

CHAPTER TWO

MOZI

Introduction

Mòzǐ 墨子, “Master Mo” (ca. 480–390 BCE), founded what came to be known as the Mòjiā 墨家 “Mohist School” of philosophy and is the figure around whom the text known as the *Mozi* was formed. His full name is Mò Dí 墨翟. Mozi is arguably the first true philosopher of China known to us. He developed systematic analyses and criticisms of his opponents’ positions and presented an array of arguments in support of his own philosophical views. His interest and faith in argumentation led him and his later followers to study the forms and methods of philosophical debate, and their work contributed significantly to the development of early Chinese philosophy. Mozi himself was probably of quite humble origins. He may have been a member of the craft or artisan class, and his philosophy is distinctively anti-aristocratic. Early in life, he may have studied with followers of Kongzi. However, he went on to become a serious critic of the emerging Confucian tradition.¹

Mozi was not just a philosopher. He led an organized utopian movement whose members engaged in direct social action, including the military defense of states and cities that he judged to be victims of wars of expansion. He was a strong and charismatic leader who inspired his followers to dedicate themselves to his unique view of social justice. This required them to lead austere and quite demanding lives under his direct control and command. Mozi could tax his followers, judge, and punish them; under certain circumstances he could even put them to death. The discipline that defined his movement is reflected in a number of his philosophical positions. His ideal state is highly centralized, orderly, and ideologically unified.

1. During Kongzi’s life and after his death, people began to declare themselves followers of Kongzi and his Way. At this point, it makes sense to describe these people as constituting a “Confucian” tradition or “Confucianism.”

Mozi saw ideological differences and the factionalism they spawned as the primary source of human suffering. Therefore, he sharply criticized the family-based ethical and political system of Kongzi for its inherent partiality and advocated a strict chain of command leading up through a monarch and resting in Heaven. In place of Kongzi's understanding of Rén 仁 as general "Goodness," Mozi interpreted *Ren* more specifically as "benevolence," and advocated a form of state consequentialism, which sought to maximize three basic goods: the wealth, order, and population of the state. As an alternative to Confucian familial love, he argued for jiān'ài 兼愛, which is often translated as "universal love" but is better understood as "impartial care." In Mozi's view, the central ethical problem was excessive *partiality*, not a lack of *compassion*. His primary goal was to change and shape behavior—in particular the way people are treated—and not to cultivate emotions, attitudes, or virtues. He showed little interest in what one would call moral psychology and embraced a simple and highly malleable view of human nature. This led him away from the widely observed Chinese concern with self-cultivation. His general lack of appreciation for psychological goods and the need to control desires and shape dispositions and attitudes also led him to reject categorically the characteristic Confucian concern with culture and ritual. These views are expressed in his arguments against elaborate funerals and musical performances, two mainstays of Confucianism.

While Mozi was not a self-cultivationist, he believed that human beings can change even apparently deeply held attitudes and dispositions quickly and easily. For a variety of reasons, he maintained that people could be induced to take up almost any form of behavior, even behavior that was suicidal. He shared a commonly held early Chinese belief in the psychological tendency to respond in kind to the treatment one receives. He further believed that in an effort to win the favor of their rulers, many people are inclined to act as their rulers desire. Those who do not respond to either of these influences can be motivated and controlled by a system of strict rewards and punishments, enforced by the state and guaranteed by the support of Heaven, ghosts, and spirits. Most important of all, Mozi believed that properly crafted rational arguments provide a strong if not entirely compelling motivation to act, for anyone who is able to understand them; presented with a superior argument, thinking people act accordingly.

Mozi's later following lasted until the time of the short-lived Qin dynasty (221–207 BCE), when the movement seems to have suddenly

come to an end. The reasons for this are not well-documented, but it is most likely that a paramilitary group such as the Mohists would never have been tolerated by and could not survive during the centralized and militarized regime of the Qin. There is some irony in this, in that several prominent ideas in the Fǎjiā 法家 “Legalist” thought that served as the state ideology of the Qin find clear precedents in Mozi’s philosophy. The later Mohists continued Mozi’s early interests and developed sophisticated systems of logical analysis, mathematics, optics, physics, defensive warfare technology and strategy, and a formal ethics based upon calculations of benefit and harm. All of these philosophical concerns can be found in the early strata of the *Mozi* that are represented in the following selections.



*Chapter Eight: Honoring the Worthy*²

Our teacher Mozi³ says, “The kings, dukes, and great officials who now rule the various states all want their states to be wealthy, their populations great, and their administrations orderly, and yet instead of wealth they get poverty, instead of great populations they get meager ones, and instead of order they get chaos. In this way they fundamentally miss what they desire and get what they dislike.”

What is the reason for this?⁴

Our teacher Mozi says, “This is because the kings, dukes, and great officials who rule the various states are not able to honor the worthy and employ the capable in carrying out their rule. And so, in a state where there are many worthy men,

2. There are multiple versions of many of the central chapters of the *Mozi*; these probably reflect the views of the three different sects of Mohism, which appeared after Mozi’s death. I have chosen what I consider to be the most interesting version of each chapter translated here. (In some cases, I have only translated what I regard as the most interesting sections within a given chapter.) Our chapter headings refer to the primary divisions in standard editions of the complete text.

3. The *Mozi* is unique among early Chinese philosophical texts in the manner in which it refers to its author. Most philosophers of the period were referred to as “Master so-and-so” by adding the honorific zǐ 子 after the person’s surname (see *Important Terms* in the appendices). In the case of Mò Dí 墨翟 this would yield “Mozi.” But the Mohists refer to their master as zīmòzǐ 子墨子. This probably meant “Our teacher Master Mo.” A similar prefixed use of *zi* is found in the *Gongyang* commentary on the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. (For the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, see *Important Texts* in the appendices.)

4. The *Mozi* often employs the literary device of an unnamed interlocutor to carry forth the dialogue.

good order will be secure, and in a state where there are few worthy men, good order will be tenuous. This is why it is the proper work of kings, dukes, and great officers to increase the number of worthy men in their states.”

Since this is the case, what is the best way to go about increasing the number of worthy men?

Our teacher Mozi says, “It is analogous to the case of wanting to increase the number of good archers or charioteers in one’s state. One must reward and esteem them, revere and praise them; then one can succeed in increasing the number of good archers or charioteers in one’s state. How much more should this be done in the case of worthy men—those who are well versed in virtuous conduct, discrimination in discussion, and broadly knowledgeable! Such men are state treasures, guardians of the altars to the soil and grain.⁵ They too must be rewarded and esteemed, revered and praised; then one can succeed in increasing the number of worthy men in one’s state.

“This is why in ancient times, when the sage-kings ruled, they announced that:

Those who are not righteous, I shall not enrich.

Those who are not righteous, I shall not esteem.

Those who are not righteous, I shall not regard as kin.

Those who are not righteous, I shall not get close to.

“When the wealthy and eminent in the state heard this, they retired and thought to themselves, ‘At first, we could rely on our wealth and eminence, but now the king promotes the righteous and does not turn away the poor and the humble. This being the case, we too must be righteous.’ When the king’s relatives heard this, they retired and thought to themselves, ‘At first, we could rely on being royal kin, but now the king promotes the righteous and does not turn away the most distant relations. This being the case, we too must be righteous.’ When those close to the king heard this, they retired and thought to themselves, ‘At first, we could rely on being close to the king, but now the king promotes the righteous and does not turn away those far removed from him. This being the case, we too must be righteous.’ When those far removed from the king heard this, they too retired and thought to themselves, ‘At first, we thought that being far removed from the king meant we had nothing to rely upon, but now the king promotes the righteous and does not turn away those far removed from him. This being the case, we too must be righteous.’ The word spread to those serving in distant cities and outlying regions, to the sons of nobles serving within the court, to all those within the capital, and on

5. The site of important state sacrifices and often used as a metaphor for the foundation and stability of the state. Cf. Mozi’s various references to this and other sacrificial sites in “On Ghosts” (*Mozi* chapter 31, below).

out to the common people throughout the four corners of the kingdom. Hearing this, they all strove to be righteous.”

What is the reason for such success?

Our teacher Mozi says, “Because those above employed those below for only one reason and those below served those above in only one way.⁶ This state of affairs can be compared to the case of a rich man who builds a high wall around his house. Once the wall is complete, he has it cut through in one place and uses this for his door. If a thief should enter, the rich man can close the door and search for the thief, knowing that he has no way to escape. Why? Because the rich man has secured what is most vital.

“This is why in ancient times, when the sage-kings ruled, they promoted the virtuous and honored the worthy. Even someone who worked as a farmer, artisan, or merchant—if they had talent, they were promoted, given high rank and a handsome salary, entrusted with responsibility, and empowered to have their orders obeyed. The sage-kings said, ‘If their rank is not high, the people will not revere them. If their salary is not substantial, the people will not put trust in them. If their orders are not empowered with authority, the people will not hold them in awe.’ These three things were given to the worthy not as rewards but in order to help them complete their duties.

“And so, at that time, rank was awarded on the basis of virtue, work was assigned according to office, reward was distributed according to the amount of labor done, and salary allotted in proportion to the effort expended. And so, officials were not guaranteed constant nobility and people did not have to perpetually remain in a humble state. Those with ability were promoted, those without ability were demoted. This is what it means to ‘promote public righteousness and prevent private resentment.’⁷

“And so, in ancient times, Yao promoted Shun from southern Fuyang,⁸ entrusted him with the administration of his kingdom, and the world was at peace. Yu promoted Yi from central Yinfang, entrusted him with the administration of his kingdom, and the nine realms were brought to perfection.⁹ Tang promoted Yi Yin from among the cooks in his kitchen, entrusted him with the administration

6. That is, people were evaluated and served only on the basis of their righteousness.

7. This seems to have been a recognizable political slogan of the time.

8. On Yao, Shun, and the other figures mentioned in this paragraph, see *Important Figures* in the appendices. Fuyang is a place of uncertain location.

9. Yi is Bó Yì 伯益 (not to be confused with the brother of Shu Qi—see *Important Figures* in the appendices). Bo Yi assisted Yu in his flood-control work and served him as an exemplary minister. Yinfang is a place of uncertain location. According to an ancient system of territorial division, China consisted of “nine realms.”

of his kingdom, and his plans were all successful. King Wen promoted Hong Yao and Tai Yi from their work with rabbit snares, entrusted them with the administration of his kingdom, and the western territories submitted peacefully.¹⁰ And so, at that time, even among those ministers with substantial salaries and prestigious positions, none failed to be reverent and cautious in carrying out their duties, and even among the farmers, craftsmen, and merchants, none failed to exert themselves in honoring virtue.

“And so good men should be employed as capable assistants and responsible agents. If a ruler is able to retain such men, then his plans will not be frustrated nor his body wearied with work. A ruler’s fame shall be assured and his work successfully completed, his best tendencies will flourish and his worst shall not take form all because he retains the support of good men.”

This is why our teacher Mozi says, “When things are going well, you must promote worthy men. When things are not going well, you must promote worthy men. And if you would reverently carry on the Way of Yao, Shun, Yu, and Tang, then you must honor the worthy. Honoring the worthy is the root and basis of good government.”

Chapter Eleven: Obeying One’s Superior

Our teacher Mozi says, “In ancient times, when people first came into being and before there were governments or laws, each person followed their own norm¹¹ for deciding what was right and wrong.¹² And so where there was one person there was one norm, where there were two people there were two norms, where there were ten people there were ten different norms. As many people as there were, that was how many norms were recognized. In this way people came to approve their own norms for what is right and wrong and thereby condemn the norms of others. And so, they

10. Hong Yao and Tai Yi were gamekeepers for King Wen. Technically, “rabbit snares” should be rendered “rabbit nets.” See selection # 177 (*Mao* # 278) in Arthur Waley, *The Book of Songs* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1952) for a poem singing the praises of such a gamekeeper, describing him as a fitting companion and confidant for a king. (Note: *The Book of Songs* is Waley’s translation of the classic otherwise referred to in this volume as the *Odes*; see *Odes* under *Important Texts* in the appendices.)

11. The character yì 義 that I here translate as “norm” (for deciding what is right and wrong) is often rendered as “right” or “righteousness” (see *Important Terms* in the appendices). The senses are clearly related, but the context here argues for “norm” as more appropriate.

12. “Right and wrong” is the translation of the Chinese terms shì/fēi 是非. Below, these terms are rendered verbally as “to approve” and “to condemn.” Cf. *Mengzi* 2A6 and the accompanying note 28 (in chapter 4 of this volume).

mutually condemned each other's norms. For this reason, within families, there was resentment and hatred between fathers and sons and elder and younger brothers that caused them to separate and disperse and made it impossible for them to cooperate harmoniously with one another. Throughout the world, people used water, fire, and poison to harm and injure one another, to the point where if they had strength to spare, they would not use it to help each other; if they had excess goods, they would leave them to rot away rather than distribute them to one another; and if they had helpful teachings, they would hide them away rather than teach them to one another. The chaos that ruled in the world was like what one finds among the birds and beasts.

"Those who understood the nature of this chaos saw that it arose from a lack of rulers and leaders and so they chose the best person among the most worthy and capable in the world and established him as the Son of Heaven. The Son of Heaven was established, but because his strength was not sufficient for the task of ruling the entire world, they chose among the most worthy and capable in the world and installed the best among them as the three imperial ministers. The Son of Heaven and three imperial ministers were established, but because the world is so vast it was impossible for them to know and judge in each case what would be right or wrong, beneficial or harmful for the people of distant states and different regions. And so, they divided up the myriad states and established feudal lords and rulers. The feudal lords and rulers were established, but because their strength was not sufficient for the task before them, they chose among the most worthy and capable in the world and installed them as governors and local leaders.

"Once the governors and local leaders were in place, the Son of Heaven announced his rule to the people of the world saying, 'Whenever you hear of something good or bad, always inform your superior. Whenever your superior approves of something as right you too must approve of it. Whenever your superior condemns something as wrong you too must condemn it. Should a superior commit any transgression, one must offer proper remonstrance. Should your subordinates do anything good, one must widely recommend them. To obey one's superior and to avoid joining together with those in subordinate positions—such conduct will be rewarded by superiors and praised by subordinates. But if you hear of something good or bad and fail to inform your superior, if you are not able to approve of what your superior approves of and condemn what your superior rejects, if you do not offer proper remonstrance when a superior commits a transgression and do not widely recommend subordinates who do good, if you do not obey your superior and you join together with those in subordinate positions—such conduct will be punished by superiors and denounced by the people. This is how superiors shall

determine rewards and punishments and they shall make careful examinations to ensure that their judgments are reliable.’

“And so, the leader of each village would be the most benevolent person in the village. When he announced his rule to the people of the village he would say, ‘Whenever you hear of anything either good or bad, you must report it to the head of the district. Whenever the head of the district approves of something all of you must also approve of it. Whenever the head of the district condemns something all of you must also condemn it. Eliminate any bad teachings that you may have and study the good teachings of the head of the district. Eliminate any bad practices that you may have and study the good practices of the head of the district. If you do this then how could the district ever become disordered?’

“If we look into how good order was maintained in the district, what do we find? Was it not simply because the leader of the district was able to unify the norms followed within the district that he was able to maintain good order in it?

“The leader of each district would be the most benevolent person in the district. When he announced his rule to the people of the district he would say, ‘Whenever you hear of anything either good or bad, you must report it to the ruler of the state. Whenever the ruler of the state approves of something all of you must also approve of it. Whenever the ruler of the state condemns something all of you must also condemn it. Eliminate any bad teachings that you may have and study the good teachings of the ruler of the state. Eliminate any bad practices that you may have and study the good practices of the ruler of the state. If you do this then how could the state ever become disordered?’

“If we look into how good order was maintained in the state, what do we find? Was it not simply because the ruler of the state was able to unify the norms followed within the state that he was able to maintain good order in it?

“The ruler of each state would be the most benevolent person in the state. When he announced his rule to the people of the state he would say, ‘Whenever you hear of anything either good or bad, you must report it to the Son of Heaven. Whenever the Son of Heaven approves of something all of you must also approve of it. Whenever the Son of Heaven condemns something all of you must also condemn it. Eliminate any bad teachings that you may have and study the good teachings of the Son of Heaven. Eliminate any bad practices that you may have and study the good practices of the Son of Heaven. If you do this then how could the world ever become disordered?’

“If we look into how good order was maintained in the world, what do we find? Was it not simply because the Son of Heaven was able to unify the norms followed within the world that he was able to maintain good order in it?

“If the people of the world all obey their superiors on up to the Son of Heaven but do not obey Heaven, then Heavenly disasters still will not cease. Now, the hurricanes and torrential rains that regularly are visited upon the people is how Heaven punishes them for not obeying its will.”

This is why our teacher Mozi says, “In ancient times, sage-kings created the Five Punishments¹³ to facilitate good order among their people. These are like the main thread of a skein of silk or the drawstring of a net. They are how the sage-kings gathered in those in the world who refused to obey their superiors.”

Chapter Sixteen: Impartial Caring

Our teacher Mozi says, “The business of a benevolent person is to promote what is beneficial to the world and eliminate what is harmful.”

Granted that this is true, what are the greatest harms that are being done in the world today? Our teacher Mozi says, “It is things such as great states attacking small states, great families wreaking havoc on lesser families, the strong robbing the weak, the many doing violence to the few, the clever deceiving the ignorant, and the noble acting arrogantly toward the humble. These are some of the great harms being done in the world. In addition, there are rulers who are not kind, ministers who are not loyal, fathers who are not loving, and children who are not filial. These too are some of the great harms being done in the world. There are also those of low character who use weapons, poison, water, and fire to injure and steal from one another. These too are some of the great harms done in the world.”

If we try to discover the origin of these different harms, where do we find they come from? Do they come from caring for and benefiting people? This clearly must be rejected as the origin of these harms. We must recognize that they come from hating and stealing from people. If we wish to distinguish those in the world who hate and steal from people, do we refer to them as impartial or partial? We clearly must call them partial. And so, it is those who are partial in their dealings with others who are the real cause of all the great harms in the world.

This is why our teacher Mozi says, “I condemn partiality.”

Now those who condemn another’s view must offer something in its place. If one condemns another’s view without offering something in its place, this is like adding water to a flood or flame to a fire. Such appeals prove to have no merit.

This is why our teacher Mozi says, “Replace partiality with impartiality.”

13. The Five Punishments are said to be tattooing the face, cutting off the nose, cutting off the feet, castration, and death.

Since this is what is correct, how then can we replace partiality with impartiality?

Our teacher Mozi says, "If people regarded other people's states in the same way that they regard their own, who then would incite their own state to attack that of another? For one would do for others as one would do for oneself. If people regarded other people's cities in the same way that they regard their own, who then would incite their own city to attack that of another? For one would do for others as one would do for oneself. If people regarded other people's families in the same way that they regard their own, who then would incite their own family to attack that of another? For one would do for others as one would do for oneself. And so, if states and cities do not attack one another and families do not wreak havoc upon and steal from one another, would this be a harm to the world or a benefit? Of course, one must say it is a benefit to the world."

If we try to discover the source of these different benefits, where do we find they come from? Do they come from hating and stealing from people? This clearly must be rejected as the source of these benefits. We must recognize that they come from caring for and benefiting people. If we wish to distinguish those in the world who care for and benefit people, do we refer to them as impartial or partial? We clearly must call them impartial. And so, it is those who are impartial in their dealings with others who are the real cause of all the great benefits in the world.

This is why our teacher Mozi says, "I approve of impartiality. Moreover, earlier I said that, 'The business of a benevolent person is to promote what is beneficial to the world and eliminate what is harmful.' And now I have shown that impartiality gives rise to all the great benefits in the world and that partiality gives rise to all the great harms in the world."

This is why our teacher Mozi says, "I condemn partiality and approve of impartiality for the reasons given above. If one takes impartiality as the correct standard and truly seeks to promote and procure what is beneficial to the world, then those with sharp ears and keen eyes will listen and look out for others. Those with stout legs and strong arms will work for others, and those who understand the Way will educate and instruct others. And so, men who reach old age without finding a wife and having children will get the support they need to live out their years. Young and helpless orphans, who are without father or mother, will find the support they need in order to reach maturity. Now such benefits can be attained only if impartiality is taken as the correct standard. And so, I don't see what reason any person in the world who has heard about impartiality can give for condemning it."

Though this is so, there are still people in the world who condemn impartiality, saying, "It is surely a fine thing. Nevertheless, how can it possibly be applied?"

Our teacher Mozi says, “If it could not be applied, even I would condemn it! But is there really anything that is fine that cannot be put to use? Let us consider both sides of the matter. Suppose there were two people: one who maintains partiality and one who maintains impartiality. And so, the person who maintains partiality would say, ‘How can I possibly regard the well-being of my friends as I do my own well-being? How can I possibly regard the parents of my friends as I do my own parents?’ And so, when his friends are hungry, the partial person does not feed them. When his friends are cold, he does not clothe them. When his friends are ill, he does not nurture them. And when his friends die, he does not bury them. This is what the partial person says and what he does. But this is not what the impartial person says nor is this how he acts. The impartial person says, ‘I have heard that in order to be a superior person in the world, one must regard the well-being of one’s friends as one regards one’s own well-being; one must regard the parents of one’s friends as one regards one’s own parents. Only in this way can one be a superior person.’ And so, when the impartial person’s friends are hungry, he feeds them. When his friends are cold, he clothes them. When his friends are ill, he nurtures them. And when his friends die, he buries them. This is what the impartial person says and what he does.

“Now the words of the two people that we have considered contradict each other and their actions are diametrically opposed. Let us suppose, though, that both are trustworthy in what they say and reliable in what they do. And so, their words and deeds fit together like the two halves of a tally, and they always follow through and act on what they say. If we grant all of this, there is a further question I would like to ask. Suppose one must put on one’s armor and helmet and go to war in a vast and open wilderness where life and death are uncertain; or suppose one was sent by one’s ruler or high minister to the distant states of Ba, Yue, Qi, or Jing¹⁴ and could not be sure of either reaching them or ever returning from one’s mission. Under such conditions of uncertainty, to whom would one entrust the well-being of one’s parents, wife, and children? Would one prefer that they be in the care of an impartial person or would one prefer that they be in the care of a partial person? I believe that under such circumstances, there are no fools in all the world. Even though one may not advocate impartiality, one would certainly want to entrust one’s family to the person who is impartial. But this is to condemn impartiality in word but prefer it in deed, with the result that one’s actions do not accord with what one says. And so, I don’t see what reason any person in the world who has heard about impartiality can give for condemning it.”

14. Ba, Yue, Qi, and Jing are four ancient states that were far removed from the center of Chinese civilization at the time.

Though this is so, there are still people in the world who condemn impartiality, saying, “It is an acceptable way for choosing reliable people but one can’t use it to choose one’s ruler.”

Our teacher Mozi says, “Let us consider both sides of the matter. Suppose there were two rulers: one who maintains impartiality and one who maintains partiality. And so, the ruler who maintains partiality would say, ‘How can I possibly regard the well-being of my myriad subjects as I do my own well-being? This is profoundly at odds with the way people in the world feel. How brief is the span of a person’s life upon this earth! It rushes by like a galloping team of horses glimpsed through a crack!’ And so, when his subjects are hungry, the partial ruler does not feed them. When his subjects are cold, he does not clothe them. When his subjects are ill, he does not nurture them. And when his subjects die, he does not bury them. This is what the partial ruler says and what he does. But this is not what the impartial ruler says nor is this how he acts. The impartial ruler says, ‘I have heard that in order to be an enlightened ruler in the world, one must first worry about the well-being of one’s people and then worry about oneself. Only in this way can one be an enlightened ruler.’ And so, when the impartial ruler’s people are hungry, he feeds them. When his people are cold, he clothes them. When his people are ill, he nurtures them. And when his people die, he buries them. This is what the impartial ruler says and what he does.

“Now the words of the two rulers that we have considered contradict each other and their actions are diametrically opposed. Let us suppose, though, that both are trustworthy in what they say and reliable in what they do. And so, their words and deeds fit together like the two halves of a tally, and they always follow through and act on what they say. If we grant all of this, there is a further question I would like to ask. Suppose there were a terrible epidemic in which most of the people suffered bitterly from hunger and cold and many lay dead and unburied in the ditches and gullies.¹⁵ Between these two rulers, which one would the people then follow? I believe that under such circumstances, there are no fools in all the world. Even though one may not advocate impartiality, one would certainly want to follow the ruler who is impartial. But this is to condemn impartiality in word but prefer it in deed, with the result that one’s actions do not accord with what one says. And so, I don’t see what reason any person in the world who has heard about impartiality can give for condemning it.”

Though this is so, there are still people in the world who condemn impartiality, saying, “Impartiality is benevolent and right but how can one practice it?

15. People lying unburied in the ditches and gullies was a common trope used to illustrate a state of profound misrule. Cf. for example, *Mengzi* 1B12, 2B4 (not in this volume).

The impossibility of practicing impartiality is like the impossibility of picking up Mount Tai and carrying it across the Chang Jiang or Huang He.”¹⁶ And so impartiality is something they want to do but feel is impossible to practice.

Our teacher Mozi says, “As for picking up Mount Tai and carrying it across the Chang Jiang or Huang He, this is something that no human being has ever done. But as for impartially caring for and benefiting one another, this is something that we know the four former sage-kings¹⁷ themselves practiced.”

How do we know that the four former sage-kings themselves followed these practices?

Our teacher Mozi says, “I am not of their age or time and so have not personally heard their voices or seen their faces, but I know this by what is written on bamboo and silk, etched on metal and stone, and inscribed on basins and bowls that have passed down to us through succeeding generations. For example, the *Great Oath*¹⁸ says, ‘The illumination of King Wen was like the sun and the moon. His brightness reached to the four directions and out to the western regions.’ This describes the extensiveness of King Wen’s impartial care for the world. It compares his impartiality to the way the sun and the moon impartially illuminate the entire world without showing any favoritism.”

Though the impartiality that our teacher Mozi talks about here takes King Wen as its model, it is not just in the *Great Oath* that one finds such examples. The *Oath of Yu*¹⁹ too offers such a model. Yu says,

Come together, all my people, and heed my words! It is not that I, the little one,²⁰ dare to bring about such chaos; but the ruler of the Miao²¹ is ever more unreasonable and deserves Heaven’s punishment. This is why I now lead you, the rulers of the various states, on a campaign to rectify the ruler of the Miao.

16. Picking up Mount Tai and carrying it across a vast expanse of water is a common trope for an impossible task. Cf. *Mengzi* 1A7 (in chapter 4), where the vast expanse of water is the North Sea. The Chang Jiang, or Yangtze River, and the Huang He, or Yellow River, are the largest rivers in central China.

17. Kings Yu, Tang, Wen, and Wu (see *Important Figures* in the appendices).

18. The “Great Oath” was a speech purportedly given by King Wu. The original was said to be included in the *History* but was lost. A later forgery is included in the present edition of the *History* and part of it is quite similar to what Mozi quotes here. See James Legge, trans., *The Shoo King*, vol. 3 of *The Chinese Classics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1871; Taipei: SMC Publishing 1991), 296–97.

19. The *Oath of Yu* is a lost section of the *History* that purportedly recorded the words of the sage-king Yu. Again, a passage that is quite similar to what Mozi quotes can be found in the present text. See Legge, *The Shoo King*, 64–65.

20. The “little one” (literally, “small child”) is a self-deprecating term of self-reference used by virtuous kings.

21. The Miao are said to be a people who lived to the southeast in the area of present-day Hunan and Hubei.

This shows that the reason Yu launched a campaign to rectify the ruler of the Miao was not because he wanted to increase his wealth and honor, earn for himself additional favors and blessings, or because it pleased his eyes and ears, but rather because he wanted to contribute to the benefit of the world and eliminate what is harmful to it. Such was the impartiality of Yu.

Though the impartiality that our teacher Mozi talks about here takes Yu as its model, it is not just in the *Oath of Yu* that one finds such examples. The *Declaration of Tang*²² too offers such a model. Tang says,

I, the little one, Lü,²³ presume to use a dark-colored sacrifice to make my announcement to the Lord of Heaven above. I declare that Heaven's great drought is my responsibility. I do not know if I have committed some offense against those above or below. If there is any merit, I dare not conceal it. If there is any offense, I dare not excuse it. The judgment lies in your mind alone, Lord! If those within my domain have committed any offense, let the responsibility rest with me. If I have committed any offense, let the responsibility not fall upon those within my domain.

This shows that while Tang had the honor of being the Son of Heaven and possessed the wealth of the entire world, he still did not hesitate to present himself as an offering in his sacrificial declaration to the Lord on High, the ghosts, and the spirits. Such was the impartiality of Tang.

Though the impartiality that our teacher Mozi talks about here takes Tang as its model, it is not just in the *Oath of Yu* and the *Declaration of Tang* that one finds such examples. The *Odes of Zhou*²⁴ too offer such a model. The *Odes of Zhou* say,

The King's Way is broad so broad;
Without partiality or party.
The King's Way is even so even;
Without party or partiality.

22. The *Declaration of Tang* is another lost section of the *History*, one that purportedly recorded the words of the sage-king Tang. However, lines similar to what Mozi here quotes appear in *Analects* 20.1 (not in this volume). Similar lines can also be found scattered throughout the present *Announcement of Tang* section of the *History*. See Legge, *The Shoo King*, 184–90.

23. On the “little one,” see note 20 above. Lü is the personal name of King Tang and in such a public context, this use of the personal name is another humble form of self-reference.

24. This leads us to look in the *Odes* (see *Important Texts* in the appendices). However, the present text has only the last four lines quoted here (*Mao* # 203) with slight variation. The first four lines, though, are found with slight variation in the present text of the *History* (see *Important Texts* in the appendices). For the last four lines, see James Legge, trans., *The Shoo King*, vol. 4 of *The Chinese Classics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1871; Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1970), 353; for the first four, see Legge, *The Shoo King*, 331.

Straight as an arrow;
 As even as a whetstone.
 It is what the noble man follows;
 And the common man admires.

What I have been talking about here is not just some notion or theory. In ancient times, when Kings Wen and Wu ruled, they allocated everything equitably, rewarding the worthy and punishing the wicked without showing any partiality to their relatives or brothers. Such was the impartiality of Kings Wen and Wu. And the impartiality that our teacher Mozi talks about here takes Kings Wen and Wu as its models. So, I don't see what reason any person in the world who has heard about impartiality can give for condemning it.

Though this is so, there are still people in the world who condemn impartiality, saying, "It does not seek what is beneficial for one's parents, so does it not harm filial piety?"

Our teacher Mozi says, "Let us consider the case of a filial son who seeks what is beneficial for his parents. Does a filial son who seeks what is beneficial for his parents want other people to care for and benefit his parents or does he want other people to dislike and steal from his parents? According to the very meaning of filial piety, he must want other people to care for and benefit his parents. Given this, how should one act in order to bring about such a state of affairs? Should one first care for and benefit the parents of another, expecting that they in turn will respond by caring for and benefiting one's own parents? Or should one first dislike and steal from other people's parents, expecting that they in turn will respond by caring for and benefiting one's own parents? Clearly one must first care for and benefit the parents of others in order to expect that they in turn will respond by caring for and benefiting one's own parents. And so, for such mutually filial sons to realize unlimited good results, must they not first care for and benefit other people's parents? Or should they let it be the case that filial sons are the exception and not the rule among the people of the world?

"Let us consider what is said in the writings of the former kings. In the *Elegies*²⁵ it says,

There are no words that are left unanswered,
 No virtue that is left without a response.
 If you toss me a peach,
 I respond with a plum.

25. The *Elegies* are a section in the *Odes*. Only the first two lines, with slight variation, appear in the present version of the text. See Legge, *The She King*, 514.

According to these lines, anyone who cares for others will receive care from them while anyone who dislikes others will in turn be disliked. And so, I don't see what reason any person in the world who has heard about impartiality can give for condemning it.

"Perhaps people will think that impartial care is too difficult to carry out. But things more difficult than this have been successfully carried out. In the past, King Ling of the state of Chu was fond of slender waists.²⁶ During his reign the people of Chu ate no more than one meal a day and became so weak that they could not raise themselves up without the support of a cane nor could they walk without leaning against a wall. Curtailing one's food is something very difficult to do, but masses of people did it in order to please King Ling. Within a single generation the people changed because they wanted to accord with the wishes of their superior.

"In the past, Gou Jian, King of the state of Yue, was fond of bravery. And so, he taught his soldiers and subjects to be brave. But since he was not sure if they were really brave, he had his ships set aflame and ordered that the drums signal an advance. His troops fell on top of one another in their forward charge and countless numbers of them perished in the water and flames. Even when they ceased drumming, still the troops did not retreat. We can say that the soldiers of Yue were resolute indeed! Charging into flames is something very difficult to do, but masses of people did it in order to please the King of Yue. Within a single generation the people changed because they wanted to accord with the wishes of their superior.

"In the past, Duke Wen of Jin was fond of rough and simple attire. During his reign the people of Jin wrapped themselves in sheets of cloth, wore sheepskin jackets, hats of raw silk, and hempen shoes. They would dress this way when they had an audience with the Duke and parade around in such attire at court. Getting people to wear rough and simple attire is something very difficult to do, but masses of people did it in order to please Duke Wen. Within a single generation the people changed because they wanted to accord with the wishes of their superior.

"Curtailing one's food, charging into flames, and wearing rough and simple attire are among the most difficult things in the world to get people to do, but masses of people did these things in order to please their superiors. Within a single generation the people changed. Why? Because they wanted to accord with the wishes of their superiors.

"Now as for impartially caring for and benefiting one another, such things are incalculably beneficial and easy to practice. The only problem is that there are no

26. This and the following story about the King of Yue are also cited by Han Feizi in "The Two Handles" (*Han Feizi* chapter 7, in chapter 10 of this volume).

superiors who take delight in them. If only there were superiors who delighted in them, who encouraged their practice through rewards and praise, and threatened those who violate them with penalties and punishments, I believe that the people would take to impartially caring for and benefiting one another just as naturally as fire rises up and water flows down. One could not stop these things from being practiced anywhere in the world.

“And so, impartiality is the way of the sage-kings. It offers security to kings, dukes, and great officials and provides ample food and clothing to the myriad people. So, for gentlemen there is nothing better than carefully inquiring into the nature of impartiality and working to carry it out. Those who do so are sure to be kind as rulers, loyal as ministers, loving as fathers, filial as sons, good companions as older brothers, and respectful as younger brothers. And so, any gentleman who wishes to be a kind ruler, loyal minister, loving father, filial son, a good companion as an elder brother, and respectful as a younger brother cannot but practice the kind of impartiality I have been describing. This is the way of the sage-kings and a great benefit to the myriad people.”

Chapter Seventeen: A Condemnation of Aggressive War

[Our teacher Mozi says,] “Now suppose someone enters another’s orchard and steals their peaches and plums. When the people hear about this, they will condemn such a person, and if those above who administer the government get hold of him, they will punish him. Why? Because he takes from others in order to benefit himself. Stealing another’s dogs, hogs, chickens, and pigs is even more wrong than entering another’s orchard and stealing their peaches and plums. Why? Because more is taken from others; it is even more inhumane and a more serious crime. Entering another person’s stable and stealing their horses and cattle is even more wrong than stealing their dogs, hogs, chickens, and pigs. Why? Because more is taken from others. If more is taken from others, it is even more inhumane and a more serious crime. Killing an innocent person, stripping him of his clothes, and taking his spear and sword is even more wrong than entering his stable and stealing his horses and cattle. Why? Because more is taken from others. If more is taken from others, it is even more inhumane and a more serious crime. Up to this point, all the gentlemen of the world know well enough to condemn such actions and declare that they are wrong. But when it comes to the great wrong of attacking another state, they do not know enough to condemn it. Rather, they praise this and declare that it is the right thing to do. Can they be said to understand the difference between right and wrong?

“Killing someone is wrong and must be punished with execution. But if we extrapolate from this view, then killing ten people is ten times as bad and must be punished with ten executions, and killing one hundred people is one hundred times as bad and must be punished with one hundred executions. Up to this point, all the gentlemen of the world know well enough to condemn such actions and declare that they are wrong. But when it comes to the great wrong of attacking another state, they do not know enough to condemn it. Rather, they praise this and declare that it is the right thing to do. They really do not understand that this is wrong. That is why they record their praise of such activity and hand down these records to later generations. If they really understood that this is wrong, why would they record their wrongs and hand them down to later generations?

“Now suppose there is someone who does the following: when they see a little black, they say that it is black but when they see a lot of black, they say that it is white. We would just have to say that such a person cannot distinguish between black and white. Or suppose that when they taste a little bitterness, they say that it is bitter, but when they taste a lot of bitterness, they say that it is sweet. We would just have to say that such a person cannot distinguish between bitter and sweet. But now people see a small wrong and know enough to condemn it but see the great wrong of attacking another state and do not know enough to condemn it. Rather, they praise this and declare that it is the right thing to do. Can they be said to understand the difference between right and wrong? This is how we know that the gentlemen of the world are confused about the difference between right and wrong.”

Chapter Twenty: For Moderation in Expenditures

[Our teacher Mozi says,] “When a sage rules a state, that state will be twice as well-off. When a sage rules the empire, the empire will be twice as well-off. But they are not made twice as well-off by adding territory from without. It is rather by eliminating wasteful expenditures within the state that such rulers are able to make them twice as well-off. When sage-kings rule, whenever they issue orders, undertake an enterprise, employ the people, or expend their resources, they never do anything that is not useful. And so, they never waste their resources or overburden their people yet are able to generate great benefits.

“What is the purpose of clothes? It is to protect us from the cold of winter and the heat of summer. The proper way to make clothes is such that they keep one warm in winter and cool in summer and that is all. Whatever does not contribute to these ends should be eliminated. What is the purpose of houses? It is to protect

us from the wind and cold of winter, the heat and rain of summer, and to keep out robbers and thieves. Once these ends are secured that is all. Whatever does not contribute to these ends should be eliminated. What is the purpose of armor, shields, and weapons? It is to protect us from bandits, rebels, robbers, and thieves. Should there be bandits, rebels, robbers, and thieves, those who have armor, shields, and weapons will be victorious, while those without armor, shields, and weapons will not. And so, sages work to produce armor, shields, and weapons. Whenever they make armor, shields, and weapons they seek to make them as light, sharp, strong, and resilient as they can; that is all. Whatever does not contribute to these ends should be eliminated. What is the purpose of boats and vehicles? Vehicles are used to travel over land and boats are used to travel over water such that one can bring together and exchange what is beneficial throughout the world. The proper way to make boats and vehicles is such that they are as light and easy to use as possible and that is all. Whatever does not contribute to these ends should be eliminated. In making these various things, sage-kings never add anything that is not useful. And so, they never waste their resources or overburden their people yet are able to generate great benefits.

“If one could eliminate the fondness that kings, dukes, and great officials have for accumulating quantities of pearls and jades, birds and beasts, and dogs and horses, and use this revenue to increase the availability of clothes, houses, armor, shields, weapons, boats, and vehicles—could one double the numbers of these? Doubling the number of such things would not be hard. What then would it be hard to double? Only the number of people. And yet one can also double the number of people. In the past, the sage-kings established a law that said, “No man of twenty can be without a family. No woman of fifteen can be without a husband.” Such was the law of the sage-kings. But since the sage-kings have passed away the people have grown remiss. Those who want to start a family at an early age do so at age twenty, while those who want to start a family late do so at age forty. If we combine these, it still means that men are starting families on average ten years later than the age decreed by the law of the sage-kings. If all of them have one child every three years, then two or three children should have been born during that ten-year period. And so, is it not only by getting people to start families early in life that one can double the population?

“This is the only way to double the population, but those who rule the world today actually work in many ways to lessen the population. They overwork and overtax their people to the point where many lack sufficient resources, with the result that those who die of hunger and cold are more than one can count. Moreover, the great officers encourage rulers to raise armies and attack neighboring states. The longer campaigns take up to a year while the shorter ones last several months.

This means that men and women don't see each other for long periods of time, and in this way the population is reduced. During these campaigns, some become ill and die because they lack a stable living arrangement with regular food and water; others die in ambushes, fiery assaults, sieges, and battles. Together, their numbers are beyond reckoning. This is because the rulers of today are finding more and more ways to lessen the population. Such things never occur when sages rule. Such is not the way sages rule. They find more and more ways to increase the population."

This is why our teacher Mozi says, "To eliminate everything that is not useful is to carry out the Way of the sage-kings and offer great benefit to the world."

Chapter Twenty-Five: For Moderation in Funerals

Our teacher Mozi says, "The way benevolent people plan on behalf of the world is just like the way filial children plan on behalf of their parents." Now how is it that filial children plan for their parents?

Our teacher Mozi says, "If their parents are poor, they do what they can to enrich them. If the members of their clan are few, they do what they can to increase their numbers. If the family is in chaos, they do what they can to make it well-ordered. In pursuing these ends they may find that their strength is insufficient, their resources inadequate, or their knowledge too limited, and that they fall short. But they would never hold back any of their strength or any scheme or advantage and not apply these in their efforts to realize their parents' well-being."

These are the three benefits that filial children plan for on behalf of their parents. And this is the way they work to realize these ends. This is also the way that benevolent people plan on behalf of the world.

Our teacher Mozi says, "If the world is poor, benevolent people do what they can to enrich it. If the people are few, benevolent people do what they can to increase their numbers. If the world is in chaos, benevolent people do what they can to make it well-ordered. In pursuing these ends benevolent people may find that their strength is insufficient, their resources inadequate, or their knowledge too limited, and that they fall short. But they would never hold back any of their strength or any scheme or advantage and not apply these in their efforts to realize the world's well-being."

These are the three benefits that benevolent people plan for on behalf of the world. And this is the way they work to realize these ends. But now the sage-kings of the three dynasties of old²⁷ have passed away and the world has lost sight of what

27. The Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties (see *Important Periods* in the appendices).

is right. The gentlemen of later ages are divided in their opinions. Some maintain that lavish funerals and prolonged mourning²⁸ are benevolent and right and the proper task of filial children. Others maintain that lavish funerals and prolonged mourning are neither benevolent nor right and are not the proper task of filial children.

Our teacher Mozi says, “These two groups contradict each other in word and oppose each other in deed. Both say, ‘I am dutifully following the Way of Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, Wen, and Wu,’ and yet they contradict each other in word and oppose each other in deed. And so, people of later ages have become suspicious of the claims of both groups. If one doubts the claims of both groups then one should turn and consider them in regard to ruling the state and governing the people, to see whether or not lavish funerals and prolonged mourning promote the three benefits discussed earlier. If by following their words and implementing their plans concerning lavish funerals and prolonged mourning one really would enrich the poor, increase the population, and bring stability to precarious situations and order to chaos, then these things clearly are benevolent, right, and the proper task of filial children. Those who offer counsel could not but encourage them. Benevolent people would work to make such practices flourish throughout the world; they would seek to establish them and bring the people to praise them and to follow them, to the end of their days. However, if by following their words and implementing their plans concerning lavish funerals and prolonged mourning one really cannot enrich the poor, increase the population, or bring stability to precarious situations and order to chaos, then these things clearly are not benevolent and right or the proper task of filial children. Those who offer counsel could not but discourage them. Benevolent people would work to eradicate such practices throughout the world; they would seek to abolish them and bring the people to condemn them and to never follow them, to the end of their days. And so, from ancient times until the present, it has never been the case that bringing the world to a flourishing state and eliminating what is harmful to the world has led the state and the people to disorder.”

Now there are many gentlemen in the world who are still in doubt as to whether or not lavish funerals and prolonged mourning are right or wrong, beneficial or harmful. And so, our teacher Mozi says, “Let us examine the case. Now if we were to implement the teachings of those who follow and uphold lavish funerals and prolonged mourning, then in mourning for a king, duke, or high official, they

28. Almost certainly, Mozi here has in mind the Confucians who maintained elaborate and prolonged rituals of mourning. See for example, *Analects* 17.21 (in chapter 1 of this volume), *Mengzi* 3A5 and 7A39 (in chapter 4 of this volume), and Xunzi chapter 19, “Discourse on Ritual” (in chapter 9 of this volume).

prescribe that there be several inner and outer coffins, a deep grave, many layers of burial clothes, elaborately and intricately embroidered funeral shrouds, and a massive burial mound. Among common men and women this would exhaust the resources of the entire family. And even a feudal lord would have to empty his entire state treasury before the appropriate amount of gold, jade, and pearls could adorn the body and the proper quantities of silk, carriages, and horses could fill up the tomb. In addition, since one is to see off the dead as if they were simply changing their abode, it is required that numerous draperies and canopies, offering vessels of various kinds, tables and chairs, pots and basins, spears and swords, feathered banners, and articles made of tooth and hide must be buried along with them. It is also said that when an emperor or feudal lord dies, as many as several hundred and no fewer than several tens of retainers are to be sacrificed in order to accompany the deceased.²⁹ When a general or great official dies, as many as several tens and no fewer than several are to be sacrificed.”

What are the rules for one who is in mourning?

Our teacher Mozi says, “Mourners are to cry and wail irregularly, at all times of the day and night, and to sound as if their sobs are choked off. They are to dress in sackcloth, allow their tears to run down without wiping them away, and live in a mourning hut made of straw, sleeping upon a rush mat and using a lump of dirt as their pillow. Moreover, they are to encourage each other to refuse food and starve themselves and to wear thin clothing in order to suffer from the cold, so that they come to have sunken faces and eyes, a sallow and darkened complexion, poor hearing and sight, and limbs too weak to function. It is also said that the most noble of people uphold the rites of mourning to the point where they cannot rise up without assistance and cannot walk without a cane, and they follow these practices for three years. This is what would happen if the state took such teachings as its model and followed them as its Way. Should kings, dukes, and other great men follow such practices, they would not be able to come early to court and retire late in order to hear litigation and carry out the affairs of the government. Should officers and officials follow such practices, they would be unable to administer the Five Offices and Six Treasuries³⁰ in order to ensure that crops and timber are harvested and the

29. This refers to ritual sacrifice, most popular during the Shang but still practiced in Mozi's own time. Mengzi quotes Kongzi as definitively rejecting even the vestiges of such practices. See *Mengzi* 1A4 (not in this volume).

30. A list of these offices and their duties can be found in a later work called the *Liji* (“Book of Rites”). See the entry on the *Rites* under *Important Texts* in the appendices to this volume. For a translation, see James Legge, trans., *The Li Chi: Book of Rites*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885; New York: University Books, 1967), 109–10.

granaries kept full. Should farmers follow such practices, they would be unable to go out to the fields early and return home late in order to carry out the plowing, planting, and tending of crops. Should the various craftsmen follow such practices, they would be unable to work on boats and carts and fashion various vessels and utensils. Should women follow such practices, they would be unable to rise at dawn and retire at night in order to complete their work of spinning and weaving. And so lavish funerals entail burying a great deal of wealth, and prolonged mourning entails prohibiting people from pursuing their vocations for an extended period of time. The former takes wealth that has already been created and buries it, while the latter prohibits new members of society from being born for an extended period of time. To pursue wealth in this manner is like seeking a harvest while prohibiting plowing! Such practices have nothing to offer in regard to explaining how to become wealthy. And so, we now know that lavish funerals and prolonged mourning cannot enrich one's state."

But perhaps it has value for those who wish to increase the population of their states?

Our teacher Mozi says, "It has nothing to offer in this regard either. Now consider what would result if lavish funerals and prolonged mourning were adopted as official policy. When one's ruler died, one would mourn him for three years. When one's mother or father died, one would mourn them for three years. When one's wife or eldest son died, one would mourn them for three years. Whenever any of these five people died, one would mourn them for three years. Next, one would mourn for one's paternal uncles, brothers, and other sons, and one's various close relatives for five months. You are to mourn for several months for fraternal aunts, sisters, first cousins, and maternal uncles. And there are set standards describing the proper levels of emaciation mourners must attain. They are to have sunken faces and eyes, a sallow and darkened complexion, poor hearing and sight, and limbs too weak to function. It is also said that the most noble of people uphold the rites of mourning to the point where they cannot rise up without assistance and cannot walk without a cane, and follow these practices for three years.

"This is what would happen if the state took such teachings as its model and followed them as its Way. If the people starve themselves in this manner, then they will be unable to withstand the cold of winter or the heat of summer and countless numbers of them will grow ill and die. This greatly diminishes the chances for men and women to procreate. To seek to increase the population in this way is like seeking to increase people's longevity by getting them to fall upon their swords. Such practices have nothing to offer with regard to explaining how to increase the population. And so, we now know that lavish funerals and prolonged mourning cannot increase the number of people in one's state."

But perhaps it has value for those who wish to bring good order to the government?

Our teacher Mozi says, "It has nothing to offer in this regard either. Now consider what would result if lavish funerals and prolonged mourning were adopted as official policy. The state would be poor, the people few, and the government in chaos. This is what would happen if the state took such teachings as its model and followed them as its Way. If those above were to carry out these practices, they would be unable to attend to their affairs. If those below were to carry out these practices, they would be unable to pursue their various tasks. If those above are unable to attend to their affairs, then the government will be in chaos. If those below are unable to pursue their various tasks, then food and clothing will be in short supply. If these are in short supply, then a younger brother who seeks for such things from his elder brother will be refused and will come to feel unbrotherly. In time he will come to resent his elder brother. Children who seek for such things from their parents will be refused and will come to feel unfilial. In time they will come to resent their parents. Ministers who seek for such things from their rulers will be refused and will come to feel disloyal. In time they will rebel against their superiors. This will lead unruly and depraved people who lack proper clothing and sufficient food to build up resentment and indignation in their hearts and express it in wanton violence that cannot be stopped. And so, robbers and thieves will increase while decent and good people grow increasingly scarce. To seek to bring good order to one's state by increasing the number of thieves and robbers and decreasing the number of decent and good people is like asking someone who is standing in front of you to turn around three times without exposing his back to you. Such practices have nothing to offer in regard to explaining how to bring good order to the government. And so, we now know that lavish funerals and prolonged mourning cannot bring good order to one's state."

But perhaps it has value for those who wish to prevent large states from attacking small states?

Our teacher Mozi says, "It has nothing to offer in this regard either. Ever since the ancient sage-kings passed away and the world lost a sense of what is right, the feudal lords have relied upon force of arms to attack one another. To the south there are the kings of Chu and Yue and to the north there are the rulers of Qi and Jin.³¹ They all mercilessly drill and train their troops with the aim of attacking and absorbing one another and thereby gaining control of all the world. And so, whenever a large state fails to attack a small one it is only because the small state has an abundant stock of provisions, well-maintained fortifications, and harmony

31. The rulers of these particular states were jousting for preeminence in Mozi's time.

between its rulers and subjects. This is why great states do not want to attack it. If its provisions were not abundant, its fortifications not well-maintained, or it lacked harmony between its rulers and subjects, then large states would want to attack it. Now consider what would result if lavish funerals and prolonged mourning were adopted as official policy. The state would be poor, the people few, and the government in chaos. If the state is poor, it lacks the means to accumulate abundant provisions. If its people are few, it lacks the labor needed to maintain its walls and moats. If it is in chaos, then it will not be victorious in attack nor secure in defense. And so, we now know that lavish funerals and prolonged mourning cannot prevent large states from attacking small ones.”

But perhaps it has value for those who wish to win the blessings of the Lord on High, ghosts, and spirits?

Our teacher Mozi says, “It has nothing to offer in this regard either. Now consider what would result if lavish funerals and prolonged mourning were adopted as official policy. The state would be poor, the people few, and the government in chaos. If the state is poor its sacrificial offerings of millet and wine will not be clean and pure. If its people are few, there will not be enough of them to serve the Lord on High, ghosts, and spirits. And if its government is in chaos, then its sacrifices will not be offered regularly and at the proper times. Now suppose this reaches the point where serving the Lord on High, ghosts, and spirits is eventually prohibited and stopped. If such a policy is implemented, the Lord on High, ghosts, and spirits would discuss this among themselves up above saying, ‘Which is better? To have or to not have such people? I suppose there is no difference to us whether they exist or not!’ Then were the Lord on High, ghosts, and spirits to send down calamities and punishments and abandon such a people, would this not merely be fitting?³²

“This is why the sages of old prescribed the following methods for burial. They said that a coffin of plain wood three inches thick is enough to house the body as it decays. There should be three layers of funeral clothes, enough to cover up the unpleasantness. As for the depth of the grave, it should not be so deep as to hit water but not so shallow as to allow a stench. The burial mound should rise no higher than three feet. If one followed these methods, the deceased was properly buried. The living must not engage in prolonged mourning but should quickly go

32. As can be clearly seen here and in the following two chapters (*Mozi* 26 and 31), Mozi was a religious conservative and a fundamentalist. He insisted that the belief in and worship of the Lord on High, ghosts, and spirits was necessary for a stable and flourishing society. He was very much opposed to the more naturalized, psychological interpretations of religious ceremony that were evolving among Confucian thinkers of the time. For more on the “Lord on High,” see the Introduction to this volume. Cf. *Analects* 3.12, 6.22, 7.35, and 11.12 (in chapter 1 of this volume).

about their tasks, each person doing what they are best at in order to mutually benefit one another. These are the methods laid down by the sage-kings.”

Now those who advocate lavish funerals and prolonged mourning say, “Although lavish funerals and prolonged mourning cannot enrich the poor, increase a sparse population, stabilize a precarious situation, or bring good order to chaos, nevertheless, such is the Way of the sage-kings.”

Our teacher Mozi says, “This is not the case. In ancient times, when Yao went north to instruct the eight Di barbarian tribes,³³ he died en route and was buried on the northern slopes of Mount Qiong.³⁴ His corpse was dressed in only three layers of burial clothing and interred in a coffin of plain wood that was bound together with common vines. Mourning began only after the coffin had been lowered into the grave. The grave was then filled in and no burial mound was erected. Once the burial was complete, oxen and horses freely crossed over the grave.³⁵ When Shun went west to instruct the seven Rong barbarian tribes,³⁶ he died en route and was buried in the marketplace of Nanji.³⁷ His corpse was dressed in only three layers of burial clothing and interred in a coffin of plain wood that was bound together with common vines. Once the burial was complete, the people in the market freely crossed over the grave. When Yu went east to instruct the nine Yi barbarian tribes,³⁸ he died en route and was buried on Mount Huiji.³⁹ His corpse was dressed in only three layers of burial clothing and interred in a coffin of plain wood only three inches thick. The coffin was bound with common vines; it was not fitted tightly together nor was a ramp needed to lower it into the ground.⁴⁰ The grave was dug to a depth that did not hit water but was not so shallow as to allow a stench to escape. Once he was buried, the excess dirt was piled up as a burial mound. It came to no more than three feet in height.”

So, if we consider the case on the basis of these three sage-kings, lavish funerals and prolonged mourning are not in fact the way of the sage-kings. These three kings

33. The name given to various non-Chinese people to the north of Chinese territory.

34. The location of this mountain is not clear, though it obviously was located somewhere to the north of what was Chinese territory at the time.

35. Showing that it was not accorded any special status.

36. The name given to various non-Chinese people to the west of Chinese territory.

37. Scholars do not agree about the location of this town. It obviously was located somewhere to the west of what was Chinese territory at the time.

38. The name given to various non-Chinese people to the east of Chinese territory. Thus, Mozi's narrative purports to report on funeral practices throughout all of China and its three land borders.

39. A mountain located in Shanyin County, in the present-day Zhejiang Province.

40. This indicates that the grave was of very modest proportions for a king.

each were honored as the Son of Heaven and possessed all the wealth in the world. Is it plausible to suppose that they chose to be buried in the way in which they were buried because they were worried about having enough to spend?

But the way in which kings, dukes, and high officials are buried today is very different from this. There must be outer and inner coffins and a three-layered shroud of embroidered hide. Once the jade disks and stones are prepared, there must also be spears, swords, sacrificial vessels, pots and basins, embroidery, bolts of silk, and thousands of sets of bridles. The deceased must be provided with horses and carriages along with women entertainers and their instruments. There must be ramps leading down to and connecting with the tomb and the burial mound should resemble a hill or small mountain. The extent to which such practices interfere with the work of the people and dissipate their wealth is beyond calculation. But this is the degree to which people are willing to pursue useless endeavors.

This is why our teacher Mozi says, "Earlier, I began by saying that if by following the words and implementing the plans of those who advocate lavish funerals and prolonged mourning one really could enrich the poor, increase the population, and bring stability to precarious situations and order to chaos, then these things clearly are benevolent and right and the proper task of filial children. Those who offer counsel could not but encourage them. However, if by following the words and implementing the plans of those who advocate lavish funerals and prolonged mourning one really cannot enrich the poor, increase the population, and bring stability to precarious situations and order to chaos, then these things clearly are not benevolent and right or the proper task of filial children. Those who offer counsel could not but discourage them.

"But we have seen that those who seek to enrich their states through these practices will actually impoverish it. Those who seek to increase the population of their states through these practices will actually decrease it. Those who seek to bring good order to their states through these practices will simply throw it into chaos. Those who seek to stop large states from attacking small states through these practices will not succeed. And those who seek to gain the blessing of the Lord on High, ghosts, and spirits through these practices will receive only disaster. If we look up to the way of Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, Wen, and Wu we find they were opposed to such practices. If we look down to the policies of Jie, Tyrant Zhou, You, and Li we find they accorded with such practices.⁴¹ If we consider things on this basis, then clearly lavish funerals and prolonged mourning are not the way of the sage-kings."

41. Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, Wen, and Wu are paradigmatically sagacious rulers, while Jie, Tyrant Zhou, You, and Li are paradigmatically vicious rulers. See *Important Figures* in the appendices.

Now those who support lavish funerals and prolonged periods of mourning say, “If lavish funerals and prolonged mourning really are not the way of the sage-kings, why is it that the gentlemen of the Middle Kingdom⁴² continue these practices without interruption and follow them uncritically?”

Our teacher Mozi says, “This is just a case of people ‘following what they are used to and approving of what is customary.’⁴³ In ancient times, east of the state of Yue was the state of Kaishu.⁴⁴ When a first son was born to the people of this state, they would carve him up and eat him, saying it was beneficial to his future younger brothers. When their father died, they would carry their mothers off to some distant place and abandon them there, saying, ‘One cannot live with the wife of a ghost!’ These practices were both official policy and the popular custom. They were continued without interruption and followed uncritically. But how can this be the way to realize what is benevolent and right? This is just a case of people ‘following what they are used to and approving of what is customary.’ South of the state of Chu was the state of the people of Yan.⁴⁵ When their parents died, they would remove and discard the flesh from their bones and then bury the bones.⁴⁶ This was the way to be a filial child. West of the state of Qin⁴⁷ was the state of Yiqu.⁴⁸ When their parents died, they would gather together kindling and firewood and burn the corpse. As the smoke would rise, they would say that their parents were ‘ascending far off.’ This was the way to be a filial child. These practices were both official policy and the popular custom. They were continued without interruption and followed uncritically. But how can this be the way to realize what is benevolent and right? This is just a case of people ‘following what they are used to and approving of what is customary.’

“If we consider the funeral practices of these three states, then clearly they are deficient. If we consider the funeral practices of gentlemen in the Middle Kingdom,

42. That is, China.

43. This appears to have been a common saying of the times.

44. The precise location of this state is uncertain but its location, “east of the state of Yue,” connotes a faraway and culturally primitive area.

45. The precise location of this state is uncertain but its location, “south of the state of Chu,” connotes a faraway and culturally primitive area.

46. Such secondary reburial of bones, while never the dominant practice, is well attested in very early China. There is evidence for the practice in the Central Plains and Northwest as far back as the fifth millennium BCE. See David N. Keightley, “Early Civilization in China: Reflections on How It Became Chinese,” in *Heritage of China*, ed. Paul S. Ropp (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), 24.

47. Qin was the state farthest to the west and was considered culturally backward in Mozi’s time.

48. In the basic annals section for the state of Qin in Sima Qian’s *Shiji* (“Record of the Historian”), there is reference to a state by this name. Its exact location is still a matter of debate.

then clearly they are excessive. If one were to greatly increase the deficiency of the one and greatly diminish the excess of the latter, then there would be moderation in funerals. Even though it is good to give people clothing and food when they are alive, these things still must be given in moderation. When people die, it is good to give them funerals. But how could it be that in this alone we show no moderation?"

Our teacher Mozi says that this is the proper model for a funeral: "A coffin three inches thick is adequate for the decaying bones. Three layers of clothes are adequate for the decaying flesh. The grave should be dug to a depth that does not strike water but that also does not allow fumes to escape to the surface. The burial mound should only be high enough to clearly mark the spot. There should be crying as one sees the departed off and as one comes back from the grave. But as soon as people have returned to their homes, they should resume their individual livelihoods. There should be regular sacrificial offerings made to extend filiality to one's parents."

And so, I say that in this way our teacher Mozi's model neglects the good neither of the living nor of the dead. This is why our teacher Mozi says, "If gentlemen today sincerely wish to be benevolent and right and desire to become superior men, if they want to follow the way of the sage-kings of old, and work for the benefit of the people of the Middle Kingdom today, then they should make moderation in mourning their official policy and must not fail to examine this matter carefully."

*Chapter Twenty-Six: Heaven's Will*⁴⁹

Our teacher Mozi says, "Gentlemen in the world today understand small matters but not those that are great. How do I know this? I know this from how they conduct themselves within their families. If one is living at home⁵⁰ and commits some offense against the head of the clan, there are always the homes of neighbors to which one might flee. And yet, one's parents, brothers, and friends will unite and caution one, saying, 'You must be careful! You must be circumspect! How can you live at home and offend against the head of the clan?' This is not only how things are in the case of living at home, it is also so in the case of living in a given state. If one is living in a state and commits some offense against the ruler of the state, there are always neighboring states to which one might flee. And yet, one's parents,

49. The word translated here as "will" is *zhi* 志, which means the settled and persisting intention of an agent. For Mozi, Heaven was less a personality with a capricious or unknowable will and more one with an established, observable, and predictable set of inclinations.

50. Mozi has in mind here the practice of living in a family compound, where several generations share a common courtyard but each have their separate quarters.

brothers, and friends will unite and caution one, saying, 'You must be careful! You must be circumspect! Who can live in a state and offend against its ruler?'

"Since people offer each other such strong admonitions in these cases, where there is still some place to which one might flee, should they not think it appropriate to offer even stronger warnings in a case where there is no place to which one might flee? For there is the saying, 'Committing offense in broad daylight, where can one flee to?'"⁵¹ The answer of course is that there is nowhere to flee. For Heaven will clearly see you even if you run to the forests, valleys, or hidden places where none lives. But for some reason the gentlemen of the world don't know enough to warn each other about offending Heaven. This is how I know that the gentlemen of the world understand small matters but not those that are great.

"This being the case, what is it that Heaven desires and what does it dislike? Heaven desires what is right and dislikes what is not right. This being so, if I lead the people of the world to act in accordance with what is right, then I will be doing what Heaven desires. And if I do what Heaven desires, then Heaven will do what I desire. Such being the case, what is it that I desire and what do I dislike? I desire good fortune and a substantial salary, and dislike calamities and disasters. If I do not do what Heaven desires but rather what it does not desire, then I will lead people to act in ways that lead them into disaster and calamity. But how do I know that Heaven desires what is right and dislikes what is not right? I say this is so because, throughout the world, wherever there is right there is life, and wherever there is an absence of right there is death. Wherever there is right there is wealth, wherever there is an absence of right there is poverty. Wherever there is right there is good order, wherever there is an absence of right there is disorder. Heaven desires to have life and dislikes death, desires to have wealth and dislikes poverty, desires to have good order and dislikes disorder. This is how I know that Heaven desires what is right and dislikes what is not right.

"Moreover, what is right is what offers a standard of governing. Such a standard is not given by subordinates to govern their superiors but rather must come from superiors to govern subordinates. This is why the people devote themselves to carrying out their various tasks but do not make up their own standard. There are ministers and officials to govern them. Ministers and officials devote themselves to carrying out their various tasks but do not make up their own standard. There are the three high counselors and feudal lords to govern them. The three high counselors and feudal lords devote themselves to administering the government but they do not make up their own standard. There is the Son of Heaven to govern them. The Son of Heaven does not make up his own standard. There is Heaven to govern

51. This seems to have been a common saying of the time but its source is unknown.

him. The gentlemen of the world clearly understand that the Son of Heaven governs the three high counselors and feudal lords, the ministers and officials and the people. But that Heaven governs the Son of Heaven is something that people do not yet clearly understand.

“This is why in ancient times the sage-kings of the three dynasties,⁵² Yu, Tang, Wen, and Wu, wanted to make clear to the people of the world that Heaven governs the Son of Heaven. And so, each of them fattened up oxen and sheep, dogs and swine, and prepared pure offerings of millet and wine as sacrifices to the Lord on High, the ghosts, and spirits and prayed for Heaven’s blessings. I have never heard of a case where Heaven prayed for blessings from the Son of Heaven and this is how I know that Heaven governs the Son of Heaven.”

The Son of Heaven is the most honored person in the world and the richest person in the world. And so those who desire riches and honors cannot but accord with the will of Heaven. Those who accord with Heaven’s will, caring for one another impartially, and benefiting one another in their interactions, will surely be rewarded. Those who oppose Heaven’s will, disliking one another out of partiality and stealing from one another in their interactions, will surely be punished. This being so, who has accorded with Heaven’s will and been rewarded? Who has opposed Heaven’s will and been punished?

Our teacher Mozi says, “In ancient times the sage-kings of the three dynasties, Yu, Tang, Wen, and Wu, were among those who accorded with Heaven’s will and were rewarded. In ancient times the vicious kings of the three dynasties, Jie, Tyrant Zhou, You, and Li, were among those who opposed Heaven’s will and were punished.”

That being so, how were Yu, Tang, Wen, and Wu rewarded?

Our teacher Mozi says, “On high they honored Heaven, in the middle realm they served the ghosts and spirits, and below they cared for human beings. And so, Heaven’s will proclaimed, ‘These men impartially care for those I care for and impartially benefit those I benefit. Their care for the people is extensive and the benefit they bring is substantial.’ And so, Heaven made it come to pass that they each became the Son of Heaven and were given the wealth of all the world. Their descendants have continued for a myriad of generations; their goodness has been proclaimed throughout succeeding generations and spread throughout the world. They are praised down to the present day and are known as ‘sage-kings.’”

That being so, how were Jie, Tyrant Zhou, You, and Li punished?

Our teacher Mozi says, “On high they maligned Heaven, in the middle realm they insulted the ghosts and spirits, and below they harmed human beings. And

52. The Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties (see *Important Periods* in the appendices).

so, Heaven's will proclaimed, 'These men through their partiality dislike those I care for and in their interactions harm those I benefit. Their dislike for the people is extensive and the harm they bring substantial.' And so, Heaven made it come to pass that they did not finish out their natural span of life and their line did not even span a single full generation. They are reviled down to the present day and are known as 'vicious kings.'"

That being so, how do we know that Heaven cares for the people of the world?

Our teacher Mozi says, "Because it sheds light upon all impartially."

How do we know that Heaven sheds light upon all equally?

Our teacher Mozi says, "Because it lays claim to all impartially."

How do we know that it lays claim to all impartially?

Our teacher Mozi says, "Because it accepts sacrificial offerings from all impartially."

How do we know that it accepts sacrificial offerings from all impartially?

Our teacher Mozi says, "Within the Four Seas, all those who live on cultivated grain⁵³ fatten up oxen and sheep, dogs, and swine, and prepare pure offerings of millet and wine as sacrifices to the Lord on High, the ghosts, and spirits. Since Heaven lays claim to all people, why would it not care for them? Moreover, as I teach, 'Those who kill one innocent person will suffer one misfortune.'⁵⁴ Who is it that kills an innocent person? It is a human being. Who is it that bestows misfortune? It is Heaven. If Heaven did not care for the people of the world, then why would it send down misfortunes when human beings kill one another? This is how I know that Heaven cares for the people of the world."

To accord with Heaven's will is to take right as the governing standard. To oppose Heaven's will is to take force as the governing standard. But what does one do who takes right as the governing standard?

Our teacher Mozi says, "Those who control great states will not attack small states. Those who control great families will not plunder lesser families. The strong will not rob the weak. The noble will not act arrogantly toward the humble. The clever will not deceive the foolish. Such things are beneficial to Heaven above, to ghosts and spirits in the middle realm, and to human beings below. Benefiting these three, there is none that is not benefited, and so the best of names will be accorded to such men and they will be called 'sage-kings.' Those who take force as the governing standard differ from this. They contradict this in word and oppose it in deed, like two men galloping away from one another on horseback. Those who

53. The settled, civilized Chinese as opposed to nomadic, uncivilized "barbarians."

54. In addition to occurring in all three versions of "Heaven's Will," this line is also found in *Mozi* chapter 4 (not in this volume).

control great states will thus attack small ones. Those who control great families will plunder lesser families. The strong will rob the weak. The noble will act arrogantly toward the humble. The clever will deceive the foolish. Such things are not beneficial to Heaven above, to ghosts and spirits in the middle realm, or to human beings below. Not benefiting these three, there is none that is benefited, and so the worst of names will be accorded to such men and they will be called ‘vicious kings.’”

Our teacher Mozi says, “I hold to the will of Heaven as a wheelwright holds to his compass and a carpenter his square. Wheelwrights and carpenters hold fast to their compasses and squares in order to gauge what is round and square throughout the world, saying, ‘What is plumb with this is true, what is not is false!’ The books of all the gentlemen in the world today are so numerous that they cannot be exhaustively catalogued and their teachings and maxims are more than can be counted. Above they offer their opinions to the feudal lords and below they expound them to various men of worth. But they are far from what is benevolent and right! How do I know this? I say, ‘I measure them with the clearest standard in all the world.’”

Chapter Thirty-One: On Ghosts

Our teacher Mozi says, “In the present age, since the sage-kings who ruled during the ancient three dynasties have passed away and the world has lost sight of what is right, the feudal lords all take force as their guiding standard.⁵⁵ As a result, rulers and other superiors are not kind, while ministers and other subordinates are not loyal. Fathers are not loving and sons are not filial, elder brothers are not good to their younger brothers, younger brothers are not respectful of their elders, and proper conduct in general is not observed. Those in charge of the government do not exert themselves in their administrative duties, while the common people do not exert themselves in the pursuit of their various tasks. This is also why people abandon themselves to licentiousness, violence, piracy, rebellion, thievery, and robbery, and use weapons, poisons, water, and fire to stop travelers on the roads and byways and rob their carriages, horses, coats, and furs in order to profit themselves. As a result, the world is in great disorder.

“If we ask how this came about, we will see that it is all because people have developed doubts concerning the existence of ghosts and spirits and do not understand that ghosts and spirits can reward the worthy and punish the wicked. Now if we could just persuade the people of the world to believe that ghosts and spirits can

55. The word translated as “guiding standard” is zhèng 正, which often means “what is correct” and is related to the word zhèng 政, which means “to rule.” Mozi here is playing on these related senses. (Cf. *Analects* 12.17 in chapter 1 of this volume.)

reward the worthy and punish the wicked, then how could the world ever become disordered?”

Now those who maintain that there are no ghosts or spirits say, “Ghosts and spirits certainly do not exist!” Day and night they preach such ideas throughout the world and sow suspicion among the masses. They cause the people of the world to develop doubts concerning the existence of ghosts and spirits and as a result the world is thrown into disorder.

This is why our teacher Mozi says, “If the kings, dukes, great officials, and gentlemen of the world today really seek to promote what is beneficial to the world and eliminate what is harmful, they must inquire carefully into the issue of whether or not ghosts and spirits exist.”

I accept that one must inquire carefully into the issue of whether or not ghosts and spirits exist. Granted this, what is the proper method for pursuing an inquiry into this issue?⁵⁶

Our teacher Mozi says, “You proceed in the same way as in any other case of determining whether anything exists or does not exist; you must take as your standard the evidence provided by the eyes and ears of the people. If there really are people who have heard and seen something, then you must accept that such things exist. If no one has heard or seen anything, then you must accept that such things do not exist. If you intend to proceed in this way, why not try going into a district or village and ask the people there? If, in the course of human history, from ancient times up to the present, there really are people who have seen ghostly or spiritual entities or heard the sounds of ghosts or spirits, then how could one say that ghosts and spirits do not exist? If no one has ever heard or seen them, then how could one say that ghosts and spirits exist?”

Now those who maintain that ghosts and spirits do not exist say, “Throughout the world there are innumerable reports about hearing and seeing ghostly or spiritual entities, but who really can offer testimony about having heard or seen ghostly or spiritual entities?”⁵⁷

Our teacher Mozi says, “If we are looking for a case where many people have seen and heard [about ghosts and spirits], then in ancient times Du Bo is a good example. King Xuan of Zhou⁵⁸ killed his minister Du Bo even though he

56. Notice that in what follows, Mozi appeals to what are called the “three gauges” in *Mozi* chapter 35, “A Condemnation of Fatalism” (below).

57. Mozi wants to distinguish mere hearsay and vague claims about spiritual beings from firm and clear testimony of their existence. In the examples he cites as evidence, the testimony is firsthand, detailed, and corroborated by multiple witnesses.

58. A king who ruled during the tenth generation of the Zhou dynasty. His reign dates are 827–782 BCE.

was completely innocent. Before he died, Du Bo said, 'My lord is killing me even though I am completely innocent. If the dead are indeed unconscious, then that will be the end of it. But if the dead are conscious, within three years' time my lord shall know of this!' Three years later King Xuan and various feudal lords were off hunting in the wilds. There were several hundred chariots and several thousand men on foot; the hunting party filled the entire field. At high noon, Du Bo appeared in a plain chariot pulled by white horses. He was wearing vermilion clothes and a hat, holding a vermilion bow, and clasping vermilion arrows under his arm. He pursued King Xuan of Zhou and shot him as he rode in his chariot; the arrow pierced the king's heart and splintered his spine. King Xuan collapsed in his chariot and, draped over his own bow case, he died. None of the men from Zhou who were there at the time failed to witness this and none even in remote places failed to hear about it. The event was recorded in the court chronicle of Zhou. Rulers referred to it when instructing their ministers, and fathers referred to it as a warning to their sons, saying, 'Be cautious! Be watchful! Misfortune will surely befall all those who kill the innocent, and they will suffer the punishments of ghosts and spirits in this swift fashion!' And so, if we look at things in terms of what is written in the court chronicle of Zhou, then how can we doubt that ghosts and spirits exist?

"But it is not just the court chronicle of Zhou that attests to such things; in ancient times, Duke Mu of Qin⁵⁹ was once in his ancestral temple at high noon when a spirit entered through the door. It had the face of a man and the body of a bird, wore a plain white robe with dark edging, and displayed a serious and dignified expression. When Duke Mu saw it, he was frightened and started to run away, but the spirit spoke to him saying, 'Do not fear! The Lord is pleased with your shining Virtue⁶⁰ and has dispatched me to extend your life by nineteen years.'⁶¹ He

59. Ruler of the state of Qin from 659 to 621 BCE.

60. In very early Chinese texts, spirits savored the *míngdé* 明德, "shining Virtue," of pious worshippers in the same visceral way they were thought to enjoy the smells and flavors of the sacrifice, and the pageantry and music of the ceremony. True Virtue would elicit spontaneous feelings of approval and joy while character or behavior that was *è* 惡, "vile," would give rise to disapproval and disgust. Such ideas can be seen in the later tradition. For example, in chapter 6 of the *Great Learning*, a cultivated person is said to be attracted to the good "like loving a lovely sight" and repelled by the bad "like hating a hateful smell" (in chapter 11 of this volume).

61. A span of nineteen years marked a specific astronomical and calendrical period called a *zhāng* 章. Unaware of the precession of the equinoxes, ancient Chinese astronomers believed that every nineteen years the winter solstice was the first day of the first month of the year and that on that day the sun would appear at exactly the same place in the zodiac. Hence nineteen years were thought to define a significant period of time, something akin to a generation. Compare the story of the butcher in *Zhuangzi* chapter 3 (in chapter 8 of this volume), whose knife remained keen for a period of nineteen years.

shall ensure that your state prospers and that your descendants flourish and hold on to the state of Qin.’ Clapping his hands together, Duke Mu saluted the spirit several times and, bowing his head, asked, ‘May I inquire as to your name?’ The spirit replied, ‘I am Gou Mang.’ And so, if we accept what Duke Mu of Qin saw with his own eyes, then how can we doubt that ghosts and spirits exist?

“But it is not just this record that attests to such things. In ancient times, Duke Jian of Yan⁶² killed his minister Zhuang Ziyi, who was completely innocent. Before he died, Zhuang Ziyi said, ‘My lord is killing me even though I am completely innocent. If the dead are indeed unconscious, then that will be the end of it. But if the dead are conscious, within three years’ time my lord shall know of this!’ After one year had passed, Duke Jian was about to set off in his chariot to perform the great sacrifice at Zu.⁶³ At high noon, as Duke Jian of Yan was setting off in his chariot on the road to Zu, Zhuang Ziyi appeared, bearing a vermilion-colored staff, and beat the Duke to death with it. There were none among the people of Yan accompanying the Duke at the time who failed to witness this and none even in remote places failed to hear about it. The event was recorded in the court chronicle of Yan. Feudal lords passed it on to succeeding generations, saying, ‘Misfortune will surely befall all those who kill the innocent, and they will suffer the punishments of ghosts and spirits in this swift fashion!’ And so, if we look at things in terms of what is written in the court chronicle of Yan, then how can we doubt that ghosts and spirits exist?

“But it is not just the court chronicle of Yan that attests to such things. In ancient times, in the time of Bao,⁶⁴ Lord Wen of Song, there was a minister, Guan Gu, who served as Chief of Sacrifice. Once, while he was carrying out his duties in the temple, a shaman appeared before him holding a staff and said, ‘Guan Gu! Why is it that the sacrificial jades are not of the proper size, the offerings of wine and millet not clean and pure, the animals offered not without blemish and fully fattened, and the sacrifices of each season not performed at the proper time? Is this your doing or is Bao responsible?’ Guan Gu replied, ‘Bao is still a babe in swaddling

62. Ruler of the state of Yan. His reign dates are 504–493 BCE.

63. The name of a specific sacrificial site in the state of Yan. This adds an ironic cast to the story, for it was commonly held that a state is maintained through the spiritual power of its state sacrifices. The following lines, which are clearly a later note that became incorporated into the text, describe the locations of the state sacrifices of other contemporary states and the fact that many people witnessed these events (and hence the spiritual sighting noted in Mozi’s story): “The state of Yan performed its great sacrifice at Zu, while the state of Qi offered its sacrifice at Sheji, Song at Sanglin, and Chu at Yunmeng. Large numbers of men and women would gather to observe these rituals.”

64. Bao is the personal name of the ruler whose posthumous name was Lord Wen. He ruled the state of Song from 610 to 589 BCE. He was also known as Duke Wen.

clothes. How could he be responsible? I, Guan Gu, the minister in charge, am the one who sees to this.' The shaman then raised his staff and clubbed him to death, and Guan Gu died upon the offering platform. There were none among the people of Song who were there at the time who failed to witness this and none even in remote places failed to hear about it. The event was recorded in the court chronicle of Song. Feudal lords passed it on to succeeding generations, saying, 'All those who fail to offer sacrifices with reverence and care will suffer the punishments of ghosts and spirits in this swift fashion!' And so, if we look at things in terms of what is written in the court chronicle of Song, then how can we doubt that ghosts and spirits exist?

"But it is not just the court chronicle of Song that attests to such things. In ancient times, among the ministers of Lord Zhuang of Qi⁶⁵ there were two named Wang Ligu and Zhong Lijiao. For three years, these two had been engaged in litigation against one another, but no definitive judgment could be reached in the matter. The Lord of Qi thought of putting them both to death, but feared killing an innocent man. He thought of acquitting them both, but feared letting a guilty man go free. And so, he arranged for them to provide a sheep for sacrifice and to use its blood to swear an oath of innocence upon Qi's sacred altar. The two men agreed to swear the oath, and so the ground was prepared, the sheep's throat was cut, and its blood was sprinkled about to consecrate the sacrifice. Wang Ligu's oath was read through without incident, but before they were even halfway done with Zhong Lijiao's oath, the sheep that had been sacrificed rose up and butted him, breaking his leg. Then the spirit of the altar appeared and struck Zhong Lijiao, killing him on the very place where he had sworn his oath. There were none among the people of Qi who were there at the time who failed to witness this and none even in remote places failed to hear about it. The event was recorded in the court chronicle of Qi. Feudal lords passed it on to succeeding generations, saying, 'All those who fail to be sincere when they swear an oath will suffer the punishments of ghosts and spirits in this swift fashion!' And so, if we look at things in terms of what is written in the court chronicle of Qi, then how can we doubt that ghosts and spirits exist?"

This is why our teacher Mozi says, "Even in the deepest valleys or vast forests, in those hidden places where no one lives, you must always act properly. For the ghosts and spirits will see what you do!"

Now those who maintain that there are no ghosts say, "How can what the multitude claim to have seen and heard be considered adequate for settling doubts about this issue? How can one who aspires to be known as a person of high status

65. Ruler of the state of Qi. His reign dates are 553–548 BCE.

or a gentleman throughout the world turn to and trust what the multitude claim to have seen and heard?"

Our teacher Mozi says, "If what the multitude claim to have seen and heard is not enough to win your trust and settle your doubts about this issue, then I am not sure whether you will consider the sage-kings of the three dynasties, or even them together with Yao and Shun, as adequate models.⁶⁶ In this regard, from the average person to nobles alike, all say that the sage-kings of the three dynasties [or even they together with Yao and Shun,] are adequate models of conduct. And so, if we assume that the three sage-kings of ancient times, or they together with Yao and Shun, are adequate models, then why don't we consider the actions of the former sage-kings?

"In ancient times, when King Wu had attacked the Yin and executed Tyrant Zhou, he had the various feudal lords divide up the sacrifices of Yin. He entrusted the interior sacrifices to those who were closely related and the exterior sacrifices to those who were distantly related.⁶⁷ Since he did this, King Wu must have believed in the existence of ghosts and spirits. This is why, when he had attacked the Yin and executed Tyrant Zhou, he had the various feudal lords divide up the sacrifices of Yin. If there were no ghosts and spirits, why would King Wu have bothered to divide up the sacrifices of Yin?

"It is not only the activities of King Wu that bear this out. Whenever the sage-kings of old rewarded anyone, they always did so at the ancestral shrine, and whenever they punished anyone, they always did so at the altar of soil. Why did they reward at the ancestral shrine? In order to announce to the spirits there that rewards were fairly apportioned. Why did they punish at the altar of soil? In order to announce to the spirits there that the cases were decided properly.

"But it is not just what can be found in books that bears this out. In the time of Emperor Shun and in the time of the sage-kings of the three dynasties Xia, Shang, and Zhou, on the very first day that they established their states and set up their capitals, they always selected the most perfectly aligned altar in the capital to serve as their ancestral shrine.⁶⁸ Also, they always chose the place where the trees grew most finely and luxuriantly and established it as the altar of soil. They also chose

66. The text is slightly garbled at this point. But the sense is something like "the sage-kings of the three dynasties (i.e., Yu, Tang, Wen, and Wu) *plus* Yao and Shun."

67. The interior sacrifices were to the Yin royal ancestors and hence needed to be carried out by their direct descendants. Mozi's point is that if there were no ghosts and spirits who received these sacrifices and were aware of who was sacrificing to them, there would have been no point in dividing up these religious duties.

68. Mozi's point here is that the conscious effort to properly align cities to harmonize with spiritual forces also reflects a belief in the existence of ghosts and spirits. For the seminal study of this aspect of Chinese culture, see Paul Wheatley, *The Pivot of the Four Corners: A Preliminary Enquiry into the Origins and Character of the Ancient Chinese City* (Chicago, IL: Aldine Publishing Company, 1971).

the most kind, filial, upright, and good from among the elders of their states to oversee and perform their sacrifices. They always chose the most plump, physically perfect, and properly colored of the six domesticated animals as their sacrificial offerings and ensured that the proper type, quality, and number of jade tablets and insignia were used. They always chose the most fragrant and perfectly ripened of the five grains in order to make their sacrificial wine and cakes, and this is why there was seasonal variation in these offerings. In these various ways, the ancient sage-kings ruled the world by putting the ghosts and spirits ahead of the people. This is why they declared that before any of the civil officials were appointed, the sacrificial implements and robes must first be stored away in the royal treasury, those in charge of overseeing and performing the sacrifices must all be presented and invested at court, and those animals to be used as sacrifices must be separated from the rest of their flocks and herds. This is how the sage-kings of ancient times carried out their rule. In ancient times, sage-kings always showed their devotion to the ghosts and spirits in these ways and their devotion was generous and substantial. But they worried that their descendants would not understand this and so they recorded their activities in books of bamboo and silk and passed these down to succeeding generations. Still, they worried that these bamboo and silk books would decay over time and become lost and that their descendants in succeeding ages would have no way to learn of this. And so, they repeated this knowledge by etching it on basins and bowls and inscribing it in metal and stone. There was still some concern that their descendants in later generations would not be reverent enough to receive blessings and so in the books of the former kings and among the teachings of the sages, within each length of silk text and every book's chapter, one finds numerous and repeated references to the existence of ghosts and spirits. Why is this the case? Because the sage-kings were devoted to the ghosts and spirits. Now when those who maintain that there are no ghosts and spirits say, 'There certainly are no ghosts and spirits!' this opposes what the sage-kings were devoted to. And whatever opposes what the sage-kings were devoted to is not the way one becomes a gentleman."

Now those who maintain that there are no ghosts say, "Exactly what textual sources are there to support your claims that in the books of the former kings and among the teachings of the sages, within each length of silk text and every book's chapter, one finds numerous and repeated references to the existence of ghosts and spirits?"

Our teacher Mozi says, "Among Zhou dynasty writings, such evidence is found within the *Elegies*.⁶⁹ The *Elegies* says,

69. The quotation is from the ode "King Wen" in the *Elegies* section of the *Odes* (*Mao* # 235). For a complete translation, see Legge, *The She King*, 427–31.

King Wen is on high,
 How he shines in Heaven!
 Though Zhou is an ancient land,
 Its mandate was just recently granted.
 Is not Zhou illustrious!
 Is the Lord's mandate not timely!
 King Wen ascends and descends,
 He moves to the left and the right of the Lord.
 How fine, how fine is King Wen!
 His fame shall last forever!

If ghosts and spirits do not exist, then after he had died, how could King Wen move to the left and the right of the Lord? This is how I know that there are records of ghosts in the books of the Zhou.

“However, if only the books of the Zhou contained references to ghosts and one found no such references in the books of the Shang, then one could not take such stories as reliable models. But when we examine works from the Shang, we find passages such as the following,

Oh, in the Xia of ancient times, before it was visited by misfortune, the various beasts and bugs below and even the soaring birds above—not one behaved in an irregular manner. How much less would one who had a human face have ventured to have a deviant heart! Even among the ghosts and spirits of the mountains and streams, none dared to be unruly.⁷⁰

We see that by being respectful and sincere, the rulers of the Xia united Heaven and earth and protected the earth below. And if we consider why none of the ghosts and spirits of the mountains and streams dared to be unruly, we see that it was in order to assist Yu in his work. This is how I know that there are records of ghosts in the books of the Shang.

“However, if only the books of the Shang contained references to ghosts and one found no such references in the books of the Xia, then one could not take such stories as reliable models. So let us examine works from the Xia. The ‘Declaration of Yu’⁷¹ says,

70. The quoted passage is similar in content to parts of the “Instructions of Yi” section of the *History*. Cf. Legge, *The Shoo King*, 193–94.

71. In the present version of the *History* there is a passage that shares some of the language and general thrust of the text Mozi quotes. This passage is called the “Declaration at Gan,” with Gan being the place named in the *Mozi* passage. For the present version, see Legge, *The Shoo King*, 152–55.

A great battle was being waged at Gan and in its midst the king called for his six commanders of the left and right flanks to gather around him. He then declared to the assembled army below, “This ruler of Hu⁷² has destroyed and reviled the Five Phases⁷³ and has been remiss and abandoned the Three Spheres.⁷⁴ Heaven shall cut off his mandate.’

Continuing, he said, “This very afternoon I shall fight the ruler of Hu to decide what this day holds for us. You ministers, high officials, and common men, know that I do this not because I desire his fields and treasures but only to respectfully carry out the punishment decreed by Heaven. If those on the left do not respectfully carry out the duties of the left and those on the right do not respectfully carry out the duties of the right, you will not be respectfully carrying out Heaven’s mandate. If you charioteers do not drive your chariots straight, you will not be respectfully carrying out Heaven’s mandate. [Today you are carrying out Heaven’s mandate.] That is why the rewards for proper performance on this day will be conferred at the ancestral shrine and the punishments for failure will be meted out at the altar of soil.’

“Why were the rewards for proper performance conferred at the ancestral shrine? In order to show the ghosts and spirits that they are fairly apportioned. Why were the punishments for failure meted out at the altar of soil? In order to show the ghosts and spirits that the cases were decided properly. And so, we see that the ancient sage-kings clearly believed that ghosts and spirits could reward the worthy and punish the wicked. This is why rewards were conferred at the ancestral shrine and punishments meted out at the altar of soil. This is how I know that there are records of ghosts in the books of the Xia.”

And so, in former times, in the records of the Xia and in the following works of the Shang and the Zhou, there are numerous and repeated references to ghosts and spirits. Why is this the case? Because the sage-kings were devoted to them. How can anyone who considers what these books say still doubt the existence of ghosts and spirits? . . .

This is why our teacher Mozi says, “If the ability of ghosts and spirits to reward the worthy and punish the wicked could be firmly established as fact throughout the empire and among the common people, it would surely bring order to the state and great benefit to the people. If state officials are dishonest or corrupt in

72. A state ruled by relatives who shared the same surname as the Xia royal line. It was located in the present-day Shanxi Province.

73. These are the basic phases that the natural and human realms are supposed to pass through in orderly succession. They are wood, fire, earth, metal, and water. While a given phase is in “ascendance,” the activities and phenomena associated with that phase are thought to guide the major course of events.

74. The realms of Heaven, earth, and human beings.

carrying out their duties or men and women engage in illicit relationships, the ghosts and spirits will see them! If the people turn to licentiousness, violence, rebellion, theft, or robbery and use weapons, poisons, water, or fire to attack travelers on the roads and byways and rob their carriages, horses, coats, and furs in order to profit themselves—there are ghosts and spirits who will see them!⁷⁵ And so, state officials will not dare to be dishonest or corrupt. When they see good, they will not dare to not reward it and when they see wickedness, they will not dare to withhold punishment.⁷⁶ Thereupon, there will be an end to the common people turning to licentiousness, violence, rebellion, theft, or robbery and using weapons, poisons, water, or fire to attack travelers on the roads and byways and rob their carriages, horses, coats, and furs in order to profit themselves. And so, the world will be well-ordered.” . . .

Our teacher Mozi says, “. . . If it were the case that ghosts and spirits do not really exist, then in offering sacrifices, all we would be doing is expending resources of wine and millet. But though we would be expending these resources, we would not simply be pouring the wine into a ditch or gully or throwing the millet away. Primary clan members⁷⁷ and people living out in the villages and towns all have a chance to drink the sacrificial wine and partake of the offerings. And so, even if the ghosts and spirits did not exist, these offerings would still be a means for welcoming and bringing together close family and gathering together and increasing fellowship among people living out in the villages and towns.”⁷⁸ . . .

*Chapter Thirty-Two: A Condemnation of Musical Performances*⁷⁹

Our teacher Mozi says, “The benevolent surely are those who devote themselves to finding ways to promote what is beneficial to the world while eliminating what

75. This line also occurs at the very beginning of the chapter.

76. Cf. “Honoring the Worthy.” See *Mozi* chapter 8 (above).

77. That is, those who share the father’s surname and are in line to continue his family’s ancestral sacrifices.

78. Mozi shows no evidence of doubting the existence of ghosts and spirits, but the more sociological explanation for ritual sacrifice he offers here anticipates Xunzi’s rich and wholly secular defense of ritual. See *Xunzi* chapter 19, “Discourse on Ritual” (in chapter 9 of this volume).

79. Mozi criticizes the elaborate musical performances that were sponsored by many states in early China. These events included complex and expensive orchestras and elaborate dancing and were often accompanied by lavish feasts. He argues that these waste vast resources of time, material, and effort without producing any tangible results. He is not directly criticizing music per se. On the other hand, he shows no sense that music serves any useful purpose in life. For a meticulous and incisive study of the production, performance, ritual, and beliefs surrounding ancient Chinese chime bells, see Lothar von Falkenhausen, *Suspended Music: Chime Bells in the Culture of Bronze Age China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993).

is harmful; this is why they are proper models for human conduct throughout the world. If something benefits the world then they will do it. If it does not benefit the world then they will stop doing it. Moreover, when the benevolent think about the people of the world, if there is something that attracts their eyes, delights their ears, pleases their palates, and gives comfort to their bodies but this thing can only be gotten by sacrificing the people's stock of food and clothing, they will not engage in it."

And so, our teacher Mozi does not condemn music because he thinks that the sounds of bells, drums, zithers, and pipes are not pleasing, nor because he thinks that inlaid and carved patterns and designs are not fine, nor because he thinks that roasts of grain- and grass-fed meat are not delicious, nor because he thinks that high towers, lofty halls, and secluded pavilions are not comfortable. Though his body knows the comfort of such places, his mouth the relish of such food, his eye the fineness of such patterns, and his ears the pleasure of such sounds, nevertheless, he sees that these do not accord with the practices of the sage-kings of old and do not promote the benefit of the people in the world today. And so, our teacher Mozi says, "Musical performances are wrong!"

Our teacher Mozi says, "These days, when kings, dukes, and other persons of high rank engage in the manufacture of musical instruments as a function of state, it is no simple matter like slicing through water or breaking apart a piece of sod. Rather, they must heavily tax the people in order to enjoy the sounds of bells, drums, zithers, and pipes. If the production of these instruments were truly analogous to the sage-kings' production of boats and carts, then I would not dare to condemn it. In ancient times, the sage-kings did indeed heavily tax the people in order to make boats and carts. But once these were completed and the people asked what they could be used for, they were told that the boats could be used for traveling over water while the carts could be used for traveling over land. By using these conveyances, gentlemen could rest their feet while common people could rest their shoulders and backs. And so, why did the people give over their resources in order to produce boats and carts without considering it a burden or an imposition? Because they knew they would get something in return that benefited them. Now if musical instruments produced a similar return that benefited the people, then I would not dare to condemn them.

"However, the present use of musical instruments imposes three hardships upon the people. Because of the expenditures involved in producing such instruments, those who are hungry are unable to get food, those who are cold are unable to obtain clothing, and those who toil are not afforded a chance to rest. These are the three greatest hardships upon the people. But what if we play the great bells, strike up the drums, sound the zithers, blow the pipes, and dance with

shields and battle axes? Will this enable the people to procure food or clothing? I believe that such performances will not produce such results. But let us set aside such concerns for the moment. For, now, great states attack lesser states and great families assault lesser families, the strong rob the weak, the many do violence to the few, the clever deceive the simple, those of noble rank act arrogantly toward those of humble rank, and rebels and bandits flourish and cannot be stopped. But what if we play the great bells, strike up the drums, sound the zithers, blow the pipes, and dance with shields and battle axes? Will this bring order to the chaos that presently reigns in the world? I believe that such performances will not produce such results."

This is why our teacher Mozi says, "If we look to see whether heavily taxing the people to produce the sounds of great bells, drums, zithers, and pipes promotes the benefit of the people of the world and eliminates what is harmful to them, we see that it offers no such help."

This is why our teacher Mozi says, "Musical performances are wrong!"

Our teacher Mozi says, "These days, when kings, dukes, and great men sit up in their raised halls and broad pavilions and look down upon the great bells, the bells look like nothing more than inverted cauldrons. If there is no one to strike the great bells, how could they take delight in them? The bells must be struck in order to be enjoyed. But they cannot employ the very old or the very young to strike the bells. For the ears and eyes of such people are not sharp and clear, their limbs are not nimble and strong, the sounds they produce are not harmonious, and they cannot follow the complicated turns in the score. And so, kings, dukes, and great men must employ people in their prime, for their ears and eyes are sharp and clear, their limbs are nimble and strong, the sounds they produce are harmonious, and they can follow the complicated turns in the performance. If they employ men to make music, then these men must abandon their work of plowing, planting, and cultivation. If they employ women to make music, then these women must abandon their work of spinning, weaving, and sewing. These days, when kings, dukes, and great men put on musical performances, they divert such vast resources that could be used to produce food and clothing for the people."

This is why our teacher Mozi says, "Musical performances are wrong!"

Our teacher Mozi says, "Now let us suppose that the great bells, drums, zithers, and lutes have all been properly prepared. What pleasure would kings, dukes, and great men find in reverently listening to them all by themselves? Their enjoyment must come from listening to them in the company of common folk or gentlemen. But if they listen in the company of gentlemen, then those gentlemen must neglect the business of governing. And if they listen in the company of common folk, then those folk must abandon their proper work. These days, when kings, dukes, and

great men put on musical performances, they divert such vast resources that could be used to produce food and clothing for the people.”

This is why our teacher Mozi says, “Musical performances are wrong!”

Our teacher Mozi says, “In ancient times, Duke Kang of Qi⁸⁰ found excitement and delight in the performance of the Dance of Wan.⁸¹ The performers of the dance were not permitted to wear coarse and simple clothing nor could they eat plain or common food because it was said that ‘if their food and drink is not fine, their faces and complexion will be unworthy to look at. If their clothing is not fine, their figures and movements will be unworthy of view.’ And so, their food had to be only the finest grains and meats and their clothing had to be only embroidered silk. They never worked to produce their own food and clothing but were always supported by the work of others.”

This is why our teacher Mozi says, “These days, when kings, dukes, and great men put on musical performances, they divert such vast resources that could be used to produce food and clothing for the people.”

This is why our teacher Mozi says, “Musical performances are wrong!”

Our teacher Mozi says, “Now human beings certainly are different from the various kinds of birds, beasts, and bugs that one can find in the world today. The various birds, beasts, and bugs rely upon their feathers and fur for their clothing, their hoofs and claws for their leggings and shoes, and grass and water for their food and drink. And so even if the males do not plow and cultivate the land and even if the females do not spin and weave, these creatures are still assured of having food and clothing. Human beings differ in this respect. Those who labor upon the land survive, while those who do not, perish. If gentlemen do not exert themselves in pursuing their duties at court, then the laws and administration will fall into chaos. If common folk do not exert themselves in carrying out their work, there will not be enough material goods.

“Now if men of rank and gentlemen in the world today believe that what I say is not true, let us try enumerating the allotted tasks that are pursued throughout the world in order to see the harm done by musical performances.

“Kings, dukes, and high officials begin their work at court early in the day and retire late in the evening, listening to litigation and carrying out the administration of government—these are their allotted tasks. Men of rank and gentlemen exhaust the strength of their limbs and exert every ounce of their wisdom attending to their official duties at court and collecting taxes and levies out in the passes, markets, mountains, forests, lakes, and rivers in order to fill the state’s granaries and treasuries—these are their allotted tasks. Farmers go out to the fields at dawn and

80. Ruler of the state of Qi. His reign dates are 404–379 BCE.

81. A choreographed performance with musical accompaniment. For a description, see Waley, *Book of Songs*, 338–40.

return at dusk, plowing, planting, cultivating, and reaping great harvests of grain and other produce—these are their allotted tasks. Women rise at dawn and retire in the evening, spinning and weaving to produce hemp, silk, linen, and other types of cloth—these are their allotted tasks.

“Now if those who serve as kings, dukes, and high officials delight in musical performances and spend their time listening to them, they will not be able to begin their work at court early in the day and retire late in the evening, listening to litigation and carrying out the administration of government. As a result, the state will fall into chaos and the altar of grain will be in jeopardy. If men of rank and gentlemen delight in musical performances and spend their time listening to them, they will not be able to exhaust the strength of their limbs and exert every ounce of their wisdom attending to their official duties at court and collecting taxes and levies out in the passes, markets, mountains, forests, lakes, and rivers in order to fill the state’s granaries and treasuries. As a result, the granaries and treasuries will not be full. If farmers delight in musical performances and spend their time listening to them, they will not be able to go out to the fields at dawn and return at dusk, plowing, planting, cultivating, and reaping great harvests of grain and other produce. As a result, the supply of food will be insufficient. If women delight in musical performances and spend their time listening to them, they will not be able to rise at dawn and retire in the evening, spinning and weaving to produce hemp, silk, linen, and other types of cloth. As a result, there will not be an adequate supply of cloth. What is the cause of great men abandoning the administration of the government and the common people neglecting their work? It is music!”

This is why our teacher Mozi says, “Musical performances are wrong!” Our teacher Mozi says, “How do I know that this is so? Among the works of the former kings, there is the following in Tang’s *Official Punishments*:⁸²

To allow constant dancing in one’s hall is called *Shamen’s Fancy*. If gentlemen commit this offense, they are to be fined two bolts of silk. If it is a commoner, the fine is two hundred measures of yellow thread.⁸³

The text goes on to say,

Alas! The dancing goes on and on! The sound of the pipes is loud and clear! The Lord on High no longer supports him. He will lose the nine realms.⁸⁴ The Lord

82. There is no such section in the present *History* but in the chapter called “Instructions of Yin,” there is a passage that shares much of the language and general thrust of Mozi’s quotation. See Legge, *The Shoo King*, 196.

83. The text of the last line is garbled and the translation is tentative.

84. “He” refers to the tyrant Jie. The point of the passage is that Jie’s personal debauchery testifies to his low character, which makes him offensive to Heaven and unfit to rule. Thus, it justifies sage Tang’s attack on him. See *Important Figures* in the appendices.

on High no longer accommodates him and will send down a hundred calamities.
His family will be ruined and annihilated.

“If we look into why he lost the nine realms, we see it is simply because he promoted musical performances. The *Wu Guan*⁸⁵ says,

Qi⁸⁶ then abandoned himself to lust and music; he drank and ate in the wilds.
Qiang! Qiang! The flutes and chimes sounded vigorously! He sank, besotted
with wine! He ate gluttonously in the wilds! The Dance of Wan was elegant and
fine and its performance was heard in Heaven. But Heaven did not approve.

“And so, above, Heaven and the ghosts did not approve and, below, the people were not benefited.”

This is why our teacher Mozi says, “If men of rank and the gentlemen of the world really want to promote what is beneficial to the world and eliminate what is harmful to it, then they will prohibit and put an end to this thing called music!”

Chapter Thirty-Five: A Condemnation of Fatalism

Our teacher Mozi says, “The kings, dukes, and great officials who now rule the various states all want their states to be wealthy, their populations great, and their administrations orderly, and yet instead of wealth they get poverty, instead of great populations they get meager ones, and instead of order they get chaos. In this way they fundamentally miss what they desire and get what they dislike.”⁸⁷

What is the reason for this?

Our teacher Mozi says, “This is because, among the people, there are so many who maintain a belief in fatalism. Those who believe in fatalism say, ‘If the state is fated to be rich, then it will be rich; if it is fated to be poor, then it will be poor. If the state is fated to have a large population, then the population will be large; if it is fated to have a meager population, then the population will be meager. If the state is fated to be well-ordered, then it will be well-ordered; if it is fated to be in chaos, then it will be in chaos. If one is fated to live a long time, then one will live a long time; if one is fated to die young, then one will die young. If something is fated to occur, then no matter how hard one tries to change this, what good will it do?’ Above they use this doctrine to persuade the kings, dukes, and great officials, and

85. An unknown text.

86. Qi is the son of Yu, founder of the Xia dynasty. He succeeded his father to the throne. The point of the passage is to illustrate his bad moral character, which made him offensive to Heaven and unfit to rule.

87. These same lines occur as the opening of *Mozi* chapter 8, “Honoring the Worthy” (above).

below they deploy it to interfere with the work of the people. Therefore, those who maintain a belief in fatalism are not benevolent and their claims must be carefully examined.”

Since this is the case, how are we to go about carefully examining their claims?

Our teacher Mozi says, “When one advances claims, one must first establish a standard of assessment. To make claims in the absence of such a standard is like trying to establish on the surface of a spinning potter’s wheel where the sun will rise and set.⁸⁸ Without a fixed standard, one cannot clearly ascertain what is right and wrong or what is beneficial and harmful. And so, in assessing claims, one must use the three gauges.”⁸⁹

What are the “three gauges?”

Our teacher Mozi says, “The gauges of precedent, evidence, and application.”

How does one assess a claim’s precedents?

Our teacher Mozi says, “One looks up for precedents among the affairs and actions of the ancient sage-kings.”

How does one assess a claim’s evidence?

Our teacher Mozi says, “One looks down to examine evidence of what the people have heard and seen.”

How does one assess a claim’s application?

Our teacher Mozi says, “One implements it as state policy and sees whether or not it produces benefit for the state, families, and people. These are what are called the three gauges for assessing claims.” . . .

Chapter Thirty-Nine: Against Confucianism

1. Confucians say, “In loving kin there are different degrees; in honoring the worthy there are different grades.” This describes differences based on nearness or distance

88. This describes the practice of determining how far from true east and west the sun would rise and set. It consisted of aligning a set of gnomons (see the following note) with the rising and setting sun and using these to triangulate true east and west. It would be impossible to carry out this procedure on the surface of a spinning potter’s wheel, just as it would be impossible to use such a wheel as a sundial. For a description and discussion of this procedure and other uses of such gnomons, see A. C. Graham, *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics and Science* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1978), 370–71, and Joseph Needham, *Mathematics and the Sciences of the Heavens and the Earth*, vol. 3 of Needham, ed., *Science and Civilisation in China* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 284–302.

89. The word I have translated as “gauge” (biǎo 表) is a gnomon used to “gauge” the direction and movement of the sun’s shadow. For an illustration, see the Title Support Page for this volume at www.hackettpublishing.com/rccp-support.

and who is honored or humble. Their rituals say that “One mourns one’s father and mother for three years.”⁹⁰ One mourns one’s wife and eldest son for three years. One mourns for uncles, brothers, and other sons for one year and mourns other close relatives for five months.” Now, the length of mourning is supposed to reflect whether the deceased is near or distant, and so near relatives should be mourned for longer periods and more distant relatives for shorter periods. But [their rituals prescribe that one’s] wife, eldest son, and father are treated as equally [near]. The length of mourning is supposed to reflect whether the deceased is honored or humble, but [their rituals prescribe that] one’s wife, eldest son, and father are treated as equally [honorable], while one’s uncles and brothers are treated as humbly as the other sons. What is more perverse than this!

When the parent of a Confucian dies, he lays out their corpse without dressing it for burial, climbs up on the roof and looks down into the well, pokes into rat holes, and inspects every wash basin searching for the person. Now, if the person really still exists, then this behavior is the height of stupidity. If the person really is gone and they insist on looking for them, this is the height of hypocrisy!

2. Confucians strongly uphold the existence of fate and explain this belief by saying, “Long life or early death, poverty or wealth, safety or danger, order or disorder surely are fated by Heaven; one cannot alter them one way or another. Failure or success, reward or punishment, good or bad fortune are determined; neither human knowledge nor effort is capable of doing anything about this.” If the various officials believe this, they will be remiss in performing their assigned duties; if the common people believe this, they will be remiss in carrying out their particular work. If government is not well-ordered, there will be chaos; if farming is done in a lax manner, there will be poverty. [Working to prevent] poverty and disorder are the root of [good] governance and yet Confucians take [the existence of fate] to be a central teaching of their Way. This is a great harm to the people of the world.⁹¹

3. Moreover, [Confucians] deploy ornately embellished rituals and music in order to seduce people, and prolonged mourning and hypocritical grief in order to deceive their parents. They work to establish [their doctrine of] fate, ignore poverty [in the state], and reside in arrogance and haughtiness. They act against what is most fundamental, abandon work, and rest in indolence and pride. They show

90. See *Analects* 17.21 (in chapter 1 of this volume), and the second note to that passage.

91. For Confucian discussions of fate, see *Analects* 6.10, 12.5, 14.36, and 20.3 (in chapter 1 of this volume), and *Mengzi* 7A1, 7A2, and 7A3 (in chapter 4 of this volume).

voracious desire for food and drink but are lazy when it comes to doing their work. They often suffer from hunger and cold and are in danger of freezing or starving [to death] but lack the ability to avoid these. This is how they behave: they stuff their cheeks like a hamster, glare like a billy goat, and rear up like a wild boar. When a gentleman laughs at them, they reply, "How could such a useless individual understand the good Confucian?" In summer, they beg for grain; when the crops have been harvested, they follow after grand funerals with all their sons and grandsons tagging along behind them, eating and drinking their fill. If they manage to supervise only a few funerals, they will get all that they need. They rely upon the treasure of other families to carry out their business and depend upon the fields of other men to assure their honor. When a rich person holds a funeral, they are delighted and gleefully proclaim, "This is an opportunity for clothing and food!"

5. Confucians say, "Gentlemen must follow the ancient style of dress and speech in order to be humane." I reply, "The so-called ancient style of dress and speech was once new, and so when ancient people used such speech and wore such clothes, they must not have been gentlemen. This being the case, must one wear clothes that are not the clothes of a gentlemen and use speech that is not the speech of a gentlemen in order to be humane?"

6. Confucians also say, "Gentlemen follow [the old] and do not innovate."⁹² I reply, "In ancient times, Yi created the bow, Yu invented armor, Xi Zhong invented chariots, artisan Qiu invented boats; this being the case, are the tanners, armorers, and carpenters of today all cultivated people but Yi, Yu, Xi Zhong, and artisan Qiu all petty people? Moreover, what Confucians follow must have been invented by someone. This being the case, is what they follow in every respect the Way of a petty person?"

7. Confucians also say, "In victory, gentlemen do not pursue the fleeing [enemy] and do not shoot from behind cover. When the enemy scatters in retreat they help by pushing their carts along." I reply, "If all involved are humane people, then without saying a word they will get along. Humane people instruct one another in what to accept and what to reject, what is right and what is wrong. Those who lack a good reason follow those who have one; those who do not know follow those who do. If one has nothing more to say, one must submit; if one sees what is good, one must accept it. Why would one stand in opposition? But if two violent forces are locked in struggle, even if the victorious side desires not to pursue the fleeing [enemy] or shoot from behind cover, and when their enemy scatters in retreat they

92. Cf. *Analec*s 7.1 and 9.3 (in chapter 1 of this volume).

help by pushing their carts along, though they devote themselves completely to these tasks, still, they will never become gentlemen. Suppose there is a violent and cruel state and a sage seeks to eliminate the harm it does from the world by leading an army on a punitive expedition. If in victory he accepts and follows the Confucian method and commands his troops not to pursue the fleeing [enemy] or shoot from behind cover, and when their enemy scatters in retreat they help by pushing their carts along, then these violent and rebellious men will escape with their lives and the harm to the world will not be eliminated. This is to inflict cruelty upon all mothers and fathers and bring profound ruin to the world. Nothing is more contrary to right than this!"

8. Confucians also say, "Gentlemen are like bells; they make a sound when struck; if not struck, they do not make a sound." I reply, "Humane people are thoroughly conscientious in service to their superiors and filial in service to their parents. If their superiors work for the good, they praise them; if their superiors make a mistake, they admonish them. This is the Way to serve another as minister. Now, if they 'make a sound when struck but do not make a sound if not struck' then they conceal knowledge and withhold effort, remain silent and wait to be asked before responding. Even though they have something of great benefit to their ruler or parents, they will not mention it unless asked. If some enemy from abroad was about to create chaos [within the state] or some insurrection was afoot [within], and before these were launched no one but themselves had knowledge of these things, then even though their ruler and parents all were standing before them, they would not mention any of this unless asked. This is to be a traitor of epic proportions. If this is how they serve as ministers, they are not conscientious; if this is how they serve their parents, they are not filial; if this is how they serve their elder brothers, they are not respectful; if this is how they treat others, they are neither upright nor good."

9. Every method and teaching concerned with humaneness and right should be used on a grand scale to bring good order to the people and on a small scale to carry out the duties of one's office. Such things should be applied afar to confer broad benefit and nearby to cultivate oneself. One should not dwell in what is contrary to the right; one should not implement what contradicts good order. One should work directly and indirectly at encouraging the benefit of all-under-Heaven and cease doing anything that does not bring benefit. This is the Way of the gentleman. What I have heard of the conduct of [this fellow] Kong Qiu⁹³ is fundamentally and diametrically opposed to this.

93. Referring to Kongzi by his full name instead of as "Master Kong" (Kongzi) is an intentional act of disrespect; hence the addition of "this fellow" in the English translation.

14. Once [this fellow] Kong Qiu was in heightened straights between Cai and Chen,⁹⁴ having nothing to eat but soup made from wild plants, without even any rice to mix with it. After ten days, Zilu offered him some cooked pork; Kong Qiu did not ask where the meat came from and simply ate it. [Zilu] then commandeered someone's clothing and bartered it for some wine. Kong Qiu did not ask where the wine came from and simply drank it. And yet, when Duke Ai invited Kongzi to join him, he would not sit unless the mat was straight and would not eat unless his meat was cut properly.⁹⁵ Zilu approached him and asked, "Why did you behave in a contrary way when in Chen and Cai?" [This fellow] Kong replied, "Come! I will explain it to you. Earlier, you and I were trying however we could to stay alive; now, we are trying however we can to act righteously." When hunger-stricken, he did not decline taking whatever came his way in order to maintain his life; when fully fed, he acted hypocritically in order to aggrandize himself. What foulness, perversity, deceit, and hypocrisy is there greater than this!

94. Cf. *Analects* 15.2 (in chapter 1 of this volume).

95. Cf. *Analects* 10.12 (in chapter 1 of this volume) and *Analects* 10.8 (not in this volume).