CHINESE RELIGION

AN ANTHOLOGY OF SOURCES

EDITED BY

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New York Oxford
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
1995

Oxford University Press

Oxford New York
Athens Auckland Bangkok Bombay
Calcutta Capetown Dar es Salaam Delhi
Florence Hong Kong Istanbul Karachi
Kuala Lumpur Madras Madrid Melbourne
Mexico City Nairobi Paris Singapore
Taipei Tokyo Toronto

and associated companies in
Berlin Ibadan

Published by Oxford University Press, Inc.
198 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10016-4314
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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Chinese religion : an anthology of sources /
edited by Deborah Sommer.
p. cm. Translated from Chinese
ISBN 0-19-508894-8.—ISBN 0-19-508895-6 (pbk.)
1. China—Religion—History—Sources.
2. Philosophy, Chinese—History—Sources.
BL1802.C5477 1995
299'.51—dc20 94-7557
Pages xix–xxv are an extension of the copyright page.

6 8 9 7 5

Printed in the United States of America
on acid-free paper

The Writings of Han Yü

Han Yü (768–824) is one of the most noted literary figures in all of Chinese history, and his prose and verse styles influenced the direction of Chinese literature. A celebrated writer even in his own day, he served in various government offices and led a successful if somewhat turbulent political career. Government appointments were the goal of most educated men, who might become career officials only after passing a series of civil service examinations on literary, historical, and political questions. Han Yü passed the highest levels of the examination system in his mid twenties and held various positions in the central and provincial government for the remainder of his life.

Han Yü's writings on what might in the West be considered religious themes reveal the complexity of the interaction of the varied spiritual traditions in China, and several of his essays on such topics are presented here. He is noted particularly for his efforts to reinvigorate the native Chinese classical tradition and composed the essay "An Inquiry on the Way" *(Yüan tao),* not included here, that elevates what he calls the Way of Confucius at the expense of the Way of the Buddhists and Taoists. Confucius's way values humanity and righteousness, principles only destroyed by Lao Tzu; Taoists and Buddhists, he asserts, seek only escape from social obligations and human relationships, while the teachings of the ancient kings in the *Odes, History,* and *Changes,* in contrast, created social norms that brought prosperity and refined culture to all people.

Han Yü's "Memorial on the Bone of Han Yü's Buddha" of 819 reveals that his distaste for Buddhism is informed not necessarily by a knowledge of the Four Noble Truths but by a cultic folk practice that itself bears no resemblance to the teachings of Siddhārtha Gautama: the worship of a relic of the Buddha. Addressing himself directly to the ruler, Hsien-tsung (reign 805–819), Han Yü contrasts the long-lived regimes of the ancient Chinese sage kings, who did not worship the Buddha, with the brief reigns of Han and later rulers who did; his

arguments also appeal to a xenophobic distaste of things foreign. Han Yü is moreover concerned that the people will be encouraged by the display of the relic to immolate themselves and present offerings of their own flesh as homage. This practice is probably derived from the self-immolations of the bodhisattva Medicine King in chapter 23 of the *Lotus Sutra,* which claims that those who make offerings of toes and fingers can attain complete and perfect enlightenment. Han Yü asserts that the relic of the Buddha is not a blessing but an article of death; following ancient precedent, it should be treated with the exorcistic deprecations of shamans to drive away its baneful influences. The emperor was not convinced by these arguments, however, and Han Yü escaped execution only by virtue of his political connections.

"The Girl of Mt. Hua," very different in tone, is a rhapsodic praise of a young Taoist woman that borders on the erotic. How should one reconcile Han Yü's critiques of Lao Tzu with his implicit praise of this woman's erudite exposition of the Tao? Her lectures on spiritual truths have emptied rival halls of Buddhist monks and Taoist priests alike, and her ability to turn people back toward native traditions partially coincides with Han Yü's own agenda. The woman has attracted the attentions of the heavenly court itself, and the deliberately ambiguous imagery surrounding the Jade Countenance suggests both a celestial sovereign and his earthly representative. Suggesting that the young men infatuated with her have serious competition from higher powers, Han Yü perhaps intends his descriptions of credulous followers as a satire on unseemly motivated beliefs, but one suspects he protests too much.

As a government official, Han Yü was required to perform the religious functions appropriate to a regional representative in the service of the Son of Heaven, a tradition that had continued from ancient times when enfeoffed lords were responsible for the mountains, rivers, and other natural forces within their domain. The collected writings of many Chinese thinkers include prayers and invocations to various spirits, and "Against the God of the Wind" and "Proclamation to the Crocodile" are works of this type. The adversarial tone of the "God of the Wind" would not have been found in the *Tso chuan,* for example, which understood imbalances in the natural world as cause for human reflection. By T'ang times, however, the imperial court has apparently assumed for itself many of the prerogatives once attributed only to the spirit world, and lesser spirits are becoming viewed as forces less powerful than the emperor himself. By at least late Ch'ing (1644–1911) times this tendency became very clear, and

plaques given to a temple and its resident spirit by the imperial court employ the language of a superior (the emperor) granting a boon to an inferior (the spirit). Han Yü suggests that if the God of Wind does not cooperate, he will be punished by the Son of Heaven.

It has been suggested that the "Proclamation to the Crocodile" is written as a satire, and it is possible that the admonitions to reptiles are actually directed at corrupt officials or criminals. Yet it is entirely likely that the invocation was meant to be taken seriously; sacrifices of drowned animals were recorded in the *Rites of Chou,* and Han Yü draws upon the precedent of legendary culture heroes such as Yü (third millennium B.C.E.), who drained swamps and dug canals to create an ordered human realm out of the chaos and wilderness of nature. As populations expanded in the T'ang into territories long unoccupied, government officials responsible for land reclamation perceived themselves as continuing Yü's work.

"Memorial on the Bone of Buddha"

I humbly submit that Buddhism is but one of the religious systems obtaining among the barbarian tribes, that only during the later Han dynasty did it filter into the Middle Kingdom, and that it never existed in the golden age of the past.

In remote times Huang-ti ruled for a hundred years, and lived to the age of a hundred and ten; Shao Hao ruled for eighty years and lived to the age of a hundred; Chuan Hsü ruled for seventy-nine years and lived to the age of ninety-eight; Emperor Ku ruled for seventy years to the age of a hundred and five; Emperor Yao for ninety-eight years to the age of a hundred and eighteen; while both emperors Shun and Yü lived to be a hundred. During this time the empire was in a state of perfect equilibrium and the people lived to ripe old age in peace and prosperity; but as yet the Middle Kingdom did not know of Buddha. After this T'ang of Yin lived to be a hundred. His grandson T'ai Mou ruled for seventy-five years, and Wu Ting for fifty-nine years; and though the histories do not tell us to what age they lived, it cannot in either case be reckoned at less than a hundred. In the Chou dynasty Wen Wang lived to be ninety-seven, and Wu Wang to be ninety-three, whilst Mu Wang was on the throne for a hundred years. As Buddhism had still not penetrated to the Middle Kingdom, this cannot be attributed to the worship of him.

It was not until the reign of Ming-ti of Han that Buddhism first appeared. Ming-ti's reign lasted no longer than eighteen years, and after him disturbance followed upon disturbance, and reigns were all short. From the time of the five dynasties, Sung, Ch'i, Liang, Ch'en and Yüan Wei onwards, as the worship of Buddha slowly increased, dynasties became more short-lived. Wu-ti of Liang alone reigned as long as forty-eight years. During his reign he three times consecrated his life to Buddha, made no animal sacrifices in his ancestral temple, and ate but one meal a day of vegetables and fruit. Yet in the end he was driven out by the rebel Hou Ching and died of starvation in T'ai-ch'eng, and his state was immediately destroyed. By worshipping Buddha he looked for prosperity but found only disaster, a sufficient proof that Buddha is not worthy of worship.

When Kao-tsu succeeded the fallen house of Sui, he determined to eradicate Buddhism. But the ministers of the time were lacking in foresight and ability, they had no real understanding of the way of the ancient kings, nor of the things that are right both for then and now. Thus they were unable to assist the wise resolution of their ruler and save their country from this plague. To my constant regret the attempt stopped short. But you, your majesty, are possessed of a skill in the arts of peace and war, of wisdom and courage the like of which has not been seen for several thousand years. When you first ascended the throne you prohibited recruitment of Buddhist monks and Taoist priests and the foundation of new temples and monasteries; and I firmly believed that the intentions of Kao-tsu would be carried out by your hand, or if this were still impossible, that at least their religions would not be allowed to spread and flourish.

And now, your majesty, I hear that you have ordered all Buddhist monks to escort a bone of the Buddha from Feng-hsiang and that a pavilion be erected from which you will in person watch its entrance into the Imperial Palace. You have further ordered every Buddhist temple to receive this object with due homage. Stupid as I am, I feel convinced that it is not out of regard for Buddha that you, your majesty, are praying for blessings by doing him this honour; but that you are organising this absurd pantomime for the benefit of the people of the capital and for their gratification in this year of plenty and happiness. For a mind so enlightened as your majesty's could never believe such nonsense. The minds of the common people however are as easy to becloud as they are difficult to enlighten. If they see your majesty acting in this way, they will think that you are wholeheartedly worshipping the Buddha, and will say: "His majesty is a great sage, and even he worships the Buddha

with all his heart. Who are we that we should any of us grudge our lives in his service?" They will cauterize the crowns of their heads, burn off their fingers, and in bands of tens or hundreds cast off their clothing and scatter their money and from daylight to darkness follow one another in the cold fear of being too late. Young and old in one mad rush will forsake their trades and callings and, unless you issue some prohibition, will flock round the temples, hacking their arms and mutilating their bodies to do him homage. And the laughter that such unseemly and degenerate behaviour will everywhere provoke will be no light matter.

The Buddha was born a barbarian; he was unacquainted with the language of the Middle Kingdom, and his dress was of a different cut. His tongue did not speak nor was his body clothed in the manner prescribed by the kings of old; he knew nothing of the duty of minister to prince or the relationship of son to father. Were he still alive today, were he to come to court at the bidding of his country, your majesty would give him no greater reception than an interview in the Strangers' Hall, a ceremonial banquet, and the gift of a suit of clothes, after which you would have him sent under guard to the frontier to prevent him from misleading your people. There is then all the less reason now that he has been dead so long for allowing this decayed and rotten bone, this filthy and disgusting relic to enter the Forbidden Palace. "I stand in awe of supernatural beings," said Confucius, "but keep them at a distance." And the feudal lords of olden times when making a visit of condolence even within their own state would still not approach without sending a shaman to precede them and drive away all evil influences with a branch of peach-wood. But now and for no given reason your majesty proposes to view in person the reception of this decayed and disgusting object without even sending ahead the shaman with his peach-wood wand; and to my shame and indignation none of your ministers says that this is wrong, none of your censors has exposed the error.

I beg that this bone be handed over to the authorities to throw into water or fire, that Buddhism be destroyed root and branch for ever, that the doubts of your people be settled once and for all and their descendants saved from heresy. For if you make it known to your people that the actions of the true sage surpass ten thousand times ten thousand those of ordinary men, with what wondering joy will you be acclaimed! And if the Buddha should indeed possess the power to bring down evil, let all the bane and punishment fall upon my head, and as heaven is my witness I shall not complain.

In the fullness of my emotion I humbly present this memorial for your attention.

"The Girl of Mt. Hua"

In streets east, streets west, they
expound the Buddhist canon,
clanging bells, sounding conches, till the
din invades the palace;
"sin," "blessing," wildly inflated, give
force to threats and deceptions;
throngs of listeners elbow and shove as
though through duckweed seas.
Yellow-robed Taoist priests preach their
sermons too,
but beneath their lecterns, ranks grow
thinner than stars in the flush
of dawn.
The girl of Mount Hua, child of a Taoist
home,
longed to expel the foreign faith, win
men back to the Immortals;
she washed off her powder, wiped her
face, put on cap and shawl.
With white throat, crimson cheeks, long
eyebrows of gray,
she came at last to ascend the chair,
unfolding the secrets of Truth.
For anyone else the Taoist halls would
hardly have opened their doors;
I do not know who first whispered the
word abroad,
but all at once the very earth rocked
with the roar of thunder.
Buddhist temples were swept clean, no
trace of a believer.

while elegant teams jammed the lanes
and ladies' coaches piled up;
Taoist halls were packed with people,
many sat outside;
for latecomers there was no room, no
way to get within hearing.
Hairpins, bracelets, girdle stones were
doffed, undone, snatched off,
till the heaped-up gold, the mounds of
jade glinted and glowed in the
sunlight.
Eminent eunuchs from the heavenly
court came with a summons to
audience;
ladies of the six palaces longed to see
the Master's face.
The Jade Countenance nodded approval,
granting her return;
dragon-drawn, mounting a crane, she
came through blue-dark skies.
These youths of the great families—what
do they know of the Tao,
milling about her a hundred deep,
shifting from foot to foot?
Beyond cloud-barred windows, in misty
towers, who knows what
happens there
where kingfisher curtains hang tier on
tier and golden screens are
deep?
The immortal's ladder is hard to climb,
your bonds with this world
weighty;
vainly you call on the bluebird to deliver
your passionate pleas!

"Against the God of the Wind"

Of this drought, who is the cause? I know the author: it is the God of the Wind who is to blame. The hills made the clouds to rise, the marshes sent up their vapour. The thunder whipped the chariot, the lightning shook the banner. The rain was promising, ready to fall; but the God of the Wind was angry, and the clouds could not stay still. The Sun Crow in his kindness had pity upon the people. He dimmed his radiance, and sent not his fiery spirit to battle. But you, God of the Wind, instead what did you do?

For you what else could we have done? We looked for a suitable time, we made ready the materials for the sacrifice. The lamb was full fat, the wine was full sweet. There was food enough for repletion, drink enough for drunkenness. The God of the Wind's anger, what brought it about? The clouds were banked thick, you blew and thinned them. The vapour was ready to condense, you blew and scattered it. You melted the vapour so that it could not transform, you froze the clouds so that they could not shed their rain.

You, God of the Wind, should you wish to escape this crime, what further have you to say? Heaven above, which sees all things, has records, has laws. I now present my charge and for this crime who shall pay? The sentence of Heaven will fall upon you; when it does there can be no repentance; and God of the Wind, even if you die, what man will mourn for you?

"Proclamation to the Crocodile"

On the twenty-fourth day of the fourth month of the fourteenth year of Yüan-ho, Han Yü, Governor of Ch'ao-chou, had his officer Ch'in Chi take a sheep and a pig and throw them into the deep waters of Wu creek as food for the crocodile. He then addressed it as follows:

When in ancient times the former kings possessed the land, they set fire to the mountains and the swamp, and with nets, ropes, fish-spears and knives expelled the reptiles and snakes and evil creatures that did harm to the people, and drove them out beyond the four seas. When there came later kings of lesser power who could not hold so wide an empire, even the land between the Chiang and the Han they wholly abandoned and gave up to the Man and the Yi, to Ch'u and to Yüeh: let alone Ch'ao which lies between the five peaks and the sea, some ten thousand li from the capital. Here it was that the crocodiles lurked and bred, and it was truly

their rightful place. But now a Son of Heaven has succeeded to the throne of T'ang, who is godlike in his wisdom, merciful in peace and fierce in war. All between the four seas and within the six directions is his to hold and to care for, still more the land trod by the footsteps of Yü and near to Yangchou, administered by governors and prefects, whose soil pays tribute and taxes to supply the sacrifices to Heaven and to Earth, to the ancestral altars and to all the deities. The crocodiles and the governor cannot together share this ground.

The governor has received the command of the Son of Heaven to protect this ground and take charge of its people; but you, crocodile, goggle-eyed, are not content with the deep waters of the creek, but seize your advantage to devour the people and their stock, the bears and boars, stags and deer, to fatten your body and multiply your sons and grandsons. You join issue with the governor and contend with him for the mastery. The governor, though weak and feeble, will not endure to bow his head and humble his heart before a crocodile, nor will he look on timorously and be put to shame before his officers and his people by leading unworthily a borrowed existence in this place. But having received the command of the Son of Heaven to come here as an officer, he cannot but dispute with you, crocodile: and if you have understanding, do you hearken to the governor's words.

To the south of the province of Ch'ao lies the great sea, and in it there is room for creatures as large as the whale or roc, as small as the shrimp or crab, all to find homes in which to live and feed. Crocodile, if you set out in the morning, by the evening you would be there. Now, crocodile, I will make an agreement with you. Within full three days, you will take your ugly brood and remove southwards to the sea, and so give way before the appointed officer of the Son of Heaven. If within three days you cannot, I will go to five days: if within five days you cannot, I will go to seven. If within seven days you cannot, this shall mean either that finally you have refused to remove, and that though I be governor you will not hear and obey my words; or else that you are stupid and without intellect, and that even when a governor speaks you do not hear and understand.

Now those who defy the appointed officers of the Son of Heaven, who do not listen to their words and refuse to make way before them, who from stupidity and lack of intellect do harm to the people and to other creatures, all shall be put to death. The governor will then choose skilful officers and men, who shall take strong bows and poisoned arrows and conclude matters with you, crocodile, nor stop until they have slain you utterly. Do not leave repentance until too late.

The Writings of Chu Hsi

One of the most important thinkers in Chinese history is Chu Hsi (Zhu Xi; 1130–1200), whose influence extended as far as Korea and Japan. In modern Confucian temples his spirit tablet (a plaque bearing the deceased's name that serves as a resting place for the spirit invoked during sacrifices) stands in the central shrine of the temple along with those of Confucius, Mencius, and Yen Hui, Confucius's favorite disciple; no other post-Han philosopher is accorded such an honor.

These selections from his writings relate some of his more philosophical ideas as well as his views on religious themes, such as his attitude toward the spirit of Confucius. The entries on the mind, nature, and the feelings; on principle and material force; and on heaven and earth are from the *Complete Works of Chu Hsi (Chu Tzu ch'üan-shu).* Following the original arrangement of the text, the order of the entries illustrates Chu Hsi's priorities as they begin first with the cultivation of the individual and only then move to larger cosmogonic theories. Many of his writings, like those of other thinkers, take the form of question-and-answer discussions with pupils recorded by the student. Entries from the *Complete Works* follow that format.

The selection on the mind, the nature, and the feelings describes what might be called an inner cosmology of the human being. Chu Hsi's synthesis within the self of the Great Ultimate, yin and yang, and human values recalls Chou Tun-i's "Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate," yet Chu Hsi moreover describes the interactions of the mind, the nature, and the feelings within that system. He also gives new emphasis to the idea of principle *(li),* an old idea that had appeared infrequently in the classics; originally referring to the natural patterns and grains in jade or wood, it later was extended to include the patterns and grains of the universe itself. Human nature, for Chu Hsi, is this principle. His theories of human nature and the mind incorporate the notions of

commiseration and humanity from Mencius, the condition before and after the arising of activity from the "Centrality and Equilibrium," and a theory of the mind as master that strongly parallels the ideas of Hsün Tzu. Chu Hsi's conception of the nature as vacuous or empty may also ultimately be derived from Hsün Tzu's conception of the mind, rather than from any Buddhist idea of emptiness, as he was not sympathetic to Buddhist philosophy.

This synthesis, then, draws upon pre-Han values but grounds them in principle, the very stuff of the universe. Chu Hsi further explains the primordial forces of the universe in terms of the interactions of both principle and material force, or vital force *(ch'i)*. Classical scholars of the Chou period, in contrast, had employed analogies from nature to explain human nature, but had not focused on the elemental essences of the natural world for their own sake. Chu Hsi also develops a cosmogony, or notion of the origins of the universe, and a theory of how the first human being was created. This he understands not in terms of a creator deity but in terms of the self-operating circulation and coagulation of such forces as yin and yang and the Five Agents.

On questions concerning the nature of spiritual beings, Chu Hsi emphasizes Confucius's admonition to attend first to human beings and only then to spirits, and to respect spirits, but keep them at a distance. Chu Hsi understands spirits also in terms of the interactions of yin and yang and material force. The clear aspects of material force become the *hun* anima soul and *p'o* corporeal soul, whereas the more turbid aspects become the physical body. At death, material force disintegrates, but only over a long period of time of uncertain duration. During sacrificial offerings, it is this remaining material force *(ch'i)* that allows a resonance between the sacrificer and the spiritual being.

Although his interpretation of spiritual beings might thus sound somewhat scholastic, Chu Hsi himself nevertheless understood some spirits very personally: he offered sacrifices to the spirits of the Confucian sages, as is recorded in his "Sacrificial Report to Confucius on the Completion of the Restorations at the White Deer Hollow Academy" *(Pai-lu-tung ch'eng kao hsien-sheng wen)* of 1180, which is addressed to Confucius, Mencius, and Yen Hui. Confucius had received sacrificial offerings from the imperial court since at least the first century B.C.E., a practice maintained into the Sung and eventually into modern times. Whereas those ceremonies were part of a statewide institutional ritual system, however, Chu Hsi's sacrifices to Confucius reflect a more direct and personal relationship with the sage, and Chu Hsi performed such rites at various milestones in his

academic career, as when he completed the restoration of the White Deer Hollow Academy, where he taught.

Besides sacrifices to Confucius, Chu Hsi also presented offerings to the altars of the land and grain and, on a number of occasions, prayed for both rain and clear weather. He wrote extensively on ritual and devised new standards for household rites. In a draft of a memorial of 1189, he warned the ruler of the dangers of becoming deluded by the occult. Mountebanks throughout history had availed themselves of esoteric practices to create social disorder, he cautions, admonishing the ruler to follow historical precedent and adhere to careful study and inquiry (maxims espoused in the "Centrality and Equilibrium") in his dealings with the spirit world.

A native of Fukien Province, Chu Hsi passed the highest level of civil service examinations at the unusually early age of nineteen. Over the course of his life he intermittently served in a number of official positions, but he declined many posts and held various sinecures at temples and devoted his time to writing and teaching.

The Mind, the Nature, and the Feelings

85. The nature is comparable to the Great Ultimate, and the mind to yin and yang. The Great Ultimate exists only in the yin and yang, and cannot be separated from them. In the final analysis, however, the Great Ultimate is the Great Ultimate and yin and yang are yin and yang. So it is with nature and mind. They are one and yet two, two and yet one, so to speak. Philosopher Han Yü (768–824) described nature as humanity, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and faithfulness and the feelings as pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy. This is an advance over other philosophers on the problem of human nature. As to his division of human nature into three grades (superior, medium, and inferior), he has only explained material force but not nature.

86. Although nature is a vacuity, it consists of concrete principles. Although the mind is a distinct entity, it is vacuous, and therefore embraces all principles. This truth will be apprehended only when people examine it for themselves.

87. Nature consists of principles embraced in the mind, and the mind is where these principles are united.

88. Nature is principle. The mind is its embracement and reservoir, and issues it forth into operation.

89. Some time ago I read statements by Wu-feng (Hu Hung, 1100–1155) in which he spoke of the mind only in contrast to nature, leaving the feelings unaccounted for. Later when I read Heng-ch'ü's (Chang Tsai's) doctrine that "the mind commands man's nature and feelings," I realized that it was a great contribution. Only then did I find a satisfactory account of the feelings. His doctrine agrees with that of Mencius. In the words of Mencius, "the feeling of commiseration is the beginning of humanity." Now humanity is nature, and commiseration is feeling. In this, the mind can be seen through the feelings. He further said, "Humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom are rooted in the mind." In this, the mind is seen through nature. For the mind embraces both nature and the feelings. Nature is substance and feelings are function.

90. Nature is the state before activity begins, the feelings are the state when activity has started, and the mind includes both of these states. For nature is the mind before it is aroused, while feelings are the mind after it is aroused, as is expressed in [Chang Tsai's] saying, "The mind commands man's nature and feelings." Desire emanates from feelings. The mind is comparable to water, nature is comparable to the tranquillity of still water, feeling is comparable to the flow of water, and desire is comparable to its waves. Just as there are good and bad waves, so there are good desires, such as when "I want humanity," and bad desires which rush out like wild and violent waves. When bad desires are substantial, they will destroy the Principle of Heaven, as water bursts a dam and damages everything. When Mencius said that "feelings enable people to do good," he meant that the correct feelings flowing from our nature are originally all good.

91. The mind means master. It is master whether in the state of activity or in the state of tranquillity. It is not true that in the state of tranquillity there is no need of a master and there is a master only when the state becomes one of activity. By master is meant an all-pervading control and command existing in the mind by itself. The mind unites and apprehends nature and the feelings, but it is not united with them as a vague entity without any distinction.

Principle *(Li)* and Material Force *(Ch'i)*

100. In the universe there has never been any material force without principle or principle without material force.

101. *Question:* Which exists first, principle or material force?

Answer: Principle has never been separated from material force. However, principle "exists

before physical form [and is therefore without it]" whereas material force "exists after physical form [and is therefore with it]." Hence when spoken of as being before or after physical form, is there not the difference of priority and posteriority? Principle has no physical form, but material force is coarse and contains impurities.

102. Fundamentally principle and material force cannot be spoken of as prior or posterior. But if we must trace their origin, we are obliged to say that principle is prior. However, principle is not a separate entity. It exists right in material force. Without material force, principle would have nothing to adhere to. As material force, there are the Agents (or Elements) of Metal, Wood, Water, and Fire. As principle, there are humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom.

103. Question about the relation between principle and material force.

Answer: I-ch'uan (Ch'eng I) expressed it very well when he said that principle is one but its manifestations are many. When heaven, earth, and the myriad things are spoken of together, there is only one principle. As applied to man, however, there is in each individual a particular principle.

104. *Question:* What are the evidences that principle is in material force?

Answer: For example, there is order in the complicated interfusion of the yin and the yang and of the Five Agents. Principle is there. If material force does not consolidate and integrate, principle would have nothing to attach itself to.

105. *Question:* May we say that before heaven and earth existed there was first of all principle?

Answer: Before heaven and earth existed, there was after all only principle. As there is this principle, therefore there are heaven and earth. If there were no principle, there would also be no heaven and earth, no man, no things, and, in fact, no containing or sustaining (of things by heaven and earth) to speak of. As there is principle, there is therefore material force to operate everywhere and nourish and develop all things.

Question: Is it principle that nourishes and develops all things?

Answer: As there is this principle, therefore there is this material force operating, nourishing, and developing. Principle itself has neither physical form nor body.

Heaven and Earth

123. In the beginning of the universe there was only material force consisting of yin and yang. This force moved and circulated, turning this way and that. As this movement gained speed, a mass of sediment was compressed (pushed together), and since there is no outlet for this, it consolidated to form the earth in the center of the universe. The clear part of material force formed the sky, the sun, and moon, and the stars and zodiacal spaces. It is only on the outside that the encircling movement perpetually goes on. The earth exists motionless in the center of the system, not at the bottom.

124. In the beginning of the universe, when it was still in a state of undifferentiated chaos, I imagine there were only water and fire. The sediment from water formed the earth. If today we climb the high mountains and look around, we will see ranges of mountains in the shape of waves. This is because the water formed them like this, though we do not know in what period they solidified. The solidification was at first very soft, but in time it became hard.

Question: I imagine it is like the tide rushing upon and making waves in the sand.

Answer: Yes. The most turbid water formed the earth and the purest fire became wind, thunder, lightning, the stars, and the like.

125. *Question:* From the beginning of the universe to this day, it has not yet been ten thousand years. I do not know how things looked before then.

Answer: The past is to be understood in the same way.

Further question: Can the universe be destroyed?

Answer: It is indestructible. But in time man will lose all moral principles and everything will be thrown together in a chaos. Man and things will all die out, and then there will be a new beginning.

Further question: How was the first man created?

Answer: Through the transformation of material force. When the essence of yin and yang and the Five Agents are united, man's physical form is established. This is what the Buddhists call production by transformation. There are many such productions today, such as lice.

126. *Question:* With reference to the mind of Heaven and Earth and the Principle of Heaven and Earth. Principle is moral principle. Is mind the will of a master?

Answer: The mind is the will of a master, it is true, but what is called master is precisely principle itself. It is not true that outside of the mind there is principle, or that outside of principle there is a mind.

127. Heaven and Earth have no other business except to have the mind to produce things. The material force of one origin (the Great Ultimate including principle and material force) revolves and circulates without a moment of rest, doing nothing except creating the myriad things.

Question: Master Ch'eng I said, "Heaven and Earth create and transform without having any mind of their own. The sage has a mind of his own but does not take any [unnatural] action."

Answer: That shows where Heaven and Earth have no mind of their own. It is like this: The four seasons run their course and the various things flourish. When do Heaven and Earth entertain any mind of their own? As to the sage, he only follows principle. What action does he need to take? This is the reason why Ming-tao (Ch'eng Hao) said, "The constant principle of Heaven and Earth is that their mind is in all things and yet they have no mind of their own. The constant principle of the sage is that his feelings are in accord with all creation, and yet he has no feelings of his own." This is extremely well said.

Question: Does having their mind in all things not mean to pervade all things with their mind without any selfishness?

Answer: Heaven and Earth reach all things with this mind. When man receives it, it then becomes the human mind. When things receive it, it becomes the mind of things (in general). And when grass, trees, birds, animals receive it, it becomes the mind of grass, trees, birds, and animals (in particular). All of these are simply the one mind of Heaven and Earth. Thus we must understand in what sense Heaven and Earth have mind and in what sense they have no mind. We cannot be inflexible.

"Sacrificial Report to Confucius on the Completion of the Restorations at the White Deer Hollow Academy"

Here on the eighteenth day of the third month of the seventh year of the Ch'un-hsi era, I present a sacrificial report to Confucius, the Ancient Sage, the Perfected Sage, the King of Refined Culture. In relating some accounts of this place concerning its national and regional significance, I note that the White Deer Hollow Academy is located some fifteen leagues northeast of the city. In the T'ang dynasty, Li Po lived here as a recluse when he sojourned in the Kiangnan region, and eventually a national academy was built to commemorate him. Emperor T'ai-tsung frequently donated books, and for a number of years instruction at the academy flourished. But eventually no one was to be seen studying there, and as time passed the buildings became completely overgrown with weeds. But I thought back to the academy's previous prosperity, and with a number of other scholars received permission to revive instruction at the academy and supervise it. Had I not done so I fear I would have incurred some reproof, and so I decided to restore this place. Now it prospers again and the construction work is com-

plete, and I am about to lead several like-minded colleagues in learned discussions. I have done all this to provide for the transmission of the teachings of the ancient sages and teachers and to respond to the beneficent guidance of Emperor T'ai-tsung. As the drums sound to herald the beginning of school and the pupils take up their satchels, I lead the guests, teachers, and students in the rites of sacrificial oblations to Confucius, Yen Hui, and Mencius, so that you may draw nigh to partake of these offerings.

Draft Memorial of 1189

The *Book of History* says, "Heaven has a manifest way,and its manifold things are clearly manifest" [*T'ai-shih hsia*], and it says, "To those who do good it will send down manifold blessings; to those who do evil, it will send down manifold misfortunes" [*I-hsün*]. So people's misfortunes or blessings are all brought about by themselves. It is neither possible that someone who has committed evil can pray and obtain blessings, nor is it likely that someone who has not committed evil and has preserved what is morally upright will suffer misfortune.

How much more is this true for a sovereign king who has received heaven's mandate and serves as the ruler of the suburban altars, ancestral temples, altars to the land and grain, spirits, and human beings! If he is able to develop his virtue, implement good government, and look after the welfare of the great masses of the people, then need the elimination of disasters and harms depend on exorcism? Need the advent of blessings and prosperity depend on prayer? If he acts contrary to these principles, then he offends heaven, incurs the enmity of human beings, and angers the spirits. Even though he may try to ward off malevolent ghosts and attract good people to serve in his government, he will do so to no avail.

Such it was with the ancient kings when they formulated rites. Everyone from the Son of Heaven down to the common people had constant standards when they "gave thanks to their origins" [*Book of Rites, Chiao t'e-sheng*] and presented offerings to their parents. The sacrificial animals, ritual objects, the times, and the days that the sacrifices were held all had constant standards. The visible realm had its rites and music, the hidden realm had its ghosts and spirits [*Book of Rites, Yüeh chi*], and one principle penetrated everything, for from the very beginning they were without separation.

Now if a rite is performed that is not recorded in the ritual texts, then spirits will not come to partake of it. This would be an instance of "sacrificing to a spirit that does not belong to one" [*Analects* 2.24], and it would be a wanton sacrifice. "Wanton sacrifices bring no blessings" [*Book of Rites, Ch'ü-li*]. This is clearly written in the classics. It is not that these constant standards are purposely established to prohibit wanton sacrifices, but that the principle is a natural one and cannot be altered. If, in a state of unmindfulness, one seems to see some uncanny thing, this is due to one's mind losing its self-governing qualities, and it will thus erroneously give rise to anxiety and doubts. Then shamans, invocators, and wizards will avail themselves of this opportunity to practice their treacherously deceptive bewitching arts. As soon as their arts are put into practice, misfortune will ensue, and there will be no end to it. Both in ages past and in modern times there have been people who, because of this, have incurred extreme chaos and disorder—how can one count just how many?

The lesson is not far to seek. One must do very concentrated study and inquiry to become clear about the principles of human nature and of the mandate; one's mind will thus comprehend things clearly and be without doubts or confusion. What should be, let there be, and what should not be, let there not be. Otherwise how could one grasp and hold on to ritual, maintain one's standards, and cut off charlatanism and falseness at their source? Under the administration of the ancient kings, those people who held to sinister ways to create chaos in the government or who availed themselves of ghosts and spirits to confuse the masses were punished

without fail and were paid no heed. The ancient kings pondered such matters deeply.

It has been stated in the "Annals" that "those who are clear about the nature of heaven and earth cannot be moved by spirit prodigies; those who are clear about the principles of the ten thousand things cannot be deceived by the uncanny" [*Han History*, "Annals of Suburban Sacrifice"]. It is not very difficult to find out where some people have gone wrong.