greatness of the Yellow Emperor as mentioned above, the Taoists also speak of the fact that the Yellow Emperor had formally studied with seventy-two teachers covering various fields of learning. He finally went west to Mt. K'ung T'ung in Kansu Province to seek instruction from Kuang Ch'eng Tzu, and later journeyed to Mt. Omei in Szechuan Province where Kuang Ch'eng Tzu transmitted his teachings to the Yellow Emperor.

It is therefore commonly said that the Yellow Emperor inquired of the Tao at Mt. K'ung T'ung and received the Tao at Mt. Omei. However, it must be remembered that, based on this tradition, the achievements of the Yellow Emperor arose from the east and north of the Yellow River Plain while the system of his cultural learning and thought was mainly derived from the Northwestern Plateau.

Kuang Ch'eng Tzu is an ancient immortal revered by the Taoist school. As to whether this person actually lived is a subject we will not address for the moment. However, the names of individuals in the Taoist school, similar to the names of Bodhisattvas in Buddhism, have always represented a certain meaning and significance, and so Kuang Ch'eng Tzu signifies the collective achievements of Chinese culture. This coincidentally accords with the concept of "The shared techniques of the Yellow Emperor and the scholars."

After the Yellow Emperor received the Tao, he lived to the age of 111, having sat on the throne for 100 years. Later, owing to accomplishments attained through cultivation of the Tao, he ascended up to Heaven in broad daylight at Ting Hu, becoming an immortal ancestor. He rose up to Heaven by mounting a dragon and many officials were able to accompany him in his ascent by holding fast to the whiskers of the dragon. There were also a small number who were unable to hold

on tight and thus fell back down into the world of men. There consequently arose the later saying of “hang on a dragon and stick to a phoenix” which is used to eulogize a ruler or official who has risen to power on the coattails of others.

When we hear this mythological type story regarding the history of the Yellow Emperor in the Taoist tradition, we naturally find it difficult to believe. Moreover, in his *Record of History*, Ssu-ma Ch’ien clearly recorded: “The Emperor passed away on the south side of Ching Shan” and “he was buried at Ch’iao Shan” which is the modern “Ch’iao Ling” in Shansi Province. It is further recorded in a historical text:

The Emperor utilized the bronze of Shou Shan to forge a tripod on the south side of Ching Shan, and when the tripod was completed, the Emperor passed away. His officials removed their clothes and caps, took up their mourning staffs, and went to the temple to offer sacrifices for him.

If we base ourselves on this, the death of the Yellow Emperor becomes quite puzzling. We need not concern ourselves with these matters, for regardless, this legend of the Taoist school has always reflected the reverence and imperial title bestowed upon one whose merits and virtues will be forever remembered in the world of men.

Generally, virtues remain in the hearts of men, and merits are passed on through the ages. Most of them have placed the Yellow Emperor in the realm of the immortals, and this has influenced the worshipping of loyal officials, filial children, chaste widows, and righteous husbands. The spirit of the traditional cultural concept of “one who is intelligent and upright becomes a spirit upon his death” reflects this idea. Accordingly, we can then come to understand the explanation that the Yellow Emperor is the “Ting Hu Immortal who passed away” and became a Heavenly Immortal Ancestor is an expression of deep feelings of incomparable respect and admiration. How can this be regarded as a falsehood?

In our discussion of the drawing of the trigrams by Fu Hsi down to Shen Nung and the Yellow Emperor, we have already generally explained the cultural system of the Northwestern Plateau during high antiquity. This is a system connected with the scholarly system of the learning and thought of the *Book of Changes*. It ranges from the science of cosmic physics to philosophy, is the primitive culture of China, and it is the source of the learning and thought of the later Taoist school. Following this, there were the Three Eras of the Emperors Yao, Shun and Yu, and the learning and thought of this period is connected to the scholarly system of

the *Book of History* as well as the ideological system of the east and north sections of the central Yellow River Valley.

Emperor Yao, the great-grandson of the Yellow Emperor, was born in Tan Ling and later moved to Ch'i County near Taiyuan in Shansi Province. At the age of thirteen, he aided the Emperor in bestowing offices and as a reward for his services he was enfeoffed at Ting T'ao in Shantung Province. By the time he was fifteen, he was enfeoffed at T'ang County near Pao Ting in Hopei Province and as a result he was later called Yao of T'ang. At the age of sixteen, he occupied the Imperial throne at P'ing Yang in Shansi Province.

According to the "Chronicles of Yao" in the *Book of History*, the first administrative task of his government was to regulate astronomy and the calendar, and this gave rise to the idea of a "New Year's Day" in later culture and history. In other words, Emperor Yao's administrative policy was directed at the foundation of an agricultural society, and he focused attention on astronomy and the calendar which are connected with the establishment of the natural sciences. He advanced these as well as the building of human culture simultaneously.

At that time, Shun of Yu, who had been personally selected by Emperor Yao, aided in the administration of government. Shun of Yu assisted Emperor Yao, regulated astronomy and the calendar, established rites, music, culture and education, the imposition of punishment, administration, and many other areas and systems. At the same time, he also arranged the major tasks that had arisen since ancient times involving the natural sciences and human culture, similar to many of the administrative policies enacted by the Yellow Emperor as recorded in historical texts.

During that period, China experienced calamitous floods referred to as "vast waters that surrounded the mountains and inundated the earth." This unbearable disaster continued for ten or twenty years. Such a widespread and prolonged flood disaster brought calamity to more than three generations in China, and the suffering it caused goes without saying.

Afterwards, Yu of Hsia put forth great efforts in cutting into the mountains and dredging the rivers whereupon the flood disaster was transformed into reservoirs for water conservation to serve the entire nation. The major achievement accomplished by Yu of Hsia not only benefited his own generation, but it also contributed to the prosperity of thousands of future generations.

The actual cultural history of China, from high antiquity down to the success

of Great Yu in controlling the floods, can be considered to be the formal establishment of a strong basis for employing agriculture to found the nation. It was the achievement of a primitive agricultural economy that made it possible to complete the building of the system of Chinese culture during the Hsia, Shang and Chou dynasties.

Although ancient historical records present the highest praise when writing of the civil administrations established by Emperors Yao and Shun, yet when we study the historical events of Yao and Shun primarily using the “Chronicle of Yao” and the “Chronicle of Shun” contained in the *Book of History* as the historical basis, we can very naturally observe that the major achievements made in the civil administrations of Yao and Shun were only made possible by the success of the Great Yu in controlling the floods. It was for this reason that Confucius stated: “I can praise Yu endlessly.” He was definitely worthy to be called what Confucius described as a sage, which was beyond description.

When we speak of the Great Yu controlling the floods and the subject of flood disaster and conservation, it reminds us of the fact that the most important matter for consideration during the several thousand year period of Imperial rule in China was the prevention of flood disasters by the Yellow River and the development of water conservation for the Yangtze River. This was especially the case with the Yellow River wherein throughout history small flood disasters would last over ten years at the least and large ones would stretch out as long as thirty years. These flood disasters would necessarily create damage on the Central Plains on the Lower Reaches of the Yellow River Valley.

Those scholars who truly aspired to save the country and people from impending danger and order, and to regulate and benefit the world, all contemplated continuing the great works of the Great Yu in controlling the floods. They wanted to complete the great plan for the Chinese people whose success had not been entirely finished by the Great Yu. Since the Sung dynasty (960-1278), those scholars of the Neo-Confucian School devoted to the performance of deeds all thought that the real goal of expending efforts on water conservation of the waterways throughout China was to acquire learning for governing so as to bring about a peaceful society.

Nevertheless, in the end they did not complete the aspirations of the Great Yu in developing water conservation and flood disaster control. It is hoped that the young students of this generation will shoulder the task, emulate the spirit of the Great Yu, and give care to this great historical undertaking. In the future, after carrying out a counteroffensive and restoration of the nation, you will definitely be

able to realize this great and distinctive achievement for the Chinese people.

The Great Yu was the great-great grandson of the Yellow Emperor, and owing to his great contribution in quelling the floods throughout China and regulating water conservation, he was given the imperial crown by Shun. He became Emperor in what was the State of Han during the Warring States Period, and what now is An I near P'ing Yang in Shansi Province. This was a very famous abdication in ancient history, a tremendous achievement of the Three Eras ruled by Yao, Shun and Yu. At the same time, the era of the Great Yu marked the beginning of the civilizations of the three dynasties of the Hsia (2205-1766 B.C.), Shang (1766-1122 B.C.) and Chou (1122-255 B.C.). From the time of the drawing of the trigrams by Fu Hsi, Shen Nung, the Yellow Emperor and following Yao and Shun, the Great Yu marked off an historical era of national establishment in ancient China.

It is extremely regretful and unfortunate that some scholars, during the early years of the founding of the Republic of China (post-1911), had imperceptibly accepted the ideas of foreigners that intentionally insulted China's historical culture, denied the historical events of Yao, Shun and Yu, and maintained that Yao, Shun and Yu were fictitious; Yao was taken as the symbol of the incense burner, Shun was the candle platform, and Yu was a large reptile.

This new concept, wherein we insulted the historical culture of our ancestors ourselves, was truly a sorrowful affair and we "aggrieved our own people and gladdened the enemy." It was not known that the lighting of incense using an incense burner and the lighting of candles using a candle platform by Chinese people were customs brought into China from India with Buddhism during the Han and Wei dynasties (first to third centuries A.D.), and they were not invented during and prior to the Three Dynasties. The forms of the incense burners and candle platforms which we see are all from the T'ang and Sung dynasties and after, and actually they are somewhat later than this. How can the personages of Yao, Shun and Yu be dragged to a date one thousand years later and compared with tools employed in religious ceremonies!

We have generally discussed the cultural system reflected in the *Book of History*, and briefly introduced the periods prior to and following Yao, Shun and Yu. This has shown that the cultural origins of that period was the region of the Central Plain and it spread to the eastern and northern regions of the central Yellow River Valley. Moreover, it also briefly reveals the system established by the civilization and culture of the ancient peoples of China.

The "Contributions of Yu" chapter and other historical data contained in the

Book of History record the manner in which the Great Yu delineated the Nine Regions of China, but we shall not concern ourselves with this at the moment. The question we wish to address now is how the learning and thought of the Taoist school connects with the culture prior to the Three Eras.

We all know that, aside from establishing astronomy and the calendar which were imbued with the spirit of modern scientific nations, the primary tasks at the initial founding of states by Yao and Shun were the establishment of humanistic culture, and the setting up of a “sage whose teaching is founded on a Spiritual Way” (as mentioned in the *Book of Changes*), close to religion and rich in philosophical content. In later times, the idea of the “unity of Heaven and man” held by the Taoist and Confucian schools was formulated from this type of historical and cultural basis. This was especially true of the period when the Great Yu brought the floods under control.

Aside from the discussions in the *Book of History* and other official historical records, which only enumerate verifiable and believable historical data, the strange and uncanny legends were early eliminated and categorically removed. However, the transmissions circulated among the common populace in ancient times later became the lore of both the Taoist school and Taoist religion.

From the point of view of the cultural system reflected in the *Book of Changes*, the Taoist school transmitted the story of the Great Yu’s success in controlling the floods. Because it accepted the teachings passed down by the immortals (recluses) of high antiquity, and obtained the *River Chart* and studies on the *Book of Changes* transmitted from the Yellow Emperor—as well as astronomical and physical learning advantageous for applying the *yin* and *yang*, eight trigrams, five elements, Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches—[those of the Taoist school] were able to regulate flood disasters since ancient times. It is therefore considered that the successful achievements realized by the Great Yu were also the crystallization of the spirit of the orthodox learning of the Taoist school.

They believed the *Classic of Mountains and Seas* (*Shan Hai Ching*), which had been doubted though the ages, and they believed that the facts recorded in the *Classic of Mountains and Seas*—the gods, spirits and monstrous figures occupying the mountains, forests, rivers and marshes—were actually mysterious things that are sacred and that these demonic and ghost-like creatures were all overcome by the potency of the Tao possessed by the Great Yu. Moreover, they obeyed his commands and were employed by him whereupon he was able to accomplish his great achievement.

To sum up, the Taoist school considered that the success of the Great Yu was “bestowed by Heaven.” When the learning of the Taoist school was transformed and fell into the hands of the Taoist religion, this view became even more different. Besides totally accepting the statements of the Taoist school regarding the Great Yu, the Taoist religion maintained that he was a sage who had received the Heavenly mandate, and at the same time, that he was also the inheritor of all of the occult arts passed down by the former sages and immortals since the time of the Yellow Emperor. The success of the Great Yu controlling the floods was [later considered as] owing to his expertise in talismanic writing and other occult arts, his ability to dispatch the six *ting* spirits, six *chia* spirits and other heavenly spirits, his ability to summon the wind and rain, as well as turn sprinkled beans into soldiers.

All of these miraculous, strange and grossly absurd capabilities were all attributed to the Great Yu, and it was this that formed the especially close connection between the Great Yu and the Taoist school and religion. This shows that, during and after the Spring and Autumn as well as Warring States periods, the learning and thought of the Taoist school was connected with Fu Hsi, and after the Yellow Emperor, the cultural systems of the *Book of Changes* and the *Book of History* blended together.

In reality, the controlling of the floods by the Great Yu made it possible for the descendants of the Hsia dynasty to continue their political rule and culture for over four hundred years, and that was a culture which was truly founded upon agriculture. He maintained the astronomy, calendar and other primitive cosmic learning and thought of high antiquity, employed the physical principles of the changes of the five elements of metal, wood, water, fire and earth, as well as coordinated with the humanistic culture of agricultural society. As a result, he formed the cultural spirit of the Hsia dynasty which advocated simplicity and plainness. This is the historically famous cultural spirit of “the loyalty of the Hsia and Shang.”

After the revolution of T’ang (1766 B.C.) exterminated Chieh, the despotic ruler who reigned during the last years of the Hsia dynasty, T’ang established a culture which lasted for over six hundred years. He replaced the cultural simplicity of the Hsia dynasty with the concept of the Way of Heaven, “teaching founded on a Spiritual Way” and a religious spirit. The historically renowned “Shang ghosts” of the Shang period arose as a result of this, a cultural spirit dedicated to the worship of ghosts and spirits. This is connected with the cultural system of the *Book of History*, and after a multitude of changes, we come to King Wen (1231-1135 B.C.) of the Western Chou dynasty. King Wen flourished in Shensi Province and inherited the traditions of the Northwestern Plateau and the cultural system of the *Book of*

Changes.

Afterwards, King Wen consulted and deliberated on the merits of ancient and modern ideas and developed the study of the *Book of Changes* into the basic learning and thought of the text of the *Chou I*. Following the success of the revolution by his son King Wu, the scholastic thought of the *Book of Changes* expanded by the Duke of Chou integrated a variety of influences into the major cultural system of Chou dynasty rites, music, culture, education, justice and administration. The influences that were integrated included the humanistic culture of the Three Eras, and to some extent the ideas of the Heavenly Way, and the ideas of ghosts and spirits inherited from the Shang dynasty.

In other words, it can be considered that by the Chou dynasty all of the great cultural achievements since high antiquity had been integrated, and this was the cultural spirit of "How complete and elegant is its culture, I follow Chou" later extolled by Confucius. We can therefore observe many elements of the *Book of Changes* in the *Book of Rites (Li Chi)* and *Spring and Autumn Annals (Ch'un Ch'iu)* outside of the *Book of Changes* and *Book of History*, and this represents the shared learning upheld by the Taoist and Confucian schools. For example, the "Yueh Ling" chapter in the *Book of Rites* and the "Wang Chih," "Yueh Ling," and "Li Fa" chapters of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, are related to the concepts of disasters resulting from unusual phenomena, manifestations of changes in Heavenly bodies, and the learning and thought of the images and numbers in the *Book of Changes*.

However, the Chou dynasty culture we speak of here specifically refers to the civilization of the central Chou court and emperor. Later, during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, it referred to the cultural system of the State of Lu. If we study the cultural learning and thought of the feudal princes in the various states, we will find that each state had its similarities and differences, and they were not at all uniform. Each state preserved the cultural spirit passed on by their ancestral clans.

For example, the descendants of Shen Nung were enfeoffed in Chiao Ch'eng, Honan Province. The descendants of the Yellow Emperor were enfeoffed in Chu (Ch'ang Ch'ing County) near Chi Nan in Shandong Province. The descendants of Yao were enfeoffed in Chi in Hopei Province (Ta Hsing County in Hsin T'ien Fu, Chih Li Province during the Ch'ing dynasty). The descendants of Shun were enfeoffed in Ch'en (Ch'en Chou) near Kaifeng in Honan Province. The descendants of the Great Yu were enfeoffed in Ch'i near Kaifeng. The sage Cheng Tzu, a descendant of the Shang dynasty, was enfeoffed in Sung. Chi Tzu, another sage and descendant of the Shang dynasty, was enfeoffed in Korea owing to his having been

respected for his seeming disloyalty as recorded in the “Hung Fan” section of the *Book of History*.

These enfeoffed feudal princes were all successors of the period from high antiquity down to the Three Eras, and not solely meritorious officials of the Chou court who enjoyed the ranks of nobility. These were the virtuous governments of King Wen, King Wu and the Duke of Chou as well as the spirit of the historical and cultural tradition of China, the magnificent cultural thought of “reviving extinguished States, and restoring families whose lines of succession had been cut off.”

Secondly, the enfeoffment of meritorious officials by the Imperial House of Chou was lead by Shih Shang Fu (Lu Wang). Shih Shang Fu was enfeoffed in Ch’i, and the Duke of Chou was enfeoffed in the State of Lu, the so-called “Brother States with fifteen people and over forty people with the same surname.” These were the “feudal” conditions in the States established by the enfeoffed feudal princes of the Chou dynasty, and it was greatly different from the “feudal” system in Europe in ancient times.

It will be necessary to carry out further examinations if we wish to discuss of the different concepts of “feudalism” in the East and West together. Moreover, we must not forget that during the seven or eight hundred years from the establishment of enfeoffed states at the beginning of the Chou dynasty up until the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, the written and spoken languages of the Chinese people were not yet uniform, and the culture and learning of each State ruled by feudal princes maintained separate and individual traditions.

This equates to the fact that although the nation was unified, our culture of several thousand years still manifested regional differences in customs, habits, and dialects; the so-called “uniformity in writing and all carriage wheels being of the same size” was only formally accomplished later during the Ch’in and Han dynasties. It is because of this that when we read the different philosophers and authors of the Chou and Ch’in periods, the vast majority of texts related to the learning and thought of the Taoist school as stated by Ssu-ma Ch’ien were “not polished and refined, and the gentry found it difficult to discuss them.” It was owing to differences in dialects, as well as the fact that there was no uniform literary style, that they were written off with one stroke of the brush by the later self-styled Confucian literati during and after the Ch’in and Han dynasties, who said that they were not even worth a look.

Actually, the learning and thought of the Taoist school tend towards the

theories of the natural sciences. This is unlike the teachings of the Confucian school which were dominated by humanistic ideology. Generally, works which are partial to the theories of the natural sciences necessarily lack the emotional appeal of literary and rhetorical beauty, and regardless of its lack of depth, that associated with humanistic learning is ultimately inseparable from literature. The learning and thought of the “*fang-shih*” in the Taoist school as well as the doctrines related to the primitive scientific theories of the different philosophers and authors were, for this very reason, destroyed and buried within the criminal accusations of being “heretical” learning.

More than two thousand years later, we need only give serious attention to the historical data on culture to be able to understand this problem. For example, among the writings that have been handed down to us of Kuan Tzu, who lived slightly earlier than Confucius, regardless of the number of sections which are authentic, after a careful reading (even if we take into consideration the several chapters of the *Kuan Tzu* that are completely reliable), it is still different from the literary style that was prevalent in the State of Lu. The present text of the *Kuan Tzu* represents the humanistic theories and ideology of those of the State of Ch’i, and like the *Spring and Autumn Annals* by Yen Tzu, it possesses the literary style of the State of Ch’i.

On the other hand, Ssu-ma Ch’ien spoke of the people of Ch’i as “possessing broad intelligence and a great deal of concealed knowledge,” and in the “Free and Easy Wandering (*Hsiao Yao Yu*)” chapter of the *Chuang Tzu*, it is also mentioned that there was a strange book within the learning and thought of the State of Ch’i called the *Ch’i Hsieh*. Chuang Tzu also wrote an explanatory note which reads: “The *Ch’i Hsieh* inclines towards the strange.”

In other words, the text of the *Ch’i Hsieh* specifically focused on recording the strange and unusual. The general recognition of the local characteristic of the people of Ch’i “possessing broad intelligence and a great deal of concealed knowledge” was derived from this. As a result, the term “wild talk of Ch’i in the East” was employed in later Chinese culture to criticize someone for talking nonsense.

Secondly, there is the example of Mo Tzu and his one text. Mo Huo was from the State of Song and being most profoundly influenced by the learning and thought of that State, he possessed a religious-type belief which upheld the “will of Heaven.” At the same time, he also believed in the powers and abilities of ghosts and spirits. All of these beliefs were related to the traditions of the State of Sung as well as the reverence of ghosts, the belief in Heaven, and various cultural and other ideological influences of the people of the Shang dynasty. His theories and style of

maintaining moral integrity through sufferings and trials, hard work, and totally giving of oneself to save others and benefit the world was a spirit inherited from the Great Yu of the Hsia dynasty. It was also possibly influenced by the ideology of Sung's neighbor, the State of Ch'i, which inherited the legacy of Yu of the Hsia dynasty.

All of these facts are naturally very possible, rational and traceable, but not final determinations. However, given the fact that present deductions of ancient affairs are being made more than two thousand years after they occurred, as well as the environmental changes that have taken place in space and time, they certainly do not reflect the true conditions of those times. Although everyone utilizes textual materials as evidence, they also unavoidably contain personal views. "The total belief in books is inferior to not having books at all," and they are therefore unable to completely serve as definitive sources.

The system of thought propagated by Tseng Tzu, Tzu Ssu, Mencius, and Hsun Liao was of course the culture of the State of Lu following Confucius as well as the orthodoxy of Lu's literature. Others, such as Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, reflect the cultural style of the southern State of Ch'u.

The writings of military strategists such as the *Military Tactics of Sun Tzu* and the *Military Tactics of Wu Tzu* embody the traditional learning and thought of the State of Ch'i during the Warring States period, and reflect the advances and sublimation of the literature of that State. Further, most of the theories of the political strategists, legalists, logicians, and other schools were all related to the later thought of the States of Ch'in and Chin. It is as stated by Ssu-ma Ch'ien: "The scholars of the Three Chin (the States of Wei, Chao and Han) were very versatile, and those who discoursed on political strategies to put pressure on the State of Ch'in were mostly from the Three Chin."

The learning and thought of the Eclectics was related to the States of Ch'in, Chin, Ch'i, and Ch'u, and it can also be said to be the circulation of the miscellaneous learning and thoughts of the States of Ch'in, Chin, Ch'i, and Ch'u. The theories of the Yin-Yang School were naturally the source of the learning of the "*fang-shih*" from the States of Yen and Ch'i.

We have come to understand how this great force of culture and learning of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods later formed into the Confucian school within the main stream of Chinese culture. For the time being, we shall not pursue any discussion of this topic. The other schools such as the Yin-Yang, Military Strategy, Agriculture, Medicine, Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu, Yang Chu, Mo Tzu,

Logicians, Legalist, Political Strategy, and Eclectics were woven together and through mutual exchange were brought into the sphere of learning and thought of the Taoist school.

We have spared no efforts in tracing back the cultural learning and thought of the Taoist school to the Chou and Ch'in dynasties and earlier in order to reveal, in a broad sense, the traditional sources of Chinese culture, and investigate the distant origins and long development of the cultural thought of the Taoist school. In a narrower sense, it has been shown that there was basically no separation of the Confucian and Taoist schools during and prior to the Chou and Ch'in dynasties.

On the other hand, this also shows that the cultural learning of the Taoist school inherited the cultural system of the *Book of Changes* of the Hsia, Shang, and Chou dynasties and earlier produced by the Chinese people originating in the Northwestern Plateau. It later became the thought of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, which represented the culture of the southern State of Ch'u, merely another wave in the development of the Taoist school.

The era of the cultural learning of the Confucian school systematized by Confucius, transmitted from the Three Dynasties, and originated from the cultural system of the *Book of History* that arose in the Central Plains (as well as North and East China down to the Warring States period prior to the Ch'in and Han dynasties) became centered on the culture of the State of Lu and the thoughts of Confucius and Mencius. This was the so-called tradition inherited from Yao, Shun, Yu, T'ang, Wen, Wu and the Duke of Chou.

To summarize, through the application of learning related to rites, music, culture and education, justice and administration in humanistic society, the Confucian school with its cultural system based on the *Book of History* very much resembles a conventional army with an imposing array of troops and a dignified flag.

The Taoist school, on the other hand, which was a cultural system based on the *Book of Changes*, was adapted to meet circumstances and employed to bring order out of chaos, and was thus able to produce ingenious troops who achieved success with original ideas. This is a general explanation of the renowned Tao of the man of virtue in the cultural history of China who "externally manifested the methods of the Confucians and inwardly applied Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu."

Cultural Background of the Northern Chinese States of Ch'i, Lu, Yen and Sung During the Warring States Period

We must first seriously state that when studying the historical culture prior to the Ch'in and Han dynasties, the historical background of that time must never be forgotten. We can roughly perceive that the form of the cultural learning during and after the Chou and Ch'in dynasties was no doubt the continuous tradition inherited from the Three Eras and before, and only when we arrive at the Chou dynasty can the concrete establishment of a humanistic culture be considered to have been accomplished. However, we must never forget that historical development does not occur from out of the blue or for no apparent reason.

During the Spring and Autumn periods, each of the States of the feudal princes had varying cultural conditions, such as in spoken and written language, customs and habits, form of government, financial and economic measures, and forms of transportation owing to the differences in historical background and geographical environment. In addition, each of the States had their own individual means of governing, quite unlike that following the unification of China during the Ch'in and Han dynasties.

We need only remember the records of history which inform us that, beginning with Ch'in Shih Huang (259-210 B.C.), there gradually emerged "uniformity in writing and all carriage wheels being of the same size," and a uniform system for the removal of States and the establishment of prefectures and districts. However, we should not go so far as to randomly ignore the idea of cultural diversity during and after the Ch'in and Han dynasties. Moreover, at that time the Chou Emperor, who possessed central political authority, engaged in a shared Imperial system that was unlike the Imperial system during and after the Ch'in and Han dynasties, as well as different in form from that of the Three Eras and earlier. One need only research the three texts on rites, the *Rites of Chou* (*Rites of Chou*), *Book of Ritual* (*I Li*), and *Book of Rites* (*Li Chi*) to understand this. However, what we wish to discuss here is the problem of the origins of the learning of the "fang-shih" in the States of Yen and Ch'i. We shall begin with the State of Ch'i.

Those who have done some reading in history know that the State of Ch'i was established by T'ai Kung Lu Wang (Chiang Shang; ca. 12th c. B.C.). Chiang Shang was a later descendant of Shen Nung who lived prior to the Three Dynasties, and by this time, he was already considered a native of Tung Hai. The traditional culture of Chiang Shang and his ancestors, as well as his learning and thought, are all related to the Taoist school dominated by the thought of the "recluse" during the Chou and Ch'in dynasties. He lived a life of poverty, suffering and hardship for

decades and only at the age of eighty did he meet King Wen. Chiang Shang later assisted King Wu through the employment of ingenious military strategies, thus aiding the Chou clan to successfully complete their revolutionary endeavors. He represented the learning and thought of the Taoist school at the beginning of the Chou dynasty. King Wu rewarded him for his meritorious service by enfeoffing him in the State of Ch'i.

"The Treatise on the Feng and Shan Sacrifices" in the *Record of History* states: "The reason why Ch'i is so called is owing to its being equal (also pronounced 'ch'i') to Heaven." However, at that time, the State of Ch'i was not a very desirable place. It could not be compared to the State of Ch'i, which flourished later during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, and moreover it still retained some of its original regional vicious power. Therefore, Chiang Shang was in no rush to take up his new noble position.

While on his way to Ch'i, Chiang Shang met up with an innkeeper who offered him some words of inspiration. As a result, he immediately went forth to his destination where he proceeded to establish the State of Ch'i. Naturally, this innkeeper should be considered to have been a "recluse." When he arrived in the State of Ch'i, his first items of business in conducting government were to tap economic and financial resources and develop the fishing and salt industries along the coast. Therefore, when we speak of the history of the salt industry and financial affairs, Chiang Shang should be considered as a founding father.

It is not necessary to discuss the learning and thought concerning Chiang Shang at this point, but rather we need only study the books on military tactics, which were honored by the military strategists and planners, as well as the *Yin Fu Ching* and other texts highly esteemed by both the Taoist school and military strategists. Regardless of the question of whether or not these text are forgeries written by later writers who falsely used the name of Chiang Shang, "there are grounds for believing that this was the case, and investigations show no evidence against it." Nevertheless, there is most likely no question concerning the fact that the thought of military strategists did emerge from the State of Ch'i.

The cultural learning of the State of Ch'i was derived from the learning and thought of the Taoist school as represented by Chiang Shang, and therefore he differed greatly from the system of learning and thought of the Duke of Chou transmitted in the State of Lu. Ssu-ma Ch'ien stated that he had traveled through the State of Ch'i and the results of his observations were:

I went from the State of Lu to the State of Ch'i, and then on from Lang

Yeh which is subject to Mt. T'ai. To the north was the sea, and I passed two thousand *li* of fertile land. The people by nature possessed broad intelligence and a great deal of concealed knowledge.

There are two explanations for the term "concealed knowledge" in this quotation: one is a deep and profound wisdom in the modern sense; the second refers to possessing ample spiritual knowledge. Tsou Yen and others for whom dukes, nobles and feudal princes vied to meet all came from the State of Ch'i, and during the Ch'in and Han dynasties, many of the immortal "*fang-shih*" were also from the State of Ch'i. At the same time, owing to the fact that the State of Ch'i had begun to develop its fishing industry and administration of the salt industry during the time of Chiang Shang, this State was implicitly the economic and commercial center of China during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods. It was equivalent to Yang Chou during the T'ang dynasty (618-907 A.D.), and to Shanghai at the end of the Ch'ing dynasty and during the Republic of China.

Culture is fundamentally inseparable from finance and economics, and therefore we see the emergence of the economic and political thought of the Minister of the State of Ch'i, Kuan Chung (died 645 B.C.). Kuan Chung made the famous statement: "When the granaries are full there is knowledge of rites and ceremonies, when clothing and food are abundant there is knowledge of honor and disgrace."

The cultural learning of the State of Ch'i was especially developed owing to its flourishing economy. As a result, it became a strategic outpost for the exchange of culture between the States of the feudal princes. The majority of famous Confucian scholars during the Warring States Period all visited the State of Ch'i in the hope of developing themselves much like many of the scholars today, from throughout the world, who contemplate going to the United States to develop their career prospects. "The crowds of the world come for sake of profit, and they also depart when there is profit to be made." The same pattern is observed in ancient and modern times, in China and abroad, and this is something that is difficult for virtuous people to avoid.

For example, both Mencius and Hsun Ch'ing had close connections with the State of Ch'i. Was this coincidental? Moreover, Mencius and Chuang Tzu were more or less from the same period and their theories both advocated the principles of the cultivation and refinement of *ch'i*; the thoughts of Mencius were very much related to the theories of the Confucian school which emerged after Tseng Tzu and Tzu Lu.

In his discussions on the cultivation of *ch'i* in the "Kung-sun Niu" and "Devoting the Mind (*Chin Hsin*)" chapters, Mencius reflected the views of refining

ch'i propagated by the "*fang-shih*." Can you say that learning and thought are totally divorced from the influences of historical background and geographical environment? Mencius included explanations on the cultivation of *ch'i* and asserted the view that "Will is the commander of *ch'i*." This later gave rise to the dualism of principle and *ch'i* expounded by the Sung dynasty Neo-Confucians. If we trace the source of this, then the surviving influences of the "*fang-shih*" of the States of Yen and Ch'i during the Warring States Period cannot but carry one's spirit off far away.

With reference to the State of Lu, it is well known that the learning and thought of the Duke of Chou accorded with the paternal instructions of his father, King Wen, integrated the cultural thought since the Hsia and Shang dynasties, and formed an "elegant and refined literary" civilization during the Chou dynasty by continuing reforms. As a result, the literature composed in the State of Lu during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods was also lauded over the individual States of the feudal princes. Literature and humanistic learning are necessarily enmeshed together, but the natural sciences can be far apart from literature. Given that the cultural learning of the State of Lu was the direct tradition of the Duke of Chou, during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, it was only the State of Lu that was considered to be the orthodox center which represented the culture of the Chou dynasty.

All of the scholars of the State of Lu preserved the culture of the State of Lu, and even after the burning and destruction first carried out by the State of Lu and later by the State of Ch'u, we can see that the influences of the Duke of Chou and Chou culture were still transmitted down through to the initial years of the Han dynasty. Its distant origins and long development, as well as its value in being bequeathed to later generations, are truly wondrous.

Confucius was born and raised in the State of Lu, he sincerely admired the Duke of Chou, and accepted in its entirety the humanistic and cultural thought of the Duke of Chou as well as the literary attainments of the State of Chou. However, Confucius was a descendant of the Shang people, and subconsciously he inherited elements of the reverence of the Way of Heaven adhered to by the Shang. Nevertheless, he was after all a man of vast wisdom, and his understanding, views and interests were all comprehensive so that he also admired the cultural thoughts of the Yu and Hsia dynasties.

As a result, in emotional statements recorded in the "Li Yun" and other chapters, Confucius mentions the changes and vestiges of the culture of the three eras and later. In a conversation noted in the *Confucian Analects (Lun Yu)*, the cultural relations between the States of Lu and Ch'i are addressed when he states: "With one

change, Ch'i would come to the State of Lu, and with one change, Lu would come to a State where the Tao predominated." However, the "Tao (Way)" spoken of by Confucius here is not the "Tao" of the Taoist school. Rather he is referring to the "Way of Righteousness" adhered to by the Confucians involved in humanistic culture, and the meaning here cannot be misinterpreted.

Confucius' remarks addressing the transformation of the cultural thought at the time, wherein with one change Ch'i would come to the State of Lu and with one change Lu would come to a State where the Tao predominated, resulted in the fusion of the cultures of Ch'i and Lu and the emergence of the "Way of Righteousness" that embodied humanistic culture, and there is excellent evidence to research this. We can also catch a glimpse of the central-regional transformation of cultural thought from this and even find the key to the evolution of cultural history through the study of the major trends in the *Book of Changes* and *Book of Rites* related to the learning and thought of the Confucian and Taoist schools.

Secondly, we shall now discuss the origins of the cultural thought of the State of Yen as it has always been the case that whenever the "*fang-shih*" of the Taoist School are mentioned, a natural connection arises as to the problem of the sudden emergence of "*fang-shih*" in the States of Yen and Ch'i during the Warring States Period.

During the Chou dynasty, the State of Yen was located in an area on the northernmost frontier, and in ancient times, the remote State of Yen was frequently used to describe the Northern frontier. Yen was established as a state at the beginning of the Chou dynasty when it was given as a fiefdom to the feudal prince, the Duke of Shao, named Chi Shih. The Duke of Shao has left behind the reputation of moral excellence and kindness in the administration of government in the history of the Chou dynasty and so became a model for praise and emulation in the history of politics. We can imagine the broad-mindedness and magnanimous spirit of the Duke of Shao for he was a major ruling figure possessed of high political ethics.

The combination of his moral and political influences with the geographical environment of the State of Yen brought forth those from Yen and Chao who chanted so heroically yet mournfully, and then during the Warring States Period produced the renowned knight errants (*yu hsia*) and heroic assassins (*tz'u k'o*).

The knight errants were incarnations of the recluses. They were chivalrous and were fond of standing up for moral causes, they cultivated the occult arts including the refining of *ch'i* and tempering of swords similar to the "*fang-shih*" of the Taoist School, techniques which cannot be categorized by schools. Further, when

we take into consideration the geographical conditions of the State of Yen, which were basically interlaced with the states of Ch'i and Chin, it is clear that they absorbed and blended the learning and thought of the State of Ch'i.

In his conclusion to the "Hereditary Families of Yen," Ssu-ma Ch'ien wrote:

The State of Yen is pressed by the tribes on the North, communicates with the states of Ch'i and Chin on the South, is the weakest of the major states in the mountainous regions, and there have been many calamities. Sacrificial offerings to the spirits of the soil and grain have been conducted for eight or nine hundred years, and the renown of the Yellow Emperor was only lost later. Was this not the virtuous action of the Duke of Shao!

We then come to understand the historical and geographical environment of the State of Yen and the reasons for the many "*fang-shih*" in the states of Yen and Ch'i and the numerous chivalrous swordsmen of the states of Yen and Chao.

Furthermore, if we now speak of the State of Sung, we can then come to understand the factors contributing to the development of the ideas of *yin* and *yang* and the "Way of Heaven (*T'ien Tao*), as well as the fact that the spirits and immortals of the later Taoist School originated with the ideas on spirits and immortals propagated by Mo Tzu.

The State of Sung was founded when given as a fiefdom to a feudal prince at the beginning of the Chou dynasty. The Chou Court upheld the virtuous practice of supporting the traditional culture of China by "reviving the extinguished States, and restoring families whose lines of succession had been cut off." In order to honor the descendants of the former Shang dynasty, they enfeoffed the worthy individual Wei Tzu in the ancient ruins of the Shang dynasty thus creating the State of Sung. At the same time, this also served to preserve part of the past culture and thought of the Shang dynasty.

The last emperor of the Shang dynasty, King Chuo, was cruel, tyrannical and heartless, and yet the culture of the Shang dynasty was the main stream of the cultural evolution of China's high antiquity. The "Great Plan (*Hung Fan*)" chapter preserved in the *Book of History (Shang Shu)* has left behind a portion of the spirit of the culture and thought of the Shang dynasty.

The culture of the people of the Shang dynasty possessed a very heavy religious flavor. The Shang people exalted the Way of Heaven, believed in ghosts and spirits, added a spiritual aspect to the theories of *yin* and *yang* and the five

elements. They discussed these theories in conjunction with the Way of Heaven as well as ghosts and spirits, or utilized the *yin* and *yang* and the five elements to explain the Way of Heaven and ghosts and spirits. To the people of the Shang dynasty, this was part of a long tradition that could not be destroyed; after numerous changes, there then formed the *yin* and *yang* theories of the “*fang-shih*” in the later Taoist School.

Similar to the State of Ch’i, during the Spring and Autumn Period, the State of Sung preserved a portion of the cultural tradition of their ancestors. Historical records note that following the revolution by King Wu and the subsequent founding of the Chou dynasty, there still remained, for a period of nearly one hundred years, stubborn people of the Shang dynasty who did not fully submit to the new regime. We can thus imagine the spirit of the clan society of high antiquity as well as the force of faith.

In order to study the culture of the Shang dynasty, Confucius went to his ancestral home located in the State of Sung. Although he was very regretful that there was no way of finding the written records related to the culture of the Shang dynasty in the State of Sung, nevertheless he was very much influenced by Shang culture especially in terms of understanding the principles of the *Book of Changes*, and the concepts of the Way of Heaven, ghosts and spirits.

The religious views held by Mo Tzu, such as belief in the will of Heaven and faith in the power of ghosts and spirits to reward goodness and punish evil, completely derived from his having grown up and lived in the State of Sung. Mo Tzu accepted the cultural thought of the people of Shang, who revered ghosts and spirits, and at the same time the literary style of his writings are different from the literature from the State of Lu such as the essays of Confucius and Mencius. Moreover, it is also distinct from the literature of the State of Ch’i, such as that of Kuan Tzu. In modern times, there have been those who have speculated that Mo Tzu was from India or an Arab from the Middle East. This is a preposterous view that cannot be substantiated.

Furthermore, during the Warring States Period, the historical culture and geographical environment of the States of Ch’in and Chin gave birth to the learning and thought of the Legalist School and School of Logicians, as well as the Political Strategists who engaged in suave and ingenious intrigues, thus creating a breeding ground for experts in strategy. The States of Cheng and Wei were situated between large states, their environments promoted decadence, and they had very unconventional and romantic literary styles.

Owing to the influence of the Taoist thought of T'ai Kung Lu Wang (Chiang Shang; ca. 12th c. B.C.) and the stimulations of the times, the State of Ch'i produced a great deal of military philosophy and thought as well as strategists erudite in military learning. Thus the sources of the cultural thought of the various philosophers and authors of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods all had their own individual causes, as well as mutually influenced each other, and they were by no means born out of nowhere or all the same.

We briefly and separately enumerated the sources and environments of the cultural learning and thought of each state during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods in the above general discussion. If we ask how these types of learning and thought were able to later form and after repeated changes, fused and interchanged completely so as to become incorporated into the Taoist School, this relates to the trends of the Ch'in and Han dynasties. I am afraid there is now not enough time to address this problem.

Our previous discussion only dealt with the circumstances of those times, and when integrated together, the general cultural phenomena from the states of Ch'in and Chin in Northwestern China straight down to the states of Ch'i, Lu, Yen, Chao and Sung in Eastern China all belong to the cultural region north and south of the Yellow River. Forcing the issue slightly, we can call it an outline of the cultural learning and thought of Northern China during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods.

We must not forget, however, that the written and spoken languages of China during this period, like the individual states, were not yet uniform. Therefore, when we read the text of the various philosophers and authors prior to the Ch'in and Han dynasties, it is necessary to keep in mind that there were dialects at that time as well as local terminologies, different writing styles and various forms of written Chinese. Only then will we be able to have a clear notion of matters rather than to place complete faith in books only to be deceived by them.

It is really a shame that most later scholars were influenced by the writings of our great sage Confucius, and as a result they have for the most part utilized the literary and cultural views of the State of Lu to measure the writings of other philosophers and authors, whereby they developed grave doubts and vehemently denied them. Who would have known that this type of practice had already forgotten the historical and cultural background of that period as well as the differences in geographical environment?

If they are completely placed within the standard of the writing style,

learning and thought of the State of Lu, then this is truly committing the error when losing one's way of "taking the moon and clouds as being the same, but the stream and mountain as being different." Although one studies hard throughout their life and becomes particularly good at textual criticism, yet there are continuously disputes of different academic views. This gives rise to great anxiety and melancholy, and the fear of wasting one's life on insignificant and insoluble problems.

The Culture and Thought of the Southern State of Ch'u During the Warring States Period

We have already generally discussed the culture of North China and the learning and thought of the "*fang-shih*" of the Taoist School during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods. Let us now speak of the culture and thought of the Southern State of Ch'u during this period. It is necessary for us to pass through this critical juncture before we can understand the background of the thought of the Taoist School as represented by Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu.

At the same time, we must not forget that, during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, the State of Ch'u not only had its own unique cultural system, but the power and vigor of this State progressively increased. As a result, it was able to rival the State of Ch'in by the end of the Warring States Period, and although it was later destroyed by Ch'in, yet there was a foretelling premonition by Duke Nan of Ch'u: "Although Ch'u has but a few families, Ch'in will be destroyed and then Ch'u will necessarily rise up."

This was not stated without any basis, for in the end it was the people of Ch'u who destroyed the State of Ch'in. During this period, the State of Ch'u was a new and rising force, and its cultural learning and thought, as well as its strong southern folk customs, possessed a young and flourishing vigor. Nevertheless, it cannot be placed on a par with the states of Chi and Sung, which had long-standing and ancient cultural traditions. The State of Ch'u had a secret alliance with the State of Ch'i, and as a result there was a great deal of cultural exchange between the two states. Ch'i was not as conservative as Lu, and since Ch'i and Ch'u continuously had political, diplomatic and military relations, there was inevitably interchange of culture, learning and thought.

It was only during the reign of King Ch'eng (1115-1078 B.C.) of the Chou dynasty that the State of Ch'u was enfeoffed, for originally it was not considered important. Prior to the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, the leader of

the State of Ch'u began to call himself the Southern King owing to Ch'u's dissatisfaction at being treated as insignificant by the Chou Court. The State of Ch'u gradually grew into a major state owing to the many concerns plaguing North China, as well as the events which were occurring in the Central Plain. At the end of the Warring States Period, it then became an important and influential power.

Although its founding and establishment of its king did not go as smoothly as in the states of Ch'i, Lu, Chin and Cheng, yet the antecedents of their ancestors were definitely of great influence. They were the descendants of Emperor Chuan Hsu (posthumously called Kao Yang; reigned 2513-2435 B.C.). Kao Yang was the grandson of the Yellow Emperor and the son of Ch'ang I. During the time of Ti K'u (reigned 2435-2365 B.C.), Chu Jung, who was called Ancestor Ch'ung Li, served as Superintendent of Fire and resided in the South. Later, he was ordered to put Kung Kung to death, but because he did not carry out the order, he himself was executed. As a result, his younger brother Wu Hui succeeded him.

Wu Hui fathered Lu Chung and later Lu Chung had six sons. His wife had trouble giving birth and so all six sons were born through cesarean sections. The oldest son named K'un Wu served as a marquis during the Hsia dynasty and he had a very highly esteemed position. The youngest son, Ch'ien Chi-lien, was the founding ancestor of the State of Ch'u. During the reign of King Wen (1231-1135 B.C.) of the Chou dynasty, their ancestor Mi Hsiung had served as teacher to King Wen, and later Mi Hsiung's son was in the service of King Wen. Ssu-ma Ch'ien said of the descendants of Ch'ien Chi-lien: "It is very difficult to note his lineage as being from China or from the southern or western tribes."

A very interesting fact is that his third son, P'eng Tsu, had also served as a marquis during the Shang dynasty. It is said that the P'eng Tsu mentioned by both Confucius and Chuang Tzu, who was renowned for having lived to the ripe old age of eight hundred, was the P'eng Ch'ien so revered as an immortal in later Taoism. Confucius had once mentioned him so as to criticize himself: "How can I venture to compare myself with Old P'eng?" Chuang Tzu said of P'eng Tsu: "He is so renowned for having lived so long." That is to say, he was a famous individual of high antiquity who enjoyed an extremely long life.

After understanding the family lineage of the State of Ch'u, we then come to know that it was truly the most mysterious and dramatic lineage among all of the states during the Warring States Period.

The State of Ch'u maintained a disloyal position quite early owing to its southern feudal princes, who had newly arisen during the Spring and Autumn and

Warring States Periods being dissatisfied with the condescending attitude by the Chou Court towards them. There were no restrictions placed on their gradually expanding land areas and range of independence, and moreover, at times they even had intentions of usurping the rule of the Central Plains. During the Spring and Autumn Period when the first lord protector over the feudal lords, Duke Huan of Ch'i, declared himself lord protector, the very capable politician Kuan Tzu rendered assistance. However, they were only able to pit themselves against the State of Ch'u and conclude an alliance with them, but not dare to challenge Ch'u.

Given that the State of Ch'u was young and developing and it was not burdened by the pressures of a great many traditions. Moreover, it was still youthful and filled with a sense of uncertainty in terms of learning and thought. The literature of Ch'u was filled with language very different from that of North China, and possessed natural grace, artistry and emotion. As a result, Ch'u's learning and thought was like literature, boundless and unbridled, and its ideas were new and creative. However, we must not forget that the culture of the State of Ch'u was still transmitted down from its ancestor Chu Jung, remotely connected to the Five Emperors, and influenced by the learning and thought of the Yellow Emperor. Furthermore, the geographical environment of the South provides the natural barriers of the turbulent Yangtze and Han Rivers to blockade the forces of the North, there were innumerable deep mountainous areas as yet undeveloped, and everywhere there abounded a mysterious allure.

As a result, during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu, and others of the Taoist School were affiliated with the cultural thought system of the southern State of Ch'u. The literary styles of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, along with the "Song of Everlasting Sorrow" written by Ch'u Yuan (332-295 B.C.), are all similar types of literature arising from the culture of the State of Ch'u. The fact that the thoughts of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu are an integration of the traditional Taoist School and cultural thought of South China, can be observed throughout the texts of the *Lao Tzu* and *Chuang Tzu*.

In summary, we have spent a great deal of time discussing the sources and relations of the cultures of the states of Ch'i, Lu, Ch'u, Sung, etc. in order to resolve the question of the conventional terminology that has been used historically: the learning and thought of the "*fang-shih*" of the States of Yen and Ch'i did not arise suddenly out of nowhere but rather evolved from the traditional culture of high antiquity.

Chapter 5

Contents of the Learning and Thought of the Taoist School and Taoist Religion

On the surface, the Taoist School and Taoist religion appear to be inseparable, but in reality, they are significantly different. Prior to the Ch'in and Han dynasties, the Taoist and Confucian Schools were not separate schools and even the pre-Ch'in philosophers and authors all had their origins in the *Tao* (Way). The concept of this "*Tao*" was a general epithet that only represented the traditional culture of high antiquity.

The separate schools of Taoism, Confucianism as well as those of the early philosophers and authors, came into being at the end of the Warring States Period and during the transitional period between the Ch'in and Han dynasties. This became increasingly apparent at the beginning of the Han dynasty following the discussion of the main concepts of the Six Schools (i.e., the Yin-Yang, Confucian, Mohist, Logicians, Legalist, and Taoist schools).

During and after the Han (206 B.C.-220 A.D.), Wei (220-265 A.D.) and Northern and Southern dynasties (420-589 A.D.), the Taoist religion changed the learning and thought of the Taoist School so as to contend with Buddhism. This resulted in the Taoist School and Taoist religion becoming indistinguishable, and from the T'ang (618-906 A.D.) and Sung (960-1278 A.D.) dynasties and on, the Confucians falsely accused and condemned Buddhism and Taoism.

In reality, the learning and thought of the Taoist School prior to the Ch'in and Han dynasties was the tradition of learning passed down from before the Three Dynasties, Fu Hsi and the Yellow Emperor. It belonged to the original system of thought of the *Book of Changes*, and it embodied the cultural thought of China's primitive theoretical sciences.

The contents of the Taoist religion, which arose during and after the Han and Wei dynasties, were centered on the learning and thought of the Taoist School. The contents adopted the concept of the Heavenly Way from the system represented by the *Book of History* (*Shu Ching*), and added in the theories of the Eclectics, as well as folklore and beliefs, to formulate religious thought of a mystical nature. For the sake

of convenience, we will now discuss the two together and when necessary differentiate them so that readers may easily understand.

Cosmological Theories of Heaven and Man in the Taoist School and Taoist Religion

The *Huai Nan Tzu* is a representative text of the Taoist School in the Han dynasty which defines the universe (*yu chou*) in the context of Chinese cultural thought. Strictly speaking, the *Huai Nan Tzu* is not purely of the Taoist School as most of it reflects the thought of the Eclectic School. The *Huai Nan Tzu* states: "Above, below and the four directions are called *yu*, while former and later, ancient and modern are called *chou*." In other words, so-called *yu* is a pronoun meaning space and the firmament; *chou* is a pronoun referring to time.

Prior to the *Huai Nan Tzu*, the *Chuang Tzu* which was composed during the Warring States Period brought forth the term "*liu ho* (six harmonies)" reflecting the view of the Taoist and Yin-Yang Schools. The term "*liu ho*" refers to the space of the four directions, above and below, but it does not embody the idea of time. The term "*liu hsu* (six voids)" which is found in the "Appended Remarks" of the *Book of Changes* (*I Ching*) also partially includes the meaning of "*liu ho*."

People have always been curious and doubtful about the origins of the universe and mankind regardless of whether we are speaking of those of modern or ancient times, Chinese or foreigners. Furthermore, people have always had a great desire to find the answer to this. As a consequence, religion and philosophy have been established within the cultures throughout the world, and each has formulated a theoretical system to address these puzzling mysteries.

Generally speaking, the answers do not go beyond the several principles of the creationist theory, nature theory, and physical nature theory. Further, many different branch theories were developed such as monism, dualism, pluralism, theism, causality and non-causality, idealism and materialism. All of these are related to later so-called religious or philosophical theories, and now magical powers are being matched on the altar of the natural sciences. If you wish to know how things will be in the future, you must listen to future analyses. Our aim is merely to explain the foundation of the views and theories of the Taoist School regarding the beginning of the universe and the world.

The learning and thought of the Taoist School on the beginning of the universe and the world is also the cultural thought of the original China itself; the term "*yu chou* (universe)" was not used prior to the Chou and Ch'in dynasties, and

there was only the concept of “Heaven and earth” which was sufficient to represent the later meaning of the universe. It was considered in the Taoist School that before Heaven and earth separated, there was only a state of chaos (*hun tun*). The Taoists were not concerned with whether or not there was a creator nor did they ask whether this state was a cause or an effect.

This chaos cannot be called either a material thing or a spirit but rather as stated in the *Lao Tzu*: “The form without a form, the name without a name.” According to the “Appended Remarks” of the *Book of Changes*, as well as the Yin-Yang School which maintained primitive theoretical science, this chaos is the phenomenon of the *yin* and *yang* before they became separated into a composite state.

Later, based on the principles of the eight trigrams, it was called “prior to the first drawn line” and “before the six lines of the diagrams moved.” It was conceptually referred to as “prior to the separation of Heaven and earth” before the division of Confucianism and Taoism into two schools, and in the *Lao Tzu* it is spoken of as: “There was something undefined yet complete, born before Heaven and earth.”

The “undefined yet complete” referred to in the *Lao Tzu* does not allude to purely physical effects but rather the effects of physical material as it is conceived within the chaos, and after some time, this chaos splits into *yin* and *yang* and initiates the beginning of Heaven and earth. Therefore, among the old literature we were forced to read as youngsters fifty or sixty years ago, there is one text called *The Jade Forest of Elementary Studies* (Yu Hsueh Ch’iung Lin), and the first line of this text reads: “When the Great Chaos initially split apart, there began the universe (*ch’ien* and *k’an*).” After the Great Chaos initially split apart and formed Heaven and earth, the existence of this Heaven and earth was like a chicken’s egg. The earth resembled the yoke of the egg, the atmospheric layer and interstellar space of the earth resembled the egg white, and Heaven was outside of the outer eggshell of the earth.

Three thousand years ago, our Taoist School maintained that the earth was the same as the heavenly bodies in terms of both being living organisms, and it was just like an extension of our own lives. This was later formulated into the theory of immortals and spirits in the later Taoist School, which held that the human body was a small universe.

People and the myriad things in the world were naturally produced following the splitting apart of Heaven and earth. However, we wish to first explain the ideas and theories of the Taoist School and Taoist religion concerning events

after the birth of Heaven and earth, and then proceed to elucidate various other theories. The view held by the Taoist School and Taoist religion regarding the origin of mankind and the generation of the myriad things in the world is that the human species, which first appeared following the splitting apart of Heaven and earth, was derived from the descent of Heavenly spirits. This did not involve creation by another force, nor did they emerge through biological evolution. Where then did these Heavenly spirits come from? They had come this point and did not persist in trying to investigate their origins further.

The later changes between spirits and men was owing to the Heavenly spirits which had descended down from Heaven having forgotten their origins, and craving after the pleasures of the world. They became increasingly distant from their Heavenly roots, whereupon they evolved into the present situation of the mortal world. When Heaven and earth were first split apart, primitive man had communications with Heavenly spirits at all times, and Heaven and earth were also close. The farther away from that time, the more humanity degenerated, and due to the degeneration of humanity, the wider the distance between Heaven and earth.

Aside from this, there are also two types of ideas related to the theories of the Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu faction of the Taoist School: the thought of the "*fang-shih*" based on the theories of the *Lieh Tzu* which maintain that Heaven, earth, the myriad things, and mankind are transformations of one *ch'i*. What kind of thing after all is this *ch'i*? Is it mind? Is it matter? Let us address these questions later.

The generation through the transformations of the *ch'i* of Heaven and earth involves four processes and causes. The text of the *Lieh Tzu* reads:

Form is born from the formless. In that case, then where are Heaven and earth born from? It is therefore said that there are the *t'ai i*, *t'ai ch'u*, *t'ai shih*, and *t'ai su*. With the *t'ai i*, *ch'i* is not yet visible; with the *t'ai ch'u*, there is the beginning of *ch'i*; with the *t'ai-shih*, there is the beginning of form; and with the *t'ai-su*, there is the beginning of matter. When *ch'i*, form and matter are joined together and not yet separated, it is called the 'great turbidity (*hun lun*).' The 'great turbidity' refers to the myriad things being in a great turbidity and not yet separated from each other.

Chuang Tzu is even more fantastic as he employs a fable. The tone of the story is endless satire and regret for the myriad things and beginning of mankind which arose with the splitting up of Heaven and earth. He states: The Lord of the Center was called Great Chaos (*hun tun*), and as soon as he deliberated with the lords of the four directions, they felt that Great Chaos, Lord of the Center, was very

magnanimous. They thought that it was a shame that he was not divided up, and so in order to repay his kind intentions each day they made one orifice in him. They made seven orifices in seven days (the seven orifices on the human body representing the seven openings of the five sensory organs). However, it was truly a shame that Great Chaos died with the opening of the seven orifices.

Chuang Tzu's story is filled with a sense of philosophical humor in the same vein as the "Commentaries on the Images and Names of the Hexagrams" of the *Book of Changes* which are filled with extremely interesting sections. The "Commentary on the Images of the Hexagrams" of the *Book of Changes* calls the image of Heaven and earth the Negative (Stagnation) Hexagram, but conversely calls earth and Heaven the Prosperity Hexagram. When Heaven is on the bottom and earth covers, this is called "dwelling in prosperity," and when Heaven is on top and the earth on bottom as is conventional, this is called "dwelling in stagnation." This is similar to Chuang Tzu's idea of Great Chaos dying when seven orifices were made in that both reflect everlasting regret over the confusion produced in the world as well as the foolishness and stupidity of human existence.

The thought of the Taoist School on Heaven and earth following their splitting apart is related to principles and theories concerning the spiritual and material worlds. It is the source of the cultural thought of high antiquity and the Three Dynasties, which is the amalgamation of the theories on *yin* and *yang* and the eight trigrams in the scholastic system of the *Book of Changes*, as well as that of the five elements in the "Great Plan" chapter of the *Book of History*. This Taoist School thought on Heaven and earth connects back to the traditional astronomy (Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches) and other fields of learning of the Yellow Emperor. It is a pity that in these later times we label as "superstitious" those things of value in primitive theoretical science that we do not understand so as to conceal our embarrassment and to serve as a pretext for smothering traditional culture in a very rash manner.

We will now first present a general introduction to the contents of the learning and thought of the Taoist School so as to avoid having everyone blindly denying its value.

The Concept of the *Yin* and *Yang*

The terms *yin* and *yang* were the earliest to appear within the cultural learning of high antiquity, more ancient than even the five elements, Eight Diagrams, Heavenly Stems, and Earthly Branches. They are central concepts in the scholastic system of the *Book of Changes* formed within the cultural system of the

Five Classics, and they are also mentioned in the *Book of History* but not given as much importance as they received in the *Book of Changes*.

Yin and *yang* are the universal principle of mutual antithesis and mutual destruction and production discovered in high antiquity from the observation of the myriad things in Heaven and earth, human affairs, and nature. The theorem of the changing of the *yin* and *yang* in the phenomenal world, as well as in human affairs and nature, was consequently established and utilized to explain the universal principle of change. The mention of “one *yin* and one *yang* are called the *Tao*” in the “Appended Commentaries” of the *Book of Changes* employs these two principles. It employs them to explain that the universal law based on the flow and evolutionary change of the *Tao* does not go beyond the mutual changes of the one *yin* and one *yang*.

Yin and *yang* are an abstract concept and they are the names of representative symbols used to explain the flow of opposites. By no means can they be taken to be real substances. In terms of physical functions, they represent stillness and movement; in physical matter, they represent hard and soft; in terms of phenomena in the universe, they represent Heaven and earth; in terms of the movements of Heavenly bodies, they represent the sun and moon; in terms of human beings, they represent man and woman; in terms of the animal world, they represent male and female animals; and in the sphere of ideas, they represent the positive and negative. In sum, they abstractly represent all opposites and can be flexibly applied to any thing or idea. They serve as the general representative of the universal flow of opposites since the splitting apart of Heaven and earth.

The Confucian and Taoist schools later made special use of the term *T'ai Chi* (Great Ultimate) found in the “Appended Commentaries” of the *Book of Changes* to replace the term Great Chaos (*Hun Tun*) to describe the state prior to the separation of Heaven and earth. This further embodied the concept that the movement of the *T'ai Chi* produced the two principles (*yin* and *yang*), the movement of the two principles produced the four forms (the minor and major *yin* and *yang*: *shao-yin*, *shao-yang*, *t'ai-yin*, and *t'ai-yang*), and the movement of the four symbols produced the eight trigrams (*pa-kua*). In addition, Lao Tzu also brought forth the theory of “the myriad things bear the *yin* and embrace the *yang*.” Later, Confucian thought was blended with that of the Taoist School and there evolved the principle that each of the myriad things in the world possessed a “*T'ai Chi*” and that each “*T'ai Chi*” had one supported *yin* and one embraced *yang*.

Yin and *yang* are the most widely and frequently used terms from the ancient culture of China in the natural, physical and theoretical sciences. The astronomers

and astrologers of high antiquity use the principle of the interchanging of the *yin* and *yang* to explain their views of theoretical physics as well as for it to serve as a bridge for science to penetrate into philosophical ideas.

During the Warring States Period, those of the Yin-Yang School were also the contemporary theoretical scientists of primitive science. The diviners, prognosticators who used tortoise shells and diving-straws as well as later pronostication using mathematical calculations, and “soothsayers” expert in the selection of time prior to and following the Ch’in and Han dynasties down to the geomancers of the Wei (220-265 A.D.) and Chin (265-420 A.D.) and after, and the fortunetellers of the T’ang (618-906 A.D.) and Sung (960-1278 A.D.) dynasties, all branched off from the system of the Yin-Yang School of the Warring States Period. Nevertheless, *yin* and *yang* are still abstract terms, and the principle that is utilized to quite concretely explain the changes of the abstract *yin* and *yang* is the concept of the five elements.

The Concept of the Five Elements

The term five elements (*wu hsing*) which arose from the culture of the *Five Classics* was first mentioned in the “Great Yu” and “Great Plan” chapters of the *Book of History*. The “Great Plan” chapter, written by Chi Tzu (12th c. B.C.), is the philosophical basis of the humanistic learning and thought of the Shang dynasty. Specifically, it is derived from the concept of the five elements in nature. It is also the central idea of the cultural tradition passed down from the Great Yu to Yao and Shun. However, it is not frequently seen in the learning and thought of the scholastic system of the *Book of Changes*.

As is well known, this term refers to the five components of metal, wood, water, fire and earth. This term was later taken as being part of the tradition of ancient superstitions given the childish game-like quality of *hsing* (this Chinese character also has the meaning of running around), and also given the later diviners and fortunetellers who practiced physiognomy and calculating one’s future utilizing the five elements. As a result, it later became something laughable.

In reality, the five elements are part of the primitive scientific learning of high antiquity, and they are the philosophical basis of the physical theory of the universe. The so-called five elements are similar to the movements in the phrase, “The movements of the Heavenly bodies are constant and regular” found in the “Appended Explanation” of the image of the trigram *ch’ien* (Heaven) in the *Book of Changes*; both are used to explain the principle of the constant movement of the Heavenly bodies in the cosmos.

The usage of movements in the phrase, “The movements of the Heavenly bodies are constant and regular,” reflects the view of the universe maintained in Chinese culture. It has always been considered that the universe is in a dynamic state, and consequently human affairs and the physical phenomena in the world have consistently been viewed “constantly changing.” Therefore, the use of the five elements of metal, wood, water, fire and earth served as representations which arose out of the practice in primitive science of utilizing the ears, eyes and other sense organs, consciousness and other easily visible things as representations.

This was the case in the ancient culture of China as well as in the ancient cultures of Greece, Egypt and India. The environments of different periods in history are distinctive, and when we take the view of later generations, then the superficiality of people who slight and ridicule those of the past will in the same way be something laughed at by those in the future.

Metal represents the properties of solid matter. Generally, after things grow they necessarily reach a state of hardening, and thus the solidity of metal is used as a symbol in the same way that ancient India used the symbol of earth to denote hardness and solidity.

Wood represents the characteristics of generating force. In the material world, the functions of continual extension of life such as that of grass, trees and other vegetation are the most apparent and easily observed. It is said: “No prairie fire can burn the grass utterly, the spring wind blows it back to life again.” The growth vitality of grass and trees can symbolize that the universal life of the universe possesses continuously generating functions.

Water represents the potential for freezing. Fire represents the sublimation of the generating force, the attainment of brilliant light and thermal power.

Earth is the universal basis of the foothold of mankind, and it includes the symbolic representation of the planet earth. Our entire culture and civilization is rooted in achievements of the earth.” It was therefore said in the thought of the later Yin-Yang School that: “The four forms and five elements all rely upon the earth.”

Those in the Yin-Yang School of Taoism brought forth the concept of the five elements, and from the principle of the transformations of the five elements, explained that their interpromotion and restraint was based on the theory of the ebb and flow of *yin* and *yang* and the interchanging of the full and empty, as well as extinction and growth. They also used it to analyze the changes in the physical world and in human affairs.

There is so much that can be said, but let us stop here and sum up. The concept of the five elements, like the learning and thought of the *yin* and *yang*, is one of the central and basic theories of the Yin-Yang School developed out of the Taoist School. It has been utilized in astronomy through symbols that explain the five planets in the solar system; used in geography as the five bearings of north, south, east, west and center; used in meteorology to describe the four seasons of spring, summer, autumn, and winter; used in physiology and medicine as symbols for the heart, liver, spleen, stomach, lungs, and kidneys.

Further, during the Ch'in and Han dynasties and after, there were many scholars who were outwardly Confucian and inwardly Taoist, as well as experts in prophesy that integrated the sects of the Taoist School with branches of the Yin-Yang School. These individuals applied the theories regarding the changes of the five elements to political thought to serve as a theoretical basis for changes of state power throughout history.

The theory of "the five virtues interchanging from beginning to end," as related to state power in history, also emerged and served to gain flattery from the sovereign. This was indeed a great function of the five elements! Chou Lien-hsi (1017-1073 A.D.), a Neo-Confucian of the Sung dynasty, obtained the *Explanation of the Chart of the Great Ultimate (T'ai Chi T'u Shuo)* from the Taoist School, and this text did not go beyond the thought of *yin* and *yang* and the five elements of the Taoist School. The practice, by those who were outwardly Confucian but inwardly Taoist, of using this thought originally borrowed from Buddhism and Taoism to attack them was really quite unjust and regrettable.

The Concept of Sixty Year Cycle Using the Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches

Based on scattered records found in ancient historical texts, the learning and thought of the sixty year cycle was established in the time of the Yellow Emperor, and it was utilized to explain the pattern of movement of the Heavenly bodies, sun and moon: one year is divided into four seasons and twelve months, one month is divided into thirty days and each day is divided into twelve divisions, and through intricate interaction they come to form one year with twenty-four solar periods.

This natural pattern of Heaven and earth, and the regularity of the movements of the sun and moon, was derived through the research and observations made by Ta Nao as ordered by the Yellow Emperor. It was considered that the five elements of Heaven had split into the functions of *yin* and *yang*, and involved "disturbing" and "intervening" the functions of the earth. So he then

determined ten Heavenly Stems, namely “*chia, i, ping, ting, wu, chi, keng, hsin, jen, kuei*” to serve as symbols for the physical patterns of the sun, five planets, and the earth.

During and after the T’ang and Sung dynasties, the Yin-Yang School gave the Heavenly Stems a slightly different meaning; at the same time, they considered that the physical changes of the earth were due to the functions of the Heavenly Stems, and thus the earth itself was subject to the alternating changes of the *yin* and *yang*. The name was fixed as the ten Earthly Branches, namely “*tzu, ch’ou, yin, mao, ch’en, i, wu, wei, shen, yu, hsu, hai*” to serve as symbols of the waxing and waning, and appearing and disappearing of the moon, and its relationship with the sun and the earth.

As regards the concept of the twelve Earthly Branches, there was a similar astronomical theory in ancient India equivalent around the time of the Chou and Ch’in dynasties in China. However, they did not employ abstract names and concepts for representation in India but rather twelve animals. Later on in the Han dynasty, the learning and thought of India was transmitted into China with Buddhism, and after integration of the two concepts, the twelve birth signs were used to represent the functions of the twelve Earthly Branches. As a result, the twelve animal representations of “rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, chicken, dog and pig” were formulated.

The original meaning of the term “twelve branches” was that the physical nature of the earth itself was both related to the Heavenly Stems and the function of the mutual transformation and production of the earth itself in supporting the myriad forms of animate and inanimate things. Later, fortunetellers called them “Earthly Branches” to match with the “Heavenly Stems,” and as a result, they conceptually changed their functions to be similar to the stems and branches of a tree.

The Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches were treated in high antiquity very much like the five elements and eight trigrams were, as both were the crystallization of mathematical and symbolic logic. A scientific spirit was employed for the mathematical conceptions of natural phenomena, and then later they were integrated into one idea whereupon these abstract logical symbols were established. People were then able to integrate these abstract symbols and seek answers for a very complex universe with laws governing the myriad changes of affairs and things both astronomically great and infinitely subtle. Moreover, these symbols are easy to remember and can be popularized.

In later times, no one knew the background of this learning and thought, and having flowed into the hands of itinerant entertainers and fortunetellers, its value sank to the lower depths. The ancients integrated the mathematical concepts of the Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches into a means of representing time, space, and statistical numbers for divination called the “sixty year cycle (*chia-tzu*).” This involves joining together the odd (*yang*) and even (*yin*) numbers of the ten Heavenly Stems and twelve Earthly Branches, and combining them so that the first group begins with “*chia-tzu*” and the sixtieth is “*kuei-hai*.”

The connotation of the beginning of the myriad affairs and things in the universe is the possession of power like that of plants and trees generating and flourishing, and this is the idea of “*chia-tzu*.” The final resolution functions like water congealing, and this is the idea of “*kuei-hai*.” This principle of the cycle of sixty units forms a complete concept called the “sixty year cycle (*chia-tzu*).” Some in later generations also called the “flower *chia* of sixty years.”

The Taoists and Confucians of the Han dynasty combined it with the *yin* and *yang*, five elements, eight trigrams, and other mathematical concepts into representative symbols using the trigram images of the *Book of Changes* and thus called it “taking the *chia*” for divination with the *Book of Changes*. It has been used to explain China’s history and philosophy, calculate the past affairs of people and the world, and conjecture on future developments, and it thus became the learning of prophesy of the two Han dynasties. This later became increasingly complex, and the calculation methods of each school were different. As a result, its value was generally nullified and ever so gently placed into the file of frivolous and unbelievable matters.

Further, the Taoist religion adopted the *yin* and *yang*, five elements, eight trigrams, and the sixty combinations of the Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches passed down from high antiquity, and then supplemented the Heavenly spirits and generals as well as the Nine Palaces mathematics, which all reflected strong religious flavor. They then formed the mysterious art of “becoming invisible (*ch’i-men tun-chia*),” added the concept of the twenty-eight constellations in astronomy to the mathematically logical symbols of the six *ting*, six *chia* and six *wu*, adorned themselves with the magical robes of the Mysterious Female and Heavenly Lad, ascended the clouds and rode on the mist to and fro within the imaginary worlds to who knows where, created heterodox sects, and drew amulets and recited chants through communications with spirits.

As a result, the falsities passed on by one man became fact in the mouths of ten thousand, and magic arose whereby with one shake of the body, wind and rain

could be summoned and soldiers could be mustered with the throwing of beans. Nevertheless, the original and basic character of the cosmic view of Heaven and man—in terms of primitive science and philosophy within the Taoist School or Taoist religion regardless of how it later changed—was derived from research and investigations in astrophysics and geophysics. There is no doubt that it was not merely fabricated, nor purely talk without any subsequent actions.

During and after the Han and Wei dynasties, the learning and thought of the Taoist School evolved and changed into the Taoist religion, but the universal law of the connection between Heaven and man was still based on the concept of “taking the *chia*.” However, during and after the Han and Wei dynasties, the view of the relationship between Heaven and the mortal world held by the Taoist religion was influenced by the transmission of Buddhism from India, and another world view of Heaven and man was subsequently established.

Beginning from the establishment of the Five Pecks of Rice Sect of Chang Tao-ling (34-156 A.D.) during the Eastern Han dynasty, the learning of the “*fang-shih*” prevalent since the Warring States Period and Ch’in and Han dynasties was transformed into the thought of the “Taoist priest (*tao-shih*)” at the end of the Han dynasty. They initially designated the political and geographical regions prevalent in the Han dynasty and assigned famous mountains and abodes of immortals as their centers. They acted on their own in delineating the regions separately administered by Heaven and man, but which secretly harbored religious and political revolutionary ambitions.

This was already quite manifest during the Three Kingdoms Period in the hands of Chang Lu of Tung-ch’uan, a descendant of Chang Tao-ling. They divided China into thirty-six famous mountains that were “Cave Heavens” of immortals, and seventy-two famous sites which were the “Blessed Abodes” of immortals. Each “Cave Heaven” and “Blessed Abode” was associated with a “recluse” or “*fang-shih*” of ancient times. These immortals which were later acknowledged by the Taoist religion, and considered as ghosts and spirits belonging to a said Heavenly Official or the underworld, were all managed by this administrative region.

For example, Mt. Chu Jung associated with Chiang Huai fell into the administrative region belonging to immortal San Mao True Lord (*San Mao Chen Chun*). The mountain has three terraces which are separately the larger Mao Ying, and the smaller Ku and Chung. This later gave rise to a branch of the Mao Shan Taoist sect. The larger Mao Shan has a cave called the Hua Yang Cave and this was the dwelling place of the famous recluse and immortal T’ao Hung-ching (451-536 A.D.) who lived during the Liang dynasty. They freely endowed feudal titles upon these recluses and immortals, and regardless of whether they were common folk or

major generals, they were given the titles of “True Lords (*Chen Chun*)” or “True Man.”

We can then come to understand another aspect of the integration of folk society and intellectuals during the turmoil that pervaded the end of the Eastern Han dynasty, that is, that they had early possessed religious and political revolutionary thought. Furthermore, they wished to transcend reality by escaping reality, and wanted to establish a free and spiritual kingdom in Heaven and on earth quite like the organization of the Vatican around the time of the founding of the Roman Empire in the West.

If we study the evolution of Eastern and Western cultures in detail, we continuously discover cyclical patterns, wherein like the revolving of the sun and moon, there are slight differences given the influences of time. This evolution is also similar to the differences between the scenery of rivers and mountains wherein spatially each forms a different image. This is another topic which we will not pursue here.

In summary, the background of this ideology concerning Heaven and man is still rooted in the culture of high antiquity, its source being the scholastic system of the *Book of History* and quasi-religious thought. People expanded and raised the high esteem placed in high antiquity on “deification,” the worshipping of Heavenly and earthly ghosts and spirits, sacrificing to the spirits of mountains and rivers, and the great respect of all things in nature to create the organized ideology of the Taoist religion as regards the relationship between Heaven and man during and after the Han and Wei dynasties.

However, it is especially noteworthy to point out that regardless of how they changed and how the ghosts and spirits of Heaven and earth were arranged, focus was still placed on humanistic culture, that is, raising the value and functions of the principles of humanity. Therefore, by cultivating the Way of goodness one can ascend and become a spirit or immortal, and by cultivating the Way of evil one will then fall into Hades and become a ferocious ghost.

Beginning with K’ou Ch’ien-chih (5th cent. A.D.) and other Taoist priests in the Wei and Chin dynasties and afterwards, various methods were adopted to actively establish the Taoist religion so as to resist the influences of foreign religions (such as Buddhism) making inroads into China. Consequently, the primitive physical ideology of the Taoist School regarding the relationship between Heaven and man was changed into the concept of *ch’i* transforming to form Heaven and earth.

This theory was later explained in this way: “The light and pure component of *ch’i* ascended to make Heaven, while the heavy and turbid portion sank and congealed into the earth.” This was combined with the ideas of the relationship between Heaven and man held by various Taoist priests, and this gave rise to the names of the rulers of Heaven such as the Sovereign of the Vast Heavens (*Hao T’ien Shang Ti*) and the Heavenly Worthy of Primordial Origin (*Yuan Shih T’ien Tsun*). This organization of a Heavenly Court arose from the scholastic system of the *Book of History* and the thought of the *Book of Rites*. It is based on the organizational system of Chou dynasty officials, and together with the concepts of the three stellar enclosures and twenty-eight constellations of high antiquity, there was formed a complete Heavenly Court of the Supreme Sovereign.

Venus (*T’ai Pai Xing*), which was originally the sovereign of military affairs and war within the astrological studies of military specialists, was also changed into being connected with the star Venus in the West with a benevolent countenance and the white hair of an old Heavenly spirit. The religious matters governed by Lao Tzu and Shakyamuni Buddha were equated to the Primordial Hall of the Three Lords (*San Kung Yuan Lao Yuan*), and each had their own residences. The Queen Mother of the West spoken of in the “Biography of Mu T’ien-tzu” and the “Unofficial Biography of Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty” was later changed into the mother of the Jade Emperor Supreme Sovereign, a model of filial devotion in both Heaven and the world of men. It is difficult to thoroughly explicate the concepts of the Sovereign of the Sagittarius who governs longevity and birth, and the Sovereign of the Big Dipper who is lord of death and killing. In imitation of the theory of the Three Bodies (*trikaya*) of the Tathagata Buddha—the founder of the Buddhist teachings—during and after the T’ang dynasties, the Old Lord on High (Lao Tzu)—founder of the Taoist religion—was transformed from the one *ch’i* of Lao Tzu into the Three Pure Ones. The Three Pure Ones were Jade Purity (*Yu Ch’ing*), Great Purity (*T’ai Ch’ing*), and Highest Purity (*Shang Ch’ing*).

In summary, if we wish to clarify in detail the organization of the Heavenly Court in the Taoist religion, the register of gods and demons, and the political system of Heaven, then much like the imperial political system in Chinese history there have been changes down through the ages that were quite difficult to explain in detail but quite rich in legend and folklore. Later, Heaven was divided into thirty-three heavens, the highest Heavenly Ruler became the Jade Emperor (*Yu Huang Ta Ti*), and hell was divided into eighteen levels separately administered by eighteen Yama Kings. The emperor in the world of men stands between the Emperor of Heaven and King Yama of hell.

[According to these theories,] after he dies, an individual’s soul first appears before King Yama, and then King Yama accompanies him to have an audience with

the Jade Emperor. The individual is again evaluated as to the good and bad deeds he performed over a lifetime, and then determination of reward or punishment is made. This view is totally based on the Buddhist ideas concerning Heaven and man that were transmitted into China.

For example, the name King Yama itself is an Indian Sanskrit name. It can be seen in the popular fiction of the Yuan (1206-1368 A.D.) and Ming (1368-1644 A.D.) dynasties such as the *Canonization of the Gods* (Feng Shen Pang), which employs the historical story of King Wu of the Chou dynasty subjugating Cho (the last King of the Shang dynasty) to create a written text on the canonizations carried out by Chiang T'ai Kung (Lu Wang). One by one the Jade Emperor, the ghosts and spirits of the rivers and mountains as well as the kitchen and privy were all canonized as governing spirits. Owing to his impartiality and selflessness, Chiang T'ai Kung forgot about himself and at the end of the novel there was no position of deification left for him. The conclusion was that he could only canonize himself as the altar god of the altar to the soil and grain.

We can very clearly observe one aspect of the very deep and penetrating humanistic culture of the Chinese people from this historical story, which is related to the connections between Heaven and man, and encapsulated within a very interesting myth. That is, the religious learning and thought prevalent since the establishment of the Taoist religion has never departed from its original focus on humanistic culture.

When we look at the belief in ghosts and spirits now prevalent among the common populace, strictly speaking, it is a very complex matter wherein spirits and Buddhas, as well as spirits and the Tao, are inseparable and are always dwelling within the pages of the two famous novels *Canonization of the Gods* and *Journey to the West*. As is the case with Chinese culture, it is very difficult indeed to rigidly discriminate the true beliefs of the Chinese people. As a result, which religion should ultimately bear responsibility for the common superstitions now prevalent in society? Further, to which religion should the worshipped spirits be attributed?

These are difficult questions. However, we can now come to understand another aspect of the magnificent spirit of the Chinese people. Based on our view of history, although there were no constitutional proclamations stipulating "freedom of religious belief," in actuality, there has been unwritten acknowledgement of "freedom of belief" for the past 5,000 years. No matter if it was religious belief introduced from outside or our own religion, as long as the predominant principle was to teach people to be good, and it was beneficial to the way of the world and the moral character of human beings, they were without exception offered a seat of honor and respect.

There has never been enmity due to differences in religious beliefs in China but only the protection of humanistic culture through mutual understanding, assistance and by complementing each other. The wars that were fought and the bitter disputes that ensued because of religion definitely do not reflect the original cultural spirit of China. It is hoped that our descendants will be able to comprehend the superb tolerance and broadmindedness of this tradition.

Let us take, for example, a certain sect that is now popular. For the moment we will not concern ourselves with the accuracy of its teaching, but we see that it uniformly pays homage to Confucius, Lao Tzu, Buddha, Jesus or Mohammed, augments the slogans common to the three teachings (Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism) which have been prevalent since the T'ang and Sung dynasties, and has become a voice reflecting a common denominator of the above five teachings.

This phenomenon can only have been accomplished given the tolerance of Chinese culture. It is a true free, democratic thought, and I hope that young students will now take note of this. In reality, this attitude has already been passed on to the United States. As a result, many such new religious sects have emerged in the United States in recent years. I consider that the religion of the 21st century will inevitably follow a trend towards combined religious teachings.

At the same time, it should be added that within Chinese culture and popular society there is a certain free democratic advocacy and public sentiment as concerns reward and punishment for moral good and evil in human relations, and this has been influenced by Taoist religious thought. For example, a good person from the countryside is freely canonized as a village god after his death, and a good official is canonized as a town god (equivalent to a county head or the head of an administrative district in the human world) after his demise. Other examples are Kuan Kung (died 219 A.D.), who stressed high moral principles throughout his life and was freely canonized as a god (*shen*); Yueh Fei (1103-1141 A.D.), who displayed unparalleled loyalty for his country was also canonized as a god; and Pao Wen-cheng (died 1062 A.D.) renowned for his unswerving sense of justice and integrity was canonized as King Yama.

One need only take a close look at historical texts and local chronicles (provincial and county chronicles) to be able to clearly observe the public sentiments of popular society as regards reward and punishment for good and evil deeds, as well as deification of those held in high esteem. This is another aspect of Chinese culture that has been widespread since the Chou dynasty, that is, the appraisal of emperors, kings, officials and literati and the "code to confer posthumous titles" after their death. It is related to the folk ideology of posthumous canonization, and is very much worthy of our serious attention.

The idea of reward and punishment for good and evil deeds had therefore influenced China's past social and educational thought as well as our ethical concepts of how to conduct oneself as an individual and in society. The guidance of leading officials was unnecessary as there was automatic admonishment of honor and disgrace in life and death which was derived from the polytheistic thought of the unity of Heaven and man. It is difficult to render a conclusive decision on its actual value within the relationship between the key to the cause and effect of success or failure, gain or loss, right or wrong, and education and politics.

Learning and Thought of the Cultivation of Immortals in the Taoist School

As previously mentioned, the learning of the Taoist School originated from the thought of the "recluse," who later evolved into the "*fang-shih*" of the Warring States, Ch'in and Han dynasties, the immortals who lived during and after the Ch'in, Han, Wei and Chin dynasties, as well as the Taoist priests of the Taoist religion. By the T'ang and Sung dynasties and afterwards, they were called "cultivators of immortality (*lien-shih*)."

On the surface, this system of learning and thought underwent several stages of transformation. However, in essence, it can be traced to the same origin and there were not any really major alterations. It was actually only extended following the development of historical culture and the absorption of external methods of learning. The focus of the learning and thought of the Taoist School is founded on this system of cultivation methods, and because the Taoist religion followed in the footsteps of Taoist School, they also adopted this system of learning and thought as the fundamental basis.

Let us now present an overall introduction so that you can get a glimpse at exactly what those renowned mysterious and unpredictable Taoists were selling in their gourds.

Estimation of the Meaning of Human Life by the Taoist School and Taoist Religion

We are generally only aware of the Chinese culture as represented by the learning of Confucius and Mencius of the Confucian School who so strongly advocated the ideas of human ethics, and based on this humanism, advocated and formulated the system of humanistic philosophy and thought embodied in the *Five Classics* and six arts (rites, music, archery, driving a chariot, history, and mathematics). However, we have forgotten the historical and cultural traditions of high antiquity related to the scholastic system of the *Five Classics*, and the scattered

records of the philosophers and authors of the Chou dynasty which have been preserved. It is indeed regrettable that the learning and thought in the area of human sciences handed down to posterity by our ancestors has been so randomly discarded.

It is well known that both ancient and modern, as well as Chinese and foreign philosophy, engage in studying questions related to the universe and human life with a desire to find measures to have people realize permanent peace. Further, philosophical thought, just like religious belief, is always based on a pessimistic view of human life that is derived from the shortcomings of the world. Although philosophy and religion are also the same in that both address themselves to the problems of human life and the world, however, their final requirements and ultimate goals are for the most part the study of the problem of life and death.

This is especially the case in religious thought wherein most people generally give attention to the problem of death and scorn life, thus denying practical realities. Exactly as expected, they put forth great efforts in improving human life and beautifying reality, and yet their goal is still to take the achievements accomplished through hard work in real life as capital for their departed soul after death. In other words, both religion and philosophy for the most part stand shouting on the side of death and extinction calling for the sublimation of the soul.

It is only Chinese culture, which is based on the scholastic system and spirit of the *Book of Changes*, that greatly differs from this. Life and death, existence and extinction are considered as only two types of contrasting phenomena equivalent to two ends of a pole. Life and death are considered as night and day wherein if one stands on the side of the sun setting behind the mountains where the plants are fading at dusk, and sees a scene of "The white sun leans on the mountain, The Yellow River flows into the sea," everything is in the past, there is no future, and a melancholy feeling of endless misery pervades. However, if one stands on the east side in the early morning, on the side where "The buildings look out over the sun shining on the blue sea, The gates face the tides of Chekiang," and they view the source of life so that "No prairie fire can burn the grass utterly, The spring wind blows it back to life again," there is the feeling that there is always another tomorrow, an limitless future which offers one unparalleled vitality and eternal prospects. The thought of the scholastic system of the *Book of Changes* views human life and the myriad things in the world from the pole end attached to life, and as a result has established the concept of "The new superceding the old without end is called 'change.'"

The two major currents of culture in high antiquity—the Taoist and Confucian schools—start out from this philosophical basis of endless life. They

consider that the value of human life and the functions of human wisdom can make up for the physical shortcomings in Heaven and earth, as well as human life subject to sadness and suffering, birth and extinction. Consequently, they determined that the goals and value of human life function to “participate in the natural nourishing of Heaven and earth.” In other words, people as living organisms have unlimited potentiality, and if an individual is able tap it, they will then be able to supplement the shortcomings of Heaven and earth.

The learning and thought of the Taoist School proceeds from this conception. It considers that human life was originally capable of “cultivating a life which exists as long as Heaven and earth, and capable of attaining a longevity that compares with the sun and moon.” Moreover, the Taoist School feels that human beings are also able to control Heaven and earth, and manage the laws of nature. Why is it then that human beings are unable to develop this potentiality? Why are individuals unable to realize this?

There are two answers to these questions: (1) It is because people themselves are unable to recognize the source of life because they are blinded by external things, disturbed by the seven emotions (pleasure, anger, sorrow, joy, love, hate, desire) and the six sexual desires (arising from color, form, manner, voice, softness, and features). At all times and everywhere they create troubles themselves, and they reduce and destroy their own opportunities for longevity. (2) It is also because they do not know the principles of continuance and supplementation, and are only cognizant of reduction and consumption, but not of the wonderful use of increase.

Owing to the decay and chaos of the times, the prevalence of a free atmosphere of discourse, and the research, learning and thought among the people gradually being given serious attention by the upper levels of society during the Warring States Period, some of the “*fang-shih*” of the States of Yen and Ch’i—who had sincere faith in these ideological concepts—based their ideas on astronomical physics as well as geophysics. Considering that the pattern of human life was identical to the unending pattern of the movements of Heaven and earth, they established the principles and methods of the “cultivation of life (*yang-sheng*).” Given the general principles of these methods, some engaged in physical and physiological studies, some studied chemistry and medicines, some pursued physical and mental training, while still others carried out research on the thoughts and beliefs related to sacrifice, prayer, and purification.

There was a multitude of varieties of study, and each held on to their own theories. However, this is only limited to their views on the occult practices for the cultivation of human life. They began with these concepts of occult practices and applied the ideas of establishing oneself and managing to get along in the world to

one's relations with others and the handling of affairs. Each of these concepts possessed individual ideas and theories thus formulating different explanations of the philosophers and authors of the Chou dynasty.

We will not for the moment consider whether or not these absolute and esteemed practical ideals can be realized. At the very least, these concepts and theories which possess profound meaning related to the meaning of human life and physical life itself are actually unprecedented in the cultural and ideological history of the world, and it was only the Taoist School in China which first advocated these concepts.

The theoretical basis for Chinese medical studies of the past was totally derived from the learning and thought of the Taoist School. Consequently those doctors during and after the Wei (220-264 A.D.) and Chin (265-420 A.D.) dynasties, who were not thoroughly versed in the *Book of Changes*, *Yellow Emperor's Classic on Internal Medicine*, *Classic of Medical Problems*, and the learning of the Taoist School, were then greatly deficient in the principles of medical science.

The Influence of the Thoughts of the “Fang-shih”

During the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, this new and popular thought of the “fang-shih” was only known by those scholars who had studied the classics exhaustively. Aside from sitting about discussing the *tao* and discoursing on humanistic thought, there was a total lack of interest in science. These scholars even laughed at it as being something absurd and categorically rejected it. However, individuals of wide knowledge and sound scholarship—just like the ignorant masses—were more or less influenced by their views. Therefore, “cultivation of the spirit,” “ingestion of *ch'i*,” “taking of drugs,” “worship and prayer” and other practices gradually became widespread.

This is quite similar to our modern age of science wherein whether or not someone truly comprehends the principles, he still follow the trends of science with the fashions of atomic ice cream, atomic hair cuts and mindless modern type utterances. This is especially the case in the United States with their popular fantasy-like science fiction much like the *Canonization of the Gods*. Hence, we will now classify and explain the renowned theories related to the thought of the “fang-shih” in the Taoist School at that time.

(A) The theories and methods on the cultivation of the spirit were naturally first advocated by Lao Tzu

For example, the principles of the cultivation of the spirit spoken of by Lao Tzu is stated as follows:

The Spirit of the Valley does not die. It is called the Mysterious Female.
The doorway of the Mysterious Female is the root of Heaven and earth.
It is there within us all the while. Use it as you will but it is inexhaustible.

This “Spirit of the Valley (*ku-shen*)” was interpreted by later Taoist priests and “cultivators of immortality” as being related to medical science. They related it to the physiological functions of the human body, and considered that the “valley (*ku*)” mentioned by Lao Tzu actually was speaking of “grain (also pronounced *ku*),” that is the “Spirit of the Grain,” or the spirit of the stomach and spleen (Taoist priests refer to it as being a part of the Middle Palace).

Another interpretation took the “Spirit of the Valley” as the path of grain (the connecting place of the large intestines and kidneys), and thus some Taoists even controlled themselves when they felt the urge to pass wind. By holding the path of the grain tight, they felt that they were in accordance with Lao Tzu’s path of cultivation and thus cultivating the miraculous art of the “Spirit of the Valley.”

In actuality, the “Spirit of the Valley” referred to by Lao Tzu can be clearly understood by carefully reading the principle of “Attain the utmost emptiness, Guard carefully quietness” embraced in Chapter 16 of the *Lao Tzu*: “All things flourishing as they do, Each returns to its root. Returning to the root is called quietness, Quietness is called restoring life.” If one is able to calm the mind, make it empty like a valley, one can then understand the sphere of “Sound transmitted in a deserted valley, listening in an empty hall,” and “It is there within us all the time.”

During and after the Wei, Chin, Sui, and T’ang dynasties, the methods of “preserving the spirit and cultivating one’s nature” coordinated with the medical classic of the Taoist School, the *Yellow Emperor’s Classic of Internal Medicine* (*Nei Ching*) as well as the *Yellow Court Classic* (*Huang T’ing Ching*) of the Taoist religion. This gave rise to the theories of “internal visualization and introspection” and “long life through prolonged visualization.” Therefore, the methods of “internal visualization” and concentrating on the navel are practices developed by the later Taoist School, and are not terms which arose from the Ch’an (Zen) School of Buddhism. This should be clarified and given attention.

What is meant by “spirit” in the Taoist School? There are many different explanations in the philosophical writings of the Warring States Period. Let us present several examples. The “Commentaries” of the *Book of Changes* states: “The spirit does not dwell in any place, and the changes are without substance.” Later, in discussing the basic principles of the Six Schools, Ssu-ma T’an stated: “People are born of spirit, and what they depend on is form,” and “Spirit is the source of life, and form is the embodiment of life.” Ssu-ma Ch’ien developed this even further

when he stated: “The spirit moves the *ch’i*, and the *ch’i* follows into form,” and “Does not the sage avail of his intelligence? Who is it that can preserve the spirit of Heaven and earth and establish form!”

The question of spirit and form discussed by the father and son, Ssu-ma T’an and Ssu-ma Ch’ien, is similar in principle to the “Essay on the Original Spirit of T’ai Su” and the “Essay on Spirit and Form” related by Ch’i Po in the *Yellow Emperor’s Classic of Internal Medicine (Nei Ching)*. For example, “With form, if the eyes are obscured, we ask where the pain is and search within the meridians. The condition is not ascertained through pressing, and therefore it is called form.” Further, “As for spirits, they are not heard through the ears, seen through clear eyes, or comprehended through the mind, and they are prior to the will. They are realized through wisdom, and one cannot speak of or see them. If one travels in the dark, there will be singular light like the wind blowing clouds, and therefore they are called spirits.”

These spirits spoken of in the thought of the Taoist School are not spirits of a religious nature, but rather the theory of these spirits is scientific, and not pure philosophy. However, this is also not materialist ideology but rather something that integrates both spirit and function. It is a monistic ideology of mind and matter which touches upon the basis of life.

When we come to the *Yellow Court Classic* of the Taoist religion, this text clothed the spiritual theory of life contained in the primitive Taoist School with a Taoist robe, and painted on a mask of ghosts and spirits that occupied each acupoint in the five organs, the six viscera, and the limbs and skeleton of the human body. As a result, according to the concepts of the *Yellow Court Classic*, the human body is a mysterious world of spirits; if it is employed to explain Confucian thought, this is actually the best explanation for the theories of warning and fear contained in the *Great Learning* and *Doctrine of the Mean* for the promotion of cultivating wills bent on sincerity and respect. If we view this from the point of view the original pure scientific thought of the Taoist School, this type of learning, which ties together both physiological and religious characteristics, holds a unique and unmatched position in the history of religious thought in the world.

(B) The first theories of the cultivation of *ch’i* and the refinement of *ch’i*

The first theories of the cultivation of *ch’i* and the refinement of *ch’i* were the methods of practice adhered to by the *fang-shih* of the Taoist School beginning during the Eastern Chou dynasty after the reign of King Mu (1001-946 B.C.) up through the Spring and Autumn Period, and these focused on cultivation of the

spirit. By the Warring States Period, the cultivation methods of the Taoist School changed from emphasis on cultivation of the spirit to “practice of both form and spirit” owing to advancements in medical, pharmaceutical and alchemical techniques. Focus was placed on absorbing *ch’i* and refining *ch’i*. During this period, there was widespread discussion of the Chuang Tzu’s methods and theories on the “practice of both form and spirit.”

Although their learning and thought continued the line of the founders of the Taoist School, yet there were differences in their ideological directions and methods. The principle of cultivation of the spirit as espoused by Chuang Tzu mainly included “forgetting about material things and the human body, viewing birth and death as a unified whole, making all things equal, and dwelling in the formless.” In practice, there was special emphasis on the theories of “making the mind level” and “sitting in forgetfulness,” and cultivating the spirit and harmonizing with the Tao so as to be able to attain the realm of “purity in the abode of the void and only good fortune.” In this way, one could then “mount the truth of Heaven and Earth, ascend the principles of the six *ch’i*, and travel in the infinite.”

When compared with the theories of Lao Tzu, we can already see apparent evolution. However, aside from cultivation of the spirit, Chuang Tzu also proposed methods for cultivation of *ch’i*: “The true man breathes from his heels while the ordinary man breathes from his throat,” and “By following along the governor meridian one can protect the body, make it healthy, and live a long time.” This expounded the principle of the function of *ch’i* and its relationship to human life. The development of this learning and thought by Chuang Tzu was certainly influenced by the thought of the “*fang-shih*,” and not only Chuang Tzu but others, who followed, also considered that this was directly inherited from Confucius who advocated the practice of benevolence and righteousness.

Mencius was also obviously influenced by the thought of the “*fang-shih*” of the Taoist School in his theoretical writings on the cultivation of life, which reflected a major departure from the original simple and unadorned theories of Confucius. This was also greatly different from the “being careful of oneself when alone” and “sincerity” espoused by Tseng Tzu, as well as the methods of cultivating the spirit through “sincere openness” and “open sincerity” as discussed by Tzu Ssu.

Mencius very clearly brought forth his theory on the cultivation of *ch’i*: “The will is the commander of the *ch’i*.” He made special reference to the cultivation of *ch’i* at night until dawn, and then the vital spirit can be cultivated filling the space between Heaven and Earth. He explained in very concrete terms the process of cultivating *ch’i*:

One who commands our liking is called good, one whose goodness is part of himself is called sincere, one whose goodness has been filled up is called beautiful, one whose goodness is brightly displayed is called great, when this great person has a transforming influence he is called a sage, and when the sage cannot be known he is called a spirit.

In any case, these ideas are very difficult to find within the practices and theories passed down by Confucius, Tseng Tzu, and Tzu Ssu.

The alchemical theories of the Taoist School spanning over the last two thousand years have never gone beyond the realm of *ch'i*. What, after all, is this *ch'i* that was so frequently spoken of in the Taoist School and served as the basis for those who sought to cultivate the path of "immortality," engaged in deep breathing exercises, stretched like bears and cranes, and refined their *ch'i* through "spitting out the old and bringing in the new"?

People often ask me where the *ch'i* be taken into when ingested. Should it go to the lower *tan-t'ien* (below the navel)? Should it be guided to the *chung-kung* (in the stomach cavity)? Who would have known that this body was like a pouch of skin with the wind going in and out ... it is packed with many bones, internal organs, an entire nervous system, as well as blood and internal secretions such that when one hair is pulled the whole body moves, and the *ch'i* can go everywhere inside it unobstructed. For example, when a rubber ball is blown up with air, you would think that the air would concentrate in a certain fixed place within the ball. Is this actually possible? If it is not, then inhaling and exhaling performed during refinement of *ch'i* exercises is equivalent to the effects of the wind going in and out, and it is only a matter of movements which blow and clean. Where then is there any accumulation of *ch'i*, alchemical refinement, and the attainment of "immortality" in this?

The theories of some of the Indian yoga practices maintain that the air is filled with the energy of sunlight as well as many unknown physical nutritional components that can increase the longevity of humans. Who would have known that the *ch'i* in the blood possessed so many components nutritional to the human body. For example, if one inhales an excessive amount of oxygen, it will become harmful, and if too much sunlight energy is absorbed, this will also change the nature of the human body with very negative results.

To sum up, these theories are mere nonsense that seem correct, but are actually not. In reality, they are all deceptions carried out in the name of "text-based explanations" but with it one is unable to comprehend the true meaning of the

Taoist School. As a result, the later spiritual members of the Taoist School following the Wei and Chin dynasties feared that people would misunderstand the meaning of “*ch’i*,” and so created a Chinese character of their own composed from the image of “nothing” on top and the image for fire on the bottom. This explanation of the Taoist School was aimed at stressing the principle that *ch’i* is not air.

Another view held that “*ch’i*” had three levels of meaning and therefore utilized three different Chinese characters. The first one, which has a “rice” component within it, was equated with the air which we breathe. The Chinese character without the “rice” component added, related to the air in the atmosphere, and it was only the Chinese character composed from the two components “nothing” and “fire,” which was the “*ch’i*” spoken of by the Taoist School.

Which is the genuine meaning of the Chinese character for “*ch’i*” in the Taoist School? It specifically refers to a type of potential energy inherent to life, and it is not electricity or the functions of the atom. We take a modern view and avail ourselves of modern knowledge. We can only utilize the abstract term of “energy” as employed in physics to derive a provisional explanation. We can thus know that when we speak of the methods of refining *ch’i* such as “spitting out the old and taking in the new” etc., we are not saying that it is not beneficial to human health. We can only state that the breathing techniques of the Taoist School which “spit out the old and bring in the new” are like using a match to ignite the potential energy in one’s body.

In order to economize on time, we shall not address the detailed explanations of specialists but rather now continue to explain the ingestion and refining of *ch’i* with the “subtleness of both form and spirit” brought forth by the “*fang-shih*” during the Warring States Period. The ideas of the *fang-shih* were elevated to the realm of “spirits and immortals” and this was the epoch-making belief as reflected by Chuang Tzu.

Traditional beliefs held that those possessing high moral repute became True Gentlemen, great men, men of excellence and sages, and they imperceptibly transformed into the highest standards for human society. Chuang Tzu took this standard higher and established the new epithets of the “realized man, spiritual man, and true man.” He therefore stated: “The realized man is selfless, the spiritual man is without merit, and the sage is nameless.” The later Taoist School and Taoist religion employed the term “true man” to refer to spirits and immortals who had realized the Tao, and this practice was initiated by Chuang Tzu.

We must be aware of the fact that, within the entire system of Chuang Tzu’s

thought, if an individual was unable to attain this realm of the spiritual man, then he has not reached the pinnacle of human pursuit and thus cannot be called a realized man. Unable to reach the highest realm in conducting themselves, the multitudes of people are false, and therefore referred to as “walking corpses” in later Taoist thought.

Chuang Tzu’s standard for the value of human life and the raising of individual character were certainly too high. In terms of the common person, it can be said that it is merely something that can be hoped for but not acquired. As a result, everyone considered that the thought of Chuang Tzu along with that of the entire Taoist School was only a type of idealism. In reality, he placed the concept of human life along side the functions of the universe, and he was certainly correct when he stated that it was only necessary for mankind to have self-respect and a sense of importance. It is because people are insufficiently great that they are self-abased and thus do not dare to undertake such a path.

What then is the realm of the “true man” and “spiritual man” of which he spoke? He stated:

There dwells a spiritual man in the mountains at Miao Ku She. His flesh is like ice and snow, and he is meek and modest like a young woman. He does not eat the five grains, inhales the wind and drinks the dew, rides on the clouds and mounts the flying dragon. He travels beyond the four seas, and his spirit is concentrated so that his material things are unblemished and his harvests plentiful.

This type of description of the “spiritual man” is frequently seen in the *Chuang Tzu*. In some places, he goes even further when speaking of the “spiritual man” ascending to the sun and moon and riding the clouds. He raises the realm and value of humans; occupying an exalted position, he looks down from above and very naturally disdains the mundane world and considers it not even worth mentioning. Chuang Tzu therefore stated that we need only use the dregs and leftovers of such a spiritual man to make many sages. What should we then say about the other parts?

(C) The reasons for the taking of drugs

In the learning of the ancient Taoist School, the taking of drugs was the “alchemical practice” of the later Taoist Alchemical Sect which evolved from the “*fang-shih*” of the Taoist School wherein immortality was attained through the ingestion of alchemical drugs.

This was an orthodox school embodying the physical sciences and philosophy of the Taoist School. It also involved the application of the scientific knowledge of high antiquity in China and concepts of the physical world to the ideals of the biological life sciences. They attempted to utilize drugs to transform the character of both mind and body, extend a person's life span, and ascend to heaven and become an immortal. They were world pioneers in developing an era of chemistry, and they were the mainstream of early pharmaceutical research.

This sect of the Taoist School which focused on the ingestion of drugs was composed of honest "*fang-shih*" during the Warring States Period, and at the same time it also included individuals involved in medicine. Owing to the view propagated by the thought of the Confucian School, those who employed medicines and drugs to help society and save people were generally called "occultists," and they were always associated with the "*fang-shih*." They were never afforded any social status in Confucian circles, and they were actually not taken seriously. They were sometimes grouped together with the Buddhists and Taoists and despised as itinerant quacks.

As a result, during and after the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties, many scholars involved in the medical sciences specially boasted that they were affiliated with "Confucian medicine" so as gain status in the academic world. There are basically two theories related to the taking of drugs by the "*fang-shih*" sect which can be summarized within three categories and three sequences:

(D) The two theories related to the taking of alchemical drugs

In terms of taking alchemical drugs, the Taoists held two basic theories to justify this practice.

(1) They considered that the human body is a world of bacteria, and the four limbs, bones, five organs and six viscera are all filled with the life activities of bacteria. They employed primitive concepts to name the types of bacteria, and called them "worms."

The medical and pharmacological view passed down from ancient times in China has always divided the human body into three warmers (upper, middle and lower): basically, the upper warmer extends from the head to the chest area; the middle warmer is from the stomach to the diaphragm; and the lower warmer extends from the diaphragm and down including the kidney system, large and small intestines, urinary bladder, etc.

The parasites of the three warmers were called the “three corporeal worms.” There were also names given to the “races” of the “three corporeal worms:” P’eng Chu, P’eng Chih, and P’eng Chiao. Later Taoist religion was more courteous and called them the “three corporeal spirits.” It has also be said that: “The upper worm dwells in the brain, the middle worm dwells in the *ming-t’ang* (located between the eyes), and the lower worm dwells in the abdomen and stomach. The upper corporeal worm injures the eyes, the middle corporeal worm injures the five organs, and lower corporeal worm injures the stomach and abdomen.” They are generally called the “Three P’eng.”

The Taoists who subscribed to these views therefore refined mineral drugs such as mercury (cinnabar), arsenic, sulfur, and other toxic metals and congealed them into alchemical pills through chemical processes, and ingested them in the hope of becoming immortals. This also served to kill bacteria so as to exterminate the “Three P’eng.” We shall not discuss the accuracy of this theory for the moment. However, this medical theory did appear more than two thousand years ago in an age without the slightest influence of modern science. Can you say that it is entirely without scientific basis?

(2) Aside from the idea of taking of alchemical drugs to destroy the “three corporeal worms,” the second theory maintains that the five organs and six viscera within the system of blood, flesh and bones are very easily damaged by, and become diseased due to external influences such as cold, temperature, heat, moisture and the attack of contagious diseases.

If all of the physiological functions of the human body could be transformed into the nature to gold and silver, naturally one could then live a long time. Consequently, they researched the chemical properties of mineral drugs, and made copper and iron into gold (most of the so-called gold of the Ch’in and Han dynasties was copper ore and there was actually very little real gold. It was thus necessary to manufacture these materials chemically and as a result China’s alchemy witnessed the earliest inventions of smelting technology in the history of world science. Later this technology was transmitted to Europe by Arabs). They also utilized the components of certain natural plants to transform pure gold into liquid form, and then to gradually ingest it so that it could be slowly absorbed into the body. After a long period of time, this would change all of the physiological functions into the nature of gold, and then one could naturally become immortal.

Would you say that this type of idea is absurd? Is it really absurd though? Not exactly. Generally speaking, scientific inventions usually arise out of an imagination like that of a child playing. Prior to having any evidence, we can only

maintain an attitude of doubt, but you will certainly inquire: wouldn't one be poisoned if they ingested gold? The toxic component of gold is not very potent, and if the gold is not transformed into a liquid form, perforation of the intestines and stomach can occur at any time.

The "*fang-shih*" had researched several types of drugs to rescue one from gold poisoning quite early over two thousand years ago, and it is quite a shame that the transmission of some of them have already been lost. One such method involved eating the meat and eggs of the Francolin bird for gold poisoning, and Szechuan peppers for silver poisoning. The method for smelting iron into gold has also been transmitted down to later generations, and it is said that when people now try these methods the gold can surely be smelted. However, at present natural gold is quite common and the cost for smelting gold chemically is more expensive than natural gold, and therefore these techniques serve no purpose. This is found among the factual data of modern researchers who have studied reports of the Taoist school on cultivation and refining.

When we hear of the ideas encompassed in the learning of these "*fang-shih*" of the Taoist School, they seem quite ridiculous, and yet at the same time they are also very interesting. This naturally does not lead one to believe them, and yet modern man has conceived of using interfusions of blood serum and the ingestion of other drugs to attain long life. Is this not also worth doubting given that this has not been proven to date by formal tests? The spirit of the scientist is to seek theoretical proof from within one's imagination and ideas, and then to verify the theory through testing. We shall therefore for the moment regard this idea of the "*fang-shih*" of the Taoist School seeking "immortality" as a view of science fiction.

It is here applicable to explain a problem involving Chinese history. Several emperors and famous individuals of the Han, T'ang, Ming and Ch'ing dynasties who sincerely believed in the Taoist arts and the taking of alchemical drugs such as Han Yu (768-824 A.D.), Su Tung-p'o (1036-1101 A.D.), and Wang Yang-ming (1427-1528 A.D.) brought about their early deaths by ingesting the alchemical drugs of the "*fang-shih*" of the Taoist School. What was the reason for this? We wish to sincerely warn each of our friends here today who superstitiously believe in modern patent medicines, who take large amounts of tonics, and take special injections of restoratives that they should pay careful attention to this problem.

The "*fang-shih*" invented and refined mineral drugs made from metals and other substances. In terms of medical and pharmaceutical worth, they made doses for physically treating the human body, and only if suitable doses were applied, not only would it be correct but it would be extremely valuable. However, these types

of drugs refined from mineral substances were all irritating in nature, and moreover they acted to fiercely develop physiological functions much like modern vitamins.

The first important point in the methods of ingestion by the “*fang-shih*” orthodox Taoist School is the need to very thoroughly “purify the mind and restrict the passions” in terms of psychological behavior and one can absolutely not be covetous of sexual activities and the consumption of meat before beginning to take the drugs. Otherwise, one will have a very intense tonifying *yang* reaction as soon as the drug is consumed, which will necessarily promote sexual impulses. There is no doubt that this became an amulet for hastening on death by those emperors and famous nobles who spent their days dallying in wine, women and song. This is not at all surprising!

The second important point is that the alchemical drugs consumed by the Taoists required first practicing up to the level wherein the spirit was fixed and the *ch'i* accumulated, grains were avoided and one did not eat the food cooked in the world of men. Only then could one absorb and fuse the drugs, otherwise one could actually be poisoned by food or die from the ingestion of the drug. In sum, generally those who took alchemical drugs were unable to cut off the desire for “food and sex,” but rather, on the other hand, they came to rely upon the effects of the alchemical drugs to realize the pleasures of “food and sex.” Then “the taking of drugs to seek immortality contrarily became a misunderstanding of the use of these drugs.” This was a necessary outcome but this great mess need not be blamed on the “*fang-shih*.” Don’t you think so?

(E) The three types of alchemical drugs ingested

After the Warring States Period and all the way through the Ch’in, Han, Wei, Chin, Northern and Southern Dynasties, and the Sui and T’ang dynasties, three types of pills of immortality can be delineated from the alchemy sect. These refer to what the later Taoists called the “heavenly primal drug,” “earthly primal drug,” and “human primal drug:”

(1) There are two types of heavenly primal drug: one refers to the cinnabar pills made from natural minerals such as natural chemical drugs composed of the five metals and eight stones. The other does not require arduous refining by oneself but rather receiving it from one who has already refined the pill and realized the Tao.

(2) The earthly primal drug specifically refers to the use of botanical herbs to study the refining of alchemical drugs. From the time of the Ch’in and Han

dynasties and after, the development of Chinese pharmaceuticals was inseparably related to the study of refining earthly primal drugs by the Taoist School. For example, the stories of eating *polyporus lucidus* and *polygonum multiflorum* in order to become an immortal based on folk tradition all derive from the ideas of earthly primal drugs.

There is a special book which survives dedicated to research on *polyporus lucidus* (*ling-chih ts'ao*) and it includes the types of *ganodorma lucidum* (*ling-chih*) such as mineral fossils and animal fossils. Most of these have never really been seen, and the *ganodorma lucidum* commonly seen growing wild in Taiwan is not the alchemical drug for becoming an immortal but it is rather the bacterial type. Some are poisonous, and even one type that is not poisonous will still cause hallucinations at small dosages. Large dosages can cause schizophrenia or poisoning, and it cannot be taken superstitiously so that one regrettably passes away at an early date.

(3) There are two types of human primal drugs. The first refers to leaving the secular life, avoiding worldly affairs and becoming pure, cultivating the spirit and *ch'i*, eliminating desires and cutting off ties, and refining body and mind so as to attain a state of purity, quietude, non-action, and emptiness. Using the effects of the highest quietude, one only seeks accumulation and does not become involved any form of dissipation. He ignites the potential energy in his own body such as by opening the eight extra meridians including the conception and governing meridians, then realizes fixing the spirit and accumulating *ch'i*, develops the marvelous function in life, and creates a new life freely and independently. This is the Pure Cultivation Sect spoken of by the later Taoist School, and it is also called the Single Cultivation Sect.

The second type of human primal drug uses the theories of ancient sexual techniques as the basis for studying the functions of sexual psychology and sexual physiology. It considers that the internal secretions (hormones) of both sexes possesses life-prolonging effects, and when practiced within normal married life without confusion and dissipation, through sexual activities one can realize a sublime spirit and prolonged life. This is the so-called Sexual Cultivation Sect mentioned by the later Taoist School, and falls within the category of sexual practices such as "long life through prolonged insight" and "internal insight and refinement of seminal energy (*ching*)."

Their research on internal secretions should be considered to be the earliest in the medical history of the world. However, the abuses of this sect did great harm. For example, the frequently spoken of "gathering and supplementing technique" (gathering *yin* to supplement *yang*, and the gathering of *yang* to supplement *yin*) as

well as heterodox practices in the past—including “collecting human placentas” and the ingestion of cinnabar and lead (draining and ingesting the blood of young male and female children)—involved ruthless and barbaric acts. Not only were they immoral but they were also offensive, criminal and outrageous.

Many people in China’s folk society superstitiously believed in these heterodox practices and surreptitiously spread them around. Who would have known that this learning would be rearranged by modern medical science and bring forth many pharmaceutical medicines that we now use, such as hormones and vitamins. It has gone beyond this primitive and unrealistic ideal, and lost its superstitious character.

(F) The three methods for ingesting alchemical drugs.

The orthodox “*fang-shih*” of the Taoist School during the Warring States Period should be classified as consumers of alchemical drugs. They were inventors of chemical drugs who smelted the five metals and eight stones, sintered lead and refined mercury (chemically refined mercuric sulfide, mercuric oxide, etc.), and were the creative force for composing medical prescriptions. They based their work on the theories of physical science, and they made experimentally proven achievements.

The later Taoist School called cultivation of the seminal essence (*ching*), *ch’i* and spirit (*shen*) “body and mind alchemy.” This was a development of the internal cultivation method of using the human primal drug as well as a special achievement in the cultivation of life. We shall discuss this later. It is quite regrettable when one cultivates internal alchemy that focuses on *ching*, *ch’i* and *shen*, and discusses alchemy without understanding the principles of Taoist medical science or the knowledge related to Taoist pharmaceuticals.

From the standpoint of alchemy, there are three methods for ingesting alchemical drugs: the first method is the use of earth primal drugs wherein cultivation serves as preparatory work for the so-called strengthening of one’s sinews and bones, and perfecting of the body and mind. Even if one is a common person, he or she can eat in such a way so as to attain and maintain health. This later developed into the practice of the Chinese people to eat particular foods for curative effects. For example, there is the custom of eating special foods in the winter months to nourish the body. All of these customs originated from the idea of earth primal drugs.

The second method for ingesting alchemical drugs is the cultivation of

human primal drug to transform the nature of the *ch'i* and so attain the Taoist level of fixing the spirit and accumulating the *ch'i*. This is the realm which Chuang Tzu described as: "Having no fear when climbing high, not becoming wet upon entering water, and not being burned upon entering fire," and "He does not dream when asleep, does not worry when awake, does not take satisfaction in eating, and his breathing is deep." When one attains this level, one can refrain from grains and need not sleep. It is as Chuang Tzu said:

He knows nothing of taking joy in birth nor anything about despising death. He emerges without delight, and returns without a fuss. He comes briskly and he goes briskly, and nothing more. He does not forget where he began nor where he ends. He receives and takes pleasure in it. He forgets about it and hands it back again. This is called not using the mind to repel the Way, not using the mind to help Heaven.

Afterwards, a person can then take the Heavenly primal drug, which is the third type of ingestion. This is the method of cultivation upheld by the alchemical sect of the *fang-shih*. It is a regrettable that there have been those who did not understand the true meaning of the way of alchemy. Attempting to find "immortality," they actually rushed on early deaths. How can this be anything but a great mistake?

(G) The cultivation and practices of the sect of worship and prayer

We have already given a brief introduction to the learning and thought of the "*fang-shih*" and the cultivation of immortality. The techniques of cultivating immortality through the sect of worship and prayer has always been combined with the "*fang-shih*," but this is a great error. The learning and thought of the true "*fang-shih*" in their cultivation of immortality was based on scientific and philosophical theories; the learning and thought of the sect of worship and prayer was based on religious faith and belongs within the range of spiritualism and the study of the soul. It formed the central concept of the Taoist School after the Han dynasty.

When discussing the matter of worship and prayer, it is first necessary to go back and investigate the ideas related to worship and prayer embodied in the cultural tradition of the Three Dynasties and even further to the time of the Yellow Emperor wherein shamanistic prayers handed down from high antiquity were applied medically to treat "specialties of supplication." Based on the ideas of worship and rites from the cultural tradition of the *Classic of History* down to the *Book of Rites*, we can understand that the religious thought and feeling of our ancestors during and after the Three Dynasties was similar to the cultural origins of

various peoples throughout the world. They all arose from pantheism and fetishism, and then later gradually evolved to form the religious authority of monotheism.

Although our ancestors had similar origins with the various peoples throughout the world and began with the same type of religious faith, yet they never enjoined in monotheistic authority. Moreover, the most outstanding feature is that they had always placed Heaven, spirits and man on an equal footing from the moral point of view. Further, they employed the same rituals for the worship of the spirits of the ancestors, the spirits of Heaven and earth, and the spirits of the mountains and streams.

This was especially the case within Chou dynasty culture, which amalgamated the cream of Three Dynasties culture and thought and established models for major and minor forms of worship and sacrifice with a focus on ancestor worship. It is for this reason that the memorial tablets dedicated to one's ancestors and parents were called spirits tablets by later generations. The traditional cultural spirit of "employing the way of filial piety to govern the world" arose from this, and it is also a major distinction from the cultures and ancient religious thoughts of various peoples throughout the world. It is for this reason that the patterns of other cultures can in no way be blindly superimposed on Chinese culture and forcibly interpreted to be the same.

The ancient worship of the spirits of Heaven and earth, as well as that of mountains and streams evolved, and as a result, by the time of the Emperors Yao, Shun and Yu, the *feng-shan* rites for the worship of Heaven and earth had continued previous popular thought and become the major ceremony symbolizing national rule. However, you should not forget that the true spirit of the *feng-shan* rites was based on human culture. Why? Although the spirits of the mountains and streams were great and reverent, they were not the emperors of the human world who led people to revere and worship them. They were, after all, just mountains and streams, and "who knows where sages come from and from where spirits arise?"

I am sure that everyone is aware that the "*feng-shan*" rites refer to religious concepts and rites within ancient Chinese culture and thought, but everyone has forgotten its intrinsic spirit, which is to raise humanistic thought. During and after the T'ang and Sung dynasties, the sages and worthy people praised by the Confucian School, as well as the popular novel *Enfeoffment of the Spirits* written between the Yuan and Ming dynasties, all arose from this spirit.

There was a major transformation of the "spirit of the *feng-shan* rites" beginning with the manipulation of these ceremonies by Ch'in Shih Huang and Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty. Aside from expressing the smugness of imperial

power and being utilized as an excuse to tour the country and display imperial prestige, the transformation was actually a reflection of the psychological weakness of the Taoist priests (*tao-shih*) of the time who absurdly sought after “immortality” and to ascend to Heaven on a dragon as the Yellow Emperor had done according to the transmissions of the Taoist School. We therefore see the page in history regarding the dramatic “*feng-shan*” rites performed by Ch’in Shih Huang and Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty.

The practices of this sect of “Taoist priests” completely focused on the influences of spirits and the use of medicinal drugs along with incantations and amulets. They then availed to cultivate the unity of mind and will to trigger the functions of telepathy and perform magical arts, and they courted ambitious schemers. For example, the beliefs of Ch’in Shih Huang and Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty led them to seek after drugs which could bestow immortality, and to carry out the “*feng-shan*” rites so as to request the aid of spirits. As a result, the Taoist priests were then able to be frauds and line their own pockets. One example is the summoning of spirits and feigned magical arts displayed by Li Shao-weng (ca. 2nd c. B.C.), and this was not the only case. This led to great disaster, like the major case of casting spells which occurred in the Han court.

Later historians placed this group of “Taoist priests” and “magicians” together with the “*fang-shih*,” which was quite unfair to the real “*fang-shih*” who followed after the Ch’in and Han dynasties. We should add here that the embryonic form of spiritualism, study of the soul, and psychicism in Chinese cultural learning and thought were already quite prevalent prior to the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods. We need only read the Confucian *Analects* wherein Confucius said: “Will you say that Mt. T’ai is not so discerning as Lin Fang?” to know Confucius’ views on the “*feng-shan*” rites. Wang-sun Chia had asked: “What is the meaning of the saying ‘It is better to pay court to the furnace than to the southwest corner’? The Master said: ‘Not so. He who offends against Heaven has none to whom he can pray.’” We can know from this the long-standing custom of praying to the spirits of the household and furnace.

Ch’in Shih Huang placed great importance on the “*feng-shan*” rites. Aside from the “*feng-shan*” rites, Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty also liked to pray to the furnace spirit. At the same time, he also believed in the descending of spirits, which is what was passed down by latter generations to the present as the heterodox practices of the three different forms of summoning spirits and recording through a shaman (ex., *fu-chi*, *fu-luan*), and he believed in the tradition of the existence of the soul.

We often criticize others of being superstitious, but in reality, the truly most

superstitious people are actually not the foolish masses but rather the higher one's knowledge, the more superstitious they are. Moreover, those who criticize others for being superstitious are psychologically fixed within a set pattern of superstition.

This is a very interesting and profound psychological problem that we will address in the future. Nevertheless, why is it that everyone, reaching all the way up to the emperor and down to those of the lowest classes, was so willing to listen to a belief in superstitious myths? The reason for this is that human knowledge has never had any means of unlocking the mysteries of the universe and human existence, and as a result, the "Taoist priests" of the sect of prayer and worship were able to stir up trouble by various psychological means.

Let us now quote from Ssu-ma Ch'ien's writings in the "Feng-Shan Rites" concerning Emperor Wu's beliefs in superstitious myths, which is sufficient to clearly see the theatrics universal to both ancient and modern China and foreign nations: "The words of the spirits were written down and it was commanded that they be referred to as the written law. All knew that this was of no consequence, and only the emperor took delight in it." There was General Wu Li of the Immortals Sect who "prepared his baggage and entered the sea in the east to search for a teacher," and when Kung-sun Ch'ing reported to the emperor that the "spirits and immortals enjoyed dwelling in high pavilions," architectural projects were immediately started. There are even more of such stories concerning Ch'in Shih Huang.

Were not Ch'in Shih Huang and Emperor Wu of the highest intelligence? Were not these actions and ideas of the highest foolishness? We should rather say that it is only those of the most superior intelligence who can manage such foolishness, for those who are not foolish are not necessarily intelligent. This is another major philosophical issue that we shall not address here.

Then were the ideas of the Sect of Sacrifice and Worship a sect of lies? Not at all. Aside from the spirit of sacrifice and worship inherited from the Three Dynasties and earlier of high antiquity, the contents of the true Sect of Sacrifice and Worship can be traced to its origins of learning which possess great worth. It is well known that sacrifice and prayer permeated through all religious rites in ancient and modern times throughout the world. If we therefore wish to study the origins of the ancient culture and thought of all mankind, we cannot overlook the origins of the Sect of Sacrifice and Worship conducted by Taoist priests. At the same time, we cannot dismiss it as merely being the superstitions of primitive mankind. This is because sincere sacrifice and prayer is able to sometimes produce psychic responses and realize the effects of spiritual assistance in response to affairs.

Naturally what we mean here by “sometimes” refers to the absolute unity of spirit and will, and when one attains to devotional sincerity, the effects and achievements are the function of man to the spirit, the abstruseness of the psyche, and the mysteriousness of the soul. These three fundamental types of learning are mysteries that have never been revealed. The incantations of the shamans of high antiquity, as well as the “supplications” passed down from the time of the Yellow Emperor, were based on this profound learning, and although it later evolved into religious rites, yet the basis was still related to the function of the psyche of spiritual life and the soul.

If we peel off the outer layer of superstition and do not utilize it to deceive people, and employ a scientific spirit to study it, would you not say that it has made a great contribution to humanity? If we are truly able to study the functions and abstruseness of the spirit of invention and prove the existence of the soul, this would naturally result in the modern ideological tendency towards materialism to collapse of itself. Moreover, it would inevitably bring changes to the religious, philosophic, and scientific culture.

Secondly, the incantations uniformly employed by “Taoist priests” appear to be crude, unrefined and not worth reading, and yet they do give rise to a certain spirit. If we wish to study the dialects or colloquial expression of ancient times, attention must be focused on this area as it will provide ample materials.

Many sects arose following the Five Pecks of Rice Sect of Chang Tao-ling (34-156 A.D.) during the Eastern Han Dynasty, and the forms of amulets also varied. For example, after the Yuan and Ming dynasties, the amulets of the Ch'en Chou Sect truly seem to have had spirits who drew the Peach Wood Amulet thus giving one the feeling of children at play. Nevertheless, if one wishes to study the origins of different styles of ancient written language such as tadpole characters, the relationship between Indian Sanskrit and Chinese amulets, and the writing forms created by the Taoist religion after the T'ang and Sung dynasties, it is necessary to give serious attention to these amulets. In sum, the main spirit of the sacrificial and worship rites, amulets, and incantations of the “Taoist priests” of the Sect of Sacrifice and Worship must be linked with the cultivation of the spirit and *ch'i* practiced by the “*fang-shih*” before we can come to an accurate understanding of them.

In other words, if one is unable to attain the state of forgetting one's physical and mental self and concentrating the spirit, if one cannot practice until the spirit and *ch'i* are fixed and concentrated, or close off the *ch'i* and refine one's form, then it will be a case of what is popularly called: “Not being able to draw an amulet, one is

laughed at by the spirits." Therefore, Ko Hung (ca. 4th c. A.D.) who lived during the Chin dynasty spoke of the important points necessary for cultivation and the writing of amulets in his *Pao P'u Tzu*. He made special note of the refining of *ch'i*, and therefore the methods of the Sect of Sacrifice and Worship were still within the sphere of the learning of the "*fang-shih*."

Chapter 6

The Immortal Alchemical Sect During and After the Han and Wei Dynasties

The epithets for those of the Taoist School, *fang-shih*, and immortals, as well as the contents and origins of their learning and thought, were used interchangeably during the period from the Warring States Period down through the Ch'in and Han dynasties. Beginning in the Han and Wei dynasties and extending over one thousand years down to the present, there was no longer any mention of *fang-shih*, but rather only the Taoist School and immortals which also became inseparably meshed together.

In reality, the learning of the immortals of the Taoist School during and after the Han and Wei dynasties had long since lost the appearance that it had prior to the Ch'in and Han dynasties. The immortals of this Taoist School that had continued for more than one thousand years were actually part of the Alchemy Sect, the so-called "Way of Alchemy" which applied methods of internal alchemy focused on the refinement of *ching* (seminal essence), *ch'i*, and *shen* (spirit) to reach the highest goal of liberation and becoming an immortal.

During and after the Sung and Yuan dynasties, immortals were divided into five categories: (1) Ta Lo Heaven Golden Immortals, (2) Heavenly Immortals, (3) Earthly Immortals, (4) Human Immortals, and (5) Ghost Immortals. These stages were explained in the following way.

The lowest type of immortal was to have the spirit not be extinguished at death, and consisted of being able to exist with supernatural powers forever in the realm of ghosts. This is called the "achievement of the ghost immortal."

Cultivation which results in long life without sickness, calamity or hardship is called the "achievement of the immortal in the world of men," which is the stage of the human immortal.

The next higher step involves abstinence from grains, ingestion of *ch'i*, having swift movements, possessing a small amount of miraculous powers, and not being susceptible to various phenomena in the physical world such as not being affected

by cold and heat, and fearing neither water nor fire. This is termed the “achievement of the earthly immortal.”

The next level is related to the cultivation of flying through the air, being able to disappear, living forever, and possessing various types of supernatural powers. This is a level similar to the realm discussed allegorically by Chuang Tzu and Lieh Tzu called the “achievement of the heavenly immortal.”

The highest level is cultivation whereby both form and spirit become extraordinary, one is not limited to birth and death within the world, one is liberated and without bonds, can disperse and form into primordial *ch'i*, and can congeal and take on form to dwell at will in Heaven or among men. This is the golden immortal, and is called the “highest achievement of the spiritual immortal.”

Are these precise facts? Are they possible? We have no means to prove it now, and so let us not dwell on this. However, there is a small point that is worth taking special note.

In Chinese culture, the highest standard of the Confucian School regarding the cultivation of human ethics and education is to raise the character of a common person up to the level of a sage. On the other hand, there is also the learning of the Taoist School, which aims at raising the human level even higher through the study of cosmic physics, and bases its views on physical life functions. It maintains that a human being can rise up from being a common individual to being a superior man through cultivation and refinement, can increase the value of human life, surpass the ideals of the real world, perfect the functions of cosmic physics, and transcend the constraints of time and space. Moreover, earlier than 1000 B.C., the scientific ideas of more than sixteen or seventeen centuries were able to independently produce a set of scientific views, and regardless of whether they were illusory, factual, deceptions, or statements derived from the empirical, all are worthy of our attentions and require careful research.

The Originator of Alchemical Texts Wei Po-Yang

There is good documentation on those who originated the learning and thought of the cultivation of immortality through alchemical means during and after the Ch'in and Han dynasties. It is only natural that we begin with Wei Po-yang of the Eastern Han Dynasty, known as Immortal Wei or the Fire Dragon Immortal in the later Taoist School. The exact date of his birth is unclear, but he certainly lived during the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220 A.D.). It is reliable to say that he preceded Chang Tao-ling, the founder of the Sect of Prayer and Sacrifice as well as the Taoist

School of Amulets and Magic.

It is well known that the Eastern Han Dynasty was a period of decline for Confucian ideology, and all learning was in a state of decline. However, we must not forget that there were actually major achievements made in the scientific fields of theoretical physics and astronomy, and it was only those of later times, lacking scientific cultivation, who placed these among the useless texts concerned with the study of "divination by tortoise-shell and milfoil."

In reality, what actually was the study of divination by tortoise-shell and milfoil, and what did it embrace? I am afraid that, aside from those who merely imitate others so as to also criticize, most people have not made any effort to study this subject, but have criticized a very specialized field taking the view of an outsider. This is truly an injustice!

There were two epoch-making individuals in the history of the Taoist School and Taoist religion who lived at the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty. One was Wei Po-yang, and the other was Chang Tao-ling. Wei Po-yang represents the spirit of the recluse in ancient traditional culture, that is, the spirit immortal. Chang Tao-ling originated the tradition and lineage of Taoist magical arts during and after the Han Dynasty, and by the Sung and Yuan dynasties and afterwards, it continued to be the lineage of the Chang Heavenly Masters of the Cheng-i Sect who resided at Mt. Lung Hu in Kiangsi Province. This paralleled the hereditary house of Confucius in Ch'u Fu, Shantung Province.

There was only Confucius of the Confucian School and Heavenly Master Chang of the Taoist School, who were able, within the cultural history of China, to establish systems of learning and thought that continued for nearly two thousand years. Were these not miraculous events in the cultural history of the world? This also reveals the esteem held by the Chinese people for culture, learning and thought. The Chinese were able to freely bestow such beautiful titles on their sages, immortals, retired scholars, recluses, and hermits, and they have been offered such high respect both in ancient and modern times. However, Wei Po-yang was actually a "recluse," and as a result we can only guess about what had happened to him. The only gift which he left behind is the masterpiece of the *Ts'an T'ung Ch'i*.

This text, the *Ts'an T'ung Ch'i*, is certainly something with which one can rack their brains. Some people have exhausted themselves for a lifetime to investigate this work and still have not the faintest clue to its true meaning. The renowned Sung Dynasty Neo-Confucian, Chu Hsi, admitted that he had studied this book throughout his life and was not successful in comprehending it. However, owing to

his great love for this text, and in order to avoid the suspicions between the Confucian and Taoist schools, he changed his name to Taoist Priest Tsou Hsin and wrote an annotation for the *Ts'an T'ung Ch'i*.

Wei Po-yang's aim in writing this book was to explain the principles and methods of alchemy, and to prove that the laws and principles concerning man possess similar substance and functions as Heaven, earth and the universe, but have different laws and principles. In order to arrange the teachings transmitted from ancient times and to prove that human cultivation was capable of realizing the traditional learning regarding becoming an immortal, he integrated the principles, illustrations and numbers of the *Book of Changes*, as well as the five elements and Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches embodying the principles and laws of the astrophysics prevalent in the Chou, Ch'in, and Western and Eastern Han dynasties. Together with this he also integrated the traditional material and metaphysical abstruse principles of the Taoist School and Lao Tzu into a program of alchemical practices, and presented comprehensive explanations of the lot.

The *Ts'an T'ung Ch'i* therefore involves a thorough contemplation of the principles of alchemical practices, as well as the scientific and philosophical principles of the *Book of Changes* and Lao Tzu, and shows that they totally share the same function "like the matching of tallies." Wei Po-yang therefore amalgamated the principles of the *Book of Changes*, Huang-Lao, and alchemical school to compose the *Ts'an T'ung Ch'i*.

The style of writing which Wei Po-yang employed in this book is simple, unadorned and yet beautiful, and its phraseology is much like the *I Lin*, standing as a masterpiece throughout the ages. He summarized the principles guiding the practice of alchemy within three major categories: drugs, food and the management of government. Similar to the *Lao Tzu*, the matter of the original arrangement of the chapters of this book lead to the suspicions, conjectures, and investigations of later researchers, and it has remained indistinct. If we are going to compare the *Ts'an T'ung Ch'i* written by the originator of alchemical texts with the book composed by Lao Tzu, then another alchemical text, the *Wu Chen P'ien* written by Chang Tzu-yang of the Sung Dynasty, should be compared with the text written by Chuang Tzu.

The alchemical learning discussed in the *Ts'an T'ung Ch'i* focuses attention on the cultivation of mind and body, and the alchemical drug which he refers to using for "reversing old age and restoring youth," "attaining long life," and even attaining the highest enlightenment and rising to the status of an immortal, is nothing more than the *ching*, *shen* and *ch'i* which each person naturally possesses. This alchemical

drug can be availed of during the process of cultivation, or external alchemical drugs can be utilized to nourish and supplement minds and bodies in states of decline so as to restore the original life-giving capabilities of the *ching*, *shen* and *ch'i*. The *Ts'an T'ung Ch'i* is the founding treasure text of cultivation of cultivation of life studies in China, as well as the earliest text which studied the profound secrets of the life of the body and mind. It influenced the medical sciences and biophysics of the Han and Wei dynasties, as well as the Ch'an (Zen) School of Buddhism.

The later *Huang T'ing Ching* (Yellow Court Classic) of the Taoist religion, which proposes that "the highest medicine is the *shen*, *ch'i* and *ching*," and the *Fu Hu Ching* (Dragon and Tiger Classic), all evolved from the *Ts'an T'ung Ch'i* with the addition of the concepts of religious mysticism. Wei Po-yang considered that restoration of the original prenatal spirit would allow one to become master of his own life and obtain the function of transforming life and death, and by managing all by oneself, one could reap the same benefits of ingesting alchemical drugs.

The alchemical cultivation of the *ching*, *shen* and *ch'i* and the ingestion of alchemical drugs necessitates correct character cultivation and the possession of true wisdom. Therefore, the program of mastering alchemical cultivation and ingesting alchemical drugs requires thorough understanding of the management of government. Although he indicated that the main materials for the cultivation of the alchemical drug were *ching*, *shen* and *ch'i*, yet he differed from the later alchemists of the Sung and Yuan who incorporated the theories and methods of the Ch'an (Zen) School of Buddhism. Further, he was even less like the alchemists of the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties, such as Wu Ch'ung-hsu and Liu Hua-yang, who maintained that the sperm (*ching*) and ovum of the sexual endocrine system was the *ching* of the spiritual essence. At the same time, Wei Po-yang was very different from the alchemists of Ming and Ch'ing dynasties, who so frequently took the eight extra *ch'i* channels as the main subject of cultivation.

Wei Po-yang's original writings are very clear and concise, and it is only because the later Taoist priests of both the Taoist school and religion wrote explanations and annotations, reflecting many different views, that focus was placed on the single practice purity sect. The single practice purity sect emphasized cultivation of the nature and life as well as celibacy; stress was placed on the advantages of not stepping outside the home, and dual sexual practice; emphasis was placed on external alchemy methods such as the burning of lead and refining of mercury.

The accounts varied, but the *Ts'an T'ung Ch'i* was uniformly used as the basis of their principles. This resulted in the strained interpretations of heterodox and

absurd theories that emphasized sexual practices, including the gathering of vitality from a partner, and the quoting from the text of the *Ts'an T'ung Ch'i* as a justification. These interpretations sounded reasonable and many texts were composed along these lines. They maintained that the *ching* and *shen* are the external functions of the upper and lower souls (*hun* and *p'o*), and the *ch'i* is merely a chemical compound derived from the *ching* and *shen*. This is the same line of thought as is expressed in the "Commentaries" to the *Book of Changes*: "The *ching* and *ch'i* are material substances which wander aloft and transform."

The *Ts'an T'ung Ch'i* is actually not difficult to read, nor did the author make it mysterious and abstruse for the purpose of secret metaphysical transmissions. This text is merely influenced by its historical background and differs in literary style. Wei Po-yang was born during the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-221 A.D.) and this was a transitional period marked by a literary trend toward imitation of the old style. He was not like modern people who analyze matters point by point and categorize everything so distinctly. However, you need only grasp his main subject, which explains the principles and methods of alchemical cultivation, and after reading this book over and over you will naturally come to penetrate its meaning and find its systematic arrangement.

Wei Po-yang employs the theories of Lao Tzu so as to enlist the support of an ancient sage and verify that his own principles are not unfounded. He utilizes the principles of the illustrations and numerology of the *Book of Changes*, and expends great efforts to explain the universal laws behind the changes of Heaven and earth, the moon and sun, and the weather so as to verify that the principles of the movements of human life follow a common path with the changes of Heaven, earth and the universe. Wei Po-yang does not rigidly apply the laws of Heaven and earth and the sun and moon to the human condition. The Ch'ing Dynasty Taoist priest Chu Yun-yang considers that he employed the waxing and waning of the moon to compare with the declining and flourishing of the *ching* and *shen*, and the rising and setting of the sun were compared with the fullness and emptiness of the *ch'i* and blood; this is a very famous statement.

We shall now quote one or two sections related to the theories and methods of the cultivation of tranquillity to explain Lao Tzu's "Attain the highest emptiness and maintain tranquillity" and "All material things return to their roots. Returning to the root is called 'tranquillity,' and this is known as restoring life." At the same time, we can also see within them how merely one or two hundred years after Wei Po-yang, Buddhism and the Ch'an School employed the scientific views of Chinese culture to explain the human character. They were also the first to propose using "no thought" as an initial practice of the *Ts'an T'ung Ch'i*. Moreover, we can also see

from these quotes how the methods of cultivating “tranquillity” and “respect” of the Sung Neo-Confucians became interconnected with the schools of Buddhism and Taoism.

Examples:

1. “The five elements are compared and matched in a simple manner. Water flows over fire and extinguishes the light. The sun often eclipses the moon on the last and first days of the moon. When the water is flourishing the *k'an* diagram encroaches on the *yang* and when the fire declines the *li* diagram proceeds from day to night. The *yin* and *yang* drink and eat together, and when there is sympathy the path is naturally there. I dare not speak falsely in emulating the words of the ancients. The ancients recorded the appearances of dragons and tigers, the Yellow Emperor made beautiful the gold flower, Huai Nan refined the autumn stones, and Yu Yang added yellow sprouts. The worthy can maintain his practice, but the unworthy has no such ability. In ancient times and modern, the Tao arose from the One, converse schemes are disclosed. The scholar does his utmost to remain deep in contemplation, and the essentials are revealed, clear and not imposing.”

2. “The official name is employed to fasten the emotions, the courtesy name destines the nature and speech. The gold comes and returns to the beginning of the nature, this is what is called returning the alchemical drug.”

3. “The three treasures of the ears, eyes and mouth should be closed off and not opened. The True Man is the hidden deep source, wandering he maintains the center. Winding so as to see and hear, opening and closing are both in agreement. Pivotal to oneself, movement and stillness are inexhaustible. The *ch'i* of the *li* diagram enters the blood and vital essences, and with the *k'an* diagram there is no need to listen. With the *tui* diagram there is no speech, speak rarely and follow the vital principle. The three are pivotal, slow the body and dwell in the empty chamber. Submit the will and return to the void, take ‘no thoughts’ as the norm. Push on by verifying the difficult, the mind is focused with no wavering. In sleep embrace the spirit, enlightened preserve forgetfulness. Colors seep in and moisten, the bones and joints become firm and strong. Drive out all that is negative and heterodox, and then establish the True Yang. Practice with no respite, a multitude of *ch'i* acts in a cloud. Overflowing like a spring marsh, the waters seem to dissolve the ice. Flowing from

head to foot, it ultimately rises up again. Going back and forth the cavern is without limit, gushing within the valley. That which opposes is a verification of the Way, that which is weak is a handle of virtue. Weed and hoe out the old filth, be subtle and attain harmony. The murky is the path of the clear, after a long night comes the bright daylight.”

These quotes are naturally simple and unadorned, and the meanings and principles contained therein are too numerous, so we do not have the time to render detailed explanations. To summarize: the method and aim of the *Ts'an T'ung Ch'i* is the special refinement of the vitality and soul so as to reach the realm of the True Man where “the spirits of Heaven and Earth go back and forth.” This is the orthodox learning of immortals and alchemy in the Taoist School, and as a result Wei Po-yang severely rebuked the many heterodox sects that falsely claimed transmissions from former sages, gained fame through deception of the public, and mislead society. He stated:

The successive organ method is internal visualization (this refers to internal visualization of the five internal organs such as focusing one's thoughts on the umbilicus, the lower *tan-t'ien* and other heterodox practices). Perform the steps of the dipper and constellations, the six *chia* spirits, and the dawn of the next day (this refers to the heterodox practice of stepping in the form of the *kang* spirit, worshipping the dipper, and performing spirit possession writing). Practice the nine and the one in sexual encounters, turbid and chaotic play with the Primordial Fetus (this refers to the heterodox and superstitious sexual practice mentioned in the *Su Nu Ching* of the nine deep and one shallow, as well as the method of absorbing the *yin* of a female sexual partner to strengthen a man's *yang* energy). Ingest *ch'i* to stimulate the intestines and stomach, spit out the bad and inhale the good (this refers to the heterodox practice of exhaling the old and bringing in the new, specially refining one's respiration and ingestion of *ch'i*).

Do not lie in a bed day or night, do not rest on the first and last day of the month (this refers to the heterodox practices of moving the *ching* and *ch'i* as well as sitting for long periods of time without lying down). The body is daily exhausted, one is confused and appears as if an idiot, the hundred blood vessels are gushing swiftly, one must not prove their pure dwelling (this refers to employing the five above mentioned heterodox methods to move the *ching* and *ch'i* within the body). Pile earth to erect an altar, morning and night worship and sacrifice, images of ghosts are seen, and one laments them in visions (this refers to the heterodox practice of using sacrifice and prayer to drive

away spirits and ghosts).

One is joyous in both heart and mind and feels that it is necessary to delay, unexpectedly death comes early, and rotten it exposes its objective existence (this serves as a conclusion to the heterodox methods of spiritual cultivation mentioned above). Put it in operation there is suddenly opposition, being contrary the opportunity is lost. There are many techniques indeed, and in the past they were contrary to the ideas of the Yellow Emperor and Lao Tzu. Complicated they offend the entire land. Those who are clear examine the goals, profoundly they know the causes.

Wei Po-yang integrated these heterodox practices in the *Ts'an T'ung Ch'i*, and if we study his work together with the *Pao P'u Tzu* composed by the alchemist Ko Hung of the Chin Dynasty, we then come to know that these individuals involved with superstition and magical arts frequently employed magical spells to delude the public, and that these frequent deceptions have been the same both in ancient and modern times.

Is this not amusing? It is also quite regrettable! What can be done to awaken the foolish and obstinate? He therefore also stated that the magical arts passed down from high antiquity were originally the true learning of "internally a sage and externally a king," but that it was only because those of later generations lacked wisdom that it was made irrelevant and corrupted. The false was employed to confuse the truth, and this influenced society and created a depraved atmosphere. He stated:

Uphold the sages and worthies of old, embrace the mystery and the truth. Smelt the nine tripods dwelling in seclusion. Retain the *ching* and nourish the spirit, penetrate the virtues of the three lights. When the *ching* overflows to the connecting tissues, the sinews and joints are made strong. All noxious influences are eliminated, and the vital *ch'i* is constantly preserved. After long accumulations one transforms into an immortal. However, I am gravely concerned over the correct path and handling of human relations by later generations.

Heterodox methods have been randomly employed with illustrations derived from the ancient texts. They compose seals and books to be passed on to posterity. They divulge the external branches but hide the inner roots. They write texts using the names of others and falsify texts. When scholars get hold of them, they keep them secreted throughout their lives.

This has been continued in each era, and these delusions have

been passed on from generation to generation so that there is no knowledge of the truth. This has resulted in officials not serving, farmers not hoeing, merchants discarding their goods, and the families of ambitious men becoming impoverished. I am deeply troubled about this, and so have composed this essay.

However, Wei Po-yang also stated in his writings that he would not sequentially explain this matter, but rather readers must rely on their own clear determinations to be able to realize the true nature of this. He wrote:

When the words are sparse they are easy to contemplate and not troublesome, and when ordered well the truth can be examined and observed. When they are measured and follow with each other, order is realized and the meaning can be reached. Those who are wise examine and contemplate.

He also indicated the fundamental method of cultivation:

Cultivate oneself internally, being quiet and empty. The original nature is hidden, reflect within and form a body. Close off the permeation and solidify the spiritual stem. The three lights engulf, warmly nourishing the young pearl. Look at it but it cannot be seen, approach and it is easy to find. There is gradual penetration into the tissues and moistening of the muscles and flesh. Correct at first then final cultivation, the essentials cannot yet be sustained. Primary is remaining secluded, a point which common people do not understand.

He also stated:

Practice with care, resting neither day or night. Practice for three years, become an immortal and wander to distant places. Go through fire and one is not burned, enter water and one does not drown. Being able to maintain this and accomplish forgetfulness, there will be eternal joy and no vexations. Having accomplished the Tao and its virtues, one remains hidden. The *T'ai I* spirits are summoned, and one moves to dwell in the Central Continent. With great merit one ascends upwards and receives the auspicious amulet.

To sum up, the *Ts'an T'ung Ch'i* written by Wei Po-yang discusses problems related to the metaphysical path of the nature of mind, as well as the vitality and soul of qualitative changes of material through the experimental scientific ideas

related to the cultivation of body and mind. Wei Po-yang combined the learning of the Taoist sciences and the ideas of Confucian philosophy, fused them within an alchemical tripod, and became renowned as the originator of ancient alchemical texts.

This is truly no exaggeration. Chu Yun-yang stated that he used "Heaven and earth as an alchemical tripod, and the body and mind as the alchemical drug." This is quite the case. Wei Po-yang's focus on the cultivation of the primordial alchemical drug in humans is the highest principle for developing the functions of human nature and life.

The Alchemical Method of Refining *Ch'i* and Nourishing Life Through the Combination of the Medical Sciences of the *Fang-shih* and the Representations and Numerology of the *Book of Changes*

Aside from the commentaries and annotations by famous classical text scholars of the Confucian School, the greatest achievements in science during the two Han dynasties were those made in the development of astronomy and calendar calculations. For example, the very brilliant and talented Ssu-ma Ch'ien also participated in the modification of the calendar, and he took great pride in completing the work bequeathed by his predecessors.

Later, Yang Hsiung (53 B.C.-18 A.D.) conceived of using the theories of the illustrations and numerology of the *Book of Changes* and the laws of astronomy and calendar calculations to create his own new explanation. As a result, he wrote the *T'ai Hsuan Ching*, which contains very abstract astronomical theories aimed at generally addressing certain metaphysical and material questions. Regardless of whether or not his learning was well founded or possessed the value of scientific discovery, if such a renowned and literary Confucian scholar possessing interest in scientific and philosophical theories were living in the present, which gives so much serious attention to science and philosophy, he would be given an award.

Owing to the evolution of the theoretical science of the *Book of Changes* illustration and numerology sects of the two Han dynasties, by the Eastern Han Dynasty, the theories on the illustrations and numerology of the *Book of Changes* became more abstract. For example, there were the diagram features of Meng Hsi, the accommodations of Ching Fang, the ascending and descending of Hsun Shuai, the combination of the lines of the diagrams and the times of day proposed by Cheng Hsuan, the relating of the diagrams with the Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches by Yu Fan, and the use of illustrations and commentaries to explain the

first and second parts by Fei Chih. This influenced and gave rise to the Hsun School of studying the *Book of Changes*.

The origin of the *ch'ien* and *k'un* diagrams can be traced back to the Chou Dynasty cultural traditions of King Wen and the Duke of Chou, the "Yueh Ling" chapter of the *Book of Rites* was used for the verification of materials, and then Cheng Hsuan employed the Taoist interpretation of the "Yueh Ling" chapter to supplement its contents, and formed the major system of Eastern Han learning and thought on the illustrations and numerology of the *Book of Changes*. This in turn influenced the rise of the study of illustrations and other types of divination. However, there was another ideological reason for the flourishing of the study of divination that need not be discussed in this section.

We shall now briefly explain the contents of the theories of the *Book of Changes* illustrations and numerology during the two Han dynasties, which was actually aimed at explaining the theory of the fluctuations of the *ch'ien* and *k'un* diagrams, the theory of diagram features and their ascending and descending, the theory of combining the lines of the diagrams with the times of day, and the principle of relating the diagrams with the Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches of the alchemy sect of Taoism. The contents involving how this influenced the theories of *ch'i* channels in the medical sciences after the Eastern Han Dynasty, and the cultivation techniques of ingesting *ch'i* and refining *ching* of the hygienists, are too numerous and vast. Thus we have no way of enumerating them individually here. We are limited in space and thus will only introduce certain related alchemical breathing techniques and the principles of several theories so that you may have a general idea.

The specialists in the illustrations and numerology of the *Book of Changes*, who received the traditional ideas from among the learning of ancient Chinese astronomy, considered that the movements of Heaven, earth, the universe, the sun and moon, as well as the relationship between Heaven, earth, the sun and the moon, and the myriad things on the earth and mankind are actually merely a major life activity. Moreover, they constitute a common practice that can be followed.

This is especially true as regards using the waxing and waning of the moon, as well as the physical and meteorological changes of the earth, to serve as standards for the major *ch'i* mechanism of life in Heaven and earth so as to establish its basic theoretical explanation: Heaven, earth and the universe are the sources of the major life of the myriad things, the sun, moon and earth are minor lives split off from the major life, and people and the myriad things are then nothing more than very minor lives split off from Heaven and earth.

However, whether major or minor life, their ultimate source is of the same substance, and the laws of life activities also follow the same pattern. Therefore, the original motivating force of major and minor lives is always the function of the transformations of the *ch'i* mechanism. However, although this formless *ch'i* cannot be seen or touched, it is an indication that can be known from the principle of the movement of Heaven, earth, the sun and the moon, and within the continuation of human life. Moreover, its principles can be found; they used the geophysical features of meteorology and the regular pattern of one year being divided into four seasons, twelve months and 360 days coordinating with one year (365.25) of the movement of the sun, and the waxing and waning of the moon as the standard.

It was considered that the movements of Heaven, earth, the sun and the moon, as well as geological, physical and human life activities, are all governed by a common original force and law. This original force is called *ch'i* (this *ch'i* cannot of course be taken as the common air in the atmosphere). As a result, a theory was established which holds that the moon originally did not have any light of its own, but rather it emitted light owing to the *ch'i* mechanism of the sun. Therefore, the sympathy of the *yin* and *yang ch'i* mechanism occurs in one month, and given its position in time and space, the moon experiences waxing and waning including the phenomena of darkness, fullness and waning.

Thus, the standardization of matching transformations to the earth's meteorological characteristics, physical nature and human affairs formed from the calculation of the sympathy of the *yin* and *yang ch'i* outside of the laws of astronomy, make up the theory of the combination of the Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches. Five days make up one period, three periods make up one *ch'i*, six periods make up one segment, and therefore the twelve months of one year are divided into twenty-four solar periods.

If we further employ a method of induction, the functions of these *ch'i* mechanism periods are governed within twelve months and form the phenomena of the twelve diagrams of dispersal and addition. There is therefore the layered induction of the ten Heavenly Stems, twelve Earthly Branches, twenty-eight constellations, twelve semitones, five elements, and eight trigrams which form the illustrations and numerology of the study of the *Book of Changes* within the Taoist School.

This is learning that is related to astronomy, geology, physics and human affairs. It later developed into the eighty-one questions brought forth in theoretical medicine, the theories of the *Classic of Medical Problems* (*Nan Ching*) related to the *ch'i* channels of the human body, and the theories on the blood and *ch'i* in the Yellow

Emperor's *Classic on Internal Medicine (Nei Ching)* which maintain that the flow of *ch'i* and blood in the twelve meridians, fifteen collaterals, triple warmer, and eight channels, as well as the movements of the *ch'i* mechanism of Heaven, earth, the sun and the moon, are all subjected to the same laws and principles.

As time went by, based on the above mentioned theories as well as the theories on the rise and fall of *ch'i* in the *ch'ien* and *k'un* diagrams, those who practiced the path of alchemy and immortality maintained that the *ch'i* mechanism of human life should be calculated from the time one is conceived; males take an eight-digit number as the standard life cycle, and females take a seven-digit number as the standard of their natural endowment which is within the sphere represented by the *ch'ien* diagram.

It is quite clear that the lives of females before the occurrence of their menstrual periods are associated with the *ch'ien* diagram made up of six solid lines, and they are considered to be perfectly unblemished maidens at this time. With the oncoming of the menstrual period at around the age of fourteen, females are then represented by the *t'ien feng hou* diagram made up of five solid lines and one broken line on the bottom. By the age of twenty-one, the first line of the diagram is already broken. At the age of forty-nine, a woman then goes through menopause and the *ch'i* of the *kua* of prenatal life is then completed. This is equivalent to saying the life energy endowed at birth will soon be exhausted, and thus the remaining years beginning from the age of fifty-six are merely the remaining *ch'i* of postnatal life. Later on, the *ch'ien* diagram dominated by *yang* transforms into the *k'un* diagram of pure *yin* and enters into the *yin* sphere of another life.

Males are calculated using an eight-digit number so that at the age of sixteen a male is considered to be a child, and maintains the original prenatal *ch'i* of the *ch'ien* diagram. By the age of about fifty-six (called the change of life for males), the *ch'i* of prenatal life gradually becomes exhausted, and at sixty-four years and after, the remaining life is the function of postnatal *ch'i*. This is to say that the *ch'ien* diagram of pure *yang* transforms into the *k'un* diagram of pure *yin* and enters into the *yin* sphere of another life.

This gave rise to the theory of the alchemical cultivation of "immortality" and refinement of life which held that the basis of the first step, whether male or female, is having the youthful body enter the Tao, and that this was the highest level. Secondly, one should cultivate the Tao and retain hope during the phase when the *ch'i* of the *kua* has not yet been exhausted. If one waits until this *ch'i* has already been depleted to begin cultivation, it is not that there is absolutely no hope, but there will be twice the work with half the results.

We will not for the moment evaluate whether or not this theory is totally reliable, but rather extend and compare it with the theories and practices of modern medicine. Aside from inadequately detailed and new evidence, we cannot find any faults with this theory. However, everyone must understand that this is a theory that was proposed within the culture of China over two thousand years ago by the Taoist School in connection with physiological medicine. Seeing that we have now gone beyond their views and evidence, still it is a creation of over two thousand years ago that was realized within the history of science and medicine.

It was generally the case that when those in later generations who cultivated the Tao grew to advanced ages and became disheartened, they would then consider pursuing techniques for realizing long life and immortality. If one could truly become an immortal in this way, the least expensive thing in the world had been seized by intelligent individuals, but I am afraid this is not possible.

The scope of this theory regarding the relationship between the *ch'i* mechanism of Heaven and earth and the *ch'i* channels of the human body was made smaller so as to explain its laws. They considered that during one exhalation and one inhalation, the channel movement is six inches (with one exhalation, the channel movement is three inches; with one inhalation, the channel movement is three inches). A person inhales and exhales a total of 13,500 times in one day. The movement of the *ch'i* channels penetrates throughout the body passing fifty degrees [out of a 360 degree circuit].

If we utilize the Han Dynasty computation standard, which is a clepsydra, it passes through one hundred fifteen-minute periods. However, the so-called channels include both the *ch'i* and blood wherein "the *ch'i* and blood move the *yang* twenty-five degrees, and move the *yin* twenty-five degrees." If we apply modern medical concepts, it can be said that this *ch'i* mechanism of life is the flow of *yang* for twenty-five degrees in the central nervous system, and the flow of *yin* in the autonomic nervous system (we are of course not medical specialists and are only using these terms for purposes of explanation, and thus these should by no means be taken as standards).

Through further detailed analysis, the twelve channels of the heart, liver, lungs, spleen, stomach, kidneys, gallbladder, large intestines, small intestines, bladder, triple warmer and urethra are coordinated with the number of respirations following the *ch'i* mechanism, and explanations of each category are given. Afterwards, the twelve Earthly Branches and twenty-four solar periods are added so that this theory which encompasses health cultivation, medicinal drugs and physiology enters into a spiritual and mysterious sphere as well as symbols for

inducing the memory.

To sum up, during the period from the Eastern Han to the T'ang and Sung dynasties, aside from the methods for the cultivation of mind and nature brought forth by Wei Po-yang of the orthodox alchemical sect, the most prevalent and influential theory and method was that of intaking *ch'i*, which became the main current of alchemical practices. The origin of the theories of this type of experimental sect should be traced back to the theories of Chuang Tzu: "One finger within Heaven and earth, and one horse among the myriad things," "Like a wild horse and flying dust, blown about by the breathe of the myriad things," "The True Man breathes with his heels, the common man breathes through his throat."

By the Sung and Yuan dynasties, the internal alchemical methods of practice had absorbed the principle of illuminating the mind to observe the nature of the Ch'an School, and at the same time there was also mutual influence with the Tantric methods transmitted from north and south India. This produced two very important methodological and theoretical factors: (1) It stressed the dual cultivation of both nature and life as the ultimate principle of the alchemical path and the final goal of attaining immortality. (2) There was special emphasis given to the three steps of "transforming *ching* into *ch'i*, *ch'i* into spirit (*shen*), and returning the spirit (*shen*) to the void" which was the unsurpassed method of alchemical practice.

As a result, in terms of theory, this principle was followed in all of the alchemical texts composed during and after the Sung and Yuan dynasties. Whether they be the orthodox thought of the Taoist School or heterodox practices, they plagiarized from the *Ts'an T'ung Ch'i* or *Wu Chen P'ien*, rendered forced interpretations of these texts, and utilized them as a basis for verification. Therefore, the views during the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties on alchemy reflected: "Cultivation of life [physical alchemy] without the cultivation of essential nature is the first error of practice. If one only cultivates essential nature and does not practice [physical transformative] alchemy, then it will be difficult for the spirit to realize sagehood even in ten thousand kalpas."

Moreover, what is most incredible is that the tradition of the alchemical school has always honored the Immortal Lu Ch'un-yang who lived at the end of the T'ang Dynasty as its founder. This is very much like the vast majority of the thought and learning of the Buddhist School after the T'ang Dynasty, which fell within the sphere of the Ch'an (Zen) School. This was a marvelous achievement of the cultural development of the T'ang Dynasty.

Although the school of alchemy was divided into four sects (the Southern

Sect emphasized the dual cultivation of *yin* and *yang*; the Northern Sect emphasized single cultivation of purity and quietude; the Western Sect emphasized single cultivation; and the Eastern Sect emphasized dual cultivation) during the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties, yet its main principle did not depart from the theoretical basis of the dual cultivation of nature and life. It sometimes also borrowed from the Neo-Confucianism of the Sung Dynasty or the ideas contained in the *Great Learning* (*Ta Hsueh*) and the *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Chung Yung*). It focused on the theories of "reaching the limit of the nature of man and that of material things," and "investigating thoroughly principles and nature so as to realize life," as well as discussions regarding the transformation of nature and emotions, the dragon and tiger, and lead and mercury in alchemy.

To sum up, the learning and thought of alchemy evolved from the cultivation of the spirit in Chou and Ch'in dynasties, to the refinement of *ch'i* in the Han and Wei dynasties, and then to the cultivation of *ching* in the Sung and Yuan dynasties and after. This witnessed a great change in focus from the original unadorned Taoist arts. Although they revered the Yellow Emperor and Lao Tzu, yet they were poles apart from Lao Tzu's principles of the cultivation of purity and emptiness to say nothing of the later alchemists who employed heterodox methods.

These heterodox methods included the sexual technique of taking the vitality of a partner to supplement oneself and other grotesque practices which they considered to be of the highest attainment, self-styled secret transmissions of the orthodox school of alchemy; or they spoke of the succession of masters and disciples, and those who have already lived for several hundred years and were able to realize the wonderful techniques for "eliminating sickness and becoming immortals." We need only read the absurd discussions of the mystics of the Wei and Chin dynasties enumerated in the *Pao P'u Tzu* and then wish to break out into laughter. We can also then know that it is identical to the crazy ranting that has pervaded throughout the ages.

The alchemical methods practiced during the Ming and Ch'ing Dynasty were very different from the orthodox alchemical methods cultivated during the Han, T'ang, Sung and Yuan dynasties, and the path of cultivation became increasingly narrow. The alchemy generally spoken of primarily refers to the Wu-Liu Sect of alchemy: the *Verification of the Golden Immortals* (*Chin Hsien Cheng Lun*) written by Wu Ch'ung-hsu and the *Classic of a Life of Wisdom* (*Hui Ming Ching*) integrate the theories and ideas of the Confucian, Buddhist and Taoist schools and make every effort to prove that their alchemical methods were the direct transmissions of the orthodox teachings of the Taoist School. However, they made erroneous interpretations of Buddhist doctrines and concocted passages that they attributed to

the Buddha. This made people step back at the very sight of it, for it was actually quite ridiculous and foolish.

This sect of alchemy solely focused on the “transformation of *ching* into *ch’i*” as the basis for preliminary practice. They gave special attention to the functions of sexual physiology and behavior. In terms of practice, they considered that the impulses of the male and female sexual reproductive mechanisms should not contain any elements of sexual desire before the alchemical drug could be generated at noon and midnight. This pertains to the initial stage of cultivation, and there are also the use of the spirit of the eyes to reflect light internally, regulate the breath, tighten up the perineum (*hui-yin*), guide the *yang* essence along the governor channel (central nervous system) and return it to the Niheng Palace in the Upper *Tan-T’ien* (in the brain).

The function of “returning the *ching* to supplement the brain to attain immortality” is derived from this, a small amount of prenatal *ch’i* at the initial cultivation of the alchemical drug. After it reaches the Upper *Tan-T’ien*, it transforms into spiritual liquid within the *Hua Ch’ih* (internal secretions of the mouth and lymph gland), follows along the throat, and then descends to the Lower *Tan T’ien* (below the navel). This is called opening the conception channel.

The circulation through the governor and conception channels forces coordination with the theory of the Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches in the illustrations and numerology of the *Book of Changes*. This is known as making one microcosmic orbit (also called turning the water wheel). Later, all those who explained how to turn from the microcosmic orbit to the macrocosmic orbit and coordinate the green dragon, white tiger, lead, mercury, *yin*, *yang*, etc., the most mysterious of the mysterious, the most spiritual of the spiritual, and who aspired to be immortals without exception, brought forth an unsurpassed alchemical method that they diligently cultivated. In the end they verified cultivation by means of reversal (the male sexual organ was contracted, and the breasts of females were restored to being like those of a young girl). A further step was attaining the ability to transform *ch’i* into spirit (*shen*), sending the *yang* spirit out, and having the spirit wander outside the body. This was the achievement of the golden immortal.

There were many methods that had very great influence. Generally speaking, the views and terminology of opening the governor and conception channels and “being possessed” that were held by the renowned martial artists of the Southern School (internal) and Northern School (external), practitioners of *ch’i-kung*, those who focused on quiet sitting and nourishing health, and the individuals described in martial arts novels, were all derived from the theories, terms and methods of this

sect of alchemy.

Putting aside for the moment the question of whether or not the theory and method of “transforming *ching* into *ch’i*” in this alchemical sect are orthodox, there are two advantages of applying it: (1) It can resolve the worrisome problem involving sexual psychology for those of any religion or sect who practice celibacy. At the same time it is also very helpful for those who truly want to maintain prohibition against obscenity, and is helpful against the wild pursuit of temptations of the flesh so prevalent during the last years of the 20th century. It is also helpful for those who seek psychological and physical health. (2) These teachings also strongly advocated the accumulation of merits as the basis for cultivating the path of immortality. If one only possesses a method but does not accumulate great merit through the performance of good deeds, he or she will have no hope at all of attaining the fruits of immortality. This is of significance to social and religious education, and it is an adage recognized for its truth and worth.

To sum up: aside from the two above mentioned advantages, we consider that it is an excellent means of practice for the cultivation of health. However, as noted above, one must pay attention to the fact that if this method is used for cultivation, it is also necessary to deeply comprehend the Taoist theories regarding medicine and physiology, otherwise, the corrupt practices associated with it can be quite frightening.

On the negative side, there are four disadvantages in using this method:

(1) Owing to the fact that not only do those studying cultivation not understand Taoist medicine and physiology or the true principles related to *ching*, *ch’i* and *shen*, but they also do not comprehend the scientific laws related to the twelve regular *ch’i* channels and the eight extra channels (*jen* (conception), *tu* (governor), *ch’ung* (thrust), *tai* (belt), *yin-ch’iao*, *yang-ch’iao*, *yin-wei*, and *yang-wei* channels). Even more important is that if one does not understand the theories of the Taoist and Buddhist schools related to the nature of the mind and the true principles of nature and life, and only seeks to eliminate sickness and extend one’s years of life, they will then put all of their energies towards doing inhaling exercises to lift the spirits and contract the perineum to cultivate the *ching*.

On the surface, practice of this method can strengthen the tendons and bones, make one healthy in old age, and give one a feeling of glowing with rosy and healthy cheeks. As a result, one is seen by others and has the self-confidence of being at least “half an immortal.” In reality, eighty or ninety percent of the time all will be forgotten to encephalemia or paralysis over half of the body, what is

commonly referred to as being “possessed by the Devil.” How pitiful to have sought glory and ended up in disgrace, to have sought long life and never even enjoyed one’s days in peace!

(2) Regardless of whether one wishes to study the path of immortality or Buddhism, the Taoist arts or Buddhist principles, an individual must first recognize that their cultivation, learning and methods possess abundant and penetrating principles, and that the desired results of cultivation are all based on methods established by profound theories. Moreover, the methods are suited to the person, medicine is prescribed to remedy the illness, and only flexible and useful guidance is offered rather than stiff and dead techniques.

This is especially the case with the Taoist School, which integrates with the natural and humanistic sciences of astronomy, geology, physics, chemistry, mind cultivation, and human ethics and enters the highest realms of philosophy and metaphysics. If one does not comprehend the principles, and relies upon some small heterodox arts, or practices breathing, concentrating on points (the point between the eyes, *tan-t’ien*, *chung-kung*, and *hai-ti*), and considers that this is the highest secret transmission, this is nothing but laughable.

Actually, these methods are all designed to concentrate one’s powers of awareness so as to pay attention to one portion of physiological functions, and have that function develop the vitality of its original capabilities. They are only the principles of the self-healing of the spirit along with natural physical effects, and involve methods to stimulate inherent physiological activities. They are not the secret transmissions for becoming an immortal through alchemical practices.

In addition, those practitioners who have not realized the realm described by Lao Tzu of possessing a pure mind, having few desires, and practicing non-action, but employ ideas of obtaining material gain to seek immortality, are similar to the unhealthy psychological problem spoken of by Chi An to Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty: “Having many desires within, and displaying benevolence and righteousness to the outside world.” As a result, there are psychological illusions and hallucinations caused by physiological changes during the process of cultivating these alchemical methods, or the physiological changes, neurosis and psychosis resulting from psychological delusions.

In reality, demons are produced by the mind and people make unnecessary trouble from their own imaginings. The Ch’ing Dynasty poet Shu Wei wrote in emotional response to a poem by Lu Ch’un-yang: “Riches and honor are like a dream, there has never been an immortal who did not study.” This quote reflects the

principle stated above aptly.

(3) The alchemical methods of the Wu-Liu Sect place great importance on the effects of cultivating *ching* and focus on the sperm of the reproductive organ as the essential component of the alchemical drug. As a result, they include the sexual techniques of pinching acupuncture points, masturbation type activities, and sexual union without emission in their practices. They emphasize dual practice of males and females, and techniques to make one's complexion like that of a young girl. This was also referred to as the transformation of *ching* into *ch'i*, and the various schools and practices which they established were all connected with the Wu-Liu Sect. So, too, were the illnesses which resulted from the desire to eliminate disease and attain immortality, and the madness which was caused by trying to transform *ching* into *ch'i*.

(4) In the philosophy of the Yellow Emperor and Lao Tzu, humility, restraint and refinement are taken as the guiding principles, and being pure, empty and without desires are regarded as the ethical basis of human cultivation. The alchemical methods promoted by Wei Po-yang took "cleansing the mind and retiring into secrecy" as the highest principle, and maintaining one's good position by restraint and preserving the inner light to nourish the true principle as the basis of practice. However, those who have cultivated the alchemical practices of the Wu-Liu Sect from the time of the Ming Dynasty down to the present have been arrogant, wild, narrow-minded, mysterious, and ignorant, fully exposing the negative and debased side of Chinese culture. This is truly a shame.

The first wrong path taken by this sect of alchemy was the absurd idea that the *ching* of the spiritual vitality (*ching shen*) spoken of in the Taoist School was referring to sperm and blood. This was a fundamental error. Most people initiate their practice by quiet sitting and a great number of them experience some physiological reactions. They feel that there is circulatory flow through the *ch'i* channels in the body, and pulsations in some of their muscles. These are natural effects of practicing alchemical methods, and they consider them the achievements of having already opened up their conception and governor channels as well as the eight extra channels.

In reality, these are all physiological reactions that naturally occur in quiet psychological states. There is not anything strange about them as they only verify the initial effects of quiet cultivation. Actually, the governor channel is the function of the spinal nervous system, the conception channel is the function of the autonomic nervous system, *ching* is the endocrine functions of the kidney glands and reproductive organs, and the spiritual saliva of the mouth is the endocrine

functions of the pituitary and lymph glands.

If we integrate certain common knowledge of modern physiology and medicine, psychological and philosophical knowledge, and various scientific theories and experience, we can then know that this is a very ordinary method of cultivating one's health. It is the result of the blending of spiritual vitality and psychology and not any mysterious secret of orthodox alchemy and immortality.

There are also some schools of thought in modern medicine that are now studying the relationship between sexual hormones, blood and the restoration of youth. However, those are the ideals of medical science experiments such as the implantation of pituitary glands and afterbirths, and the injection of various types of hormones. These still remain within the ideological sphere of 2,000 years ago when the "*fang-shih*" were searching for means to extend life. The only difference lies in the theoretical names, drugs and methods employed. It can thus be seen that human wisdom is forever young, and this is another major problem in the cultural history of mankind.

To summarize, the *ching*, *ch'i* and *shen* brought forth by the Taoist School are, from the scientific point of view, the spiritual functions of the eyes, ears and mind in terms of the physical and mental lives of people. The manifestation and application of spirit (*shen*) is then the function of one's vision, the manifestation and application of *ch'i* is then the function of one's sense of hearing, and the manifestation and application of *ching* are then the active thoughts of the mind and the inherent activities of the body.

If we approach this from the point of view of the physical functions of the unity of Heaven and man, *shen*, *ching* and *ch'i* are then the functions of light, heat and power. From a philosophical perspective, the *shen* mentioned by the Taoist School is close to the "nature" spoken of in Buddhism, and the *ching* of the Taoist School is close to the "mind" in Buddhism. We therefore see the line "the essence (*ching*) of the mind is perfected" in the T'ang Dynasty translation of the *Surangama Sutra*; the *ching* referring to sperm (*ching ye*) is the stimulation of psychological desires triggering the functions of the internal secretions of the sex glands and the circulation of blood by the heart. It is just as Kuang Ch'eng-tzu of the Taoist School stated: "With the arousal of sexual desires there is necessarily stirring of the *ching*."

The *ch'i* spoken of by the Taoist School is close to the breathing discussed in Buddhism, the function of postnatal life. If we draw from phenomena of the physical world for purposes of illustration, *shen* is comparable to the light energy bestowed upon the myriad things by the sun as it gives energy to all life on earth.

Ch'i is comparable to the vapors issued forth from the light energy of the sun radiating on the earth. *Ching* is then comparable to the combined physical effects produced by the sun bestowing light energy on the myriad things in the world. However, it should be noted that I have employed illustrations because there is no way of explaining the conditions of *ching*, *ch'i* and *shen* in detail, and illustrations are merely analogies, and not the essence of the original.

The Taoist practices of the Chou and Ch'in dynasties began with the cultivation of the spirit which encompassed the functions of *ching* and *ch'i*. The methods of the Taoist School during and after the Ch'in and Han dynasties emphasized the cultivation of *ch'i*, and although they varied slightly from the cultivation of the spirit, they changed from the metaphysical to the physical realm. The cultivation of *ching* during and after the Sung and Yuan dynasties descended even deeper into the physical realm, and the techniques completely focused on postnatal concepts of form quality. The principles of form and spirit involve a very broad area and for the moment we will not discuss them here.

Let us further explain by discussing the relationship between sitting in meditation, the Tantric School, and yoga. Sitting meditation was introduced into China from India as a Buddhist method for concentrating the mind so as to enter a state of deep contemplation. This method of sitting with folded legs was a form derived from ancient Indian yoga, and it was not originally from the Buddhist School nor from the alchemical sect of the Taoist School. It is a method which can be utilized in all forms of cultivation of the mind and body, but we rarely see mention of the relationship to sitting meditation in the alchemical texts of the Taoist School prior to the T'ang and Sung dynasties. However, there is no doubt that sitting meditation is a very useful method which can aid in the cultivation of the Tao. It would be a mistake to discuss the cultivation of the path of immortality and the meditation (*ch'an*) of the Ch'an School of Buddhism together.

During and after the Sung and Yuan dynasties, the Tantric Sect of Buddhism transmitted from Tibet, like the Taoist School, paid serious attention to the cultivation of the *ch'i* channels and realizing bliss, clarity and a state of no thought. These were also originally excellent Buddhist methods of practice which focused on verification of the material by means of the metaphysical. However, by the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties, they had become like the alchemical methods of the Taoist School which focused on the effects of form quality and cultivation of the *ch'i* channels. It had thus taken a plunge down from the original profound sublimity. The highest achievements in yoga techniques are only equivalent in value to the internal practices of the *ch'i* guidance and health cultivation school of Taoism, and are not the ultimate teaching.

Most people who study the alchemical arts often mix up sitting meditation, Tantric, yoga and other methods of cultivation popular throughout the world without clarifying the differences in focus among them. Purity of mind and few desires is always the starting point in practice whether one is studying the path of the immortals or Buddhism, and the ultimate aim is calmness, extinction and non-action. This is aptly stated in the Taoist text *Classic of Purity and Quietness (Ch'ing Ching Ching)*: "If one can constantly be pure and quiet, both Heaven and earth will revert to you." However, people in the real world are often as Confucius mentioned: "Food and sex are the major desires of people." Kao Tzu also stated: "Food and sex are the nature of people." It is quite impossible for people who desire after food and sex, and scheme to enjoy wealth and fame to want to accomplish "abandoning desires and cutting off entanglements."

I recall reading a story in a sketchbook that went:

During the Ming Dynasty a powerful noble once heard that there was a practitioner of the Tao who was already over ninety years of age but only looked about forty. He invited the practitioner to his home and inquired of the method of long life without old age.

The practitioner of the Tao replied: 'I have never had any relations with a woman throughout my life.'

The noble then said upon hearing this: 'That is of no interest to me at all, I do not wish to study this.'

This story is quite representative of the psychology of average people, and therefore many famous literary figures have composed poems critical of immortals. For example, "Ch'ang O should regret having stolen the pill of immortality, So sad every night in the azure sky" as well as "She certainly had a short life, Unfortunately she has become an immortal."

This is a common psychological reaction, and in similar fashion emphasizes the desires for food and sex. However, on the other hand, the path of immortality is truly no easy task, and the selection of individuals for cultivation of the path of immortality very much focused on naturally bestowed physiological traits, so called: "If one does not possess the bones of an immortal, even upon encountering a true immortal he should not seek the Way."

The famous official Li Pi (722-789 A.D.) of the T'ang Dynasty was born with bones and joints which gave off a tinkling sound, but the Ch'an Master Lai Ts'an only conceded that he had the bones to serve as a minister for ten years. A physiognomist said to Ch'ien Jo-shui: "You do not have the bones of an immortal,

but you can be honored as a duke or noble.”

A poem by Tu Fu reads: “The body of the True Gentleman has the bones of an immortal, How can common people know of it?” This is similar to the saying in Buddhism: “The study of Buddhism is a matter undertaken by a great and virtuous man. It is not something which is done by emperors, kings, generals and ministers.” To sum up, sitting meditation is a method of cultivation beneficial to both body and mind, and if one considers that quiet sitting is the study of the Tao, this is another topic altogether.

Chapter 7

General Discussion on the Thoughts of the Founders of the Taoist School and Taoist Religion

The learning and thought of the Taoist religion is based on and evolved totally from the contents of the Taoist School, which has already been previously discussed. The concept and contents of the thought of the Taoist School are founded on classifications made during and after the Ch'in and Han dynasties. For example, the Taoist and Confucian schools were not divided into separate schools during the Chou and Ch'in dynasties, and moreover the learning and thought of the pre-Ch'in philosophers and authors were all born out of the Tao. However, the concept of this Tao was not the Tao found in the Taoism during and after the Ch'in and Han dynasties.

If we base ourselves on common practice, naturally both the Taoist School and Taoist religion are taken to be inseparable from the learning and thought of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu. In reality, we should push this back more than one thousand years and understand the relationship between the historical backgrounds and geographical environment of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods.

Aside from literary style and language employed for expression as well as differences in methods for saving the world, there were no major conflicting points between the thought of Lao Tzu, founder of the Taoist School, and that of Confucius, patriarchal sage of the Confucian School. It was later people who portrayed their ideas and characters as being antithetical and as incompatible as fire and water. This was a dispute which was created by the disciples of the Confucian and Taoist schools and which was unrelated to the original thoughts of the two schools.

Our present aim is to lay particular stress upon the thoughts of the Taoist School and Taoist religion during and after the Ch'in and Han dynasties. It is therefore unnecessary to discuss this problem in detail here but rather give several examples to serve as a starting point to explain the thoughts of the Taoist School and Taoist religion.

The Meaning of “Heaven” Prior to the Split of the Confucian and Taoist Schools

We all know from the learning and thought of the Five Classics which were revised or written by Confucius that the basis of Confucius’ philosophical thought is established on the concept of the Way of Heaven within the ancient and traditional culture of China. However, the writing of the ancients are limited to the thought of the period, and there were no strict rules regarding the classifications of dogma or the regulation of definitions.

For example, there were five categories of ideas related to Heaven and all of them have been mixed into the one term of “Heaven”:

- (1) Heaven refers to the visible heavenly bodies that have material form.
- (2) Heaven refers to a metaphysical Heaven, a purely abstract idea.
- (3) Heaven refers to a heaven with a religious type divine personality that has the function of connecting the wills of the divinity and man.
- (4) Heaven is a symbol of the highest spiritual crystallization.
- (5) Heaven is an expression of mental sublimation.

It is therefore necessary—each time the word “Heaven” is encountered when reading pre-Ch’in texts—to tie it together with what proceeds and follows it. The entire essay must be understood before we can comprehend how the word Heaven is being used within a certain context.

Consider that both the *Erh Ya* and *Shuo Wen*, which give explanations of words, are very authoritative reference texts, but how do they stand up during different historical periods? There are also places where these references are not always reliable for every situation. For example, when Hsu Shen, the author of the *Shuo Wen*, explained the six categories of Chinese characters, his explanation reflected the thought of the Han dynasty. Although the explanation was close to the situation of high antiquity, yet it was not complete. This is something that is worthy of study.

The Meaning of “Tao” Prior to the Split of the Confucian and Taoist Schools

The term Tao, which is as complex as the term Heaven discussed above, can be generally explained within five categories of ideas based on its usage in the learning and thought of the Chou and Ch’in dynasties, and these have been mixed into the one term Tao:

- (1) A metaphysical and ontological concept simply called the Tao.
- (2) All patterned and yet unchanging laws were also generally called Tao.
- (3) The ethical standard to which human society adheres is commonly called the Tao.
- (4) That which is mysterious, unknown, unfathomable and inconceivable is called the Tao.
- (5) A path that is commonly traveled upon is called the Tao.

The Confucians, Taoists and the hundred schools which flourished during the Chou Dynasty—including the Yin-Yang School, School of Names, Legalists, and Militarists—each spoke of a “Tao.” Aside from special discussions related to the metaphysical Tao in certain places, most of the uses were of the second category that cannot be combined together with the metaphysical Tao.

There are some places in the *Five Classics* wherein the term Tao is used differently even within one discussion of an idea both as a noun and a verb. Moreover, the noun is used there sometimes reflecting the first category mentioned above, and at other times it embodies the fifth category. This is owing to the fact that nouns were very simple in ancient times and not great in number. In addition, these terms would have been clearly understood at the time, but when read by those of later generations there was much confusion. For example, the Chinese character for Tao in *Lao Tzu* was used in a variety of ways so that later interpreters had very different explanations and understanding of the same Tao.

Lao Tzu

The Concepts of the Way of Heaven, Non-Action and Spontaneity in the Thought of Lao Tzu

The terms Tao and Heaven are indistinct in the learning and thought of Lao Tzu, and as a result people in later generations pondered over his words. For example, they even theorized about the very first sections: “The Tao that can be spoken of is not the eternal Tao. The name that can be named is not the eternal name.” and “Man imitates the earth, the earth imitates Heaven, and Heaven imitates the spontaneous.” If we do not completely rely upon the commentaries of later scholars and recognize them as the theories of others, we should then read only the original text. In this way, its meaning will become clear.

Lao Tzu wishes that people would imitate Heaven. Why is Heaven worth imitating? Lao Tzu very succinctly tells us that “The myriad things depend on it and it denies nothing to anyone. It does its work but makes not claim for itself,” and

“The reason Heaven and earth can last long and abide is that they do not live for themselves.”

That is, Heaven and earth nourish the myriad things and people, but they do so without any selfish aims or preconditions. The myriad things derive life from them as well as meet their ends, a completely natural phenomenon. Heaven and earth give life without any resentment over the toil, and take no credit for their deeds. Therefore, people should emulate the great spirit of unselfishness, benevolence and compassion embodied by Heaven and earth. This is an ethical standard, the realm of the metaphysical Tao and the natural law of the physical world.

As a result, some then considered that the natural and spontaneous was the basis of Heaven and earth. Some took this natural spontaneity mentioned by Lao Tzu as the natural spontaneity found in Indian philosophy, and yet others took it as being the nature of the physical world as discussed in later science. The interpretations became increasingly numerous and confused. It must be understood that the spontaneity or naturalness later used to translate foreign works on philosophy and science more than two thousand years after Lao Tzu merely borrowed the term “*tzu-jan*” or the natural, and it does not reflect the original connotation of the *Lao Tzu*.

If we understand the grammar involved in the usage of single Chinese characters during Lao Tzu’s time, then the previous passages are quite easy to comprehend. It is merely emulation of the principle of spontaneity of Heaven and earth. What is this principle of spontaneity? It is merely that Heaven and earth themselves (*tzu*) are originally in and of themselves (*jan*). As time went by, the original meaning of the individual Chinese characters gradually were joined together into a noun reflecting the principle of nature. Originally, the ideas of Tao and virtue in the thoughts of Lao Tzu and Confucius were separated, but later they were brought together as a compound meaning ethics.

The well-known theory of “non-action (*wu-wei*)” by Lao Tzu is based on the highest principle of the spontaneity of Heaven and the Tao. He employed “non-action” to explain the realm and function of Heaven and Tao, and the ideas of “non-action” and “not non-action” were used to explain the principle of “non-action.” “Non-action” is by no means doing nothing. Later generations made the mistake of taking “non-action” as not doing anything and this was certainly an injustice to Lao Tzu.

When Lao Tzu spoke of “non-action,” he was referring to the very essence of

Heaven and the Tao. "Not non-action" refers to the fact that although the substance of the Tao is "non-action," yet it still possesses the functions and effects of living things going on without end. Therefore, there are the theories of the "mutual production of existence and non-existence" and "emergence from movement" for the functions of the substance of Tao. His proposing of "non-action" and "not non-action" for Heaven and the Tao also explains that people should emulate Heaven and earth, act when it is appropriate, stop at the proper time, and realize the standard of true selflessness and impartiality. This is the firmness of the principle of Heaven.

Lao Tzu therefore stated: "When you have completed your work, retire. This is the Way of Heaven." If we compare his learning and thought with that of King Wen, Duke Chou and Confucius, I feel that they are very much connected to the traditional culture of high antiquity, and really cannot find any major differences between them.

Lao Tzu's Views on Benevolence, Righteousness and the Sage

Why was it that Lao Tzu criticized benevolence and righteousness and ridiculed the Sage? He had addressed his criticism against the social ills of his time and the excesses carried out to rectify wrongs, not against the benevolence, righteousness and sage discussed by Confucius. [Misunderstanding matters,] later Confucians took these comments as being offensive and unfair.

During the time of Lao Tzu and Confucius, that is the Spring and Autumn Period, there was a general corrupt moral influence, imperial rule was not pervasive, the feudal princes fought with each other, there were fierce struggles for power, and the ideas of gaining hegemonist power, fame and wealth flourished. However, those who vied to be overlord always spoke of their actions in terms of benevolence, righteousness and the path of the sage. They read the writings of the philosophers and thinkers of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, and spoke of themselves as sages.

The intellectuals, who specifically employed learning and thought to pursue fame and wealth, also utilized the way of the sage to assist rulers in vying for more power. As a result, sages were everywhere to be found, and benevolence and righteousness transformed into means for carrying out political schemes. Lao Tzu could not but have ridiculed such actions. He therefore wrote: "Abandon the sage and discard wisdom, and the people will be benefited a hundredfold. Abandon benevolence and discard righteousness, and the people will return to being filial and compassionate. Discard shrewdness and eliminate profit, and thieves and

robbers will cease to be.”

However, Lao Tzu also brought forth the principle of the true sage, that is, the true sage should emulate the nourishing of the myriad things in the world and be spontaneous like Heaven and earth without aims or conditions. Lao Tzu felt it was wrong to think that Heaven and earth were predisposed with benevolence, as was maintained by many of his contemporaries. He stated that Heaven and earth gave birth to the myriad things without any discrimination, treating equally the myriad things and straw dogs.

Lao Tzu felt that the true sage should also maintain such equality and selflessness in saving and aiding the world, being devoid of any aims or conditions. Lao Tzu said: “Heaven and earth are not benevolent, It treats the myriad things as straw dogs. The sage is not benevolent, and he treats all people as straw dogs.” Those of later generations employed these lines to satirize the sage as well as Heaven and earth, [but they simply did not understand Lao Tzu and the conditions he was writing about].

Lao Tzu considered that the spontaneity of Heaven and earth were the functions of the mindless mind, and thus held that the mind of the true sage was that of “non-action” and “not non-action.” He said:

The sage has no permanent mind, and he takes the mind of the people as his own. He is kind to the kind and he is also kind to the unkind. Virtue is kind. He is faithful to the faithful and he is also faithful to the unfaithful. Virtue is faithful. The sage is shy and self-effacing in the world and he maintains his mind drifting along for the sake of the world. All the people focus their ears and eyes but the sage always preserves the state of an infant.

Is this not Lao Tzu’s own explanation? Therefore, the meaning of “When you have completed your work, retire. This is the Way of Heaven,” does not teach people that they must retire from the world, but rather as he said, “All things return to their roots.”

For example, the text for the *ch’ien* trigram in the *Book of Changes* reads: “The Great Man harmonizes his virtue with Heaven and earth, harmonizes his brightness with the sun and moon, harmonizes his sequences with the four seasons, and harmonizes his good and bad fortunes with ghosts and spirits.” Is this not a classical idea similar to that of Lao Tzu, differing only in the form of expression?

The Great Man spoken of in the *Book of Changes* is equivalent to the true sage mentioned by Lao Tzu. “Harmonizes his virtue with Heaven and earth” is very similar to the idea that of Heaven and Earth, “The myriad things depend on it and it denies nothing to anyone. It does its work but makes no claim for itself.” Is not “Harmonizes his brightness with the sun and moon” the same in meaning as “Heaven and earth are not benevolent, it treats the myriad things as straw dogs”? The sun and the moon illuminate Heaven and earth without discriminating the pure and impure, but show equal compassion to the highest level of purity and to the filthiest cesspool. The remaining “Harmonizes his sequences with the four seasons, and harmonizes his good and bad fortunes with ghost and spirits” can be explained in the same way.

If Lao Tzu was truly criticizing benevolence, righteousness and the sage, what need would there have been for him to mention a Tao and virtue outside of benevolence and righteousness? Isn’t this like superficially changing the liquid but not the drug, and putting old wine in a new bottle? If we understand his full meaning, he is being even more stringent in his requirements for true benevolence, righteousness and ethical behavior.

A modern example is how Mao Tse-tung employed communism to call for a peasant revolution to implement communism and socialism. For the moment, let us not concern ourselves as to whether communism is correct. Everyone can see that all of the actions of Mao Tse-tung were a matter of mouthing pious sentiments while doing the dastardliest deeds. He borrowed the slogans of revolution to achieve his own selfish pursuit of power, and at the same time he impregnated his ideas into enemy nations by propagating humanism and equality so as to weaken and undermine them. Is this not equivalent to the hegemonists of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods who availed themselves of the slogans of benevolence and righteousness to carry out their violent acts?

On the other hand, the American line of using free democracy to lead the international community and allies is a freedom based on the benefits to itself and a democracy founded on its own needs. As long as they are unified, the Americans do not mind sacrificing an ally and splitting it in two, and calling a war of incomplete triumph humanism, and nearly falling on one’s knees to surrender as peace. Those who are easily duped and pressured are then bullied and oppressed, and those who are worthy of respect and praise have two faces. These types of international political ideas truly reflect Lao Tzu’s statement of “Where wisdom is displayed great falseness exists.”

Misunderstanding of Lao Tzu's Political Thought

In order to discuss the thoughts of the Taoist School and Taoist religion, we cannot but first relate the theories of Lao Tzu. Although we previously only briefly mentioned Lao Tzu's ideas on Heaven, Tao and spontaneity, I still feel we are being too wordy as Lao Tzu only has 5,000 words in his text and we are perhaps going contrary to his principles of simplicity. However, in reality, both the Taoist School and Taoist religion honor him as their founder, and therefore it is necessary to speak further of his concepts.

When we speak of Lao Tzu's political thought for ruling a state, it is first necessary to mention a problem. That is, in reading books from the Chou and Ch'in dynasties, the idea of "state (*kuo*)" must be given note. Eighty percent of the time, this concept of the state is conceptually different from the modern state of which we now speak. This is because the term "state" often referred to local political units during and after the Ch'in and Han dynasties. During the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, the feudal princes ruled over states.

In past Chinese history and culture, the term reflecting the idea of the nation was the world (literally "under Heaven" or *t'ien-hsia*). The philosophy related to political thought contained in the text of *Lao Tzu* was basically discussed previously in the sections on Heaven and Tao. His political focus was "small states with sparse populations" and "ruling a large state is like frying a small fish." Lao Tzu advocated that people should realize self-awareness and self-government through the Tao and virtue, and like frying a small fish slowly simmer so as to influence the people and form social customs.

The idea of "hearing the chickens and dogs of neighboring villages but never having any contact" is equivalent to the child's song heard by Emperor Yao when traveling in K'ang Ch'u: "I am but a common person and do not know anything but following the principles of Heaven," as well as the song of the old man Chi Jang which he sung on the road: "Days come and days go. We drill wells and drink, till the fields and eat. What has the emperor's power to do with me?"

If we come to further understand that Lao Tzu's thought was representative of the culture of South China during the Spring and Autumn Period and look into the geographical environment of South China, then there is nothing very strange about his statement "hearing the chickens and dogs of neighboring villages but never having any contact" in terms of local political thought. If we go back several decades, those mountain people living in the countryside in South China would never travel to a city during their lifetimes, and would never leave their small

hamlets. Given this fact, we need only imagine the situation two or three thousand years ago.

Even in the modern and advanced scientific civilization of the United States, residents in many large cities dwell in cage-like apartments and rarely have contact with their neighbors. If someone dies across the hall they have no clue at all. Is this a phenomenon that often occurs in a free society? As a result, when we look at Lao Tzu's statement of society based on "hearing chickens and dogs of neighboring villages but never having any contact," we then feel that it represents a type of ideal realm of great peace in the world.

Aside from these statements regarding local self-rule, ethical government and political ideals, Lao Tzu also advocates uniform rule by virtue for the state. He said: "Heaven attained oneness and became clear, earth attained oneness and became quiet, the barons and princes attained oneness and became sovereign rulers for the world." Is this not a good explanation of his own thoughts on government? We need only understand these major points to discover the major misunderstandings perpetrated by others as well as their erroneous use of Lao Tzu's thoughts on government and politics.

Lao Tzu Has Been Falsely Charged as the Instigator of Schemes and Intrigues

Since ancient times, whenever intellectuals wished to criticize someone for being crafty and cunning, irresponsible, ambiguous, adept at postponing matters and shifting blame to others, and engaging in underhanded schemes, they very easily attributed these to the Yellow Emperor and Lao Tzu. The statues and images of spirits and sages honored by the Taoist School and Taoist religion were employed to rebuke that which was low and distasteful. As a result, that which was connected with the Taoist School and Taoist religion was thought contemptible.

After Lao Tzu was honored and placed upon the precious throne as founder of the religion and named the Old Lord on High during the T'ang Dynasty, he was further disgraced. Even though the Sung Neo-Confucians secretly borrowed Lao Tzu's ideas to substantiate their own theories, yet they went out of their way to criticize Buddhism and Taoism. They attributed all schemes and crafty tricks to Lao Tzu.

How did this injustice come about? Lao Tzu had stated: "What one wishes to be shrunken must first be stretched out. What one wishes to be weakened must first be made strong. What one wishes to put down must first be raised up. What one wishes to take must first be given. This is the subtle wisdom of life." Later

strategists employed this principle espoused by Lao Tzu to further their own schemes and plots, often applying it to political intrigue and plots. The militarists utilized this principle for strategic and tactical purposes.

During the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, the methods of intrigue employed by the hegemonists applied this principle as recorded in the *Kuo Yu* and *Strategies of the Warring States Period* (*Chan Kuo Ts'e*) as well as in the theories found in the later *Ch'ang Tuan Ching*. As a result, most people imperceptibly linked the negative aspects of the Strategists and Militarists with Lao Tzu and gave him a bad name.

In actuality, these statements by Lao Tzu refer to the cause and effect relationship between the universe and human affairs. He presented the principle of the "Way of Heaven comes around in a cycle," and "The movement of the Tao consists in returning, the use of the Tao consists in weakness." If one does not follow the path of the spontaneous Tao in conducting affairs but rather employs schemes and tricks, one will ultimately fail. The function of "What one wishes to be shrunken must first be stretched out" relates to the physical world and this advocates the theory of "the soft and weak overcome the hard and strong." For example, when a flower or tree is about to begin withering, they are especially luxuriant, and yet this extension of luxuriance is the prelude to withering.

"What one wishes to be weakened must first be made strong" is a law of the biological world. For example, as related to human life, one first passes through a phase of being strong and robust before growing old and weak. "What one wishes to take must first be given" is a constant theorem of the universe. For example, Heaven and earth give life to the myriad things, and when one is bestowed with life, this is the beginning of receiving. Therefore, when people are giving and receiving they have feelings of gain and loss as well as success and failure. However, from the view of the natural principle of the Tao, there is the path of "birth then death, death then birth," and it is only a process of life. This is what Lao Tzu referred to as the "subtle wisdom of life."

However, this law of cause and effect of Heaven and the Tao proposed by Lao Tzu was continuously misunderstood by later generations and utilized for schemes and tricks. Although it is said that Lao Tzu's Taoist thought was used to formulate political policies during the flourishing periods of the reigns of Emperors Wen (179-156 B.C.) and Ching (156-140 B.C.) of the Han Dynasty, yet aside from the austerity and elimination of the death penalty during the reign of Emperor Wen—which approached the ideals of benevolence, righteousness and ethical behavior—there was still no real adaptation of the practice of virtue through pure non-action.

Moreover, in reality they used the schemes of the strategists [when governing], and it is therefore incorrect when people refer to these emperors as having put into practice the learning and thought of the Taoist School. This reflects the political stance prominent in past history of “employing the thoughts of the Yellow Emperor and Lao Tzu internally while displaying Confucian methods externally.”

The Focal Point of Lao Tzu’s Political Thought

After the text of the *Lao Tzu* was changed to be called the *Tao Te Ching* by the rulers of the T’ang Dynasty, later generations would always link Lao Tzu together with ethics (*tao te*). However, in reality, the *tao* (way) and *te* (virtue) were originally separated. The *tao* is the substance while the *te* is the function.

The original text was burned during the Ch’in Dynasty, and therefore later the order of the chapters could not be determined. Old texts had been composed on bamboo slips and parchment so that their sequential order was easily confused. However, the division of the substance and function were very clear and so we should understand that the focus of Lao Tzu’s political thought involves the concept of “virtue.” He employs the term “Way” as the central philosophy for internal self-cultivation, and the term “virtue” as the emphasis for external handling of political and social affairs. Moreover, the meaning of “virtue” in ancient times also embodied the idea of “attaining,” equivalent to effects and attainment in modern terms.

Lao Tzu said: “High virtue is non-virtuous, therefore it has virtue. Low virtue never frees itself from being virtuous, therefore it has no virtue.” This refers to the highest virtue, that is, even if one performs a virtuous deed of the highest order yet he does not feel that it is virtuous, and if one performs a virtuous deed of a low order, he does not consider the gain and loss of such action.” This is equivalent to the “non-action” and “not non-action” related to the concept of Tao as discussed by Lao Tzu.

Political schemes were not only rebuked within the political thought of Lao Tzu, but it should also be emphasized that he also did not advocate returning to the political rule of primitive society. The “small states with sparse populations” mentioned by Lao Tzu relate to the separately ruled states established by feudal lords, one form of local self-rule. He advocated political unification of the entire nation. For example, Lao Tzu said: “Heaven attained oneness and became clear, earth attained oneness and became quiet, and the barons and princes attained oneness and became sovereign rulers for the world.”

Of course using the “attained oneness” employed here is not sufficient to

explain that the focus of Lao Tzu's thought was necessarily on unification. His usage of "oneness" here includes the idea of cultivation. Therefore, Lao Tzu said:

Humility is the root from which greatness springs, the high must be constructed on the foundation of the low. That is why barons and princes call themselves 'The Solitary One,' 'The Little One,' and 'The Worthless One.' Do they not realize their dependence on the lowly? Truly excessive honor means no honor. It is not desirable to shine like jade and resound like stone chimes.

From this we can see the full expression of his political thought of transformation through virtue and unification.

Lao Tzu's advocacy of "requiting injustice with kindness" is a traditional spirit that has pervaded throughout Chinese cultural history. After World War Two, the Chinese government advocated "using kindness to requite injustice" towards Japan reflecting the ideas of kindness and virtue of the Taoist School. Confucius advocated "Justice in return for injustice," which carried a certain element of valor. When compared with Lao Tzu, Lao Tzu appears to be at a much higher level.

Lao Tzu's Theories on the Cultivation of Life

It has always been the custom to apply Chinese culture and philosophy to the practical functions of the cultivation of mind and body, whether one is speaking in terms of surpassing the emptiness of the mundane world or edifying the physical world around us. This has been extended to regulating the family, ruling the nation and bringing peace to the world. There has never been "empty talk without deeds" but rather emphasis on personal cultivation and ethical behavior in human relations.

This marks an outstanding difference between Chinese and Western culture and philosophy. Therefore, when we look at Chinese culture from the standpoint of Western philosophy, it is considered that China basically has no real philosophy but only an emphasis on the cultivation of life that can only be called a "philosophy of life." If we look at Western thought and inner cultivation in Western philosophy, there is no unity between thought and action and it is considered empty talk, nothing more than mental delusions. The words are logical, principled and high sounding but still they are not practical for use in society.

Lao Tzu is a major figure in Chinese culture and thought, and he represents the theoretical center of the Taoist School. During the Chou and Ch'in dynasties,

aside from Lao Tzu expositing methods for the cultivation of mind and body, any data regarding “*fang-shih*” are now non-existent, and therefore the methods on the cultivation of life discussed by Lao Tzu make up the earliest concrete theories on the subject.

Chang Tzu-yang of the orthodox Alchemical School of the Sung Dynasty wrote in his *Wu Chen P'ien*: “There are 300 precious amulets and the spiritual text of the *Tao Te Ching* contains 5,000 characters. There have been innumerable immortals from of old, and they have all realized the truth from these.” This represents the Taoist view on the great value of the *Tao Te Ching*. For the sake of brevity we shall discuss his major points within five categories:

(A) The cultivation of quietude begins with attaining utmost emptiness and internal stillness

Lao Tzu said: “Attain to utmost emptiness and embrace internal stillness. While the myriad things are stirring, I contemplate the return. All things flourish and each returns to its root. To return to the root is called stillness. To know the constant is called insight. If one does not know the constant, one runs blindly into disaster.”

This is Lao Tzu’s principle of the cultivation of life. He points out that the origin of life is based upon stillness and therefore one must cultivate returning to the source of life so as to accord with the constant Tao. The method of cultivation is unlike the later Taoist practices of sitting in meditation, concentrating on points of the body, etc. Lao Tzu only briefly states the necessity to “attain to utmost emptiness and internal stillness.”

(B) The cultivation of the spirit proceeds from utmost stillness to being dimly visible as if not present

Lao Tzu said: “The spirit of the valley never dies. It is called the mysterious female. The gate of the mysterious female is called the root of Heaven and earth. Dimly visible as if not present, when you use it, it is inexhaustible.” This explains beginning with the cultivation of stillness, and then proceeding to attain a state of spiritual distraction, harmonizing the spirit into one, and coming to exist as long as Heaven and earth. One can then have contact with the root of Heaven and earth.

The so-called “spirit of the valley” is not a spirit that appears in a religious valley, nor is it a certain point on the body or an allusion for the mind as explained in later Taoism. The “valley” is a deep area in the mountains representing a state of

quietude. However, a deep and empty valley has echoing due to the air not circulating and the fine dust moving about as if a spirit was present. Lao Tzu utilized this image to describe a spiritual realm that is empty and quiet.

The so-called mysterious female does not refer to the *tan-t'ien* in the lower abdomen as interpreted by the later Taoist School. The “mysterious female” derives from the ideas of the *Book of Change*. The mysterious is synonymous with the origin and the female is of course the origin of all living things. Therefore, if people wish to cultivate immortality, they should proceed from cultivating stillness and the spirit to attaining the realm of the “mysterious female,” dim as if not even present. The “mysterious female” is the source of life and it can have contact with the spirit of Heaven and earth.

(C) The cultivation of *ch'i* is designed to aid the cultivation of stillness and the spirit

Lao Tzu said: “The space between Heaven and earth is like a bellows. It is empty and yet inexhaustible. The more it works the more comes out.” This is used to explain the function of one *ch'i* passing through life and death. This expounds the function of respiration and the one *ch'i* that can aid the cultivation of stillness and the spirit so that the spirit can unite into one.

Lao Tzu further said: “In carrying the soul, can you embrace the one and not let go? In concentrating your *ch'i* to attain suppleness, can you reach the state of a newborn babe? In washing and clearing your inner vision, can you do so without leaving any blemishes?” This explains that if a person is able to cultivate to the level wherein the spirit and soul are joined into one without letting go, wherein the mind and *ch'i* move in unison, wherein one becomes supple like a newborn babe and cleans their mind without leaving any blemishes, one can then attain the pure *yang* realm wherein “In the opening and shutting of the Heavenly gate, are you able to play the role of the female?” The later Alchemical School, which sought after immortality, called this the “*yang* spirit.”

(D) Realizing that which is shadowy and indistinct

Given the achievements of the cultivation of stillness, spirit and *ch'i*, one can finally know the true functions of power and spirit. Lao Tzu said:

In everything the man of virtue follows only the Tao. As a thing, the Tao is shadowy and indistinct. Indistinct and shadowy, yet within it there is an image. Shadowy and indistinct, yet within it there is a substance.

Hidden and dark, yet within it there is an essence. This essence is very real, and within it there is something that can be believed. From ancient times until the present, its name has not departed. It serves as a way of examining the beginnings of all things. How do I know the ways of all things at the beginning? By means of this.

The spirit and Tao that he mentioned are attainable by all people. This explains the achievement of cultivation of stillness, the spirit and *ch'i*, harmonizing with the Tao and virtue, and encompassing the truth of the ten thousand things. If an individual is able to reach this realm, he can then verify the spiritual accomplishments that he has realized.

(E) The results of the cultivation of life

Lao Tzu first brings forth the example of a newborn babe as the achievement of the cultivation of life. Lao Tzu stated:

One who possesses abundant virtue is comparable to a newborn babe. Poisonous insects will not sting it, nor fierce beasts seize it, nor birds of prey maul it. Its bones are supple and its sinews weak, yet its hold is firm. It does not yet know of the union of male and female, yet its male member will stir. This is because its virility is at its height. It cries all day but does not become hoarse. This is because its harmony is at its height. To know harmony is called the constant, to know the constant is called insight. To try to add to one's vitality is ominous. For the mind to control the *ch'i* is called forcing. To be overgrown is to decay, and this is going against the Tao. That which goes against the Tao will come to an early end.

This section explains the mind and body that result from cultivation. They are forever like a newborn babe similar to the "restoring youth and becoming like a young child" mentioned in later periods. Therefore, Lao Tzu also said:

One who is adept in cultivating life does not meet with tigers or rhinoceros when traveling nor is he touched by weapons when charging into an army. There is nowhere for the rhinoceros to butt its horn; there is nowhere for the tiger to place its claws; there is nowhere for the weapon to lodge its blade. How is this? It is because for him there is no realm of death.

This is the basis of the "immortality" cultivated by the later Taoist School.

The *Classic of Purity and Stillness*

This text, the *Classic of Purity and Stillness*, has its origins in the thought of Lao Tzu and the Taoist School. It is purely derived from the standpoint of the Taoist religion, it develops on the subtle meaning of the *Tao Te Ching*, and it possesses great value given its distinctness from the cultivation methods of the Alchemical School of Taoism. It can be considered the best work of the Taoist religion.

The *Classic of Purity and Stillness* was composed during the T'ang Dynasty even though it is attributed to the Lord on High Lao Tzu. Its literary form very much emulates the *Heart Sutra* of the Buddhist School and many of its specialized terms are also derived from Buddhism. If we do not give attention to textual criticism and only discuss its contents, as well as discard the concepts of time and differences in sects, then the *Classic of Purity and Stillness* is not only essential reading that represents both the Taoist School and Taoist religion. It is also mandatory reading if one wishes to understand the spirit of Chinese culture during and after the Late T'ang Dynasty, as well as the interpenetration of the three systems of thought of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism.

The *Classic of Purity and Stillness* reads:

Lao Tzu said: The Great Tao is without form, and gave birth to the Heaven and earth. The Great Tao is obdurate, the sun and moon moving back and forth. The Great Tao is nameless, it rears and nourishes the ten thousand things. I do not know its name and so call it the Tao. The Tao possesses both purity and turbidity, movement and stillness. Heaven is pure and the earth turbid, Heaven moves and the earth stays still, the male is pure and the female turbid, the male moves and the female stays still. It continuously flows giving birth to the ten thousand things. Purity is the source of turbidity, and movement is the basis of stillness. Those who are able to constantly be pure and still belong to Heaven and earth. The human spirit is fond of purity but the mind disturbs it. The human mind is fond of stillness but desires obstruct it. If one is able to constantly drive out desires, their mind will naturally become still. Settle the mind and the spirit will naturally become pure, the six desires will naturally not be produced, and the three poisons will be extinguished. Therefore, the minds of those who are unable to accomplish this are not settled nor are their desires driven away. When one who has driven away desire looks into his mind, there is no mind, when he looks externally at form, there is no form, and when he observes things from afar, there are no things. He realizes that all three are empty, and sees that emptiness is

also empty. Emptiness has nothing which is empty, and that which is empty is also non-existent. Without non-existence is also non-existent, and since without non-existence is non-existent, one is clear and constantly tranquil, but tranquillity is without that which is tranquil. How then can desire be produced? Since desire is not produced, there is then true stillness, true and constant response to things, and true and constant realization and abiding. With constant responses and constant stillness, there is constant purity and stillness. Possessing such purity and stillness, one gradually enters into the true Tao, and since one has entered the true Tao, it is called realizing the Tao. Although it is called realizing the Tao, in reality there is nothing that is realized. However, in order to save sentient beings, it is called realizing the Tao. Those who are able to awaken to this can transmit the sagely Tao. Lao Tzu said: the superior man does not contend but the inferior man is fond of contending. The highest virtue is not virtue and the lowest virtue is to cling to virtue. Those who cling do not possess the Tao and virtue. The reason why sentient beings do not realize the true Tao is that they possess deluded minds, and since they possess deluded minds, their spirits are frightened. Since their spirits are frightened, they cling to the ten thousand things and produce greed and desire. Since they produce greed and desire, they have mental distress. Mental distress and deluded thoughts bring worry and suffering to body and mind. They then suffer defilement and disgrace in the waves of birth and death, forever sunk in the sea of suffering and forever having lost the true Tao. Those who awaken to the true and constant Tao are self-realized, and those who have realized the Tao are constantly pure and still.

The above text is the full text of the *Classic of Purity and Stillness*, altogether 392 Chinese characters. The terms “emptiness,” “six desires,” “three poisons,” and “sea of suffering” are all expressions borrowed from Buddhism. If we critique it using the words of the fifth patriarch of the Ch’an School, it can then be said that: “Later generations can enter the Tao through practice based on this.”

Chuang Tzu

How did Chinese culture and thought evolve and produce the Taoist School and Taoist religion? If we focus on individuals and regard the era as secondary, then during the Spring and Autumn Period, it is naturally Lao Tzu and Confucius who are the representative figures. Following Lao Tzu and Confucius, during the Warring States Period the theories and schools of philosophers multiplied. Chuang Tzu’s learning and thought cannot be overlooked if we wish to answer the above

question.

The learning and thought of the Warring States Period was like the political situation at that time. Although the country honored the Chou rule, in reality each of the states administered by feudal lords schemed and vied with each other for hegemony. The learning and thought during that period resembled this situation in that even though the ideas were all derived from one source of uniform ancient culture, yet each relied on their own experiences and established various sects and different theories. Among these, the most well-known are the theories of Chuang Tzu of the Taoist School, Mencius of the Confucian School, and Mo Tzu of the Mohist School.

We have already mentioned that Confucius and Mencius represent the Northern system of culture and thought centered in the State of Lu, while Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu represent the Southern system of culture and thought centered in the State of Ch'u. Both of these systems were connected to the cultural origins of the states of Yen, Ch'i and Sung. This was especially the case in the Taoist School wherein during the Warring States Period, the "*fang-shih*" of the states of Yen and Ch'i were the core of the learning and thought of the Taoist School in the North. Based on reliable historical records, the major representative of the learning and thought of the Taoist School in the South was Chuang Tzu.

Although Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu are often spoken of together in later times as the major representatives of the ideas of the Taoist School, the teachings of Chuang Tzu and the thought of Lao Tzu are quite different. In addition, the teachings of Mencius were not as pure as those of Confucius, having already become mixed with a certain amount of despotism. The teachings of Chuang Tzu are also not as simple and unadorned as those of Lao Tzu, as they were mixed in with a certain component of heroic spirit.

Let us now present a general overview of Chuang Tzu's thought.

The Fables in the *Chuang Tzu*

The text of the *Chuang Tzu* has a total of thirty-three chapters. Chapter 1, "Free and Easy Wandering," to Chapter 7, "Fit for Emperors and Kings," are commonly referred to as the "Inner Chapters," while the remaining chapters are called the "Outer Chapters" and "Miscellaneous Chapters." Most people who study the *Chuang Tzu* consider that it is more difficult to read than the *Lao Tzu*. This is because the scope of the knowledge that it embraces is broader, and many of its theories and analogies are related to the knowledge of theoretical physics at that

time. As a result, this text is not limited to only pure ideology.

In addition, Chuang Tzu was fond of employing fables. When fables are now mentioned, most people make the connection with Aesop's fables, or consider that they are nothing more than fanciful flights of the imagination of no real value. Actually, Chuang Tzu's fables cannot be viewed as purely metaphorical, nor can they be read purely as empty flights of the imagination. Aesop's fables have been translated into Chinese with the influx of Western culture into China, and the actually term for "fable (*yu yen*)" was borrowed from Chuang Tzu. Moreover, the nature of the fables is not exactly the same because Chuang Tzu did not make use of fables to fabricate stories.

The fables related by Chuang Tzu are the indirect exposition of a fact or principle. He hoped that people would be able to penetrate through the background of the story and come to comprehend the ideas he was trying to convey. If we were to compare it with the writings of the T'ang and Sung dynasties, the witticism and disjunctive nature of the language employed in the *Chuang Tzu* could be considered to be of the highest realm of Ch'an Buddhism.

For example, the first chapter "Free and Easy Wandering" begins with a fable: there was a very large *roc* fish in the North which suddenly changed into a large *p'eng* bird. This bird flew away to the South. The second fable concerns how Yao wanted to cede the empire to the recluse Hsu Yu, but Hsu Yu did not accept it. As a result, Hsu Yu quotes the questioning of Lien Shu by Chien Wu, discusses the remarks of the madman of Ch'u Chieh Yu, and describes the Immortal who dwells on Ku She Mountain:

His skin is like ice or snow, and he is gentle and shy like a young girl. He does not eat the five grains, but sucks the wind, drinks the dew, ascends up on the clouds and mist, rides a flying dragon, and wanders beyond the four seas. By concentrating his spirit, he can protect creatures from sickness and plague and make the harvest plentiful.

Chuang Tzu utilizes this story to describe the highest realm of human existence sought after by recluses of superior attainments. Therefore, individuals such as Hsu Yu had no desire to serve as ruler.

The third fable is a matching of wits with one of Chuang Tzu's contemporaries, Hui Tzu. Chuang Tzu relates their conversation in order to explain that each individual possesses his own mind and holds different views, and yet their mind is directed to attain a state of being free and unfettered.

We shall employ the Buddhist term “liberated” to explain the “free and unfettered” state mentioned by Chuang Tzu. However, liberation in Buddhism has the meaning of leaving the world whereas the “free and unfettered” spoken of by Chuang Tzu connotes the great freedom of leaving and coming back into the world. The state of great freedom is similar to the objective related in the unofficial records of the Ch’an School.

Chuang Tzu’s Free and Easy Wandering and the Seven Inner Chapters

In terms of conventional wisdom, the first fable, which relates how a fish transformed into a *p’eng* bird, is a lot of scribbled nonsense. However, Chuang Tzu brings forth a text entitled *Universal Harmony* to prove the accuracy of his statements, and to state that these facts were not of his own concoction. He says that this text records strange and unusual events, and so it was probably very similar to the later *Classic of the Mountains and Seas*, which also describes various unusual things. However, we must note that the text of the *Universal Harmony* was authored by a writer from the State of Ch’i, and it was necessarily connected with the ideas of the “*fang-shih*” originating from the states of Yen and Ch’i.

The principles represented in these allegorical stories have always been a means of explanation. There are two views on the fables: (1) The common view maintains that the fable itself is a story conjured up by the author and thus need not be traced. Chuang Tzu’s original intention was then to use it to explain the subjective and preconceived ideas held by individuals which vary in terms of their learning, knowledge, experience and ambition. (2) The Sect of Alchemy in the Taoist School considered that the fish of the north referred to the mechanism of the primordial *ch’i* in the lower *tan-t’ien*. Its transformation into a large *roc* bird and flying to the South represented the movement of *ch’i* upwards along the governor channel (spinal cord) to the Ni Heng Palace (the *ting-men* point at the top of the head) to open the orbit of the governor and reception channels.

In reality, Chuang Tzu used this fable to explain that all things in Heaven and earth originated from the functions of *ch’i*, which was transformed from one breadth, as well as discuss the principle of the physical transformation of all things in the universe; the interchanging of the myriad things in the world is a central idea in Taoist science and philosophy.

The myriad things in the world exist through mutual generation and destruction. It is as if a dream with everyone living in a befuddled state and unawares. This is truly a most disturbing and at the same time laughable fact. Later during the T’ang dynasty, T’an Shao of the Taoist School authored the *Hua Shu*,

which brought forth a great deal of both reliable and unreliable facts to explain this principle.

To summarize, the focus of Chuang Tzu's fables was to explain the functions of the mechanisms of *ch'i* and the transformation of material things. However, it must be noted that the material things spoken of in ancient times were certainly not the concepts of matter or physics as they are used today. At that time, the meaning of the material was to use it to represent a type of thing. It would be a grave mistake to regard it in the same light as the modern concept of "materialism."

Chuang Tzu's free and easy wandering represents Chuang Tzu's Taoist thought and the need to accord with one's nature and realize liberation. When this concept is used to view the seven Inner Chapters, it then becomes a comprehensive ideology.

The first chapter, "Free and Easy Wandering," discusses the highest and most perfect realm of human existence.

The second chapter, "Making All Things Equal," explains that the existence of the myriad things and humans in the phenomenal world is inherently unequal, and if one wishes to realize the fruits of liberation and being free and unfettered, they must first make all things equal. How can the myriad things in the phenomenal world be made equal? This can only be accomplished through cultivation to the realm where the vital essence of Heaven and earth are unified, where "Heaven and earth are born with me, and the myriad things are joined with me." It is only when true equality is realized that one can become a great sage equal to Heaven.

The third chapter, "The Secret of Caring for Life," proceeds forth from the first and second chapters which focus on being free and unfettered, and making all things equal. If one is truly able to unify material things with oneself, this would then constitute understanding the secret of caring for life, and by caring for life and accommodating one's nature through understanding the oneness of material things and oneself, one could then manage affairs in the world without stress or grief, as well as use the world rather than be used by the world.

This then leads into the fourth chapter, "In the World of Men," and it from here up until the fifth chapter, "The Sign of Virtue Complete," that one realizes complete virtue through internal cultivation and according with the natural and spontaneous nature of Heaven.

The sixth chapter, "The Great and Venerable Teacher," explains the

achievements of the “inner sage” whereupon one can then become an “outer king” truly qualified to be a great and venerable teacher. One can then rely on the Tao to conduct affairs and be a teacher to emperors and kings.

Chapter 7, “Fit for Emperors and Kings” then serves as a general conclusion.

Chuang Tzu’s literary style is boundless, and there is not one matter that he brings forth in discussion which is not a valuable and central component of the theme. It is for this reason that readers have been dazzled by his display, and overlooked the unified system within the seven Inner Chapters without tying them together.

The Style of the Outer Chapters of the *Chuang Tzu*

For the moment we will not discuss the questions regarding whether the thirty-six outer and miscellaneous chapters of the *Chuang Tzu* were written by Chuang Tzu or added by later writers. Although his Outer Chapters use the ideas of leaving and entering the world, as well as liberation and being free and unfettered as their starting point, yet the vast majority are concerned with learning that can be employed to do good in the world. Moreover, they are written in a very lively style, and embody the highest principles. It would be more accurate to say that the political and military tactics of the later School of Strategists were mainly influenced by the thoughts of Chuang Tzu rather than saying that they were based on the ideas of Lao Tzu.

After the classification of the inner and outer chapters of the *Chuang Tzu*, later writers of the Taoist School followed the precedent started in the text of the *Chuang Tzu* classifying discussions on methods of internal cultivation as “inner chapters,” and other learning and ideas applied externally as “outer chapters.” This practice was imitated in both the *Huai Nan Tzu* and the *Pao P’u Tzu*. It is quite incredible that those of the Taoist School would so admire and be so adept at discussing military affairs much the same as the Taoist School of the Warring States Period who were so heavily imbued with ideas of the political strategists and legalists.

The Mutual Causation of the Ideas of Caring for Life in the *Chuang Tzu* and the *Fang-shih* Immortals

Generally speaking, in periods of political decay and chaos, the social consciousness—being stimulated by the times and environment—will necessarily become down-fallen, pay close attention to practical affairs, attempt to gain

enjoyment for the moment, and seek out stimulation. Or, it will retreat from practical realities and tend towards the mystical in an attempt to find an ideal realm. These two paths are common tendencies that have manifested during periods of upheaval in both ancient and modern times, in China and abroad. The first of these paths is related to realism and enjoyment, while the latter is involved with escapism. In a broader sense, there is almost no one who is able to transcend these two parameters during periods of upheaval.

During the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, the sudden rise of the learning and thought of the “*fang-shih*” in the North, as well as the development of the ideas on caring for life propagated by Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu in the South, were naturally also conditioned by their times and environment. Although this is not necessarily always the case, it is difficult to avoid.

As was already mentioned, during the Warring States Period, Chuang Tzu, Mencius and others were to different degrees influenced by the ideas of the “*fang-shih*” regarding the cultivation of the spirit and *ch’i*, and this was especially the case with Chuang Tzu. Chuang Tzu’s philosophical theories are almost entirely based on this spirit. We shall now give several examples to illustrate his theories on cultivation of life and the spiritual man.

Chuang Tzu expresses the principles of cultivation of the spirit and *ch’i* in the “Free and Easy Wandering” chapter: “If he had only mounted on the truth of Heaven and earth, ridden the changes of the six *ch’i*, and thus wandered through the boundless, then what would he have had to depend on?” This meshes with Mencius’ concept of direct cultivation of one’s vital *ch’i* without harm, reaching the same goal with different means.

In “The Secret of Caring for Life” chapter, Chuang Tzu states: “By moving along the governor channel, one can protect the body, perfect life, cultivate oneself, and live out one’s years.” This is similar to the cultivation of *ching* and *ch’i* practiced by the “*fang-shih*” which later developed into methods and concepts of internal alchemy.

In his chapter entitled “In the World of Men,” Chuang Tzu uses a conversation between Confucius and Yen Hui to explain the methods and principles involved with the fasting of the mind:

Yen Hui asked: ‘May I ask what the fasting of the mind is?’

Confucius said: ‘Make your will one. Don’t listen with your ears, listen with your mind. No, don’t listen with your mind, listen with your

ch'i. Listening stops with the ears, the mind stops with recognition, but *ch'i* is empty and waits on things. Only the Tao gathers in emptiness. Emptiness is the fasting of the mind.'

Yen Hui said: 'Before I heard this, I was certain that I was Wei. Having now heard this, there is no more Hui. Can this be called emptiness?'

Confucius said: 'Yes, indeed. Now I will tell you. You may go and wander in his bird cage, but never be moved by fame. If he listens, then sing; if not then keep still. Have no gate, no opening, but make oneness your house and dwell with what cannot be avoided. You will then be close to success. It is easy to halt one's steps; the hard thing is walking without touching the ground. It is easy to be false when working for men, but difficult to be false when working for Heaven and earth. You have heard of flying with wings, but you have never heard of flying without wings. You have heard of the knowledge that knows, but you have never heard of the knowledge that does not know. Look into that closed room, the empty chamber where light is born. Fortune and blessing gather where there is stillness. However, if you do not keep still, this is called sitting with the mind racing about. Allow your ears and eyes to communicate with what is inside, and put mind and knowledge on the outside. Ghosts and spirits will then come to dwell, not to speak of men! This is the changing of the ten thousand things, the connection with Yu and Shun, the constant practice of Fu Hsi and Chi Ch'u. How much more so is this true for lesser men!'

This section on the fasting of the mind in *Chuang Tzu* flows together with the methods and principles advocated in *Sitting in Forgetfulness (Tso Wang Lun)*, which discusses the cultivation of *ch'i* by circulating it along the governor channel.

In "The Great and Venerable Teacher" chapter, Chuang Tzu makes further mention of the theory of being outside of birth and death. He utilizes a conversation between Nan-po Tzu-k'uei and Woman Crookback to illustrate this idea:

'You are old in years and yet your complexion is like that of a child. Why is that?'

She said: 'I have heard the Tao.'

Nan-po Tzu-k'uei asked: 'Can the Tao be learned?'

She replied: 'My Heavens, how can that be? You are not the man to accomplish such a thing. Now there's Pu-liang Yi who possesses the talent of a sage but not the Tao of a sage; I possess the Tao of a sage but not the talent of a sage. I thought I would teach him and see if I could get

anywhere in making him a sage. It is easier to explain the Tao of a sage to one who has the talent of a sage. I then began explaining and kept at him for three days, 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 more days, and after that he was able to put things outside himself. When he had put things outside himself, I kept at him for nine 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 solitude. After he had seen his own solitude, 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 does not die, and that which gives life to life does not live. This is the kind of thing it is: there is nothing it does not send off, nothing it does not welcome, nothing it does not destroy, and nothing it does not complete. Its name is 'running counter to tranquility.' After the opposition, it attains completion.

This, along with "Let your mind wander in simplicity, harmonize your spirit with the vastness, follow along with things the way they are, and do not allow personal views" in the "Fit for Emperors and Kings" chapter, and the theory of cultivating *ch'i* through the "mechanism of balancing the *ch'i*" espoused by Lieh Tzu's teacher Hu Tzu in the same chapter, all serve to develop Chuang Tzu's methods of caring for life.

The main purpose of the entire text of the Chuang Tzu, like that of the Lao Tzu, is to attain the highest realm of human existence and realize its highest objective. The various theories and methods related to Lao Tzu's cultivation of life and Chuang Tzu's caring for life are only processes for taking care of life; they are not the highest aim. Chuang Tzu's highest goal and ultimate realm is to become a divine man, true man and great man who transcends the world as well as material bonds.

The individual who is adept at caring for life, as described by Lao Tzu, and the immortal of Ku She Mountain mentioned by Chuang Tzu, are standards which have been established, and this marks a major difference between the Taoist School and the Confucian School. Confucian thought during the Chou dynasty—as represented by Confucius and Mencius—focused on the actual in human life and established standards for the five human relations with the aim of bringing peace and security to the real world. They did not discuss affairs that transcended the world: "The sage does not discuss affairs beyond the six directions." Therefore, the

various views that are brought into discussion in the thought of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, whether they be theories of a metaphysical nature or affairs of the material world, are only said in passing and they are not the main subject.

As Chuang Tzu stated: "From his dust and leavings alone you could mold a Yao or a Shun! Why should he consent to bother about such things?" However, Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, as well as Confucius and Mencius, all shared a common aspiration to bring long term peace and stability to their societies. Confucius and Mencius focused on the influence of benevolence and righteousness, while Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu centered on the Tao and virtue.

The benevolence and righteousness propagated by Confucius and Mencius, as well as the Tao and virtue discussed by Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, were by no means invented or created by them. In reality, all of these are traditional concepts handed down from high antiquity. It is only the terms and meaning adopted by each that contributed to differences in connotation. When Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu denounced benevolence, righteousness and the sage, they were not repudiating the benevolence, righteousness and sage spoken of by Confucius and Mencius. Rather, they were condemning those of their contemporaries who were trying to "palm off horse meat as beefsteak," and availing of benevolence, righteousness and the Tao of the sage to indulge their own selfish desires.

The realm of the sage, divine man, true man and great man spoken of by Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu requires that all people independently accomplish self-realization, reach the highest level of the Tao and virtue, and afterwards attain benevolence, righteousness, the Tao and virtue. However, one should not be a slave to fame and wealth while posing as being benevolent, righteous and virtuous, or as standing aloof from worldly success while covering a multitude of sins so as to transcend ethics throughout one's life. The significance attributed to the true man and great man by Chuang Tzu is quite clear. He considers that one who is able to realize the level of the true man can then be said to have reached the highest point of human existence, and he can then be considered to be a true person and be called a sage or divine man. One who was opposite to this would then not be considered a person.

To sum up, during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, the learning and thought of Northern China around the area of the Yellow River, and the thought prevalent in the South as represented by Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu in the State of Ch'u, were to different degrees influenced by the teachings of the "*fang-shih*" on the cultivation of life. There is clear and irrefutable evidence of this. Later Confucians, being overconfident of themselves, wished to establish absolute

authority and have sole control of a Confucian world. As a result, they established the idea of orthodox sects, “petty pendants” with ridiculous views when compared with the attitudes of Confucius, Mencius, Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu.

It must be understood that the paths taken by Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu, Confucius and Mencius jointly carried on the traditional spirit of non-separation of ruler and teacher that had been passed on from the Three Dynasties and earlier. Owing to the changing times and the decline of the perfect way of the ancient kings, the way of the teacher was employed for personal ends. Although later Confucians said they had great esteem for Confucius and Mencius when discussing the teacher of a king, in reality their virtues, learning and talent could not even be mentioned together with that of Confucius and Mencius.

The so-called self-styled disciples of Confucius and Mencius advocated the way of the sage, but they did nothing more than transmit and learn texts as well as chant the words of the sages as a tool for attaining promotion in official rank. At most, their moral integrity and knowledge were a little better and they were capable of serving as ministers of state. It was therefore in their best interests to employ the term “heterodox” mentioned by Confucius to condemn those less conventional disciples of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu.

Owing to limitations of space, I will not discuss the learning and thought of Lieh Tzu. However, it is much more substantial and systematic to employ the thought of Lieh Tzu to study the metaphysical ontology of the Taoist School as regards theoretical physics. Later, people suspected that the text of the *Lieh Tzu* was of dubious authenticity, and claimed that it was a forgery by someone of the Wei or Chin dynasty. I feel that this is not necessarily the case because the scholars of the Wei and Chin dynasties, aside from maintaining traditions in learning and thought and making exaggerated literary additions, did not possess such talent.

The Influences of the Yin-Yang School and *Fang-shih* of the Warring States Period

In order to be as brief and to the point as possible, aside from adding a small bit of explanation of the learning and thought of the Taoist School during the Chou Dynasty as represented by Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, it would be best to limit discussion to the Yin-Yang School and *fang-shih* as reference. It is important that we know the background of the Warring States Period wherein regardless of whether they were individuals or the states of feudal lords, on the upper or lower levels of society, all placed great emphasis on material gain and focused on the practical much like the modern world of today.

In his biography on Mencius, Ssu-ma Ch'ien wrote of the learning and thought prevailing at the time:

At that time, the State of Ch'in employed Shang Yang, and the state prospered and was strong militarily. The states of Ch'u and Wei used Wu Ch'i, and they weakened their enemies and won wars. King Wei and King Hsuan of the State of Ch'i employed the disciples of Sun Tzu, and the feudal lords faced off the State of Ch'i to the East. The world was enmeshed in vertical and horizontal alliances, and attack was viewed as virtuous. However, Mencius discoursed on the virtues of Emperors T'ang and Yu and the Three Ancient Periods, and this is why they differed.

It can be seen from this that emphasis on material gain is the inevitable outcome of environments that have a deep-rooted pursuit of pragmatism. The social prevalence of focusing on profit and emphasizing the practical even more so creates a chaotic society of confusion and contention.

Confucius and Mencius emulated former kings, and they sang the praises of the political thoughts of Emperors T'ang and Yu, ideals which were very difficult to realize. However, the carrying forth and enhancement of the ideas of the former kings, as well as preserving the spirit of traditional culture during and prior to the Three Periods, was a necessity. Those of the Taoist School such as Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu and Chieh Yu felt that the prevalent views of the times could not be stemmed. One could only take steps in advance and guide one's actions according to circumstances. However, it is truly no easy matter to master the techniques of taking steps in advance, and having "action" be as if "non-action."

Therefore, both Confucius and Mencius came to understand the importance of mastering the trends of the times when they reached middle age. Confucius praised this concept of the "times" in both the *Book of Changes* and the *Confucian Analects*. Mencius later briefly explained: "Although one be intelligent, this is not as good as seizing the right moment, and although one has a hoe, this is not as good as awaiting the opportune moment." This sentiment is very well expressed in the T'ang dynasty poem by Tou Kung: "One desires to inquire of past affairs when melancholy, But the river waters flow away and never return. The spring grasses flourish green when the east wind blows, Partridges ascend and fly past the king's terrace."

The Learning and Thought of Tsou Yen

The Yin-Yang School, which was contemporary with Mencius, enjoyed a very lively intellectual atmosphere. In his biography on Mencius, Ssu-ma Ch'ien wrote:

When the kings, dukes and officials first viewed his methods, they were frightened and ultimately unable to put them into practice. Master Tsou was highly respected in the State of Ch'i. When he went to the State of Liang, King Hui of Liang went to the outskirts of the city to welcome him, and he was treated with the propriety of an important guest. When he went to the State of Chao, he sat in a place of honor next to the ruler. King Chao of the State of Yen embraced him as a harbinger of vast wisdom, regarded him as a master, and built for him a palace of granite. He grew very prosperous, and when traveling to the states of feudal princes he was always reverently honored. How different this was from Confucius' pallor due to hunger in the states of Ch'en and Ts'ai, and the difficulties met by Mencius in the states of Ch'i and Liang!

When we now read Ssu-ma Ch'ien's account in the *Record of History* regarding the fame of Tsou Yen of the Yin-Yang School, it is truly one of international proportions. All of the feudal lords vied to invite this renowned scholar, Mencius could not compare to his powerful influence, and not even the later Su Ch'in, who was so revered by the Six States, enjoyed such glory. However, this was another type of Taoist, and the sense of respect and admiration did not reflect the Taoist spirit of the disciples of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu.

Tsou Yen limited his travels to the states of Yen, Ch'i, Chao and Liang, and he did not go to Ch'in or Chin to say nothing of the Southern states in the Wu and Yueh regions. This was because Tsou Yen was part of the Yin-Yang School, and the teachings which he focused upon were unlike those of the Political Strategist School who employed gains and losses, and rights and wrongs to win people over, and who were able to obtain politically useful positions by singing their own praises.

The statement "When the kings, dukes and officials first viewed his methods, they were frightened" describes the situation wherein his theories began to be accepted by the upper levels of society holding power. But even while welcoming these teachings there was still a feeling of not being able to completely believe them. He therefore said: "they were unable to put them into practice." This shows that they were later unable to implement them. This is not stating that Tsou Yen's ideas were impractical, but rather that they could not be accomplished. Why do I say this? If we take a further look at Ssu-ma Ch'ien's general outline of Tsou Yen's theories, he states:

Tsou Yen saw that those in power were immoral and extravagant. They were unable to respect virtue and give of themselves completely to the people as described in the 'Ta Ya' section of the *Book of Poetry*. He then profoundly observed the ebbs and flows of the *yin* and *yang*, the myriad and strange changes in the world, and composed over one hundred thousand characters of sagely text.

His words were expansive and great but without foundation, and so he had to first look into small, detailed matters and then magnified them. The preface traced back to the time of the Yellow Emperor, to the techniques shared by scholars as well as the major successes and misfortunes of different eras. Recordings were made of seeking blessings by praying to spirits, regulations, and went far back to the mysterious origins prior to the separation of Heaven and earth.

There were first enumerated the famous mountains, great rivers valleys, wild beasts, climate, fauna, and classes of things in China. He then extended further beyond the seas, places not seen by others. He made judgments on matters within Heaven and earth and the transformations of the five virtues, enumerated each of their benefits, and revealed the mutual agreement between Heaven's appointment and human affairs.

He maintained that the China spoken of by the Confucians was only one part of eighty-one sections that he described. He called China the "Red District Spiritual Region (Ch'ih Hsien Shen Chou)" and this "Red District Spiritual Region" was composed of nine regions. During the time of Emperor Yu, these Nine Regions were not separately divided.

There were in turn nine regions outside of the "Red District Spiritual Region," and these were also called Nine Regions. They were surrounded by seas, and the peoples and animals did not have any communication between them wherein there were nine districts in each region. These nine regions were surrounded by large oceans and the world was thus divided. His general purport was that people must practice benevolence, righteousness, moderation, as well maintain the relations between ruler and official, superior and inferior, and the six family relationships.

Ssu-ma Ch'ien also wrote:

"It is said that I Yin (ca. 18th c. B.C.) supported the throne and aided T'ang in becoming king. Pai Li-hsi fed the cows beneath the cart and Duke Mu came to manage the throne. Through harmony the correct path was taken. Tsou Yen commented that although this was irregular, he still attained the Great Way."

Let us now explain the biographical facts regarding Tsou Yen as recorded by Ssu-ma Ch'ien, and at the same time briefly explain the ideas of the Yin-Yang School at that time and the learning of this school which was later incorporated into the Taoist School.

(A) The Motives and Aims of Tsou Yen's Theories on *Yin* and *Yang*

The focus of the initial section of Ssu-ma Ch'ien's text lies in the line "the myriad and strange changes in the world." We must fully understand the function of Ssu-ma Ch'ien's biography and why it was placed together with the discussion on Mencius. Moreover, his purpose in first writing on the *yin-yang* theories of Tsou Yen was to advocate the guiding principles of ethics and at the same time to explain that Tsou Yen was not satisfied with the pragmatism of the time. He therefore first expounded the principle of the ebb and flow of *yin* and *yang* so as to explain the path which historical individuals should have taken.

The line "the myriad and strange changes in the world" reveals that the text on Tsou Yen is employing the strange phenomena within the social changes at that time to verify the mutual changes of the *yin* and *yang*. This is not to say that Tsou Yen purposely created weird and uncanny theories to confuse people. Later generations who read this essay interpreted it out of context and utilized the line "the myriad and strange changes in the world" to conclude that the theories of Tsou Yen and others of the Yin-Yang School were limited to discourse on the strange and weird. This mistake was repeated down through the ages.

This first unjustly wronged the learning and thought of Lao Tzu, and then later buried alive the learning of the Yin-Yang School and Tsou Yen which in turn constrained the proper development of the spirit of China's primitive theoretical sciences. These ideas gave rise to separate sects and factions during and after the Han dynasty, and then later they were joined together into the Taoist School.

(B) The Contents of the Yin-Yang Theory

The second section of the essay explained that the *yin-yang* theory, which he proposed, was a philosophy of history combined with theoretical science that was used to explain the inevitable evolutionary trends of human affairs as well as those of the world at large. The study of predictions, as well as the integrated methods of using the *Book of Changes*, divination with tortoise shell, and the selection of lucky days developed by Chiao Kan and Ching Fang during the Han dynasty, the ideas embodied in the *Huang Chi Ching Shih Shu* by Shao Yung of the Sung dynasty, the *T'ui Pei T'u* and *Shao Ping Ko* transmitted since the T'ang dynasty down through the

Ming and Ch'ing dynasties, and the study of predictions carried out in China for two thousand years, all evolved from the system of learning and thought of the Yin-Yang School. Therefore, Ssu-ma Ch'ien also wrote:

He recorded the natural and man-made disasters of each historical period, predicted developments in future eras, and traced far back prior to the separation of Heaven and earth when the universe had not yet been formed, an obscure period which cannot be verified, taking it as the basis for establishing his theory.

This explains that he used historical facts for verification and the theoretical physics of the mutual changing of *yin* and *yang* as the basis to predict future events and to investigate the metaphysical ontology of the universe prior to the birth of Heaven, earth and the ten thousand things.

(C) The Geophysical Thought of Tsou Yen

The geographical environment of famous mountains, major rivers and connecting valleys in China is the theoretical basis for the *True Illustrations of the Five Mountains* (Wu Yu Chen Hsing T'u) composed within the Taoist religion after the Wei and Chin dynasties, and explained the primitive idea of the interconnection between the immortal grottoes in the earth's core and their direct link to Mt. Maoshan near Nanking. These grottoes serve as the lungs of the earth, and thus the channels of these grottoes are called "earth lungs."

When we hear of this now, we will feel it strange and laughable, and yet there is the study of geophysics in the United States that is now spending enormous amounts of money to drill through the earth's core in offshore areas of the United States to investigate its geophysical characteristics. This, you might feel, is the magnificent spirit of modern science, yet why do you laugh at the geophysical theories studied in ancient thought and pay them no attention? This strange mentality is then derived from not understanding the spirit of science. Scientists and philosophers are similar in that they are always able to find problems within any given question, and this is not parroting what others have said or awaiting the discoveries of others and then using them for one's own enjoyment.

When we take a close look at the theories of Tsou Yen, are they really absurd, and to what extent are they absurd? It was also said that he studied the reproduction of animals and other living things, the importance of their relationship with the climate, and then extended to foreign regions which most people of his day were unable to see. He stated that from the time of the separation of Heaven and

earth, the five elements of metal, wood, water, fire and earth and the geological environment were related to the successes and failures of all historical and political events, these being the effects of adapting to time and place, like the matching of two tallies. Moreover, he considered that the China which was discussed by the Confucians of his time merely included 1/81 of the entire world.

Tsou Yen stated that China, called the “Red District Spiritual Region,” was made up of nine regions which were earlier demarcated by the Emperor Yu, and that the areas beyond China were also divided into nine regions, the “Nine Major Regions” of the world. Each region was surrounded by a large ocean and the people and animals were unable to have any contact with each other. The same connected areas were called a region. Outside of these nine major regions was the largest surrounding ocean that was connected with a place which connected Heaven and earth.

Based on Ssu-ma Ch’ien’s account of Tsou Yen’s views on geology, can you actually say that his theories were absurd? However, we should remember that from the perspective of the scholars of the Warring States Period, his views actually were quite strange and unbelievable. Therefore, Ssu-ma Ch’ien stated that the kings, dukes and high officials all revered him in a rather fearful manner, but they were not like people of today who blindly revere the boasts of scientists.

Only Ssu-ma Ch’ien was capable of serving as a true transmitter of history, and without commenting on whether or not Tsou Yen was correct, he merely stated: “His theories were all of this category” so that later generations may study them. His closing remarks in Tsou Yen’s biography were that Tsou Yen’s general aim was that human behavior must maintain the constant ethical standards of benevolence, righteousness, moderation, and the relations between the ruler and official, superior and inferior, and the six family relationships so as to realize the original moral nature of human beings.

At the beginning, one will first employ far-reaching and irregular theories to attract the notice of others. Ssu-ma Ch’ien therefore continues by further explaining that when I Yin had not attained his purpose, he went to serve as a cook. He then became close with T’ang of the Shang dynasty and helped T’ang attain the throne. When Pai Li-hsi had not attained his purpose, he tended cows for others and fed them under a cart. As a result, he was employed by Duke Mu of Ch’in and single-handedly brought about the hegemony of Ch’in. Both of these individuals had methods for advancing themselves wherein they approached the Great Way after realizing mutual trust between ruler and official.

These unusual practices such as I Yin serving as a cook, and Pai Li-hsi tending cows, were quite similar to the unusual practices of Tsou Yen. Ssu-ma Ch'ien was certainly defending Tsou Yen in his essay. However, although Tsou Yen did have ideas and theories related to the natural sciences, he actually started from concepts in the natural physical sciences. In the end he returned to the morals of human relationships thus reflecting the prevalent trend of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods.

(D) The Prevalent Trend of Learning in the State of Ch'i

During the Warring States Period, besides Tsou Yen, there were many scholars of the Yin-Yang School who congregated in the city of Chi. The most renowned of these so-called gentlemen of Chi included Ch'un Yu-k'un, Shen Tao, Huan Yuan, Chieh Tzu, T'ien P'in, and Tsou Shih. Ssu-ma Ch'ien said: "Each wrote books which discussed the suppression of revolts, political affairs, and the superior path of action."

Shen Tao, a native of the State of Chao, wrote the *Shen Tzu*, and was later included within the Legalist School. T'ien P'in and Chieh Tzu were both natives of the State of Ch'i; they composed the *T'ien Tzu* in twenty-five chapters and the *Chieh Tzu* in two chapters respectively, and both were later placed within the Taoist School. Tsou Shih wrote a text in twelve chapters and was categorized as being in the Yin-Yang School. Tsou Yen was skilled in discussing all types of subjects, and the Taoists who traveled to the city of Chi called him "the skillful debater." Huan Yuan, a native of the State of Ch'u composed a text in two chapters. Nevertheless, "all of them studied the teachings of the Yellow Emperor and Lao Tzu, and brought forth their own interpretations."

These disciples of the Taoist School studying a comprehensive range of learning were very influential in the State of Ch'i at that time, and they were both esteemed by the King of Ch'i and the upper levels of society as well as enjoyed great honor. For example:

When Ch'un Yu-k'un met the King of Liang, he spoke continuously for three days and three nights without growing tired. King Hui wanted to retain him as cabinet minister, but Ch'un Yu-k'un declined and took his leave. He was later offered carriages, chariots, strings of money, jade honors of rank, and one hundred taels of gold, but he did not serve in an official capacity throughout his life.

Those that followed after Ch'un Yu-k'un, such as Tsou Shih, were "all appointed as

great officers of state, they were highly respected by the eminent families, treated as guests by the feudal lords throughout the country, and were called the 'sages of Ch'i who were able to govern the nation.'"

When Hsun Tzu was a young man, he traveled to study in Ch'i, and he had contact with Ch'in Yu-k'un for some time. There are therefore many aspects of Hsun Tzu's thought which are imbibed with Taoist elements. Later, after T'ien P'in and others died, during the reign of King Hsiang of Ch'i, Hsun Tzu served as the highest teacher, and when Ch'i wished to fill a vacancy for chief official, Hsun Tzu managed the "sacrificial wine" three times.

The "*Fang-shih*" of the States of Yen and Ch'i and the Origins of the Thought of Immortals During the Ch'in and Han Dynasties

Emperor Ch'in Shih Huang and the Feng and Shan Sacrifices

The *Book of Rites* and the "Eight Books" in the *Record of History* provide a very reliable and systematized set of materials regarding the origins of the learning and thought of the Taoist religion in China. They give us much information on how the Taoist School transformed into the Taoist religion, and how the "*fang-shih*" of Yen and Ch'i changed to become immortals. Most of the historical materials have certain records in chapters entitled, "Feng and Shan Sacrifices." We shall now briefly discuss the Taoist School and origins of the Taoist religion during the Ch'in and Han dynasties.

The Feng and Shan sacrifices carried out in ancient Chinese history were similar to the religious ceremonies practiced in the West. Moreover, they were great ceremonies carried out by emperors through successive eras. The Feng sacrifice refers to sacrificing to Heaven using a mound of earth built on Mt. T'ai as the altar to show gratitude for the favors of Heaven. The Shan sacrifice is carried out on a small hill at the bottom of Mt. T'ai to show gratitude for the favors of earth; "Shan" has the meaning of making something spiritual.

When Duke Huan of Ch'i came to power during the Spring and Autumn Period, he desired to carry out the Feng and Shan sacrifices, but his minister Kuan Chung made strong efforts to dissuade him: "In the past, the rulers of seventy-two houses performed the Feng sacrifice at Mt. T'ai and the Shan sacrifice at Liang-fu, though I can find the name of only twelve of these in the records." Ssu-ma Ch'ien said:

Over one hundred years later, when Confucius was teaching and transmitting the Six Classics, he is reported to have said that there had been over seventy rulers in the past who, on assuming new surnames and becoming kings, had performed the Feng sacrifice at Mt. T'ai and the Shan sacrifice at Liang-fu. He added, however, that the details of the ceremonies which they followed were far from being clear and it was difficult to say much about them.

During the times of Confucius, the significance of the Feng and Shan sacrifices faded along with the decline of the Chou imperial rule. Moreover, King Ling of the Chou dynasty adopted the ideas of Ch'ang Hung to employ supernatural and superstitious methods and shoot at the head of a wildcat so as to induce the feudal lords to come to court. This one event transformed the spirit of the Feng and Shan sacrifices to become the function of magical arts. Later, Ch'ang Hung was murdered by the men of Chin and the feudal lords rose up in rebellion as a result of this. It was therefore said: "Ch'ang Hung was the first among the men of Chou to expound the use of such magical arts."

More than one hundred years later, beginning with Duke Ling of Ch'in, the spirit of the Feng and Shan sacrifices evolved into setting up temples to gods, and then later into the worship of many gods in the Taoist religion. The exaltation of the White Emperor and *ling-pao* spirits during the Han dynasty began during the Ch'in dynasty.

When the First Emperor of the Ch'in came to power, he made a tour of the eastern provinces and districts. He performed a sacrifice at Mt. I in Tsou and there set up a stone tablet lauding the achievements of the Ch'in. "He then summoned seventy Confucian masters and scholars from Ch'i and Lu to meet him at the foot of Mt. T'ai." They held different views on the rituals for carrying out the Feng and Shan sacrifices; "As the First Emperor listened to the debates of the scholars, he found that each of them expressed a different opinion and their recommendations were difficult to carry out. As a result, he dismissed all of the Confucian scholars."

When those Confucian scholars who had been dismissed heard that the First Emperor of the Ch'in had encountered a violent wind and rainstorm, they used this as a basis to ridicule him. "The First Emperor then proceeded east on his journey as far as the sea, stopping along the way to perform rituals and sacrifices to the various famous mountains and great rivers and to the Eight Spirits, and searching for immortals such as Hsien-men and his companions." The Eight Spirits appear to have existed since ancient times. Some people say that their worship was begun at the time of the Great Duke, the first lord of the State of Ch'i. However, since the

sacrifices were later discontinued, no one knows exactly when they originated. "When you have completed your work, retire. This is the Way of Heaven."

The so-called Eight Spirits are:

- (1) The Lord of Heaven; sacrifices were offered to him at the Navel of Heaven. Another explanation is the Navel of Heaven is the name of a spring located at the foot of a mountain in the southern suburbs of the city of Lin-tzu, and there are five springs that originate from this site. This varies from the usual superstitious views as it is said to resemble the navel of Heaven.
- (2) The Lord of the Land; sacrifices were offered to him at Liang-fu near Mt. T'ai. Because Heaven loves the yin, the Lord of the Land must be worshipped at the foot of a high mountain or on top of a small hill, at a place called an "altar." Because Earth honors the *yang*, the sacrifices to it must be conducted on a round hill in the midst of a lowland.
- (3) The Lord of Arms is worshipped by offering sacrifices to Ch'ih Yu.
- (4) The Lord of the Yin is worshipped at Three Mountains.
- (5) The Lord of the Yang is worshipped at Chih-fu.
- (6) The Lord of the Moon is worshipped at Mt. Lai.
- (7) The Lord of the Sun is worshipped at Mt. Ch'eng.
- (8) The Lord of the Four Seasons is worshipped at Lang-ya.

This is the origin of the later practice of the Taoist religion in worshipping many spirits. However, the First Emperor of the Ch'in transformed the Feng and Shan sacrifices into love of Spirit Immortals as a result of his fondness for seeking immortality in his later years. This also originated from the pervasion of the learning of the "*fang-shih*" during and after the Warring States Period, as well as the spread of the ideas of the Yin-Yang School.

The Record of History states:

From the times of Kings Wei and Hsuan of Ch'i, the disciples of the philosopher Tsou Yen propounded their master's theory of the succession of the five elements. When the ruler of Ch'in took the title of emperor, the men of Ch'i accordingly explained this theory to him, and as a result the First Emperor selected water as the patron element of his reign. Sung Wu-chi, Cheng Ch'iao, Ch'ung Shang, Hsien-men Kao (all of these are praised as ancient immortals), and Tsui Hou were all men of Yen who practiced magic and followed the way of the immortals, discarding their mortal forms and changing into spiritual beings by means of supernatural aid. Tsou Yen won fame among the feudal princes for his theories of the yin and yang. However, those *fang-shih* who lived along the seacoast of

Ch'i and Yen, although they claimed to transmit his teachings, were unable to understand them. Therefore, from this time forward there appeared a host of men, too numerous to mention, who expounded all sorts of strange and fantastic theories and went to any lengths to flatter the rulers of the day and to ingratiate themselves with them.

After reading this section written by Ssu-ma Ch'ien, we are then able to understand how the learning and thought of the immortal "*fang-shih*," as well as the Yin-Yang School of the Warring States Period, influenced both the court and the populace during the Ch'in and Han dynasties. However, we can in no way overlook the fact that although the *fang-shih* living on the coast of Yen and Ch'i transmitted the teachings of Tsou Yen on the succession of the *yin* and *yang*, they "were unable to understand them." Being unable to comprehend such theories, they then "expounded all sorts of strange and fantastic theories," and availed themselves of these to deceive the public to gain undeserved fame, and they grew great in number.

Not only were the immortal "*fang-shih*" difficult to comprehend, but this was also the case with those of the pure Yin-Yang School such as Tsou Yen. As a result, during the Ch'in and Han dynasties, most of the *fang-shih* availed to pass themselves off as immortals in order to make a living. This is because human psychology is often fond of pursuing the false and discarding the truth, and so it gave birth to false "*fang-shih*" who pretended to be immortals and played at deceptions before emperors and the general populace. At the same time, they also deceived themselves, and came to occupy an interesting section of history from the Warring States Period down through the Han Dynasty wherein men transformed into immortal beings.

Ssu-ma Ch'ien further stated:

From the age of Kings Wei and Hsuan of Ch'i and King Chao of Yen, men were sent from time to time to set out to sea and search for the islands of P'eng-lai, Fang-chang and Ying-chou. These were three spirit mountains that were said to exist in the Gulf of Pohai. They were not far from the land of men, but the difficulty was that, whenever a boat was about to touch their shores, a wind would always spring up and drive it away.

In the past, people said, there had been men who succeeded in reaching them, and found them occupied by immortal spirits who possessed the elixir of immortality. All of the plants, birds and animals of the islands were white, and the palaces and gates were made of gold and silver. Seen from afar, the three spirit mountains looked like clouds

but, as one drew closer, they seemed instead to be down under the water. As soon as anyone got near to them, the wind would suddenly come and drag the boat away, so that in the end no one could ever reach them. The rulers of the time were all aroused to envy by such tales.

Ssu-ma Ch'ien's lengthy account of the spirit palaces and gates of the Three Mountains in the sea all derived from legend and are difficult to verify. However, he employed a very ingenious line, "The rulers of the time were all aroused to envy by such tales." Ssu-ma Ch'ien is relating that the higher the position, riches and power an individual possessed, the more empty was his psychological state. The desires of people can be boundless, and those who became emperors and wished to ascend to Heaven were also inevitably prone to uneasiness. Although those great heroes conquered the world, became emperors and were clever throughout their lives, they still were befuddled in this one matter, being willing to be deceived by the *fang-shih*. Consequently, Ssu-ma Ch'ien also wrote the history of the First Emperor of the Ch'in seeking after immortals.

Ssu-ma Ch'ien stated:

When the First Emperor of the Ch'in united the empire and journeyed to the sea, a countless throng of *fang-shih* appeared to tell him of these wonders. The First Emperor decided that, even if he were to set out in person on the sea, he would be unable to reach the islands, and so he ordered his men to gather together a number of youths and maidens and send them to sea to search in his place. The sea was soon full of boats, crisscrossing this way and that, and when they returned without success, they all used the wind as an excuse. 'We were unable to reach the islands,' they reported, 'but we could see them in the distance.'

The following year, the First Emperor again journeyed to the sea going as far as Lang Ya, and then passing by Mt. Heng he returned to the capital by way of Shang Tang. Three years later, he made a trip to Chieh Shih on the coast at which time he cross-examined the *fang-shih* who were supposed to have gone to sea to look for the islands. He returned to the capital by way of Shang Province.

Five years later, he made a trip south to Mt. Hsiang and from there went to climb Mt. K'uai Chi. He followed along the sea coast on his way back, hoping to obtain some of the wonderful medicine of immortality brought from the three spirit mountains in the sea. He did not obtain the drug, and when he had gone as far as Sha Ch'iu, he passed away.

In this section, Ssu-ma Ch'ien made every effort to employ his greatest writing talents to narrate the real desires of a historical imperial personage, and very aptly ended this pursuit for immortality with the emperor's death. In this "Feng and Shan Sacrifices" chapter, Ssu-ma Ch'ien not only satirized the First Emperor of the Ch'in, as well as Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty, but at the same time he also revealed in detail those reviling and despicable aspects of the false "*fang-shih*." However, he also refuted the ridicule and disdain displayed by the Confucians during the Ch'in and Han dynasties regarding the superstitious Feng and Shan sacrifices.

Ssu-ma Ch'ien wrote:

In his third year, the Second Emperor was assassinated. Thus the Ch'in Dynasty fell just thirteen years after the First Emperor performed the Feng and Shan sacrifices. The Confucian scholars despised the Ch'in for having burned the *Book of Poetry* (*Shih Ching*) and *Book of Documents* (*Shu Ching*) and mercilessly put to death the scholars who expounded them. The common people hated its harsh laws, so that the whole world rose up in rebellion. At this time, everyone started speaking ill of the Ch'in, saying, 'When the First Emperor ascended Mt. T'ai, he was attacked by violent wind and rain and therefore was never really able to carry out the Feng and Shan sacrifices.'

He then renders his final conclusion: "Is this not an example of a ruler who, although he did not possess the virtue necessary to perform the sacrifices, yet proceeded to carry them out?"

The Spirit Way and Spirit Immortals at the Beginning of the Han Dynasty

The fact that the First Emperor of the Ch'in superstitiously believed in spirits and blindly searched for immortals resulted in "what the upper levels do the lower levels follow closely." At the end of the reign of the Second Emperor of the Ch'in, both the court and the populace were shrouded in a superstitious air of spirits and ghosts, and therefore it was Ch'en Sheng and Wu Kuang, the first to rise up in rebellion, who employed lanterns and made the sounds of a fox as the signal for the revolt.

During the rise of Emperor Kao-tsu of the Han Dynasty, rebellion was signaled by the cutting up of a white snake, and after he ascended the throne, the Emperor Kao-tsu ordered the building of a shrine to the Five Emperors where the Spirit Way was worshipped. Emperor Wen of the Han also set up an altar to the Five

Emperors, and at the beginning of the reign of Emperor Wu of the Han, special worship was performed to ghosts and spirits. He went to the old site of Yung in the state of Ch'in where suburban sacrifices were performed and established a conventional practice of holding sacrifices there once every three years. At the same time, he also began to seek out the Spirit Mistress and housed her in the Shang Lin Park.

Ssu-ma Ch'ien writes:

The Spirit Mistress who dwelled in the T'i Shih Tower was originally a woman of Ch'ang Ling who died in childbirth. Later her spirit appeared and took possession of her brother's wife, Yuan Jo. Yuan Jo offered sacrifices to the spirit in her house, and many people came to join in the worship. Lady P'ing Yuan, the maternal grandmother of the present emperor, was among those who sacrificed to the spirit, and later her sons and grandsons all became famous and honored.

Thus when the present emperor (Emperor Wu) came to the throne, he treated the Spirit Mistress with great reverence and transferred her place of worship to his own palace in the Shang Lin Park. It was at this time that Li Shao-chun appeared before the emperor to expound the worship of the fireplace and explain his theories on how to achieve immortality through dietary restrictions. The emperor treated him with great respect.

Li Shao-chun had formerly been a retainer of the marquis of Shen Tse and specialized in magical arts. He kept his real age and place of birth a secret, always telling people he was seventy years old. Claiming that he could make the spirits serve him and prevent old age, he traveled about to the courts of the feudal lords, expounding his magic. He had no wife or children. When people heard of his power to command the spirits and defy death, they showered him with a constant stream of presents, and so he always had more than enough food, clothing and money. Impressed that he seemed to enjoy such affluence without engaging in any business, and also not knowing where he was from, people put even greater faith in his claims and vied with each other in waiting on him.

Li Shao-chun then told the emperor: "If you sacrifice to the fireplace you can call the spirits to you, and if the spirits come you can transform cinnabar into gold. Using this gold, you may make eating and drinking utensils that will prolong the years of your life. With prolonged life, you may visit the immortals who live on the island of P'eng-lai in the middle of the sea. If you visit them and perform the Feng and Shan sacrifices, you will never die. This is what the Yellow Emperor did. Once

I wandered by the sea and visited Master An-ch'i, and he fed me jujubes as big as melons. Master An-ch'i is an immortal who travels about P'eng-lai. If he takes a liking to someone he will come to meet him, but if not he will hide."

Therefore, the emperor began to sacrifice in person to the fireplace. He sent magicians to set out on the sea in search of Master An-ch'i of P'eng-lai, and attempted to make gold out of cinnabar sand and various other types of medicines. After some time, Li Shao-chun fell ill and died. The emperor actually believed that he was not really dead but had transformed himself into a spirit. He ordered K'uan Shu, a clerk from Huang Ch'ui, to carry on the magical arts which Li Shao-chun had taught. None of the group sent out to search for Master An-ch'i on the island of Peng-lai succeeded in finding anything. After this, many strange and dubious *fang-shih* from the seacoast of Yen and Ch'i came to court to speak to the emperor about supernatural affairs.

We can then come to know, after reading this account by Ssu-ma Ch'ien, that Emperor Wu, a man of great talent and bold vision, also had another direction of interest, and that his ridiculous behavior in worshipping the Spirit Way and searching after spirit immortals was regarded as sweet and enjoyable. Later, Shao-weng of Ch'i also used his magical arts to have an audience with the emperor, and the emperor honored Shao-weng with the title of General Wen-ch'eng, bestowed him with great honors and wealth, treated him with reverence. On his recommendation, the emperor constructed a large palace to worship the spirits.

Ssu-ma Ch'ien wrote of this:

A year or so passed, however, and Shao-weng's magical arts seemed to grow less and less effective, for no spirits appeared to answer his summons. He then wrote a message on a piece of silk and fed it to an ox. Pretending to know nothing of the matter, he declared to the emperor: 'There seems to be some strange object in this ox's belly.' The ox was killed and its belly opened, revealing the piece of silk, and the words written on it were extraordinarily strange. The emperor recognized the handwriting, and when he cross-examined Shao-weng, discovered that the message was actually a fraud. He had Shao-weng executed but kept the matter a secret. Following this, he constructed the Terrace of Cypress Beams with bronze pillars atop of which were immortals with their palms held open to receive the dew.

Later, Emperor Wu contracted a serious illness, and although doctors and

shamans were summoned to treat him, none could cure his sickness. He sought the help of spirits and as a result his illness was cured. When recovered, he went personally to the Palace of Sweet Springs and offered wine to the Spirit Mistress. Ssu-ma Ch'ien writes: "There was nothing the least bit extraordinary about the words of the deity, which were the sort of thing that anyone could say, but the emperor alone took great delight in them. The entire affair was kept secret so that most people at the time knew nothing about it."

Later, Emperor Wu showed great favor to Luan Ta, who had been recommended by the Marquis of Lo-ch'eng, honoring him with the title of General of the Five Profits. Ssu-ma Ch'ien writes:

Luan Ta was a palace attendant of the King of Chiao-tung. Originally, he had studied under the same teacher as Shao-weng, the *fang-shih* whom the emperor had executed ... The emperor, after having executed Shao-weng, began to regret that he had been so hasty with the death sentence, and had not given the *fang-shih* an opportunity to finish displaying his powers. He was therefore very delighted to see Luan Ta.

Luan Ta was tall and handsome, and possessed many magical schemes and strategies. He did not hesitate to make the most grand pronouncements and never showed any sign that he ever doubted the truth of what he was saying. He declared to the emperor: 'I once traveled far and wide over the sea, and visited An-ch'i, Hsien-men and other immortals. However, they all looked upon me as an inferior and would not confide in me. Further, because I served King K'ang, who was only one of the feudal lords, they considered that I was not worthy to receive their teachings. I often spoke to King K'ang about this matter, but he would not listen to my suggestions. My teacher told me that gold could certainly be made from cinnabar, that the break in the dikes of the Yellow River could be repaired, the elixir of immortality could be made, and the immortals persuaded to appear. However, I was afraid that if I spoke of these things, I would meet the same fate as Shao-weng. This is the reason why I and all of the *fang-shih* have kept our mouths closed. How could I dare to speak of my magic?'

The emperor said: 'It was only the case that Shao-weng ate some horse liver and died. If you are truly able to cultivate his magic arts, what will I not give you?'

Luan Ta replied: 'My teacher has no reason to seek for men. It is men who seek him out. If your majesty truly wishes to summon him, then you must first honor the envoys that you send to him, making them members of the imperial family, and treating them as guests rather than

subjects, doing nothing that would humiliate them. If you grant each of the envoys the imperial seals, they may go and speak to the spirit man. Whether or not he will consent I do not know, but I believe that if you confer sufficient honors upon the envoys you send, he may then be persuaded to come.”

In order to test Luan Ta, the emperor instructed him to give a minor display of his magic powers by making some chessmen fight. When the board was set up, the chessmen were seen to rush against each other of their own accord.

At this time, the emperor was extremely worried about the break in the dikes of the Yellow River, and concerned that he had not been able to change it. He therefore bestowed the honorific title of General of the Five Profits upon Luan Ta. After a few months, Luan Ta was able to wear four seals at his girdle; those of the General of the Heavenly Man, General of the Earthly Man, and General of the Great Way were also bestowed upon him. ... A fiefdom of two thousand households were granted to Luan Ta, General of the Earthly Man, as well as the title of marquis of Lo-t’ung. In addition, the emperor bestowed Luan Ta with one of the finest mansions of the marquises, one thousand servants, carriages for use on ordinary and special occasions, and wall hangings, draperies, and various types of vessels to adorn his house.

The Emperor also gave his daughter Princess Wei, the eldest daughter of Empress Wei, to be Luan Ta’s wife, along with ten thousand catties of gold, and changed the name of the princess’s fiefdom to ‘Princess Tan-li.’ The emperor visited the home of Luan Ta in person, and he also sent a constant stream of envoys to inquire how he was and to supply him with anything he needed. From the emperor’s aunt and the highest officials of the government on down, people invited him to their homes to dine and showered him with gifts.

The emperor then had another jade seal carved with the title ‘General of the Heavenly Way’ and sent his envoys to present it to Luan Ta. The presentation ceremony was performed at night, the envoy being dressed in a feather cloak and standing on a mat of white rushes, while Luan Ta, similarly dressed and standing on the rushes, received the seal. This was done to indicate that Luan Ta was not being treated as a subject of the emperor. The words ‘Heavenly Way’ on the seal meant that Luan Ta should open up a way to the heavenly spirits for the emperor.

After this, Luan Ta spent every evening offering sacrifices at his home, hoping that he would be able to summon the spirits down. No spirits appeared, however, but only a multitude of ghosts who gathered around. He was able to control these. He later began to make preparations

for a journey, declaring that he would travel east and set out upon the sea to search for his teacher.

Several months after he was granted an audience with the emperor, Luan Ta wore six seals at his girdle, those of his five generalships and his marquisate, and his honor awed the empire. After this, there was hardly anyone living on the seacoast of Yen and Ch'i who did not begin waving his arms about excitedly and declaring that he possessed secret arts and could command the spirits and immortals."

Luan Ta was later executed owing to his inability to display magical powers, whereupon the emperor began to employ Kung-sun Ch'ing. "Kung-sun Ch'ing said: 'I believe the spirits should be induced to come, for they like to live in towers.' Therefore the emperor gave orders for the construction of the Flying Eaves and Cassia Towers in Ch'ang-an and the Increased Life and Longevity Towers at the Palace of Sweet Springs. He presented Kung-sun Ch'ing with the seals of an imperial envoy and ordered him to set out the necessary offerings and watch for the arrival of the spirits. He also built the Terrace that Reaches to Heaven and had the sacrificial utensils laid out at the foot, hoping to induce the spirits and immortals to visit it."

After reading these rather detailed records, we very clearly observe that Emperor Wu's fondness of the Spirit Way and seeking after spirits and immortals was even more excessive than that of the First Emperor of the Ch'in. We can then see how the learning and thought of the Taoist School transformed into the practices of the Taoist religion during and after the two Han dynasties, and how these fraudulent "*fang-shih*" fabricated facts concerning spirits and immortals to deceive people and gain fame.

Let us now take a look at the final conclusions and praises Ssu-ma Ch'ien made at the end of the "Feng and Shan Sacrifices" chapter so as to further understand the circumstances of the "*fang-shih*" at the beginning of the Han Dynasty:

The present emperor, after performing the Feng and Shan sacrifices, made another tour twelve years later, visiting the Five Peaks and Four Waterways. The *fang-shih* who had been commissioned to watch for spirit beings, and those who had been dispatched to search for the island of P'eng-lai in the sea, were not successful. Kung-sun Ch'ing was also supposed to watch for spirits, but he too was unsuccessful and could only make excuses by pointing out the footprints of giant men. The emperor therefore grew weary and disgusted with the absurd tales of

the *fang-shih*. However, he was bound and snared by them unable to free himself, for he had always hoped to find one who spoke the truth. From that time on, the *fang-shih* who came to him speaking of sacrifices to spirits grew ever increasing in number, but the results were quite obvious.

Ssu-ma ch'ien offers the following words of praise:

The Grand Historian states: 'I accompanied the emperor when he journeyed to sacrifice to Heaven and Earth, the other spirits, and famous mountains and rivers. When he performed the Feng and Shan sacrifices, I entered the Temple of Long Life and assisted at the sacrifices there when the spirits spoke. I was thus able to examine the ways of the *fang-shih* and the sacrificial officials. I later returned and wrote down in order matters related to the worship of spirits from ancient times on, describing both the inside and outside aspects of these affairs. Gentlemen in later times will then be able to look into what I have written. As regards the details of sacrificial plates and utensils, the types of jade and silk offered, or the precise ritual performed in offering them, these I have left to the officials in charge of such matters.

We basically understand that during the period from the Ch'in Dynasty down to the reign of Emperor Wu at the beginning of the Han Dynasty, roughly a time frame of one hundred years when the *fang-shih* and immortals of the Taoist School and precursors of the Taoist religion worshipped spirits, the impression which the *fang-shih* left in history was very bad. The sharp criticism of *fang-shih* in later periods was categorically unrelated to the true *fang-shih* of the Warring States Period and earlier, and to attribute the later shortcomings on the earlier individuals is unfair and unjustified.

General Contents of the Learning and Thought of the Taoist School During and After the Han and Wei Dynasties

The learning and thought of the Taoist School since the time of the First Emperor of the Ch'in and Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty has continuously been misunderstood whereupon focus was placed upon the pursuit of alchemical drugs by those fraudulent *fang-shih* and immortals, and this resulted in people missing the true spirit of Taoist culture. Furthermore, there were also the Confucian scholars at the beginning of the Han Dynasty, such as Tung Chung-shu, who, being born during an era of peace, overtly supported Confucianism but privately followed Taoism. They stated that Confucian and Taoist learning and thought were inseparable during the Chou and Ch'in dynasties, wrote commentaries on the *Five*

Classics, and interpreted the sagely way wherein they came to esteem Confucian learning as the sole standard. As a result, the learning and thought of the Taoist School, Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu were diminished in value.

Beginning in the Warring States Period, the true learning of the *fang-shih* developed into the study of the *Book of Changes* during the two Han dynasties, and it combined with the great surge of astronomy during the Han Dynasty. The *T'ai Hsuan Classic*, written by Yang Hsiung, employed the philosophical theories of the eight diagrams and also embodied the principles of the astronomical sciences. It was integrated with the *yin* and *yang*, five elements, Heavenly Stems, Earthly Branches, twenty-eight constellations, selection of lucky days, tortoise shell and hexagram divination, as well as the theoretical sciences of astronomy, geography, and physics. This resulted in the establishment of the study of the eight trigrams and calculations with the Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches, of Chiao Chang and Ching Fang, etc., calculating the functions of destiny, and the system of the *Book of Changes*. There was further division so that each of them split into different schools.

During and after the Wei and Chin dynasties, the scholars of the Alchemical Sect venerated the ideological system of Wei Po-yang, integrated the principles of these theories into the main stream of Chinese theories on medicine and pharmacology, and standardized the techniques of alchemy. Kuo P'u and others promoted topographical and geographical theories based on research of the geographical works of Yu Kung and the *Classic of Mountains and Seas*. The works of *Huai Nan Tzu* and *Pao P'u Tzu*, which reflected theories of the Taoist School and miscellaneous authors, should be considered collections of the learning and thought of the *fang-shih* of the Warring States and after.

During the Period of the Northern and Southern Dynasties after the Han, these forms of learning and thought took on a religious garb owing to the veneration of the Taoist religion during the Northern Wei Dynasty, and then transformed into the study of mysticism of the Taoist religion. However, when we come to the Sui and T'ang dynasties, there was another intellectual explosion so that, aside from the study of astronomy and calendar and the gradual establishment of specialized systems of science, there were also the pragmatic studies of astrology, geography, divination, architecture, engineering, technology, and the arts, the folk rituals related to the passing of the seasons, and local customs that were closely related to the learning and thought of the Taoist School. For instance, although the theories of medicine and pharmacology as well as the techniques of divination and physiognomy have their origins in the Chou and Ch'in dynasties and earlier, yet during the Han and Wei dynasties, there was also the introduction of Indian culture through Buddhist learning and thought. This resulted in the advances in medicine

and pharmacology made during the T'ang Dynasty, and the establishment of studies on divination and hexagram calculations.

As examples, the books of prophesy by Li Heng-feng and others, and the studies on astronomy and astrology by the Buddhist monk Ch'an Master I-hsing, all derived from the learning and thought of the orthodox Taoist School. The mathematics and calendar studies of the T'ang Dynasty coordinated with the developments made in study of trigrams during the two Han dynasties, and Arab calculation methods had strong influences during the Sui and T'ang dynasties which resulted in advances in triangles, cubes, and geometry.

Owing to these continuous influences, the mathematical thought of the Taoist School during the later years of the T'ang Dynasty and the Five Dynasties period shifted towards the mathematics and philosophy of the *River Chart* and *Book of the Lo River*, which produced the trigram studies of the *Book of Changes* during the initial years of the Sung Dynasty. This employed the refined knowledge of the *Book of Changes* studies carried out during the Han Dynasty and the mathematical and philosophical principles of the *River Chart* and *Book of the Lo River* to explain the transforming mechanisms of Heaven and Earth and predict the evolution of historical persons and events.

This transformed the divination practices of the Han Dynasty and developed upon the foundations of earlier philosophy. Throughout the over one thousand years of the Yuan, Ming and Ch'ing dynasties, all of the scientific and philosophical learning and thought of the Taoist School was either related to the trigram calculations of the Han Dynasty or belonged within the sphere of the study of the *Book of Changes*.

Aside from the well-known inventions of gunpowder and printing, the scholastic and scientific achievements during the T'ang, Sung, Yuan and Ming dynasties can be categorized as follows:

- (1) **Advances in medicine and pharmacology:** aside from the tradition of using the *Treatise on Febrile Diseases* by Chang Chung-ching of the Han dynasty, there were also the theories and pharmacological techniques of the four major schools of medicine and pharmacology during the Chin and Yuan dynasties. There was also the bronze figure of the Yuan Dynasty showing all of the acupoints on the human body, which laid a solid foundation for the later study of the therapeutic methods of acupuncture. It was the transmission of this body of knowledge that has led to the developments in acupuncture therapy in Germany, Japan and other nations. Hand manipulation techniques

(*tui-na*) and massage are other methods that arose from this system.

- (2) **The use of a needle pointing south to form the compass:** a large circular piece of wood was used, and in the center was inlaid a needle pointing south. The outer circles were arranged in levels with the eight trigrams, Heavenly Stems, Earthly Branches, the sixty year cycle of stems and branches, and the twenty-eight constellations, and China was used as the center of time and space.

Observations of the range of astronomical star images were used to differentiate geographical regions, and these functioned as astronomical dividing lines, being the earliest precursors of the degrees of latitude and longitude which divide the earth. There are a total of thirty-six levels which encircle a complete compass, and it is very intricate and complex between each level realizing both interaction and mutual functioning.

At the beginning of the Ming Dynasty, knowledge of navigation was not very advanced in the West and it had not yet been transmitted to China. However, the eunuch Ch'eng Ho made three voyages to Southeast Asia and beyond during the reign of Emperor Ch'eng-tsu of the Ming Dynasty (1403-1425 A.D.). The huge wooden ships that he had built sailed southeast from China through vast oceans, and the discrimination of distance as well as navigational direction were made possible by use of this compass.

Hui-chou served as the special production area for standard compasses during the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties, and the Hui-chou compass shared a great reputation along with the region's famous ink and paper products. There were also compasses manufactured in Kuangtung and Fukien provinces. The Hui-chou compass was later primarily used for geographical bearings. The Kuangtung and Fukien compasses were mostly used for marine navigation.

To sum up, the degree standards of the Hui-chou compass were applicable for the geographical environment of China while the Kuangtung and Fukien compasses were suitable for the coastal regions in the Southeast.

- (3) **They continued the extraordinary principles of the thought of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu as well as the mutual transformation of things created within the universe, especially studied the interactive transformations of living things, and explained the marvelous theory that human beings were able to utilize their own life functions to practice cultivation and become immortals:** The *Book of Transformations* written by T'an Shao of the T'ang Dynasty was the earliest text to specifically study biological transformations. In addition, Shao K'ang-chieh of the Sung Dynasty wrote a commentary on the system of hexagrams in his work entitled *Huang Chi Ching Shih* and

formulated the concept of the three origins and the sixty year cycle commanding both space and time.

The art of becoming invisible evolved from the study of the hexagrams in the Han Dynasty. Most take this as heterodox practice or just superstition, not understanding that this embodies the key to theoretical science. The mysteries of the universe can be discovered from this, as well as the mechanisms of human affairs and the physical world, and it is a very important treasury. Owing to limitations of time and my own knowledge, let us just remind researchers to give attention to these facts which have been left out of the teachings of the orthodox Taoist School.

Chapter 8

The Taoist Religion

Due to the constraints of time, we can only discuss a small portion of the most important contents of the Taoist School and Taoist religion so as to provide researchers with a focus of reference. Even if we wrote one or two million words of detailed explanation, it would still be insufficient to cover all aspects of the Taoist School, Taoist religion, and Chinese culture. We have already discussed the origins of the Taoist religion, which can be summarized within four areas:

- (1) the learning and thought of the Taoist School;
- (2) the evolution of politics and society;
- (3) the stimulation of foreign religions;
- (4) the infatuation with mysticism.

We have already discussed in general the contents of the first area. There would be no way of discussing the complete development from the Wei and Chin down through the Sui, T'ang, Sung, Yuan, Ming and Ch'ing to the present day, and so let us conclude by briefly discussing the second area.

Reasons for the Formation of the Taoist Religion at the End of the Han Dynasty

If we wish to understand the reasons why the learning and thought of the Taoist School of the two Han dynasties transformed into the Taoist religion, it is necessary to observe the evolution of politics and society from the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods down through the Ch'in and Han dynasties.

By the Warring States Period, the six or seven hundred years of political rule and the feudal political system of the Chou Dynasty had been destroyed by certain historic realities and the transformation of culture and thought. The major and minor wars and upheaval that dominated the four hundred years from the Spring and Autumn Period to the end of the Warring States Period not only resulted in political chaos, but it also decayed away the social and economic foundation of the

country, which was based on agriculture.

We can weigh the precedents of history and see that the results of protracted warfare were the creation of certain individuals who left their mark on history. But what was actually passed down to later generations was something to ponder and sigh over because during these long periods of war, the people suffered privation and the country was depleted of resources. When I speak of privation and depletion, I am not limiting myself to economic collapse, for privation and depletion also results in the ruination of human talent.

I think everyone is aware of the proverb in Chinese culture: "It takes ten years to grow trees but a hundred to bring up a generation of good men." The actual training of talented people truly requires a social background with stable economics as the basis, and is fortified with a cultural backdrop of long-term peace before results can be attained.

It is difficult to say whether talented people from various regions at different periods of time will swim or sink when presented with the outcome of war. We all recognize that the true worth of this proverb can only be applied to the training of soldiers during war, and cannot be totally used for the effects of a nation that has been founded for a long time. Chinese people employ the famous phrases of "experienced and worldly in planning for the nation" and "heroes arise from among the young" which are diametrically opposed to each other, but actually training is something which allows no omissions at all.

During the more than one hundred years spanning the Spring and Autumn Period and Warring States Period, following the individual establishment of theories and thought by Lao Tzu, Confucius, Mo Tzu, Chuang Tzu, Mencius and others, most of the bright younger generation taught and learned these systems of thought, but they were inferior to their predecessors. By the end of the Warring States Period, the thoughts of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu were incorporated into the Taoist School, and the spirit of their learning came to fall between entering into the world of men and departing from it.

The thoughts of Confucius and Mencius took root among most intellectuals, and were totally applied to the mundane affairs of the world of men. Mo Tzu began to depart from the Taoist arts and took another path that fell between Taoism and Confucianism. He was closer to the spirit of the knight errants (*yu-hsia*) of the states of Yen, Chao, Ch'in and Chin and this gradually formed into a special social phenomenon which occurred between the common people and aristocracy.

By the time the First Emperor of the Ch'in was making his plans to swallow up the Six States prior to the unification of China, the men of great talent and ability all rallied to the strategies of contention between the warring states, running about vying for power. However, in the end, the number of brilliant individuals, such as Su Ch'in and Chang I, gradually declined so that all that was left were people like Li Ssu to fill the high official offices. How could men of superior talent and intelligence arise in such an environment?

The scholars of the Confucian School, as well as those knight errants who took up the sword and fell somewhere between the Taoist and Mohist schools, were able to have subtle effects on society at large. It was for this reason that Li Ssu's friend Han Fei held the opinion that: "The Confucians disturb the laws with their culture while the knight errants violate prohibitions with their martial skills." Han Fei certainly must have observed this social trend, and yet he did not understand the causes that created the general atmosphere of his era. He also failed to comprehend that this was a major trend that could only be dredged and followed rather than obstructed. He flagrantly ran against the major trends of his age and wished to prosecute each case according to the law. However, he suffered the jealousies of Li Ssu and others resulting in his early demise. Although he achieved his ambition of executing Legalistic authority, he inevitably met with a fate similar to Shang Yang.

Later, the First Emperor of Ch'in employed harsh laws and severe punishments, removed the Confucians and Mohists (knight errants), and ruled over a new and developing world. Nevertheless, in the end those harsh laws and severe punishments were overthrown by the new combined forces of the Confucians and knight errants. To sum up, there is a subtle historical, political and philosophical inference within this topic, and it is hoped that scholars will give attention to studying it.

Since the beginning of the Han Dynasty with the accession of Liu Pang to the throne, the Confucian scholars had already occupied an important position in government owing to their assistance to the emperor and [to the role they played in helping bring] peace to the nation. Afterwards, it was only necessary to "study literature, military affairs and the arts to have one's wealth compare to that of the Imperial family" and get ahead in one's official career. As a result, the Confucian scholars became enmeshed with the affairs of the court.

As to the knight errants, they still remained a hidden and yet powerful force as they traveled throughout China. For example, Chu Chia and Chi Pu were exemplary famous figures while the rest of the knight errants concealed themselves

among the mountains and rivers peacefully dwelling outside the law. However, Emperor Kao-tsu (206-194 B.C) of the Han Dynasty had originally been one of the common populace, arising from the ranks of the knight errants, and he knew well the ways of these traveling swordsmen. As a result, throughout his rule he had shown great sympathy and even rendered protection for the knight errants.

The situation was totally different when we come to the reign of Emperor Wu (140-86 B.C.). He was not as open-minded as his great grandfather Liu Pang, and greatly despised the popular knight errants. He later had Kuo Chieh put to death so as to establish his prestige, and as a result the knight errants went off into hiding and gradually came into contact with the followers of the Taoist School. The anti-government forces that arose at the end of the Han Dynasty can be traced to this.

By the end of the Western Han Dynasty, the knight errants had joined together with the Taoist priests and evolved into rebellious forces in the form of heterodox practices at the beginning of the Three Kingdoms Period. Further, the practice of having disciples of influential officials and powerful families arose after the Confucian scholars entered official ranks during the Han dynasty, which placed excessive power in their hands. The Confucians monopolized the selection process of officials and thus talented individuals with real learning would not dare to make efforts to attain position.

At the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty, many of these talented people withdrew from society and joined the otherworldly pursuits of the Taoist priests. They gradually laid a foundation for the Buddhist monks and Indian Brahmins who brought Buddhism into China during the Western Han Dynasty. The spirit of their ideas was very much like the "recluses" during and prior to the Chou and Ch'in dynasties who either wanted to arouse the world, or regretted the state in which they found it.

During and after the T'ang and Sung dynasties, the Buddhist monks and nuns, as well as the Taoist priests both male and female, were already prevalent entities in society. They were viewed as if having left the world of men, as being independent, as not completely restrained by imperial rule, as beyond common laws and as having an [independent] legal position. During Chinese history, from the Northern and Southern Dynasties, T'ang, Sung and afterwards, the monks did not prostrate before the Emperor and were only required to give a ceremonious bow of respect. It had then become the common practice for them not to abide by conventional regulations.

As a result, during and after the T'ang and Sung dynasties, the exalted

recluses no longer had to wander about, but rather became Buddhist monks or Taoist priests who could laugh and be lofty in the mountains, amuse themselves in tranquil settings, and remain far away from worldly turmoil. Therefore, Wang An-shih of the Sung Dynasty stated that most of the really talented individuals had gone into far off Buddhist temples and did not discuss worldly affairs. There were many collective reasons for the chaotic situation within the court, as well as the populace, at the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty. However, we shall now view this from the standpoint of the Taoist religion, and only briefly give one or two factors to explain the formation of the Taoist religion by Chang Tao-ling.

The formation and experiences of the Five Pecks of Rice Sect were actually stimulated by the intellectuals of the two Han dynasties as well as the social environment of the time. It was from this that there arose the unspoken resistance and the establishment of the Taoist religion with its own spiritual kingdom.

Chang Tao-ling was also originally an intellectual who lived at the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty. Owing to his dissatisfaction with the situation at the time, he went to reside in Szechuan and later studied Taoism at Mt. Kao-ming. Having acquired some learning, he then proceeded to write some Taoist texts and founded the Amulet Sect of Taoism, which was involved with the drawing of amulets and recitation of incantations. In the "Biography of Chang Lu" in the *Chronicles of the Three Kingdoms* written by Ch'en Shou, it is ambiguously stated that,

His grandfather Ling resided in Szechuan and studied Taoism at Mt. Kaoming. He authored Taoist texts to confuse the common people. Those who accepted his teachings were part of the Five Pecks of Rice Sect and they were popularly called rice thieves. After Ling died, Tzu-heng practiced his teachings, and after Tzu-heng died, Lu then continued the line. Liu Yen of I Chou made Lu a military supervisor. There was another army with Chang Hsiu serving as commander. He led soldiers against Su Ku, Prefect of Han-chung. Lu then attacked Hsiu and killed him, and later escaped.

Also, "Tzu-chang succeeded to office and had a falling out with Lu. He killed Lu's mother's family and then Lu went to Han-chung and propagated the teaching of ghosts and spirits to the general population. He called himself Lord Master."

After reading the accounts of Chang Tao-ling and his grandson Chang Lu in the *Chronicles of the Three Kingdoms*, there are actually religious aspects or the glorification of being a sage connected with Chang Tao-ling's Taoist sect, and there

even appears to be condemnation of him. Naturally, Ch'en Shou was an outsider in terms of the Five Pecks of Rice Sect, and the fact that he did not go into any detail reflects that he had no way of understanding it. When he speaks of the teachings transmitted by Chang Lu and his grandfather Chang Tao-ling, he only says that it was the "teachings of ghosts and spirits to the general population," which was actually the Five Pecks of Rice Amulet Sect. The amulets and incantations of this sect were utilized to expel spirits and call upon ghosts, and there was little philosophical discussion of metaphysical issues.

I have often wondered whether the occult arts practiced by the *fang-shih* during the Chou and Ch'in dynasties, and the flourishing of Taoist amulets during and after the Ch'in and Han dynasties, were influenced by Indian Brahmanism and Yoga Sect. This is quite difficult to state with certainty. However, it should be noted that during the reign of the First Emperor of the Ch'in, Indian Brahmin monks had already made contact with China. This is textually verifiable. Moreover, the forms of the amulets are very much like ancient Sanskrit writings. However, for the moment we will not address these issues.

Let us return to our discussion of Chang Lu. When we look into the local political affairs related to his activities of "teaching of ghosts and spirits to the general population" in Han-chung, it certainly serves as a good reference source for the study of local religion and politics in the political history of China at the end of the Han Dynasty. As I mentioned previously, the political situation and Taoist religion at the end of the Han Dynasty were the amalgamation of the spirit of the knight errant from the Han and Ch'in dynasties together with those who fled from the affairs of the world owing to dissatisfaction during the two Han dynasties. This is what created the spiritual kingdom of the Taoist religion. As stated in the *Chronicles of the Three Kingdoms*, the method of governing people employed by Chang Lu in his Way of Ghosts practiced in Han-chung was:

Those who came to study the Way were initially all called ghost soldiers. After studying the fundamentals, they were then referred to as libationers, and each led a group. Many of them became leaders and major libationers teaching honesty and avoidance of deception. All mistakes must be confessed, and they were very much like the Yellow Turbans. All of the libationers set up wayside inns (*i-she*) much like the inns of today. Travelers would be provided with adequate accommodations. Those who committed offenses were made to write three pieces of paper to the three rulers of Heaven, Earth and water, and then given punishment. They did not establish regular civil officials but rather libationers to govern. The people were joyous. They ruled Szechuan and Han-chung for thirty

years.

Later, Chang Lu's local authority was overturned by Ts'ao Ts'ao. Chang Lu surrendered and was made General of Chen-nan. Ts'ao Ts'ao paid him ceremonial respect and "enfeoffed him in Liang where he ruled over ten thousand households. Lu's five sons were also enfeoffed as marquis. After Lu died, he was given the posthumous title of Original Marquis."

When we read this brief history of Chang Lu's leading of the Five Pecks of Rice Sect, it is both interesting and amusing. It adequately reflects the strange phenomena of the local political upheaval of the Three Kingdoms Period, and yet Chang Lu was much wiser than Chang Chueh who led the Way of Great Peace and the Yellow Turban rebellion. If everything recorded by Ch'en Shou is factual, then the religious-type local rule carried out by Chang Lu in Han-chung was close to the "non-action" and measures proposed in the *Tao Teh Ching*.

The insight and historical writing of Ch'en Shou were naturally far short of those of Ssu-ma Ch'ien, and yet his critical evaluations presented at the end of the biographies of Chang Lu and others were quite on the mark. He stated that Chang Lu and others were able to resign themselves to adversity and protect the ancestral halls of their ancestors; given the chaotic state of continuous upheavals and innumerable robbers everywhere, comparatively speaking, they were actually outstanding individuals. Further, Ch'en Shou was unable to see the southern move to Kiangsi by Chang Lu's children and grandchildren, and the posthumous titles and honors bestowed upon his family as Heavenly Masters of the Cheng-i Sect of Mt. Lung-hu during and after the Sung and Yuan dynasties. These honors were comparable to those given to the posterity of Confucius in Ch'u-fu, Shantung Province.

The *Chronicles of the Three Kingdoms* reflect the subjective viewpoints of Ch'en Shou, and so the Chang Tao-ling, which he describes, was no more than a magician who "followed a heterodox way and deceived people." Quite to the contrary, Ko Hung offers a very different portrayal in his "Biographies of Spirit Immortals":

Chang Tao-ling was a native of the State of P'ei (modern Anhui). He originally studied literature and history, and acquired a penetrating knowledge of the Five Classics. Later, he sighed and said: 'This is not beneficial to extending one's life span,' and so then proceeded to study the way of longevity. He acquired the Yellow Emperor's Nine Tripod Alchemical Method. He desired to make it but the drugs were very costly and he was not wealthy. He desired to treat people. He managed fields

and livestock but this was not his expertise and so did not continue. Hearing that the people in Szechuan were pure, honest, and easily transformed by teaching, and that there were many famous mountains there, he went to Szechuan with his disciples. Dwelling on Mt. Ho-ming, he authored twenty-four Taoist texts. While cultivating his mind, there were suddenly Heavenly beings which descended riding ten thousand golden chariots with canopies of feathers, and those riding dragons and tigers were too numerous to fathom. Some were messengers while others were young lads of the Eastern Sea. They conferred the brilliant teaching of the True One Way upon Ling, and accepting it, he was then able to cure illnesses. As a result, the people called him a Master and his disciples numbered several tens of thousands. He established libationers who ruled over households much like officials. There was a system of regulations whereby his disciples had to contribute rice, cloth, paper, pens, firewood, etc. People were guided to make and repair roads, and those that did not would fall ill. All of the people worked to clear wild areas and build bridges. Those who were ignorant did not know that Ling had written certain texts and took them as having been sent down from Heaven.

After reading Ko Hung's account, we can then understand the facts given by Ch'en Shou on Chang Tao-ling. However, they are quite brief and subjective. Chang Tao-ling's True One Brilliant Way methods became even more widespread by the Chin Dynasty, and all of the nobles, officials and common people believed in this Way. For example, the Wang, Hsieh and other major families of the time all paid homage to this Way, and the famous calligrapher Wang Hsi-chih also was a follower. Therefore, the *Yellow Court Canon* written in his hand was not merely done for artistic and entertainment purposes.

Furthermore, when we take another look at the transformation through teaching carried out by Chang Tao-ling in Szechuan as recorded by Ko Hung, from the viewpoint of contributions of historical culture, one feels that he was similar to the scholars of Wen-weng who transformed Szechuan through culture and education. Ko Hung writes:

Ling desired to rule the people with a sense of economy and shame as he did not like the use of punishments. He set up a system of regulations wherein those with illnesses were recorded to have committed some offense. The written record was thrown in water, and having made a pact with spirits, the offense would no longer be committed as the agreement stated death to those who did. As a result, the common people contemplated avoiding illness. If one became ill they would be ashamed

and not dare to commit any crime fearing both Heaven and earth. Afterwards, all those who had transgressed transformed to do good deeds.

The above section describes Chang Tao-ling's method of transforming the common people wherein each person would be aware and control themselves, stress economy and shame, fear the will of Heaven, and carry out good works. Based on the idea of the Taoist School, "do not speak excessively about governing," focus was placed on the principle of action. How could this measure enacted by Chang Tao-ling be incorrect? Ch'en Shou's remark of "they were commonly known as rice thieves" was from the standpoint of the government of the Wei Dynasty and cannot be fully relied upon. Secondly, Ko Hung also wrote about Chang Tao-ling's personal experiences in cultivation and engaging in certain practices:

Ling acquired much wealth so as to make the alchemical drug. Once made, he swallowed half of it not wishing to ascend to Heaven. He was able to separate himself into several tens of people ... he practiced internal hygiene exercises and employed the methods of the immortals. Ling said to those in attendance: 'The vulgar customs of the times have not yet been eradicated and so I may not leave the world. I can only use the practices of moving and guiding *ch'i*, sexual practices, and taking herbs to live several hundred years. The Nine Tripod Method was only given to Wang Chang and later only one person from the east has come to acquire it. This person will be arriving on the seventh day of the first month during the daylight hours.' He presented all of the details, and on the appointed day Chao Sheng came from the east and his appearance was as before just as Ling had described. Ling tested him seven times, and then was bestowed with the *Classic of Ascending Alchemy*.

This quote explains the methods for immortality cultivated by Chang Tao-ling, that is, focus was placed on the external alchemy of using gold and cinnabar, and this was supplemented by the internal alchemical practices of moving and guiding *ch'i* as well as sexual practices. Lastly, it was the Nine Tripod Method that was followed.

The so-called seven tests given to Chao Sheng and the later bestowal of the methods for cultivating immortality are merely an example of the presumptuous demands of later generations pursuing immortality.

Ko Hung also wrote:

There were seven tests.

The first test of Sheng was when he arrived at a closed gate. A messenger reviled him for over forty days and though exposed to the elements, he did not leave until admitted inside.

During the second test, Sheng was sent out into the wilds to chase away animals. He encountered a very beautiful woman who made excuses to spend the night and use his bed. The following day she said that her foot hurt and so stayed for several days during which time she flirted with him. Sheng did nothing that was not within propriety.

The third test involved Sheng suddenly seeing thirty bottles on the road, but he walked by without taking one.

The fourth test was when Sheng was taken into the mountains to collect wood. Three tigers appeared before him and chewed his clothing but did not harm his person. Sheng was not afraid nor did he change countenance. He said to the tigers: 'I am a gentleman of the Tao, in my youth I did not transgress in any way, I traveled far to seek out my spiritual master in order to acquire the way of longevity. What are you doing? Is it that a ghost of the mountain has dispatched you here to test me?' After a short while the tigers got up and left.

The fifth test involved purchasing more than ten bolts of silk at the market and after having paid for them the seller reviled him for not giving the money. Sheng then took off his own clothes to buy the silk and paid him without showing any anger.

The sixth test had him taking care of fields. Someone with tattered clothing, dirty face, and boils festering and smelling vile came and kowtowed begging for food. Sheng was very grieved and so took off his own clothes for him to wear, and fed him with his own rations.

The seventh test witnessed Ling and all of his disciples ascending to a terrace on a very sheer cliff. Below there was a peach tree that resembled a human arm and was bearing fruit, next to it was a stone precipice, and below that was an unfathomable deep canyon. Ling said to his disciples: 'If there are any among you who can get the fruit please speak up now.' Everyone bent over and looked, and all of the more than three hundred people began to sweat profusely, no one daring to attempt to get it.

Only Sheng said: 'There are spirits who shall protect me and my sagely teacher is present, who will surely not allow me to die in this canyon. There are certainly many disciples who can obtain this fruit.' He then jumped down, climbed the tree without slipping, and picked a large number of fruit from the tree that he carried back. However, the precipice was very dangerous and steep, and being unable to climb up had no

way of returning. He then threw the peaches up one at a time, a total of 220.

Ling got them and gave one each to his disciples, eating one himself, and leaving one for Sheng. Ling then extended his hand and pulled Sheng up. Everyone saw that Ling's arm extended over 90 feet, and he pulled Sheng right up. Ling gave him the peach, and after Sheng ate it, Ling went near the canyon and laughed: 'The mind of Chao Sheng is correct, he was able to climb the tree without slipping. Today I wished to try jumping down to get the peach.'

Everyone admonished him, and only Sheng and Wang Ch'ang were silent. Ling then jumped into the air but did not land on the peach tree, and no one knew where he went. Everyone looked up and down, and seeing no road were quite astonished and shed tears. Only Chao Sheng and Wang Ch'ang were quiet and then said after a while: 'The master leaped into the bottomless abyss, and why should we not be at ease!' They then leaped down right in front of Ling and saw him sitting on a bed in a small tent. Seeing Sheng and Ch'ang, he laughed: 'I knew you would come.' He then bid them farewell and returned to put his old hut in order. All of his disciples were shocked and dismayed.

Later, Ling together with Sheng and Ch'ang ascended up to Heaven in broad daylight. The disciples watched them on high submerged in the azure clouds. At first, Ling had dwelled in the mountains of Szechuan, concocted half of the pill of immortality and became an Earthly Immortal. It was for this reason that he wanted to test Chao Sheng seven times.

Those who rashly pursue the prescription of immortality should do some deep introspection after reading Ko Hung's account of the magical arts of Chang Tao-ling. They should understand that studying the examples of spiritual immortals in the Taoist School and Taoist religion shows that accomplishment must be predicated by virtue. Those of later generations employed the values of frivolous loyalty, diligence and mental fortitude in managing affairs and rashly pursuing the occult arts for leaving the world and surpassing normal human abilities. Is this not a fruitless endeavor like climbing a tree to catch a fish?

If the path of the spiritual immortal may not be learned, then taking this type of virtuous behavior as a model for personal cultivation and the handling of oneself in society will be just the same as the so-called Great Gentleman of the Confucian School. What harm would such a transformation have for a man of the Tao? Such terrible reviling of this as being heterodox and not worthy of study seems unjust and unfair.

We have very briefly introduced the course of the formation of the Taoist religion at the end of the Han Dynasty so that you may generally understand its relationship with the evolution of politics and society during and after the Ch'in and Han dynasties, and understand that the ideas of the Taoist School served as the basis for the formation of the Taoist religion.

The Taoist School and Taoist Religion During and After the Chin and Wei Dynasties

After initially understanding the learning prevalent at the end of the Han Dynasty and that the social trend of trying to escape from reality gave impetus to the Taoist religion rising out from the Taoist School, and then proceeding to study the transition in learning and thought carried out by those of the Wei and Chin dynasties, there is then a clear sequence to follow and strong foundation which to build upon. At the end of the Han Dynasty, all people from the imperial court down to the common populace were affected by the various economic, political and military disruptions as well as the social unrest of the times, and the situation was in continuous upheaval.

As a result, various types of beliefs arose in response to the demands of the times, and these were able to be widely transmitted and penetrate deeply into every level of society. When we add in the fact that those of crafty and shrewd intentions exploited the dissatisfaction of the errant knights and intellectuals, the political strategies and intrigues fit in easily and formed the situation of the Three Kingdoms Period.

If we wish to understand historical and cultural evolution, we must not forget the background influences of the age. It is thus necessary to discuss the learning and thought of the Wei and Chin dynasties, and trace the learning and thought back to the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty before we can understand causes for the learning and thought of the Wei and Chin dynasties.

While discussing the causes of Buddhism and Chinese culture, I had touched upon the fact that the core of an era's learning and thought rested with the manner of leadership of those holding political power. The period from the end of the Han Dynasty through the Wei Dynasty ruled by the Ts'ao clan propagated the classical studies of the Confucian School, continued to discourse on the teachings left behind by Confucius and Mencius, and aside from a small number of important Confucian figures such as Cheng Hsuan and Lu Chih, etc., the majority of so-called Confucian scholars employed literature to gain deeper perception.

For instance, Wang Chien and others were infatuated with the intellectual world of prose and verse while the rest of the scholars were engaged in saving the nation from doom and ensuring its survival, and even though they were pursuing learning and thought, focus was always placed on practical applications. The study of the images and prognostications of the *Book of Changes* only had a very small following of scholars who would spend their spare time in specialized research, for example Cheng Hsuan, Hsun Shuai and Yu Fan. Aside from these, the medical practices of Hua T'o and the mathematical computations of Kuan Ko still preserved and employed the ways of the orthodox Taoist School (i.e., Yu Chi, Tso Tz'u, etc.). Although they enjoyed great fame and were very influential, they were still not regarded as highly as the literati, and so from this we know that the situation of learning and thought from the end of the Han Dynasty through the Three Kingdoms Period was as chaotic as the political situation.

Owing to the literary excellence of Ts'ao Ts'ao and his sons who ruled the Wei Dynasty, most of the scholars excelled in literature and had diminished any pursuit of principles and learning. By the period of transition from the Wei to the Chin, the sons of renowned gentry families, such as Ho Yen and Wang Pi, were neither able to make thorough examinations or compose penetrating commentaries. Thus, given this learning devoid of real study, they employed the thoughts of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu to explain the *Book of Changes*; not only was the original meaning of the Han Dynasty learning on the *Book of Changes* lost, but major changes in the thoughts of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu also arose from this.

Adding in the fact that the high officials and aristocratic families at the time desired to save the country but had no way of doing so, most of the renowned scholars bided their time, and pursued metaphysical theories and pure conversations to escape from reality much like those at the final stage of any era. They tended to find comfort in sensual pleasures, wine, women and song, thus reflecting the widespread decadence of the times. As a result, there was study of the three mysteries with focus on Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu.

The so-called pure conversation and three mysteries arose from this situation, and it was during this period devoid of any core learning and thought that famous monks such as Chih Tun and Chih Ch'ien came from Central Asia bringing their Buddhist learning eastward. Their discussions on the concepts of *prajna* (wisdom), *sunyata* (emptiness), "spiritual self" and "*nirvana*" quickly became popular. On the other hand, there were also those who were influenced by the chaos of the times and were quite broad-minded and unrestrained such as Chi K'ang, Yuan Chi, Shan T'ao, Liu Ling, etc. They were sacrifices excited by the prevalent morals of their day.

Aside from these individuals who were sufficient to influence the moral atmosphere of their times, there were others during the Wei and Chin dynasties who attempted to save the nation. How could there have been no people who would do so? This is never the case. Human affairs are similar to the natural physical world wherein when there is darkness there is also light, and when there is a positive side there is naturally also a negative side.

During the Wei and Chin dynasties, most of those individuals who attempted to save the nation were those of the Taoist School and Taoist religion. For example, aside from the sect founded by Chang Tao-ling during the Three Kingdoms Period, the Southerner Hsu Sun (Sheng-yang) established the Sect of Purity, Brightness, Loyalty and Filial Piety in Kiangsi Province. He employed the traditional teachings of the Taoist and Confucian schools regarding personal cultivation and ethical behavior as the inner teaching, and externally used amulets and other occult practices as the basis for accumulating merit and virtues.

Hsu Sheng-yang's influence would last for more than one thousand years, and he became the founder of the Southern Branch of the Taoist religion which flourished after the Wei and Chin dynasties. This was also the forerunner of the sect of magical arts at Mt. Lu which prospered during and after the T'ang and Sung dynasties. The Wanshou Temple, a sacred site of the Taoist religion in Nanchang, Kiangsi was built in honor of Hsu Sheng-yang. According to the traditions of the Taoist religion, the Taoist arts of the sect founded by Hsu Sheng-yang could be cultivated at home and it was not necessary to leave one's family and become a priest. As a result, everyone in the family from young to old could practice the teachings passed down by Hsu Sheng-yang, ascend to Heaven in broad daylight, and become blessed immortals.

In reality, aside from the occult arts and supernatural powers spoken of in the Taoist religion, Hsu Sheng-yang's greatest contribution was the development and establishment of irrigation works in Kiangsi Province and on the Upper Reaches of the Yangtze River. This was truly a major contribution, and although it was not as expansive as the river projects undertaken by Li Ping and his son during the Ch'in Dynasty, it was still an important factor which aided the development of Southern China.

We can understand very clearly Hsu Sheng-yang's relationship to the establishment of the Taoist religion in Southern China during the Wei and Chin dynasties from the "Biography of Hsu Sheng-yang" written by Huang Yuan-chi. From this, we also come to know the trends in learning and thought in the court and among the common populace from the Eastern Han Dynasty through the Three

Kingdoms Period in China, as well as the changes which occurred in social customs. Therefore, the initial establishment of the Taoist religion by Chang Tao-ling occurred during the reigns of Emperor Heng (147-168 A.D.) and Emperor Ling (168-189 A.D.).

Afterwards, shrewd and crafty individuals employed his methods. They established various sects among the people, such as the Yellow Turbans led by Chang Chueh who carried out rebellion in the name of the Way of Heavenly Peace, and they served as the initiators of the chaotic situation which befell the Three Kingdoms Period. However, Hsu Sheng-yang's sect of Taoism, which developed in the two southern states of Wu and Shu during the Wei and Chin dynasties, combined the traditional cultures embodied in the Confucian and Taoist schools and established an ethical system in the world focused on the supramundane realm of Heavenly immortals and the accumulation of merit through good actions as well. How then can the accounts presented in historical records only consider the pure conversation and metaphysical discourses as being representative of the learning of the Wei and Chin dynasties?

In addition, Kuo P'u, who studied together with Hsu Sheng-yang, developed theoretical principles related to the images and numerology of the *Book of Changes*, carried out research on geophysical subjects, and was a forerunner of later studies in geography and astrology. It is regretful that his achievements as well as those of Hsu Sheng-yang did not become as well known as those of Ko Hung, and the study of the Taoist arts by later generations which penetrated into society perpetuated the errors made by Kuo P'u.

Ko Hung, author of the *Pao P'u Tzu*, studied alchemical methods for realizing immortality, and these included the traditional Taoist arts of inner cultivation, deep breathing exercises, refining the *ch'i* and cinnabar, taking drugs, writing amulets, etc. On the more mundane level, his writings included political and philosophical principles, as well as individual behavior and managing affairs, and these possess rich value in terms of both science and philosophy.

According to the *History of the Chin Dynasty*, aside from his 160 chapter *Pao P'u Tzu*, Ko Hung's other writings included 100 volumes of poems and essays, the 30 volume *I Chiao Chang Piao*, and 10 volumes each on immortals, good officials, living in seclusion, and strange phenomena. He also authored 31 volumes of miscellaneous prescriptions, the 100 volume *Golden Casket Prescriptions*, and four volumes of emergency prescriptions. We need only read the biographies and evaluations of individuals during and after the Wei and Chin dynasties, such as those of Ko Hung and Kuo P'u, to understand the true meaning of what has been

said by those of later generations: “Heroes all pay homage to Buddha upon reaching old age,” and “There have never been immortals who have not read books.”

After basically understanding the formation of the Taoist religion from the learning and thought of the Taoist School beginning from the end of the Han Dynasty, we can then know the causes and results of the expanded establishment of the Taoist religion during the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-535 A.D.); by the time of the Northern Wei Dynasty, the influences of the learning and thought of the Wei and Chin dynasties were naturally more focused on the mysterious and strange. Further, the political power of the Northern Wei Dynasty rose from the border peoples of the Northwest, who of course very easily accepted the ideas of Buddhist culture. The beliefs held by those in power served to disseminate these ideas throughout society.

If viewed from the perspective of the history of the development of Buddhism in China, the Northern Wei Dynasty played a very important role in spreading Buddhism. However, during the reigns of Emperors T'ai-tsu and Shih-tsu, the Taoist religion also flourished along with Buddhism. Moreover, the different Taoist arts of Chang Tao-ling, Hsu Sheng-yang and others at the end of the Han Dynasty foreshadowed the formal establishment of the Taoist religion at the beginning of the T'ang Dynasty.

The most competent of those during the Northern Wei were the Taoist priest Kou Chien-chih and his disciple, the powerful Wei official Ts'ui Hao. Kou Chien-chih's study of the Tao very much resembles the experiences of Chang Tao-ling. His establishment and propagation of the Taoist religion was owing to the recommendations of Ts'ui Hao whereupon he was conferred as a Heavenly Master by the court of the Wei Dynasty and there was extensive transmission of his teachings.

Later during the reign of Emperor Wu (483-494 A.D.) of the Northern Wei Dynasty, the massive destruction of Buddhism—a major crime in the history of Buddhism—has been attributed in records to Kou Chien-chih and Ts'ui Hao. However, in reality Kou Chien-chih did not totally agree with the measures taken at that time to destroy Buddhism and the Buddhist community of monks. It is a point of fact that Ts'ui Hao had manipulated power for his personal ends and had advocated the extinction of Buddhism. However, according to the *History of the Wei*, not only did Ts'ui Hao not believe in Buddhism, but he also did not believe in the true teachings of Lao Tzu. He was not very well read and rather preferred to dabble in the *yin* and *yang*, five elements, and occult arts. He compared himself with Chang Liang, and it can be said that he was utterly ignorant of the spirit of true Buddhism and Taoism. As a result, he was responsible for a major tragedy in the religious

history of China.

If we wish to study the general circumstances related to the establishment of the Taoist religion during the Northern Wei Dynasty, we may read the "Chronicle of Buddhism and Taoism," "The Biography of Ts'ui Hao" and the "Biography of Kou Chien-chih" in the *History of the Wei*, as well as related information in the *Historical Records of the Buddhist School*.

The Taoist Religion During the T'ang Dynasty

According to historical documents, the true establishment of the Taoist religion occurred during the founding of the T'ang Dynasty by Emperor T'ai Tsung (627-650 A.D.). At the beginning of his reign with the establishment of the T'ang Dynasty, owing to the traditional views of the patriarchal clan system, Emperor T'ai Tsung utilized the name of one of his ancestors which had been passed down through the ages and everyone knew quite well. As a result, he chose Li Erh (Lao Tzu), who shared the same surname as himself, to be the founder of the Taoist religion. Lao Tzu was then honored as the Great Lord on High. Further, formal commands were made wherein the Taoist religion was made the national religion and placed before Buddhism.

Although this led to debates with the followers of Buddhism, yet no changes were made and the official position of Buddhism remained secondary. The emperor did have inclinations towards Buddhist learning and thought, yet he did not change from his original intentions to follow the traditional concepts of following the patriarchal clan system. This is one of the special characteristics of Chinese culture, and a strong point in the traditional thought of the Chinese people. As a result, other foreign religions that desired to comprehensively employ religious faith to overthrow the traditional spirit of the patriarchal clan system and run counter to the ideas of using the way of filial piety to govern, were foolish and naïve, for violation of this principle proved to be quite fruitless.

When discussing the cultural ideas of the T'ang Dynasty, we should not forget Buddhism and the Ch'an School, and yet it must be understood that the spirit of Chinese culture from the T'ang Dynasty and after was an amalgamation of the three teachings of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, which has remained true up to the present. The Taoist religion and Taoist School actually occupy a very important position within this synthesis.

A great deal of the literature, fiction, art, industry, architecture, and everyday life of the T'ang Dynasty are products of Taoism and the Ch'an School, and neither

one can be emphasized over the other. Briefly speaking, the writings of poets such as Li Po who reflected the Taoist spirit of spirits and immortals, Tu Fu who embodied the orthodoxy of the Confucian tradition, and Wang Wei who focused on Buddhist concepts, can all be traced to either the Taoist, Confucian or Buddhist teachings, and it is often difficult to strictly separate the synthesis of these three teachings.

The flourishing of Taoism and Buddhism during the T'ang Dynasty had profound influences on T'ang Dynasty culture, and yet the factors of human affairs and the physical world necessarily condition each other. Temporally, the culture of the T'ang Dynasty lasted as long as the period since the Ch'in and Han dynasties; spatially, it amalgamated the special features of China, India and the Arab world. As a result, its vigor and force seem to have surpassed that of the Ch'in and Han dynasties.

During this period, the Taoist religion formally established its guiding principles, synthesized the learning related to the *yin* and *yang*, Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu, the Confucians, Mo Tzu, the Militarists, Legalists, Agriculturists, and Miscellaneous Schools of the Chou and Ch'in dynasties, copied the methods of the Tantric practices and teachings of the Brahmins, and merged them into *chiao* rituals and sacrifices. Taoists adorned themselves with ceremonial robes, wielded staves and swords around disheveled hair, repeated incantations and secret formulas, as well as summoned and dispelled spirits. This was the result of their having been widely influenced by the culture of the T'ang Dynasty.

At the same time, during the entire three to four hundred years of the T'ang Dynasty, the Taoist religion itself produced both positive and negative individuals who composed two groups of fresh troops which completed the establishment of the Taoist religion: (1) Lu Yen (Lu Ch'un-yang) of the Late T'ang Dynasty; (2) Tu Kuang-t'ing who lived at the end of the T'ang and beginning of the Five Dynasties Period.

Lu Ch'un-yang arose from the orthodox tradition of alchemy and cultivation of immortality in the Taoist School. He absorbed the ideas related to self-cultivation in Ch'an Buddhism, which arose during the period from the Wei and Chin to the Sui and T'ang dynasties, and established the central system for alchemy practices during and after the T'ang Dynasty. This system pervaded throughout later periods during which time it raised considerably the status of the Taoist religion. At the same time, it also resulted in the learning and thought of the Taoist School being transmitted throughout Chinese society as well as spreading to each region of Asia.

Tu Kuang-t'ing, with his center in Western Szechuan Province, strongly

opposed Buddhism and placed ultimate faith in the Taoist religion. Aside from collecting texts related to the Taoist occult arts, he also fabricated many Taoist works so as to substantiate the contents of the Taoist religion. As a result, later generations came to use these forgeries and took them as being authentic. However, during and after the T'ang and Five Dynasties Period, the research of the Taoist religion was primarily focused on transformations of natural physical functions and promoting the theory that people could transform into immortals. The most famous as well as most difficult to study is the *Book of Transformation* written by T'an Hsiao.

Secondly, there were also the concepts of cultivating the physical powers of people to absorb solar energy and transform it into human physical energy, and transforming the human body made of flesh and blood into light energy which could fly up to the sun and moon. These concepts were generated by the ideas encompassed in the *Classic on Ascending to the Sun and Moon* of the Taoist religion.

The cultivation of immortality practiced by later generations included absorbing the essences of the sun and moon as well as seeking their energies. These types of pursuits can be traced back over three thousand years ago in the learning and thought of China. It has always been that the ideas of scientists began from what appears to be trifling matters. How is it that we have forgotten the so-called trifling matters of our own ancestors and not realized this point?

The Taoist Religion During the Sung, Yuan, Ming and Ch'ing Dynasties

Although the basic nature of the Taoist religion during the Sung, Yuan, Ming and Ch'ing dynasties arose out of the Taoist religion of the T'ang Dynasty, yet the separate establishment of religious sects and the mixing together of the orthodox and heterodox resulted in major differences. However, due to limitations of time, we cannot discuss them each here in detail.

Owing to the fact that Emperor Chen Tsung (998-1023 A.D.) began to utilize religious faith to conceal the shame of his failures in military affairs, government and foreign relations, and then later Emperors Hui Tsung and Yin Tsung superstitiously believed the deceptions of bogus Taoist priests, the nation ultimately fell into ruins.

To sum up, we must remember an unchanging principle in Chinese culture that if we wish to discuss the way of governing and bringing peace to the nation, religion alone cannot be solely relied upon. In terms of governing, religion is only one element that guides political change. If the way of governing is discussed only in the context of religion, then in view of the experiences of the Han, T'ang, Sung,

Yuan, Ming and Ch'ing dynasties, then there have not been any precedence of being invincible.

For example, Chang Chueh of the Yellow Turbans during the Han Dynasty, Han Shan-t'ung of the White Lotus Society during the Sung and Yuan dynasties, as well as the T'ai Ping, Red Lantern and Boxer movements during the Ch'ing Dynasty were all lessons in failure. However, from the pure standpoint of the Taoist religion, these successes and failures are not the responsibility of the learning and thought of the orthodox Taoist School or the Taoist religion itself, but merely due to the selection of leaders. Under the auspices of Emperor Hui Tsung of the Sung Dynasty, the old texts of the Taoist religion were collected into the *Complete Taoist Library* (*Yun Chi Ch'i Chien*) and this became the precious classic for studying the learning of the Taoist religion.

During the transition from the Northern to the Southern Sung Dynasty, Wang Ch'ung-yang established the Way of Complete Truth in Shensi Province. His disciple Ch'iu Ch'ang-ch'un continued his work and this sect spread throughout Shantung and Hopei provinces. During and after the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties, the Complete Truth Sect served as the basis of the Dragon Gate (*Lungmen*) Sect which was the major sect of the Taoist religion in North China. During the period when the Yuan Dynasty sprang up in Mongolia and Genghis Khan traveled far off to the border of India, he sent soldiers through the Western Hsia to Shantung Province to invite Ch'iu Ch'ang-ch'un.

Ch'iu Ch'ang-ch'un traveled beyond China, through the desert, to meet with Genghis Khan who bestowed upon him a copper and iron tally to serve as a contract. When the Yuan army entered into China, he used his tally of the Way of Complete Truth and so avoided being killed and robbed. We really cannot wildly guess as to whether this was something that actually happened before the fact or was slander against Ch'iu Ch'ang-ch'un as being a traitor.

Generally speaking, this was a major case in Chinese cultural and religious history that we have no way of pursuing at the moment. However, the *History of the Yuan Dynasty* and the documents left behind by the Yuan minister Yeh-lu Ch'u-ts'ai do not put Ch'iu Ch'ang-ch'un in a good light, and therefore some people suspect his worth as well as that of the Way of Complete Truth.

In reality, the contents of the so-called Way of Complete Truth synthesized the new occult arts which arose out of the spirit of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. The cultural consciousness of the people at this chaotic time, which witnessed the encroachment of the northern border peoples into Central China, was

strongly stimulated and this gave rise to new religious sects. However, the political rule of the Yuan Dynasty government was devoid of any cultural basis, but after Genghis Khan broke through the borders, the learning and thought of the Tantric School of Buddhism became prevalent throughout society.

Yeh-lu Ch'u-ts'ai not only strongly believed in the Tantric teachings, but he was also an important minister who vehemently protected Buddhism. At the same time, he also studied the teachings of the Northern Ch'an School. As a result, his views on Ch'iu Ch'ang-ch'un were not only influenced by political factors but by religious belief as well. He naturally regarded Ch'iu Ch'ang-ch'un as an enemy, and this is seen very clearly when we carefully read the sections in the *History of the Yuan Dynasty* related to Taoism and Buddhism.

The Taoist religion during the Ming Dynasty was related to the political power of the Ming imperial household. There were many historically hideous episodes with excesses too difficult to put in a very words. In terms of the Taoist religion itself, there were two major epoch-making events:

(1) The compilation and editing of the *Taoist Canon* was completed during the Yung Lo Period (1403-1425 A.D.) wherein all of the writing and classics related to the Taoist School and Taoist religion were organized into the "three *tung* (*Tung-chen*, *Tung-yuan* and *Tung-shen*)," four supplements (*T'ai-yuan*, *T'ai-p'ing*, *T'ai-ch'ing* and *Cheng-I*)," and twelve divisions (scriptural texts, amulets, commentaries on scriptural texts, activities of deities, prohibitions, rituals, methods, occult practices, biographies, psalms and hymns, memorials to the throne). This was done in imitation of the Buddhist *Tripitaka*.

This then comprised a complete collection that preserved the traditional culture of the Taoist School in China. This collection contains abundant materials and although the editing was not ideal so that the contents are too fragmented, yet the Taoist School and Taoist religion themselves are extremely complicated. If one had a lifetime of unlimited energy and drew upon collective wisdom in an attempt to classify this great entanglement, I am afraid they would have no way of being able to bring about a concrete system.

(2) The Alchemy Sect that cultivated the path of immortality was similar to the many other sects during and after the Sung and Yuan dynasties which honored Lu Ch'un-yang of the T'ang Dynasty as their founder. By the time of Chang Tzu-yang and Pai Yu-tan of the Sung Dynasty, it was called the Southern Orthodox Alchemy Sect, and then at the end of the Ming and beginning of the Ch'ing, it split into four sects of which the Southern Sect and Northern Sect were prominent. The

alchemical methods of the Southern Sect dominated by Chang Tzu-yang included individual practice of nature and life, the dual practice of nature and life, as well as dual practice carried out by men and women.

The Northern Sect was naturally dominated by Ch'iu Ch'ang-ch'un's Way of Complete Truth at the beginning of the Yuan Dynasty. This sect emphasized the alchemical methods of purification and specialized cultivation. The Southern Sect was lead by Li Han-hsu, who maintained that he had directly received the alchemical methods of Lu Ch'un-yang, and its focus was on singular practice. The Eastern Sect was lead by Lu Ch'ien-hsu, who also maintained that he had directly received the secret transmissions of Lu Ch'un-yang, and the emphasis was on dual practice involving men and women.

To sum up, although there were different emphases and strong points for each of the four major sects of alchemy in the Taoist School which emerged at the end of the Ming Dynasty, yet they were fragmented and spread out. Moreover, they were always related in some way to the Ch'an (Zen) School and the meditation techniques of Buddhism.

As a result, by the end of the Ming and beginning of the Ch'ing, the path became increasingly narrow whereupon all of the alchemical techniques were from the Wu-Liu Sect headed by Wu Ch'ung-hsu and Liu Hua-yang. They knew nothing of the Han, let alone the Wei and Chin dynasties, and therefore the three hundred years of the Ch'ing Dynasty were dominated by drawings of ghosts and peach wood charms against evil. This reflected the decadent stage of the teaching wherein there is only dabbling in the spiritual and one just drifts along with the world without any ideas of his own.

Chapter 9

The Ideas of the Taoist School and Taoist Religion and the Educational Spirit of Chinese Culture

When we speak of Chinese culture during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods, this includes the learning and thought of the hundred schools of thought. What are representative and what sufficiently influenced each level of society during the Ch'in and Han dynasties were the Confucian, Taoist and Mohist Schools. By the Sui and T'ang and afterwards, the representative schools were those of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. The reason I wish to reiterate this view is that I hope that when discussing Chinese culture you will not emphasize one at the expense of another and go off in the wrong direction.

The learning and thought of the Taoist School and Taoist religion has had a tremendous and extended influence on Chinese history and culture penetrating into every aspect of society. For example, there are many nouns and specialized terms, as well as commentaries and annotations, wherein there occurs borrowing from the learning and thought of the Taoist School. Naturally, there were later many areas in which the Taoist School and Taoist religion adapted and amalgamated the learning and thought of the Buddhists. This is an undeniable fact.

The learning of the Confucian School, as well as that of the metaphysicians and pure conversationalists, were even more indebted to Taoist thought, especially that of Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu and Lieh Tzu. Other areas such as government, military affairs, economic, society, literature, art, industry, agriculture, etc. were all related to the learning and thought of the Taoist School, the predecessor of the Taoist religion. We have already discussed this in the briefest of terms focusing only on the most important, common and familiar influences.

The customs and habits of the Chinese people—whether it be related to agricultural society, fishing and hunting, living on the plains, plateaus or at sea—have been closely connected with the five periods, six factors in nature (wind, cold, summer heat, humidity, dryness and fire) and the twenty-four solar terms becoming an integral part of everyday life. All of these were influenced by the traditional learning and thought of the Taoist School for more than three thousand years.

Secondly, folk customs such as New Year's sacrifices, sending off the God of the Stove, the Lantern Festival on the fifteenth day of the first month, worship of Heaven, earth and one's ancestors, the Spring Banquet, the Birthday of Flowers on the twelfth day of the second month, Grave Sweeping Day on the third day of the third month, the Dragon Boat Festival on the fifth day of the fifth month, the Sunning Festival on the sixth day of the sixth month, the Begging Festival on the seventh day of the seventh month, the Ulumbana Festival on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, the Mid-Autumn Festival on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, and climbing mountains on the ninth day of the ninth month were all derived from the ideas of the Taoist religion.

In terms of superstitious folk ideas from the Taoist religion, the greater part of each month is filled with prohibitions that must be followed, and one does not dare to make a wrong move. This influence has also extended to many customs related to marriage, funerals, mourning and other rituals. However, these various customs arose from the period when Confucianism and Taoism were not yet separated, as evidenced in the *Book of Rites* and other early works. We have lived for such a long time within the realm of the learning and thought of the Taoist School and so have forgotten the origins of our customs. We are truly too unfamiliar with the contents of the Taoist School!

It is even more important to know when discussing the close relationship between the Taoist School and Chinese culture and education that the goal of education in the past in China was predominantly to study the ideas of Confucius and Mencius in the Confucian School in order to establish ethics in human relations, cultivate oneself, regulate the family, govern the nation and bring peace to the world, so-called rank and fame. Later Confucians consistently viewed Taoism and Buddhism as heretical, and as a result the contributions made by the Taoist School and Taoist religion have been hidden from view and their sources have been forgotten.

There are still those of the older generation still living who can verify this. I can therefore state with conviction that former Chinese education involved the intellectuals who focused on the moral character of the individual in conformity with the ideas of the Confucian School, but using the spirit of the Taoist School and Taoist religion as the basis. What was the reason for this? This was owing to the force of two texts from the Taoist religion:

- (1) *The Hidden Retribution Classic of Lord Wen Ch'ang*;
- (2) *The Book of Cause and Retribution*.

The contents of these two books are equivalent to the commandments of the Taoist School and Taoist religion, as well as the educational models in Chinese culture for teaching people to perform good deeds and eliminate evil. They take the Way of Heaven rewarding good and punishing evil and that of the law of cause and effect. They bring forth many examples of the correct way to conduct oneself and affairs, how to treat people, and the proper manner of receiving gifts. They proceed from personal cultivation and proper conduct in society all the way to ascending to Heaven and becoming an immortal.

These ethical teachings, which were transmitted for over two thousand years starting from the Han and Wei dynasties, focused on the cultivation of unpublicized good deeds. "Unpublicized good deeds" refers to the accumulation of merit through the performance of good deeds when they are not known by others. In advancing this concept, it was considered in the past that even more important than rank, fame and literary talent was the performance of good deeds and elimination of evil for the accumulation of merit. As a result, although many scholarly families throughout Chinese history would paste Buddhist sayings on their front gates, yet they would place the *Hidden Retribution Classic of Lord Wen Ch'ang* and *Book of Cause and Retribution* on their desks as models for teaching their children and grandchildren.

If a youth bent on advancing himself in studies and an official career did not follow these regulations, then even if his literary talents were excellent, it would be difficult for him to attain any fame. Furthermore, after entering the examination hall, while seated within that dark, chilly and exceptionally gloomy atmosphere: "If there is an injury it will be avenged, and if there is an enemy he shall be opposed." If one had done some evil deed, not only would they be unable to pass the examination, but there were also tales of individuals meeting sudden death within their test cubicles. From a contemporary point of view, this was possibly owing to the very poor hygienic conditions inside the test cubicles, but from the past point of view regarding individual character and human relations, more important was the idea of "save an ant and become a *chuang-yuan* official, bury a snake and enjoy the glory of a prime minister."

This spirit and general situation continued all the way up to the end of the 19th century within the cultural and educational world of China. At the same time, in each and every province, prefecture and county there majestically stood Wen Ch'ang Pavilions, Towers to the God of Literature, Eastern Range Temples, City God Temples, and Temples to the Three Gods of Heaven, Earth and Water. During and after the T'ang Dynasty, the Lord Wen Ch'ang controlled the spiritual path of literary pursuits, the God of Literature ruled issues of rank and fame, as well as rewarded the good and punished the evil.

Lord Wen Ch'ang was also the first to appear on stage in Chinese operas (including Peking opera and local operas) before the opening gong was struck. The second to appear was the God of Wealth. When an opera performance was completed, Duke Kuan, the God of War, would appear on stage with his moon shaped broad sword to purify the area. What was the significance of the cultural concepts in these operas? There is certainly something behind this that is worth deep consideration. Those who study education and thought cannot but make reference to this. An objective reading by the youth of today will be of great value in understanding and reestablishing Chinese culture and ethical teaching in the world.

It should be added here that the basic philosophy of Chinese culture, in terms of human relations and ethics, is based on the concepts of cause and effect and retribution. Both Confucianism and Taoism adhere to these principles, and they only differ as to the extent that they do so. The components related to this are heavier in Taoism than in Confucianism, and later the Buddhists also paid strict attention to the idea of "cause and effect within the three worlds."

Therefore, in the area of the cultivation of human ethics, that which naturally coincided with the ideas of the Confucian and Taoist Schools very easily took hold. However, from the Sui and T'ang dynasties up to the present, there have been conflicts between the "cause and effect within the three worlds" of Buddhism, and the concepts of cause and effect of the traditional Taoist School. Most were half believable and half suspicious.

What was the cause of this? The ideas of the Confucian and Taoist Schools were based on the traditions of "Those who accumulate good deeds will necessarily enjoy abundant blessings, and those who accumulate evil deeds will necessarily suffer abundant disasters," as well as, "If good deeds are not accumulated, one will not achieve fame, and if one does not amass evil deeds, one will not suffer misfortune." Therefore, the concept of cause and effect came to be applied to one's ancestors, parents and posterity.

The concept of "cause and effect within the three worlds" propagated by the Buddhists was based upon the actions of the individual in his past, present and future lives. The discussion of cause and effect from one's ancestors, parents, and down to one's posterity was easy to believe and verifiable whereas that from one's former and future lives was more difficult to fathom and accept.

Regardless of whether it was a concept derived from the Taoist or Buddhist School, at the beginning of the Han Dynasty, in the "Biography of Po I" in the *Record of History* Ssu-ma Ch'ien had already raised certain reservations questioning the

Taoist theory of “The Heavenly Way blesses the good and punishes the evil.” However, in another chapter of his book, he maintained very strong faith in this theory. In his book *Lun Heng*, Wang Ch’ung disputes the fatalistic idea of cause and effect, but he does agree with and promote the idea that people should pursue goodness.

This is related to the specialized learning of Eastern ethical education. It is a very involved subject, but what we wish to explain here is the origins of the ideas of the *Hidden Retribution Classic of Lord Wen Ch’ang* and *Book of Cause and Retribution*, as well as the convergence of the ideas of cause and effect and retribution connected with the Taoist and Buddhist Schools. These came to form the ideological background of the ethical views of every strata of Chinese society.

In addition, the connection between the Taoist School and Taoist religion and literature beginning from the Wei and Chin dynasties down to and following the T’ang and Sung dynasties was very much like that of Buddhist learning and the Ch’an School. Both were intertwined with literature, and if we force a delineation based upon historical periods, the literature of the Wei and Chin dynasties was dominated by Taoist influences in terms of both poetry and prose. The literature of the T’ang was heavily influenced by both the Taoist and Buddhist Schools especially in poetry. However, there was more influence by the Taoist School on short essays and fiction. The literature of the Sung Dynasty tended towards the Ch’an School both in terms of poetry and prose. There were more Buddhist than Taoist elements in the drama and fiction of the Yuan Dynasty, but there was gradual fusion during the Ming and Ch’ing dynasties.

In order to discuss this very serious subject, I would like to get everyone to relax a little and then introduce some materials related to the Taoist School and Taoist religion contained in T’ang poems so that you may experience the spiritual realms of those immortals. There is a poem written by the famous T’ang poet Li Shang-yin which truly reflects the feeling of the Taoist School:

Coming was but empty words as you have gone without a trace,
The moonlight slants above the rooftop as the fifth watch sounds.
Dreams of far off parting, cries which cannot call,
Urgently finishing the letter, the ink will not thicken,
The illumination of the candle half covers kingfishers embossed with
gold.
The faint smell of musk pervades through embroidered hibiscus,
The young man Liu pines that Mt. P’eng is far,
Past Mt. P’eng a myriad ranges forge up.

He composed another poem entitled "The Decorated Lute":

The decorated lute had fifty strings before it was broken,
Each string and each fret recall flourishing years.
Chuang Tzu dreamt at daybreak that the butterfly had lost its way,
Emperor Wang bestowed his spring passion upon the cuckoo.
The moon is bright on the vast sea, the pearl has tears,
The sun warms the blue fields, smoke rises from the jade.
The emotion can ripen with remembrance,
Disappointed now as before."

The young man Liu, Chuang Tzu dreaming of a butterfly, Emperor Wang bestowing passion upon a cuckoo, pearls shedding tears in the vast sea, the sun warming blue fields, etc. are all allusions derived from the Taoist School and Taoist religion. This type of poetry could certainly not have been composed without such cultivation, artistic conception and emotion.

The poems of the Sung Dynasty by such noted writers as Su Tung-p'o, Wang An-shi, and Huang Shan-ku were even more intertwined with Taoist and Buddhist ideas. Su Tung-p'o's "To the Tune of the Water Music Prelude" reads:

When did the moon begin to shine?
I inquire of Heaven as I raise my cup.
I wonder what year it is in the Heavenly palaces and towers?
I wish to return there riding on the wind,
But fear the azure halls and jade abodes would be too cold at such
height.
I get up and dance with my clear shadow,
As if no longer in the world of men.
Around crimson pavilions,
Lowering into sweet inner rooms,
Shining upon those still without sleep,
The moon should have no enmity.
Why is she always full when men are parted so long?
Men have their melancholy and joy, parting and meeting,
The moon has her obscurity and brightness, waxing and waning,
Never from of old has there been lasting perfection!
I only wish that we shall live long,
And watch the fair moon even though a thousand miles apart.

This is only one example of many. If one wishes to study Taoist thought and

Chinese literature, there is more than meets the eye and it should not be let to slip away.

The literature, moral culture, science and philosophy, not to mention political influences of Chinese culture, have all been influenced by Taoist thought and Taoist religion. While the origin of many popular influences in Chinese culture and society have been overlooked because of the tendency to criticize Taoism label it as superstitious, it is undeniable that many of these influences have been highly advantageous, and in fact responsible for Chinese peace and prosperity. This short work has provided but a small glimpse into the behind-the-scenes role played by various Taoist personages, the Taoist school and body of thought, and it is hoped that with these new insights, you can better appreciate the Taoist school and Taoist religion.

Other Books by the Author

If you enjoyed this short text, you might be interested in other related works by the author:

Translated Works of Zen and Esoteric Master Nan Huai-Chin:

Grass Mountain: A Seven Day Intensive in Ch'an Training with Master Nan Huai-Chin, trans. by Margaret Yuan and Janis Walker, (Samuel Weiser, York Beach: Maine, 1986).

Tao and Longevity, trans. by Wen Kuan Chu, (Samuel Weiser, York Beach: Maine, 1991).

Working Toward Enlightenment, trans. by J.C. Cleary, (Samuel Weiser, York Beach: Maine, 1993).

To Realize Enlightenment, trans. by J.C. Cleary, (Samuel Weiser, York Beach: Maine, 1994).

The Story of Chinese Zen, trans. by Thomas Cleary, (Charles E. Tuttle, Boston, 1995).

Basic Buddhism: Exploring Buddhism and Zen, trans. by J.C. Cleary, (Samuel Weiser, York Beach: Maine, 1997).

The Insider's Guide to the Best and Worst Spiritual Paths and Practices, Nan Huai-Chin and William Bodri, (Top Shape Publishing, Reno: Nevada, 2002).

How to Measure and Deepen Your Spiritual Realization: A Short Multi-disciplinary Course on Evaluating and Elevating Your Meditation Progress and Spiritual Experiences, Nan Huai-Chin and William Bodri, (Top Shape Publishing, Reno: Nevada, 2002).

The Story of Chinese Taoism, trans. by William Brown, (Top Shape Publishing, Reno: Nevada, 2002).