

HE WHO *knows others is wise;*
He who knows himself is enlightened.
He who conquers others has physical strength.
He who conquers himself is strong.
He who is contented is rich.
He who acts with vigor has will.
He who does not lose his place (with Tao) will endure.
He who dies but does not really perish enjoys long life.

COMMENT

What is it that dies but does not perish? Wang Pi says it is Tao on which human life depends and Wu Ch'eng (1249-1333) says it is the human mind. Other commentators have given different answers; most of them, however, believe that Lao Tzu means the immortality of virtue. Thus the Taoists conform to the traditional belief, already expressed in the *Tso chuan* (Tso's Commentary on the *Spring and Autumn Annals*), namely, the immortality of virtue, achievement, and words,¹ which has continued to be the typical Chinese idea of immortality.²

NOTES

1. *Tso chuan* (Duke Hsiang, 24th year). See Legge (tr.), *The Ch'un Ts'ew, with the Tso Chuen*.
2. Erkes thinks that *death* means that a dead man still possesses power to influence the living, and that *perishing* means that this power is gone, since the body has been dissolved. Dubs rejects this interpretation and insists that Lao Tzu means immortality of influence. (See Edward Erkes, "Ssu erh pu-wang" [dead but has not perished], *Asia Major*, III [1952], 156-59; note by Homer H. Dubs, *ibid.*, 159-61; Erkes' reply, *ibid.*, IV [1954], 149-50.) Most Chinese scholars would support Dubs.

HE WHO is well established (in Tao) cannot be pulled away.
He who has a firm grasp (of Tao) cannot be separated from it.

Thus from generation to generation his ancestral sacrifice will never be suspended.

When one cultivates virtue in his person, it becomes genuine virtue.

When one cultivates virtue in his family, it becomes overflowing virtue.

When one cultivates virtue in his community, it becomes lasting virtue.

When one cultivates virtue in his country, it becomes abundant virtue.

When one cultivates virtue in the world, it becomes universal.

Therefore the person should be viewed as a person.

The family should be viewed as a family.

The community should be viewed as a community.

The country should be viewed as a country.

And the world should be viewed as the world.¹

How do I know this to be the case in the world?

Through this.²

COMMENT

It was a common conviction in ancient China that the foundation of the empire lies in the state, that of the state in the family, and that of the family in the person.³ Expressing this sentiment, Lao Tzu goes on to say that the person should be seen only through the person, and so forth—that is, with absolute objectivity and detachment. This viewpoint is characteristic of Shao Yung, the most Taoistic of the leading Neo-Confucianists. According to his famous theory of “viewing things from the viewpoint of things,” one should view things

as they are instead of subjectively and egoistically.⁴ This is essentially the spirit of Taoism.

NOTES

1. The Chinese merely reads: "From person see person," etc. Wang Pi says: "The Tao in the person may be seen from the person's own state of mind," etc. Ho-shang Kung says: "From the person who cultivates the Tao, the person who does not cultivate Tao may be seen," etc. Wei Yüan says: "By one's own person, other persons may be seen," etc.
2. Most commentators agree that "this" refers to the cultivation of virtue in the person, in the family, and so forth.
3. According to Mencius, this was a common saying. See *Book of Mencius*, 4A:5. On what basis Waley says that the theory originated with Yang Chu is not clear. Neither Yang Chu nor the "Yang Chu" treatise says anything like this.
4. *Huang-chi ching-shih shu* (Supreme Principle Governing the World), 8B:16a.

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