

MO TZU'S DOCTRINES OF UNIVERSAL LOVE, HEAVEN, AND SOCIAL WELFARE

STUDENTS OF CHINESE thought are likely to think that Confucianism and Taoism have been the two outstanding indigenous philosophical systems in China. This is true so far as the last two thousand years are concerned. In ancient China, up to the beginning of the Han dynasty (206 B.C.—A.D. 220), the greatest schools were Confucianism and Moism.¹ They dominated the intellectual scene from the fifth to at least the third century B.C. And they vigorously attacked each other.

The two were bitter enemies because in their doctrines they were diametrically opposed. While Confucius took the Western Chou (1111–770 B.C.) as his model, Mo Tzu looked to the Hsia (2183–1752 B.C.?) instead. The whole Confucian ethical system is based on the concept of humanity (*jen*), whereas Mo Tzu (fl. 479–438 B.C.)² based his on the concept of righteousness (*i*). Both are of course human values. But while Confucianists kept humanity essentially a human value, Mo Tzu traced righteousness to the will of Heaven. To the Confucianists, Heaven does not directly exert its will but leaves the moral law to operate by itself. To Mo Tzu, however, the will of Heaven determines all. Mo Tzu strongly condemns ceremonies, music, elaborate funerals, and the belief in fate (*ming*, destiny), all of which were promoted by Confucius and his followers. For Confucius, moral life is desirable for its own sake, whereas for Mo Tzu it is desirable because of the benefits it brings. Even his concept of the will of Heaven is colored by this utilitarian approach.

The greatest divergence between Confucianism and Moism, however, is on the issue of human relations. What distinguishes the Moist movement is its doctrine of universal love: other people's parents, families, and countries are to be treated like one's own. This is of course absolutely incompatible with the basic Confucian doctrine of love with distinctions: while love should embrace all, it must start with love for one's parents; therefore, one has a special obligation of filial piety to parents. Thus there is a gradation or degree in human relations. If the Moist doctrine were adopted, the whole Confucian system would be destroyed from its very foundation. This was the reason why Mencius attacked Moism mercilessly.³

The Moists challenged the Confucianists not only in theory, but also

¹ Often spelled "Mohism," although the "h" is entirely superfluous.

² The name Mo Tzu has been variously written as Moh-tse, Meh-tse, Micius, etc.

³ *Mencius*, 3A:5, 3B:9.

in actual practice. Like Confucius, Mo Tzu traveled from one state to another offering help to rulers. He did not hesitate to walk for ten days and ten nights in an effort to dissuade a ruler from making war, for he strongly condemned war. One might even say that the Confucianists and the Moists represented two entirely different groups of people. While Confucian followers came from all classes of society and Confucianism is basically equalitarian, they represented and aimed at producing an élite. We are not sure who the Moists were. The name Mo may have been a family name or may have denoted a form of punishment. The fact that Mo Tzu's followers were ascetics and had "elders" suggests that they might have been prisoners or slaves. All speculation aside, the fact remains that they may have represented the working class. If this is correct, then the opposition between Confucianism and Moism is a foregone conclusion.

We know very little about Mo Tzu himself. His private name was Ti. He was a native of either Sung or Lu, Confucius' native state. He was once the chief officer of Sung. Some say he was at first a follower of Confucianism and then turned to be an opponent. Eventually he had about three hundred followers. His dates are uncertain except that probably he was born before Confucius died and died before Mencius was born. Aside from continuing his ethical teachings, his followers also developed some epistemological interest and evolved a crude system of definition and argumentation, perhaps in order to defend their peculiar doctrines. Both of these teachings disappeared soon after the third century B.C. Ever since then, no Moist philosopher has appeared. The centuries of war in which Moism thrived was no time for intellectual hair-splitting and sophistry, and their condemnation of war did not endear them to rulers. Their asceticism and utilitarianism were too extreme to be practicable. But why did their lofty doctrine of universal love fail to continue? Was it too idealistic for the Chinese? Or was it inherently weak because it is largely motivated by the benefits it would bring?⁴ The question is open to speculation. One thing is certain, and that is, philosophically Moism is shallow and unimportant. It does not have the profound metaphysical presuppositions of either Taoism or Confucianism. Consequently it was only a temporary challenge to other schools, though a strong one. In the last two thousand years, it was philosophically profound Taoism and Buddhism, and not Moism, that provided Confucianism with stimulation and challenge. Modern interest in Moism arose in China because of its utilitarian spirit, and in the West because of its superficial resemblance to the Christian teachings of the will of God and universal love. This

⁴ On this question, see Dubs, "The Development of Altruism in Confucianism," *Philosophy East and West*, 1 (1951), pp. 48-55.

interest is likely to be temporary. However, to understand ancient Chinese thought, a study of Moism is indispensable. The following translations include the three most important chapters and additional selections of Mo Tzu's work.

THE MO TZU⁵A. *Universal Love*, Pt. 2 (ch. 15)

Mo Tzu said: What the man of humanity devotes himself to surely lies in the promotion of benefits for the world and the removal of harm from the world. This is what he devotes himself to.

But what are the benefits and the harm of the world?

Mo Tzu said: Take the present cases of mutual attacks among states, mutual usurpation among families, and mutual injuries among individuals, or the lack of kindness and loyalty between ruler and minister, of parental affection and filial piety between father and son, and of harmony and peace among brothers. These are harms in the world.

But when we examine⁶ these harms, whence did they arise? Did they arise out of want of mutual love?

Mo Tzu said: They arise out of want of mutual love. At present feudal lords know only to love their own states and not those of others. Therefore they do not hesitate to mobilize their states to attack others. Heads of families know only to love their own families and not those of others. Therefore they do not hesitate to mobilize their families to usurp others. And individuals know only to love their own persons and not those of others. Therefore they do not hesitate to mobilize their own persons to injure others. For this reason, as feudal lords do not love one another, they will fight in the fields. As heads of families do not love one another, they will usurp one another. As individuals do not love one another, they will injure one another. When ruler and minister do not love each other, they will not be kind and loyal. When father and son do not love each other, they will not be affectionate and filial. When brothers do not love one another, they will not be harmonious and peaceful. When nobody

⁵ The *Mo Tzu* is similar to the *Hsün Tzu* and later philosophical works in style in devoting each chapter to a particular subject. Originally there were seventy-one chapters but only fifty-three are extant. They cover subjects like "Condemnation of Confucianists," "Condemnation of War," etc., and military defense. Chapters 40-45 are on dialects, including the definition of terms and the explanations of major and minor causes, and are believed to have been by Mo Tzu's pupils. There was no commentary until the eighteenth century. For English translation, see Mei, *Ethical and Political Works of Mo Tzu*, which contains most of the chapters. Some chapters have also been translated by others. For a German translation of chapters 40-45, not translated by Mei, see Forke, *Mei Ti*.

⁶ Read *ch'ung* (honor) as *ch'a* (examine), according to Yü Yüeh (1821-1906), *Chu-tzu p'ing-i* (Critique of the Various Philosophers), ch. 9, 1899 ed., 9:18b.

in the world loves any other, the strong will surely overcome the weak, [The many will oppress the few],⁷ the rich will insult the poor. The honored will despise the humble, and the cunning will deceive the ignorant. Because of want of mutual love, all the calamities, usurpations, hatred, and animosity in the world have arisen. Therefore the man of humanity condemns it.

Now that it is condemned, what should take its place?

Mo Tzu said: It should be replaced by the way of universal love and mutual benefit.

What is the way of universal love and mutual benefit?

Mo Tzu said: It is to regard other people's countries as one's own. Regard other people's families as one's own. Regard other people's person as one's own. Consequently, when feudal lords love one another, they will not fight in the fields. When heads of families love one another, they will not usurp one another. When individuals love one another, they will not injure one another. When ruler and minister love each other, they will be kind and loyal. When father and son love each other, they will be affectionate and filial. When brothers love each other, they will be peaceful and harmonious. When all the people in the world love one another, the strong will not overcome the weak, the many will not oppress the few, the rich will not insult the poor, the honored will not despise the humble, and the cunning will not deceive the ignorant. Because of universal love, all the calamities, usurpations, hatred, and animosity in the world may be prevented from arising. Therefore the man of humanity praises it.

But now gentlemen of the world would say: Yes, it will be good if love becomes universal. Nevertheless, it is something distant and difficult to practice.

Mo Tzu said: This is simply because gentlemen of the world fail to recognize its benefit and understand its reason. Now, to besiege a city, to fight in the fields, and to sacrifice one's own life for fame are what all people consider difficult. And yet when a ruler likes them, his multitude can do them. Besides, to love one another universally and to benefit one another mutually is different from these. Those who love others will be loved by others. Those who benefit others will be benefited by others. Those who hate others will be hated by others. And those who harm others will be harmed by others. Then, what difficulty is there with this universal love? Only the ruler does not make it his governmental measure and officers do not make it their conduct.

⁷ According to Sun I-jang (1848-1908), *Mo Tzu chien-ku* (Explanation and Commentary on the *Mo Tzu*), these words are probably missing from the original text.

Comment. The motive of benefits is behind all Moist doctrines. Confucianists throughout history have condemned benefits as motivation instead of righteousness. For Confucius, a main difference between a superior man and an inferior man is that the former is after righteousness and the latter after benefits.⁸ Not that Confucianism renounces benefits. On the contrary, it promotes them. But they should be the *results* of good deeds, not the *motivation* for them. Mo Tzu does emphasize righteousness, but to him righteousness is to be understood in terms of beneficial results.

Formerly, Duke Wen⁹ of Chin liked his officers to wear coarse clothing. Therefore all his ministers wore [simple] sheepskin garments, carried their swords in [unadorned] leather girdles, and put on hats of plain cloth. Thus attired, they appeared before the ruler inside and walked around the court outside. What was the reason for this? It was because the ruler liked it and therefore the ministers could do it. Formerly, King Ling¹⁰ of Ch'u wanted people to have slender waists. Therefore all his ministers limited themselves to one meal a day. They exhaled before they tied their belts. They leaned against the wall before they could stand up. Within a year all at court looked thin and dark. What was the reason for this? It was because the ruler liked it and therefore the ministers could do it. Formerly, King Kou-chien¹¹ of Yüeh liked his officers to be brave. He trained his ministers, gathered them together, set his palace boat on fire and, to test his officers, said that all the treasure of Yüeh was there. The King of Yüeh himself beat the drum to urge them on. As the officers heard the drum, they rushed in disorder. More than a hundred stepped into the fire and died. Then the King of Yüeh beat the gong to let them retreat.

Therefore Master Mo said: Now, to eat little, to wear coarse clothing, and to sacrifice one's life for fame are things all people in the world consider difficult. But if the ruler likes them, the multitude can do them. Besides, universal love and mutual benefit are different from these. Those who love others will thereby be loved by them. Those who benefit others will thereby be benefited by them. Those who hate others will thereby be hated by them. And those who harm others will thereby be harmed by them. What difficulty is there in this (universal love)? Only the ruler does not make it his governmental measure and officers do not make it their conduct.

Comment. Universal love is promoted by Moism because of its beneficial results. There is no conviction that it is dictated by the

⁸ See *Analec*s, 4:11, 16; 15:17; 17:23.

⁹ R. 636-628 B.C.

¹⁰ R. 530-527 B.C.

¹¹ Fl. 452 B.C.

inherently good nature of man or by the inherent goodness of the act. Although Confucianism teaches love with distinctions, it also teaches love for all, but it does so on the grounds of moral necessity and of the innate goodness of man.¹²

But now gentlemen of the world would say: Yes, it will be good if love becomes universal. Nevertheless, it is something impracticable. It is like grappling with Mount T'ai and leaping over the Chi River.¹³

Mo Tzu said: The analogy is wrong. To grapple with Mount T'ai and leap across River Chi would be truly an extreme feat of strength. From antiquity down to the present day none has been able to do it. Besides, universal love and mutual benefit are different from this. Ancient sage-kings did practice them. How do we know this to be the case? In ancient times, when Yü¹⁴ was ruling the empire, he dug the West and the Yü-tou Rivers in the west to release the water from the Ch'ü-sun-huang River. In the north he built a dam across the Yüan-ku River in order to fill the Hou-chih-ti and Hu-ch'ih Rivers. Mount Ti-chu was used as a water divide and a tunnel was dug through Lung-men Mountain. All this was done for the benefit of the Yen, Tai, Hu, and Ho tribes and the people west of the Yellow River. In the east, he drained the great plain and built dikes around the Meng-chu marshes and the water was divided into nine canals in order to regulate the water in the east and to benefit the people of the district of Chi. In the south he regulated the Yangtze, Han, Huai, and Ju Rivers so their water flowed eastward and emptied into the Five Lakes, in order to benefit the peoples of Ching, Ch'u, Kan, and Yüeh and the barbarians of the south. This is the story of Yü's accomplishments. This shows that my doctrine of universal love has been practiced.

Comment. While Confucianists cited historical examples for inspiration and as models, Mo Tzu cited them to show that his teachings had been demonstrated. The difference between the idealistic and practical approach is clear.

In ancient times, when King Wen¹⁵ ruled the Western Land, he shone like the sun and the moon all over the four quarters as well as the Western Land. He did not permit a big state to oppress a small state, or the multitude to oppress the widow or widower, or the ruthless and powerful to rob people's grains or live stocks. Heaven recognized his deeds and visited him with blessings. Consequently, the old and childless

¹² See above, ch. 3, comment on *Mencius*, 3B:9 for a discussion on the doctrine of love with distinctions in relation to the doctrine of universal love.

¹³ This is a reference to *Mencius*, 1A:7.

¹⁴ Founder of the Hsia dynasty (c. 2183–2175 B.C.).

¹⁵ Founder of the Chou dynasty (c. 1751–1739 B.C.).

were well adjusted and enjoyed their full life span, the lonely and brotherless had opportunity to fulfill their work among mankind,¹⁶ and the orphaned had the support to grow up. This is the story of King Wen's accomplishment. It shows that my doctrine of universal love has been practiced.

In ancient times when King Wu¹⁷ was about to sacrifice to Mount T'ai, it was recorded, he said, "Mount T'ai, virtuous descendent King of the Chou assumed a great undertaking [to remove wicked King Chou¹⁸ of the Shang] and now the great undertaking has been accomplished. Men of humanity have arisen, and I pray the Lord on High to save the people of the Middle Kingdom (China) and the various barbarian tribes. Although King Chou had his near relatives, they cannot compare with my men of humanity. If there is any blame anywhere, the responsibility rests with me alone."¹⁹ This is the story of King Wu's accomplishment. It shows that my doctrine of universal love has been practiced.

Therefore Mo Tzu said: If rulers of the world today really want the empire to be wealthy and hate to have it poor, want it to be orderly and hate to have it chaotic, they should practice universal love and mutual benefit. This is the way of the sage-kings and the principle of governing the empire, and it should not be neglected. (SPTK, 4:3a-8a.)

B. The Will of Heaven, Pt. 1 (ch. 26)

Mo Tzu said: Gentlemen of the world today know small things and do not know great things. How do we know? We know from their conduct at home. If in their conduct at home they should offend their elders, there are still the homes of neighbors to which to flee. Yet relatives, brothers, and acquaintances all warn and admonish them, saying, "You must be cautious. You must be careful. How can it be to offend elders in one's conduct at home?" Not only is this true of conduct at home. It is also true of conduct in the state. If in one's conduct in the state one should offend the ruler, there are still the neighboring states to which to flee. Yet relatives, brothers, and acquaintances all warn and caution him, saying, "You must be cautious. You must be careful. How can it be to offend the ruler in one's conduct in the state?" These are people who have places to flee. Yet the warning and caution to them are strong like this. Should the warning and caution not be much stronger for those who have no place to flee? There is a saying: "If one commits a sin in daylight, where can he flee?" I say: There is no place to flee. For Heaven

¹⁶ The word *tse* means to fulfill or accomplish, said Sun I-jang.

¹⁷ Son of King Wen (c. 1121–1116 B.C.).

¹⁸ R. 1175–1112 B.C. He was responsible for the fall of the Shang dynasty (1751–1112 B.C.).

¹⁹ Cf. *Analekts*, 20:1.

should not be regarded as a forest, a valley, or an obscure gate²⁰ where no one is present. It will surely see the evil action clearly. But with regard to Heaven, gentlemen of the world today are all negligent and do not warn and caution one another. This is how we know that the gentlemen in the world know small things but do not know great things.

Now what does Heaven want and what does Heaven dislike? Heaven wants righteousness and dislikes unrighteousness. Therefore, in leading the people in the world to engage in practicing righteousness, I should be doing what Heaven wants. When I do what Heaven wants, Heaven also does what I want. Now, what do I want and what do I dislike? I want happiness and wealth, and dislike calamities and misfortunes. [If I do not do what Heaven wants and do what Heaven does not want,] then I should be leading the people in the world to devote themselves to calamities and misfortunes. But how do we know that Heaven wants righteousness and dislikes unrighteousness? I say: With righteousness the world lives and without righteousness the world dies, with it the world becomes rich and without it the world becomes poor, with it the world becomes orderly and without it the world becomes chaotic. Now, Heaven wants to have the world live and dislikes to have it die, wants to have it rich and dislikes to have it poor, and wants to have it orderly and dislikes to have it chaotic. Therefore I know Heaven wants righteousness and dislikes unrighteousness.

Comment. Even the will of Heaven and righteousness are explained in terms of practical results.

Moreover, righteousness is the standard.²¹ It is not to be given by the subordinate to the superior but must be given from the superior to the subordinate. Therefore, the common people should attend to their work with all their might, and should not forthwith²² set up the standard themselves. There are minor officials to give them the standard. Minor officials should attend to their work with all their might and should not forthwith set the standard themselves. There are great officials to give them the standard.²³ Great officials should attend to their work with all their might and should not forthwith set the standard themselves. There are the three

²⁰ Wang Nien-sun (1744-1832), *Tu-shu tsa-chih* (Miscellaneous Notes from Reading), 1933 ed., bk. 9, p. 71, reads *men* (gate) as *hsien* (leisure) and Pi Yüan (1730-1797), *Mo Tzu chu* (Commentary on the *Mo Tzu*) reads it as *chien* (brook), both without improving the text.

²¹ *Cheng*, ordinarily meaning to govern, here means to be correct or to be a standard, according to Wang Nien-sun, *Tu-shu tsa-chih*, *ibid.*, and Sun I-jang, *Mo Tzu hsien-ku*, ch. 7.

²² Sun I-jang interprets *tz'u* as forthwith but Pi Yüan reads it as *tsu*, to indulge in.

²³ The text says "generals and officials" but Sun I-jang says that means great officials.

ministers²⁴ and the several feudal lords to give them the standard. The three ministers and the several feudal lords should attend to government with all their might and should not forthwith set the standard themselves. There is the Son of Heaven (emperor) to give them the standard. The emperor should not forthwith set the standard himself. There is Heaven to give him the standard. Gentlemen of the world of course clearly understand that the emperor gives the standard to the three ministers, the several feudal lords, the minor officials, and the common people, but the common people of the world do not clearly understand that Heaven gives the standard to the emperor. Therefore the ancient sage-kings of the Three Dynasties,²⁵ Yü, T'ang,²⁶ and Wu, desiring to make it clear to the common people that Heaven gives the standard to the emperor, all fed oxen and sheep with grass and dogs and pigs with grain, and cleanly prepared pastry and wine to sacrifice to the Lord on High and spiritual beings and pray to Heaven for blessing. But I have not heard of Heaven praying to the emperor for blessing. I therefore know that Heaven gives the standard to the emperor.

Thus the emperor is the most honorable in the world and the richest in the world. Therefore those who desire honor and wealth cannot but obey the will of Heaven. Those who obey the will of Heaven love universally and benefit each other, and will surely obtain rewards. Those who oppose the will of Heaven set themselves apart from each other, hate each other, and injure each other, and will surely incur punishment. Now, who were those who obeyed the will of Heaven and obtained rewards and who were those who opposed the will of Heaven and incurred punishment?

Mo Tzu said: The ancient sage-kings of the Three Dynasties, Yü, T'ang, Wen, and Wu, were those who obeyed the will of Heaven and obtained rewards. The wicked kings of the Three Dynasties, Chieh,²⁷ Chou, Yu,²⁸ and Li,²⁹ were those who opposed the will of Heaven and incurred punishment.

Well, how did Yü, T'ang, Wen, and Wu obtain rewards? Mo Tzu said: On the highest level they honored Heaven, on the middle level they served spiritual beings, and on the lower level they loved the people. Thereupon the will of Heaven proclaimed, "They love universally those whom I love. They benefit universally those whom I benefit. Such love of people is really universal and such benefit to people is really substantial." Therefore Heaven caused them to have the honor of being

²⁴ The grand protector, the grand preceptor, and the grand tutor.

²⁵ Hsia, Shang, and Chou.

²⁶ Founder of the Shang dynasty (r. 1751-1739 B.C.).

²⁷ He (r. 1802-1752 B.C.) lost the Hsia dynasty.

²⁸ R. 878-842 B.C.

²⁹ R. 781-771 B.C.

Sons of Heaven and possess the wealth of the whole empire. Their heritages were continued by the descendants of ten thousand generations, who continually praised their good deeds. They spread [benefits] all over the world, and people praise them to this day, calling them sage-kings.

Well, how did Chieh, Chou, Yu, and Li incur punishment? Mo Tzu said: On the highest level they blasphemed against Heaven, on the middle level they blasphemed against spiritual beings, and on the lower level they injured the people. Thereupon the will of Heaven proclaimed, "They set themselves apart from those whom I love and hated them. They injure all those whom I benefit. Such hatred of people is really universal and such injury to people is really substantial." Therefore Heaven caused them not to live out their life-span or to survive their generation. They are condemned to this day and are called wicked kings.

But how do we know that Heaven loves all the people in the world? Because it enlightens them all. How do we know that it enlightens them all? Because it possesses them all. How do we know that it possesses them all? Because it feeds them all. How do we know that it feeds them all? I say: Within the four seas (the world) all grain-eating (civilized) people feed oxen and sheep with grass and dogs and pigs with grain, and cleanly prepare pastry and wine to sacrifice to the Lord on High and spiritual beings. Possessing all people, how could Heaven not love them? Moreover, I declare that for the murder of one innocent person, there will surely be one misfortune. Who is it that murders the innocent person? It is man. Who is it that sends down misfortune? It is Heaven. If it is thought that Heaven does not love the people of the world, why does it send misfortune because a man murders a man? This is why I know that Heaven loves the people of the world.

To obey the will of Heaven is to use righteousness as the method of control. To oppose the will of Heaven is to use force as the method of control.³⁰ What will happen if righteousness is used as a method of control? Mo Tzu said: A ruler of a big state will not attack a small state. A ruler of a large family will not usurp a small family. The strong will not plunder the weak. The honored will not despise the humble. And the cunning will not deceive the ignorant. This is beneficial to Heaven on the highest level, beneficial to spiritual beings on the middle level, and beneficial to man on the lower level. Being beneficial to these three means being beneficial to all. Therefore the whole world gives them a good name and calls them sage-kings.

Comment. In teaching obedience to the will of Heaven, Mo Tzu

³⁰ According to Sun I-jang, *cheng*, which ordinarily means to govern, should be *cheng*, meaning the way to control.

was the most religious of ancient Chinese philosophers. No one else relied on religious sanction as much as he did. Some scholars even suggested that he founded a religion, assuming that his followers formed some sort of a religious group. If so, he was the only personal religious founder in ancient China.

Those who use force as the way of control will act differently. Their words will be different and their action will be the opposite, like galloping back to back. A ruler of a large state will attack a small state. A ruler of a large family will usurp a small family. The strong will plunder the weak. The honorable will despise the humble. And the cunning will deceive the ignorant. This is not beneficial to Heaven on the highest level, not beneficial to spiritual beings on the middle level, and not beneficial to people on the lower level. Not being beneficial to these three means not being beneficial to all. Therefore the whole world gives them a bad name and calls them wicked kings.

Mo Tzu said: The will of Heaven to me is like the compasses to the wheelwright and the square to the carpenter. The wheelwright and the carpenter apply their square and compasses to measure all square and circular objects in the world. They say that those that fit are correct and those that do not fit are not correct. The writings of the scholars and those that do not fit are not correct. The writings of the scholars and gentlemen of the world today cannot all be loaded in carts and the many doctrines they teach cannot all be enumerated. They try to persuade the feudal lords above and various minor officials below. But as to humanity and righteousness, they are far, far off the mark. How do I know? I say: I have the shining model in the world (the will of Heaven) to measure them. (SPTK, 7:1a-6a)

C. Attack on Fatalism, Pt. 1 (ch. 35)

Mo Tzu said: In ancient times kings, dukes, and great officials, who ruled the state all wanted their country to be rich, their population to be large, and their administration of government to be orderly. But instead of wealth they got poverty, instead of a large population they got a small population, and instead of order they got chaos. Fundamentally this is to lose what they desired but to get what they disliked. What is the reason? Mo Tzu said: It was due to the large number of fatalists among the people.

The fatalists say: When fate (*ming*) decrees that the country shall be wealthy, it will be wealthy. When it decrees that it shall be poor, it will be poor. When fate decrees that the population shall be large, it will be large. When it decrees that it shall be small, it will be small. When it decrees that the country shall be orderly, it will be orderly. When it de-

crees that it shall be chaotic, it will be chaotic. When fate decrees that one shall enjoy longevity, one will enjoy longevity. And when fate decrees that one will suffer brevity of life, he will suffer brevity of life. What is the use of exerting strong [effort]?³¹ With this doctrine they tried to persuade the kings, dukes, and great officials above and to prevent the common people from doing their work. Therefore the fatalists are not men of humanity. Their doctrine must be clearly examined.

Comment. Both Confucianists and Taoists discussed *ming* in its more fundamental aspect of destiny, that is, man's endowment and function in relation to the total existence of the universe. Mo Tzu, however, looked at *ming* only in its narrow meaning of fate, and he discussed it primarily from the point of view of its effects. The deeper philosophical and religious phases did not interest him.

Now, how is this doctrine to be clearly examined? Mo Tzu said: For any doctrine some standard must be established. To expound a doctrine without a standard is like determining the directions of sunrise and sunset on a revolving potter's wheel. In this way the distinction of right and wrong and benefit and harm cannot be clearly known. Therefore for any doctrine there must be the three standards.³² What are the three standards? Mo Tzu said: [1] There must be a basis or foundation. [2] There must be an examination. [3] And there must be practical application. [1] Where to find the basis? Find it in the [will of Heaven and the spirits and]³³ the experiences of the ancient sage-kings above. [2] How is it to be examined? It is to be examined by inquiring into the actual experience of the eyes and ears of the people below. [3] How to apply it? Put³⁴ it into law and governmental measures and see if they bring about benefits to the state and the people. These are called the three standards.

Comment. A surprisingly scientific procedure: basis, examination, and application. A theory is to be verified and tested in actual experience. One cannot help sensing a strongly pragmatic flavor.

[1] But some of the gentlemen of the world today believe that there is fate. Why not look into the experiences of the sage-kings? In ancient times the chaos created by King Chieh was taken over by King T'ang

³¹ The idea of effort is found in pts. 2 and 3, or chs. 27 and 28 of the *Mo Tzu*.
³² In chs. 36 and 37 of the *Mo Tzu*, *fa* is used instead of *piao* as it is here. According to Sun I-jang, they all have the same meaning as *i*, which is translated as "standard" above.

³³ These inserted words appear in a similar passage in the opening paragraph of *Mo Tzu*, ch. 36.
³⁴ According to Wang Nien-sun, *ibid.*, p. 87, *fei* and *fa* were interchangeable, meaning to issue forth.

and replaced by order, and the chaos created by King Chou was taken over by King Wu and turned into order. The times were the same and the people were not different, and yet the empire was a chaos under Chieh and Chou but an orderly state under T'ang and Wu. How can it be said that there is fate?

[2] But some of the gentlemen of the world today believe that there is fate. Why not look into the written records of past rulers? In the written records of past rulers what were issued to the whole country and distributed among the people were the laws. Did any of them say that blessings cannot be invoked and calamities cannot be averted, or that reverence does no good and cruelty does no harm? What were employed to settle litigations and mete out punishment were the laws. Did any of them say that blessings cannot be invoked and calamities cannot be averted, or that reverence does no good and cruelty does no harm? What were used to organize armies and order soldiers were the declarations. Did any of them say that blessings cannot be invoked and calamities cannot be averted, or that reverence does no good and cruelty does no harm? Mo Tzu said: I have not enumerated all³⁵ the records. The good records of the world are innumerable. Generally speaking, they are the three types.³⁶ Try as we may, we cannot find there the doctrine of those who believe in fate. Should the doctrine not be abandoned?

[3] To adopt the doctrine of those who believe in fate is to upset righteousness in the world. To upset righteousness in the world is to establish fate. This means sorrow for the people. And to be delighted in people's sorrow is to destroy them. Now, why do we want men of righteousness in the government? The answer is that when men of righteousness are in the government the world will be in order, the Lord on High, mountains and rivers, and spiritual beings will be sacrificed to by their proper sacrificers, and the people will receive great benefits from them. How do we know? Mo Tzu said: In ancient times T'ang was conferred a fief at Po. Making allowance for the irregular boundary lines, his territory was one hundred *li*³⁷ in width and length. He and his people loved one another universally and benefited one another mutually. They shared the wealth when there was abundance. He led his people to honor Heaven and serve spiritual beings above. Consequently Heaven and spiritual beings enriched them, the feudal lords befriended them, the people loved them, and the worthy scholars came to them. Within a generation he became king of the empire and leader³⁸ of the feudal lords.

In ancient times King Wen was conferred a fief at the Chou district

³⁵ According to Pi Yüan, the word *yen* (salt) is a misprint for *chin* (all).
³⁶ The text has "five" but it should have been three, according to Pi Yüan.

³⁷ A *li* is about one-third of a mile.

³⁸ Sun I-jang said that *cheng* here means to be a leader.

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at the foot of Ch'i Mountain. Making allowance for the irregular boundary lines, his territory was one hundred *li* in width and length. He and his people loved one another universally and benefited one another mutually. Therefore those near him were contented with his government and those far away came to the fold of his virtue. Those who heard of King Wen all rose up and rushed to him. The weak, the unworthy, and the paralyzed remained where they were and expressed their desires, saying, "Why is King Wen's land not extended to include us? Wouldn't we then enjoy the same benefits as the subjects of King Wen?" Therefore Heaven and spiritual beings enriched them, the feudal lords befriended them, the people loved them, and the worthy scholars came to them. Within a generation he became king of the empire and leader of the feudal lords. I have said, when men of righteousness are in the government, the world will be in order, the Lord on High, mountains and rivers, and spiritual beings will be sacrificed to by their proper sacrificers, and the people will receive great benefits from them. From these ancient experiences I know what I said is true.

Therefore ancient sage-kings propagated laws and issued edicts, and offered rewards and punishments to encourage virtue [and check wickedness].³⁹ Consequently, people showed filial piety and deep love to their parents at home and respect to their elders in the community. They followed a standard in their conduct, observed discipline in their movements, and maintained the distinction between men and women. When they were ordered to manage official treasuries, they would not steal. When they were ordered to defend a city, they would not desert or rebel. When their ruler met with death, they sacrificed their own lives. When their ruler fled, they followed him. This is what the superior rewarded and the common people praised. But those who believe in fate say, "Whoever is rewarded by the superior is of course rewarded by fate. It is not because of virtue that he is rewarded. Whoever is punished is of course punished by fate. It is not because of his cruelty that he is punished." In consequence people do not show filial piety and deep love to their parents at home or respect to their elders in the community. They do not follow any standard in their conduct, observe discipline in their movements, or maintain the distinction between men and women. Therefore when they manage the official treasuries, they would steal. When they defend a city, they would desert or rebel. When their ruler meets with death, they would not sacrifice their lives. When their ruler flees, they would not follow him. This is what the superior will punish and the common people will condemn. But those who believe in fate say,

³⁹ According to Sun I-jang, these words should have been added to the text.

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"Whoever is punished by the superior is of course punished by fate. It is not because of his cruelty that he is punished. Whoever is rewarded by the superior is of course rewarded by fate. It is not because of his virtue that he is rewarded." As a ruler he who holds this doctrine will not be righteous. As a minister he will not be loyal. As a father he will not be deeply loving. As a son he will not be filial. As an elder brother he will not be brotherly. And as a younger brother he will not be respectful. The unreasoning adherence to this doctrine is the source of evil ideas and the way of the wicked man.

How do we know that fatalism is the way of the wicked man? Poor people of ancient times were greedy in drinking and eating but lazy in their work. Therefore their resources for food and clothing were inadequate, and the troubles of hunger and cold were approaching. They did not know enough to say, "We are weak and unworthy. We did not work hard." But they would say, "It is originally our fate that we are poor." The wicked kings of ancient times did not check the indulgence of their ears and eyes and the depravity of their minds. They did not obey their ancestors and consequently they lost their countries and ruined their states. They did not know to say, "We are weak and unworthy. Our government has not been good." But they would say, "It is originally our fate that we lost them." The "Announcement of Chung-hui" says, "I have heard that the man of the Hsia (King Chieh) issued orders to the world and falsely claimed them to be the Mandate of Heaven (*T'ien-ming*). The Lord on High was for this reason displeased and [ordered King T'ang] to destroy his armies."⁴⁰ This tells how King T'ang showed Chieh's belief in fate to be wrong. The "Great Oath" says, "King Chou abides squatting on the floor, not serving the Lord on High or spiritual beings. He neglected his ancestors and did not sacrifice to them. Therefore upon he said, 'I [have] the people and I have the mandate (fate).' He neglected his duty."⁴¹ Heaven also cast him away and withdrew its protection.⁴² This tells how King Wu (who removed King Chou) showed Chou's belief in fate to be wrong.

If the doctrine of the fatalist is put into practice, the ruler above would not attend to government, and people below would not attend to their work. If the ruler does not attend to government, then law and government will be disorderly. If the people do not attend to their work, wealth and resources will not be adequate. Then on the higher level there will

⁴⁰ Paraphrasing *History*, "Announcement of Chung-hui. Cf. trans., Legge, *Shoo King*, p. 178.

⁴¹ The text of this sentence is obscure. This is Pi Yüan's interpretation based on the phraseology of a similar passage at the end of ch. 36.

⁴² The whole quotation is a paraphrase of *History*, "Great Oath." Cf. Legge, p. 286. The last sentence does not appear in *History*.

not be the supply of pastry and wine to offer in sacrifice to the Lord on High and spiritual beings, and on the lower level there will be nothing to satisfy and comfort the worthy scholars of the world. Externally, there will be nothing to entertain the feudal lords as guests, and internally, there will be nothing to feed the hungry, clothe the cold, support the aged and protect the weak. Therefore on the higher level fatalism is not beneficial to Heaven, on the middle level it is not beneficial to spiritual beings, and on the lower level it is not beneficial to men. The unreasoning adherence to this doctrine is the source of evil ideas and the way of the wicked man. Therefore Mo Tzu said: If the gentlemen of the world today really want the world to be rich and dislike it to be poor, and want the world to be orderly and dislike it to be chaotic, they must condemn the doctrine of fatalism. It is a great harm to the world. (SPTK, 9:1a-6b.)

D. Additional Selections

1. Utilitarianism

Mo Tzu said: Any word or action that is beneficial to Heaven, spiritual beings, and the people is to be undertaken. Any word or action that is harmful to Heaven, spiritual beings, and the people is to be rejected. Any word or action that is in accord with the sage-kings of the Three Dynasties, sage-emperors Yao and Shun,⁴³ and sage-kings Yü, T'ang, Wen, and Wu is to be undertaken. Any word or action that is in accord with the wicked kings of the Three Dynasties, Chieh, Chou, Yu, and Li, is to be rejected.

Mo Tzu said: Any doctrine that can elevate conduct should be perpetuated. Any doctrine that cannot elevate conduct should not be perpetuated. To perpetuate those doctrines that cannot elevate conduct is a waste of speech. (ch. 47, SPTK, 12:2b-3a.)

When a sage rules a state, the benefits of that state may be doubled. When he extends his rule to the empire, those of the empire may be doubled. This twofold increase is not the result of appropriating land from outside, but that of doing away with useless expenditure in the state. In issuing orders, promoting any undertaking, employing the people, or expending wealth, the sage-kings in their administration never do anything that is not useful. Therefore resources are not wasted and the people can⁴⁴ be free from being overworked, and many benefits will be promoted. . . .

In ancient times the sage-kings formulated laws which said, "No man of twenty should dare to remain single, no girl of fifteen should dare

⁴³ Legendary rulers (3rd millennium B.C.).

⁴⁴ According to Sun I-jang, *te* (virtue) is to be read *te* (can).

to be without her master." This was the law of sage-kings. Now that the sage-kings have passed away, the people do what they want. Those who like to have a family early sometimes marry at twenty. Those who like to have a family later sometimes marry at forty. When the late marriages are made up by the early marriages, the average is still later by ten years than the legal age decreed by the sage-kings. Suppose there is one birth in three full years, then there would be two or three children born [by the time men now marry]. This does not only show that if people are caused to marry early, the population can be doubled.

But that is not all. Rulers of today reduce the population in more ways than one. They overwork the people in employing them, and impose heavy burdens by levying taxes. People's resources become insufficient and innumerable people die of hunger and cold. Moreover, great officials mobilize armies to invade neighboring states, for a whole year in long expeditions or for a few months in quicker ones. For a long time, husbands and wives would not see each other. These are ways in which population is reduced. . . . (ch. 20, SPTK, 6:1a-2b.)

2. The Condemnation of War

Now does it mean that to annex a state and destroy an army, injure and oppress the people, and throw the heritages of sages into confusion will benefit Heaven? But to recruit the people of Heaven to attack the cities of Heaven is to murder the people of Heaven, smash altars, demolish shrines, and kill sacrificial animals. In this way, on the higher level no benefit to Heaven can be attained. Does it mean to benefit spiritual beings? But people of Heaven are murdered and spiritual beings are denied their patron sacrifices. The spirits of past rulers are neglected. The multitude are injured and oppressed and the people are scattered. Thus on the middle level no benefit to spiritual beings can be attained. Does it mean to benefit the people? The benefit to the people from killing the people of Heaven is slight⁴⁵ indeed! And calculate its cost! This is the root of destruction of life. It exhausts the people to an immeasurable degree. Thus on the lower level no benefit to the people can be attained. (ch. 19, SPTK, 5:9a-9b.)

3. The Condemnation of Wasteful Musical Activities

The reason why Mo Tzu condemns music is not because the sounds of the big bells, resounding drums, harps, and pipes are not delightful. . . . But set against the past it is not in accord with the deeds of the sage-kings and checked with the present it is not in accord with the benefits

⁴⁵ Read *po* (extensive) as *po* (thin), according to Yü Yüeh, *Chu-tzu p'ing-i* (Textual Critiques of the Various Philosophers) ch. 9, 1899 ed., 9:20a.

of the people. Therefore Mo Tzu said: To engage in music is wrong. . . .

Mo Tzu said: To levy heavy taxes on the people in order to produce the sounds of big bells, resounding drums, harps, and pipes does not help the promotion of benefits and the removal of harms in the world. Therefore Mo Tzu said: To engage in music is wrong. . . . To have men engage in music is to waste their time for ploughing and planting. To have women engage in music is to waste their effort for weaving and spinning. Now, kings, dukes, and great officials engage in music. To strike musical instruments to produce music, they loot the people's resources for food and clothing to such an extent! Therefore Mo Tzu said: To engage in music is wrong.

Now, the sounds of big bells, resounding drums, harps, and pipes are produced. It is no pleasure for the great lords to play and listen alone. They must enjoy it either with the common people or with the rulers. If with the rulers, it will cause them to neglect their attention to government. If with the common people, it will cause them to neglect their work. Now kings, dukes, and great officials engage in music. To strike musical instruments they loot the people's resources for food and clothing to such an extent! Therefore Mo Tzu said: To engage in music is wrong.

Formerly Duke K'ang⁴⁶ of Ch'i promoted music and dance. The dancers⁴⁷ were not to wear coarse garments or eat coarse food. They said that if food was not good, their appearance and complexion would not be good to look at, and if clothing was not beautiful the body and its movements would not be good to observe. Therefore their food had to consist of grain and meat and their clothing of beautiful patterns and embroidery. This is not to produce material for food and clothing but to live on others all the time. Therefore Mo Tzu said: Now, kings, dukes, and great officials engage in music. To strike musical instruments they loot the people's resources for food and clothing to such an extent! Therefore Mo Tzu said: To engage in music is wrong. . . .

Now, kings, dukes, and great officials love music and listen to it, they certainly cannot go to court early and retire late in order to listen to litigations and administer the government. Therefore the country is in chaos and the state in danger. . . . Therefore Mo Tzu said: To engage in music is wrong. (ch. 32, SPTK, 8:14a-18b)

4. The Condemnation of Elaborate Funerals

Now the gentlemen on the world still doubt whether elaborate funerals and extended mourning are right or wrong, beneficial or harmful. Therefore Mo Tzu said: I have inquired into the matter. If the doctrines

⁴⁶ R. 404-379 B.C.

⁴⁷ Following Sun I-jang, read *wan* (ten thousand) as *wu* (to dance).

of those who advocate elaborate funerals and extended mourning are followed in the affairs in the country, it will mean that whenever a king, duke, or great official dies, there would be layers of coffin, the burial would be deep, the shrouding would be plenty, the embroidery covering would be elaborate, and the grave mound would be massive. . . . Mourners would weep in a confused manner to the point of choking, wear sackcloth on the breast and flax on the head, keep the snivel dangling, live in a mourning hut, sleep on straw, and rest their heads on a lump of earth. . . . All this is to last for three years.

If such a doctrine is followed and such a principle is practiced, kings, dukes, and great officials practicing it cannot go to court early [and retire late to administer their government, and attend to the] five offices and six departments⁴⁸ and develop agriculture and forestry and fill the granaries, farmers practicing it cannot start out early and return late to plough and plant, artisans practicing it cannot build vehicles and make utensils, and women practicing it cannot rise early and retire late to weave and spin. So, much wealth is buried in elaborate funerals and long periods of work are suspended in extended mourning. Wealth that is already produced is carried to be buried and wealth yet to be produced is long delayed. To seek wealth in this way is like seeking a harvest by stopping farming. . . . (ch. 25, SPTK, 6:7b-9a)

5. Elevating the Worthy to Government Positions

How do we know elevating the worthy is the foundation of government? The answer is: When the honorable and the wise run the government, the ignorant and the humble remain orderly, but when the ignorant and the humble run the government, the honorable and the wise become rebellious. Therefore we know that elevating the worthy is the foundation of government.

The ancient sage-kings greatly valued the elevation of the worthy and employed the capable. They did not side with their fathers and brothers. They were not partial toward people of wealth and high position. They had no special love for the good-looking. They raised and promoted the worthy, gave them wealth and high position, and made them leading officials. They demoted and rejected the unworthy, caused them to be poor and humble, and made them servants. In this way all people were encouraged by rewards and scared by punishment. They led one another to become worthy. The result was that many were worthy and few were unworthy. Such is the advancing of the worthy. . . .

Now, when kings, dukes, and great officials cannot make a coat, they

⁴⁸ The five offices were those of education, war, public works, civil personnel, and justice. The six departments were divisions in the treasury.

will depend on an able tailor. When they cannot kill an ox or sheep, they will depend on an able butcher. . . . If kings, dukes, and great officials really want to put the state in order and make it permanent and secured, why do they not understand that elevating the worthy is the foundation of government? . . . (ch. 9, SPTK, 2:4a-9a)

6. *Agreement with the Superior*

How is order brought about in the empire? There is order in the empire because the emperor can bring about a unified and agreed concept of right in the empire. If the people all agree with the emperor but not with the Heaven, then calamity still remains. Now, the frequent arrival of hurricanes and torrents are the punishment from Heaven upon the people for their failure to agree with Heaven. . . . (ch. 11, SPTK, 3:3b)

How do we know that the principle of agreement with the superior can be used to govern the empire? Well, why not examine the theory of the origin of the government? In the beginning when man was created, there was no ruler. People existed as individuals. As they existed as individuals, there was one concept of right for a hundred men, a thousand concepts of right for a thousand men, and so on until there were a countless number of concepts of right for a countless number of men. All of them considered their own concepts of right as correct and other people's concepts as wrong. And there were strife among the strong and quarrels among the weak. Thereupon Heaven wished to unify all concepts of right in the world. The worthy was therefore selected and made an emperor. The emperor, realizing his inadequate wisdom and ability to govern alone, selected the next best in virtue and appointed them as the three ministers. The three ministers, realizing their inadequate wisdom and ability to assist the emperor alone, divided the country into states and set up feudal lordships. The feudal lords, realizing their inadequate wisdom and ability to govern the land within the four borders by themselves, selected the next best in virtue. . . . Therefore, in appointing the three ministers, the feudal lords, the great officers, the prime minister, the village elders, and the heads of households, the emperor of old did not select them because of their wealth, high position, or leisure, but employed them to assist in bringing political order and administering the government. . . . When order prevails in the empire, the emperor further unifies all concepts of right as one in the empire and makes it agree with [the will of] Heaven. Therefore the principle of agreement with the superior can be applied by the emperor to govern the empire, by the feudal lords to govern the state, and heads of households to govern the family. . . . (ch. 13, SPTK, 3:13b-18a)

Comment. Mo Tzu has been criticized for absolutism. The danger is certainly present. The requirement for conformity is strict. We must not forget, however, that the final authority is Heaven. In this sense, it is not essentially different from the Confucian theory of the Mandate of Heaven. In both cases, whether the Mandate of Heaven is fulfilled is determined by whether the people are happy and society in good order. Still Confucianists were thinking of moral obligations, while Mo Tzu was thinking of practical results.