

*Kung* said, "The deformation of the tortoise means bad luck for sacrifices, but victory in war." King *Wu* followed his advice, and at length destroyed *Chou*. If this be really so, this story is like the utterances of *Confucius* on the diagrams, and *Chin Fan's* interpretation of the dream. Omens and signs are true by any means, if good and bad fortunes do not happen as predicted, it is the fault of the diviners who do not understand their business.

## CHAPTER XV.

On Death (*Lun-sse*).

People say that the dead become ghosts, are conscious, and can hurt men. Let us examine this by comparing men with other beings:—

The dead do not become ghosts, have no consciousness, and cannot injure others. How do we know this? We know it from other beings. Man is a being, and other creatures are likewise beings. When a creature dies, it does not become a ghost, for what reason then must man alone become a ghost, when he expires? In this world you can separate man from other creatures, but not on the ground that he becomes a ghost. The faculty to become a ghost cannot be a distinctive mark. If, on the other hand, there is no difference between man and other creatures, we have no reason either to suppose that man may become a ghost.

Man lives by the vital fluid. When he dies, this vital fluid is exhausted. It resides in the arteries. At death the pulse stops, and the vital fluid ceases to work; then the body decays, and turns into earth and clay. By what could it become a ghost?

Without ears or eyes men have no perceptions. In this respect the deaf and the blind resemble plants and trees. But are men, whose vital fluid is gone, merely as if they had no eyes, or no ears? No, their decay means complete dissolution.

That which is diffuse and invisible, is called a ghost, or a spirit. When people perceive the shape of a ghost or a spirit, it cannot be the vital fluid of a dead man, because ghost and spirit are only designations for something diffuse and invisible. When a man dies, his spirit ascends to heaven, and his bones return to the earth, therefore they are called *Kwei* (ghost)<sup>1</sup> which means "to return."<sup>2</sup> A spirit (*Shên*) is something diffuse and shapeless.

Some say that ghost and spirit are names of activity and passivity. The passive principle opposes things and returns, hence the name *Kwei* (ghost). The active principle fosters and produces

things, and therefore is called *Shên* (spirit),<sup>1</sup> which means "to extend."<sup>2</sup> This is re-iterated without end. When it finishes, it begins again.

Man lives by the spiritual fluid. When he dies, he again returns this spiritual fluid. Activity and passivity are spoken of as spirit and ghost. When man dies, one speaks likewise of his spirit and his ghost.

The fluid becomes man, just as water turns into ice. The water crystallises to ice, and the fluid coagulates, and forms man. The ice melting becomes water, and man dying becomes spirit again. It is called spirit, just as molten ice resumes the name water. When we have a man before us, we use another name. Hence there are no proofs for the assertion that the dead possess knowledge, or that they can take a form, and injure people.

When men see ghosts, they appear like living men. Just from the fact that they have the shape of living men we can infer that they cannot be the essence of the dead, as will be seen from the following:—

Fill a bag with rice, and a sack with millet. The rice in the bag is like the millet in the sack. Full, they look strong, stand upright, and can be seen. Looking at them from afar, people know that they are a bag of rice, and a sack of millet, because their forms correspond to their contents, and thus become perceptible. If the bag has a hole, the rice runs out, and if the sack is damaged, the millet is spilt. Then the bag and the sack collapse, and are no more visible, when looked at from afar.

Man's vital fluid resides in the body, as the millet and the rice do in the bag and the sack. At death the body decays, and the vital fluid disperses, just as the millet and the rice escape from the pierced or damaged bag, or sack. When the millet or the rice are gone, the bag and the sack do not take a form again. How then could there be a visible body again, after the vital fluid has been scattered and lost?

When animals die, their flesh decomposes, but their skin and their hair still remain, and can be worked into a fur, which appears still to have the shape of an animal. Therefore dog thieves will don dog skins. People then do not discover them, because disguised in a dog's fur-skin, they do not rouse any suspicion.

Now, when a man dies, his skin and hair are destroyed. Provided that his vital force did still exist, how could the spirit

again enter the same body, and become visible? The dead cannot borrow the body of a living man to re-appear, neither can the living borrow the soul of the dead to disappear.

The Six Animals<sup>1</sup> can only be transformed into a human shape as long as their bodies and their vital fluid are still unimpaired. When they die, their bodies putrefy, and even, if they possess the courage and the audacity of a tiger or a rhinoceros, they can no more be metamorphosed. *Nü Ai*, duke of *Lu*<sup>2</sup> during an illness could be transformed into a tiger, because he was not yet dead. It happens that a living body is transformed into another living body, but not that a dead body is changed into a living one.

From the time, when heaven and earth were set in order, and the reign of the "Human Emperors"<sup>3</sup> downward people died at their allotted time. Of those, who expired in their middle age, or quite young, millions and millions might be counted. The number of the persons actually living would be less than that of those who died. If we suppose that after death a man becomes a ghost, there would be a ghost on every road, and at every step. Should men appear as ghosts after death, then tens of thousands of ghosts ought to be seen. They would fill the halls, throng the courts, and block the streets and alleys, instead of the one or two which are occasionally met with.

When a man has died on a battle-field, they say that his blood becomes a will-o'-the-wisp. The blood is the vital force of the living. The will-o'-the-wisp seen by people, while walking at night, has no human form, it is desultory and concentrated like a light. Though being the blood of a dead man, it does not resemble a human shape in form, how then could a man, whose vital force is gone, still appear with a human body?

If the ghosts seen all looked like dead men, there might be some doubt left that the dead become ghosts, and sometimes even assume human form.

<sup>1</sup> The Six Domestic Animals are:—the horse, the ox, the goat, the pig, the dog, and the fowl.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Chap. XXVII.

<sup>3</sup> A series of mythical rulers of remotest antiquity.

Sick people see ghosts, and say that So-and-So has come to them. At that time So-and-So was not yet dead, but the fluid perceived resembled him. If the dead become ghosts, how is it that sick people see the bodies of the living?

The nature of heaven and earth is such, that a new fire can be lighted, but an extinguished fire cannot be set ablaze again. A new man can be born, but a dead one cannot be resurrected. If burnt-out ashes could be kindled again into a blazing fire, I would be very much of opinion that the dead might take a bodily form again. Since, however, an extinguished fire cannot burn again, we are led to the conclusion that the dead cannot become ghosts.

Ghosts are considered to be the vital spirits of the dead. If this were really the case, people seeing ghosts ought to see their bodies naked only, but not wearing dresses, or covered with garments, because garments have no vital spirits. When men die, their clothes become decomposed together with their bodies, how could they be put on again?

The vital spirits have their original seat in the blood fluid, and this fluid always adheres to the body. If notwithstanding the decay of the body the vital spirits were still extant, they might become ghosts. Now garments are made of silk stuffs and other fabrics. During man's life-time his blood fluid does not permeate them, nor have they any blood of their own. When the body is destroyed, they share its fate, how could they of themselves re-assume the shape of garments. Consequently, if ghosts are seen which bear a resemblance to dresses, they must also be like bodies, and if they are, we know that they cannot be the vital spirits of the dead.

Since the dead cannot become ghosts, they cannot have any consciousness either. We infer this from the fact that before their birth men have no consciousness. Before they are born, they form part of the primogenial fluid, and when they die, they revert to it. This primogenial fluid is vague and diffuse, and the human fluid, a part of it. Anterior to his birth, man is devoid of consciousness, and at his death he returns to this original state of unconsciousness, for how should he be conscious?

Man is intelligent and sagacious, because he has in himself the fluid of the Five Virtues, which is in him, because the Five

Organs<sup>1</sup> are in his body. As long as the five parts are uninjured, man is bright and clever, but, when they become diseased, his intellect is dimmed and confused, which is tantamount to stupidity and dullness.

After death the five inward parts putrefy, and, when they do so, the five virtues lose their substratum. That which harbours intelligence is destroyed, and that which is called intelligence disappears. The body requires the fluid for its maintenance, and the fluid, the body to become conscious. There is no fire in the world burning quite of itself, how could there be an essence without a body, but conscious of itself?

Man's death is like sleep, and sleep comes next to a trance,<sup>2</sup> which resembles death. If a man does not wake up again from a trance, he dies. If he awakes, he returns from death, as though he had been asleep. Thus sleep, a trance, and death are essentially the same. A sleeper cannot know what he did, when he was awake, as a dead man is unaware of his doings during his life-time. People may talk or do anything by the side of a sleeping man, he does not know, and so the dead man has no consciousness of the good or bad actions performed in front of his coffin. When a man is asleep, his vital fluid is still there, and his body intact, and yet he is unconscious. How much more must this be the case with a dead man, whose vital spirit is scattered and gone, and whose body is in a state of decay?

When a man has been beaten and hurt by another, he goes to the magistrate, and makes his complaint, because he can talk to people, and is conscious. But, when a person is slain by somebody, the murderer is unknown, his family perhaps not knowing even the place, where his corpse is lying. If under such circumstances the murdered man was conscious, he would assuredly be filled with the greatest wrath against his murderer. He ought to be able to speak into the magistrate's ear, and give him the name of the miscreant, and, if he were able to go home, and speak to his people, he would inform them, where the body was. But all that he cannot do. That shows that he has no consciousness.

<sup>1</sup> The Five Virtues are:—Benevolence, Justice, Propriety, Knowledge, and Truth; the Five Organs:—the Heart, the Liver, the Stomach, the Lungs, and the Kidneys.

<sup>2</sup> No dictionary gives this meaning for *t'ien* 殛, which usually means "to exterminate, to cut off, to cease." But it cannot be anything else here. The Chinese of to-day will likewise call a faint "death," or "small death," *hsiao-sse* 小死.

Now-a-days, living persons in a trance will sometimes as mediums speak for those who have died, and diviners, striking black chords, will call down the dead, whose souls then will talk through the diviner's mouth. All that is brag and wild talk. If it be not mere gossip, then we have a manifestation of the vital fluid of some being.

Some say that the spirit cannot speak. If it cannot speak, it cannot have any knowledge either. Knowledge requires a force, just as speech does.

Anterior to man's death, his mental faculties and vital spirit are all in order. When he falls sick, he becomes giddy, and his vital spirit is affected. Death is the climax of sickness. If even during a sickness, which is only a small beginning of death, a man feels confused and giddy, how will it be, when the climax is reached? When the vital spirit is seriously affected, it loses its consciousness, and when it is scattered altogether?

Human death is like the extinction of fire. When a fire is extinguished, its light does not shine any more, and when man dies, his intellect does not perceive any more. The nature of both is the same. If people nevertheless pretend that the dead have knowledge, they are mistaken. What is the difference between a sick man about to die and a light about to go out? When a light is extinguished, its radiation is dispersed, and only the candle remains. When man has died, his vital force is gone, and the body alone remains. To assert that a person after death is still conscious is like saying that an extinguished light shines again.

During the chilly winter months the cold air prevails, and water turns into ice. At the approach of spring, the air becomes warm, and the ice melts to water. Man is born in the universe, as ice is produced, so to say. The *Yang* and the *Yin* fluids crystallise, and produce man. When his years are completed, and his span of life comes to its end, he dies, and reverts to those fluids. As spring water cannot freeze again, so the soul of a dead man cannot become a body again.

Let us suppose that a jealous husband and a jealous wife are living together. The debauchery and the disreputable conduct of one party is the cause of constant outbursts of anger, fighting, and quarrelling. Now, if the husband dies, the wife will marry again, and if the wife dies, the husband will do the same. If the other knew of it, he would undoubtedly fly into a rage. But husband and wife, when dead, keep perfectly quiet, and give no sound. The other may marry again, they take no heed, and it has no evil consequences. That proves that they are unconscious.

*Confucius* buried his mother at *Fang*.<sup>1</sup> Subsequently such heavy rain fell, that the tomb at *Fang* collapsed. When *Confucius* heard of it, he wept bitterly and said:—"The ancients did not repair graves."<sup>2</sup> Therefore he did not repair it. Provided the dead are conscious, they ought to be angry with those who do not keep their tombs in repair. Knowing this, *Confucius* would have repaired the grave to please the departed soul, but he did not do so. His intelligence as a Sage was of the highest order, but he knew that spirits are unconscious.

When dried bones are lying about in lonely places, it may happen that some mournful cries are heard there. If such a wail is heard at night-time, people believe that it is the voice of a dead man, but they are wrong. When a living man talks, he breathes. His breath is kept in his mouth and his throat. He moves his tongue, opens and shuts his mouth, and thus produces words. It is like playing a flute. When the flute is broken, the air escapes, and does not keep inside, and the hands have nothing to touch. Consequently no sound is produced. The tubes of the flute correspond to the human mouth and throat. The hands touch the holes in the tubes in the same manner, as man moves his tongue. When he is dead, his mouth and throat decay, and the tongue moves no more. How should words be articulated then? If, while dried bones are lying about, wails and laments are heard, they come from men, for bones cannot produce them.

Others imagine that it is the autumn (which produces these sounds). This statement is not much different from the other that ghosts cry at night. If the autumn air causes these extraordinary moans and wails, it must have some substratum. Because this has happened near the bones of a dead man, people have presumed that these bones are still conscious, and utter these mournful cries in the wilderness. There are thousands and thousands of skeletons bleaching in the grass and in the swamps, therefore we ought to be haunted by their laments at every step.

It is possible to make somebody speak, who usually does not speak, but impossible that somebody who speaks, should be induced to speak again after death. Even he who spoke before, cannot be caused to speak again. Similarly, when a plant comes

<sup>1</sup> A place in *Lu* (*Shantung*).

<sup>2</sup> A quotation abridged from the *Lí-ki*, *Tan Kung*. Cf. *Legge*, *Lí-ki* Vol. I, p. 193. Modern commentators explain the passage quite differently. The dictum of *Confucius* would mean that the ancients did not repair tombs, because they built them so well, that they could not collapse. *Wang Ch'ung's* interpretation is more natural.

forth, its fluid is green, which is, as it were, given it. When the same plant dies, the green colour disappears, or is taken away. Endowed with the fluid, the plant is green, deprived of it, it loses the green colour. After the latter is gone, it cannot be added again, nor can the plant grow green again of its own accord. Sound and colour correspond to one another, and are both derived from Heaven. The brilliant green colour is like a lugubrious cry. The colour of a faded plant cannot become green again, it would, therefore, be a mistake to assume that a dead man's cry could still be produced of itself.

Man is able to talk, because he possesses vital energy. As long as he can eat and drink, the vital energy is well fed, but no sooner do eating and drinking cease, than the energy is destroyed. After this destruction there are no more sounds possible. When the person is worn out, and cannot eat any more, the mouth cannot speak any further. Death is exhaustion in the highest degree, how could man still speak then?

There are those who say that the dead smell the sacrificed meat, and eat the air, and that they are thus enabled to speak. The vital force of the dead is that of the living. Let a living being neither eat nor drink, and only inhale the smell of offerings, and feed upon air, and he will die of starvation after no more than three days.

Another opinion is that the vital force of the dead is more powerful than that of the living, and that for this reason it can smell the air, and produce sounds.

The vital force of the living is in their body, that of the dead, out of it. In what do the dead and the living differ, and what difference does it make that the vital fluid is within the body, or outside of it? Take water, and fill it into a big jug. When the jug breaks, the water flows to the earth, but can the water on the floor be different from that in the jug? The water on the floor is not different from that in the jug, then why should the vital force outside the body be different from that within?

Since a man, when dead, does not become a ghost, has no knowledge, and cannot speak, he cannot hurt others either for the following reason. In his anger, a man uses breath, but in order to injure others, he requires strength. To make use of it, his sinews and bones must be strong, then he can hurt others. An angry man may breathe heavily so near to others, that his breath shoots forth against their faces, but though he possess the

valour of *Méng Pén*,<sup>1</sup> it does them no harm. However, when he stretches out his hand, and strikes, or lifts the foot and kicks, he breaks whatever he hits. The bones of the dead decay, the strength of his muscles is lost, and he does not lift hand or foot. Although the vital fluid be still existant, it is, as if it were, only breathing, and nothing else follows. How then should it do harm to anybody?

Men and other creatures hurt others by means of knives, which they grasp with their hands and arms, and with their strong and sharp nails or teeth. Now, when a man is dead, his hands and arms waste away, and cannot lift a blade any more, and nails and teeth fall out, and cannot bite any more. How should they do harm to others then?

When a child is just born, his hands and feet are quite complete, yet the hands cannot grasp, and the feet cannot kick. The fluid has just concreted, but has no strength. Hence it is evident that the vital fluid possesses no strength. The fluid forms the body. As long as the body is still feeble and weak, it cannot do harm to any one, and how much less still, when through death the fluid becomes lost, and the vital spirit is dissolved. Something feeble and weak is incapable of injuring people, and one asserts that cold bones can do it? Is the fluid of the dead not lost? How should it injure anybody?

Before a hen's egg is hatched, there is a formless mass in the egg-shell, which, on leaking out, looks like water. After a good hen has covered the egg, the body of the chicken is formed, and when it has been completed, the young bird can pick the shell, and kick. Human death resembles the time of the formless mass. How could a formless fluid hurt anybody?

A man becomes bold and fierce, so that he can assault others, by eating and drinking. Eating and drinking his fill; he grows stout and strong, bold and fierce, and can do harm to others. While a man is sick, he can neither eat nor drink, and his body becomes worn out and weak. When this weariness and languor reach the highest degree, death ensues. During that time of sickness and languor his enemy may stand by his side, he cannot revile him, and a thief may take his things away, he has no means to prevent him, all on account of his debility and lassitude. Death is the debility and languor in the extreme, how then could a man after death still injure any one?

<sup>1</sup> Of Chap. XXXI.

If chickens or dogs, which somebody keeps, are stolen, he will, at all events, wax angry, though he be timid, and not very strong, and his anger may be so violent, that he tries conclusions with the robber, and is slain by him. During the time of great anarchy people will use one another as food. Now, provided that the spirit was conscious, it ought to be able to destroy its enemies.<sup>1</sup> A human body is worth more than a chicken or a dog, and one's own death is of greater consequence than a robbery. The fact that a man is excited over a chicken or a dog, but has no bad feeling against the individual who devoured him, shows that he<sup>2</sup> has not the power to hurt any one.

Prior to its casting off its exuviae, a cicada is a chrysalis. When it casts them off, it leaves the pupa state, and is transformed into a cicada. The vital spirit of a dead man leaving the body may be compared to the cicada emerging from the chrysalis. As cicada it cannot hurt the chrysalides. Since it cannot do so, why should the vital spirit of a dead man hurt living bodies?

The real nature of dreams is very doubtful. Some say that, while people are dreaming, their vital spirits remain in their bodies, and produce lucky or unlucky visions. Others hold that the vital spirit communicates with men and other creatures. Now, if it really remains in the body, the vital spirit of the dead must do the same. If, however, the spirit mixes with men, people may dream that they have killed somebody. Having killed somebody, they are perhaps themselves murdered by somebody else. But if, on the following day, they look at the body of that person, or examine their own, they will find no trace whatever of a wound inflicted by a sword. Dreams are caused by the vital spirit, and this spirit is identical with the vital spirit of the dead. The vital spirit of dreams cannot injure people, therefore the spirit of the dead cannot do so either.

When the fire burns, the caldron boils, and when the boiling stops, the steam ceases. All depends on the fire. When the vital spirit is incensed, it can do harm, not being angry, it cannot injure people. The fire blazing in the stove, the kettle bubbles, and the steam rises. When the vital force is enraged in the bosom, there is an innervation of strength, and the body is hot. Now, when a man is about to die, his body is cold and chilly. The cold and chilliness increase, until at last he expires. At the time

<sup>1</sup> Those who used its body as food.

<sup>2</sup> His spirit.

of death, the vital spirit is not irritated, and after the death of the body it is like the hot water taken from the caldron, how should it hurt people?

Things have a certain relation to man. When a man becomes insane, and one knows the proper thing, his malady may be cured by applying this thing as a remedy. As long as a thing is alive, its vital spirit adheres to its body, and consequently can change its form, and enter into close connection with man. After it has died, its body rots, and the vital spirit is dispersed. In default of a substratum it cannot undergo any more changes. The human vital spirit is like that of things. While they are alive, their spirit may become sick, when they die, it evaporates and disappears. Men are like things in this respect, when they die, their vital spirit also becomes extinguished, how could it still do any mischief?

Should anybody object by saying that men are much more precious than things, and that their vital spirit is different, we can reply that, as a matter of fact, things can be metamorphosed, but man cannot, and that so far his vital spirit is on the contrary inferior to that of things, whose essence surpasses that of man.

Water and fire drown and burn. All that can injure man must be a substance belonging to one of the five elements. Metal hurts man, wood beats him, earth crushes him, water drowns him, and fire burns him. Is the vital spirit of the dead a substance like the five elements? Does it injure people, or is it not a substance?—It cannot injure people. Not being a substance, it must be a fluid. Of the fluids which injure man that of the sun is the most virulent. Does the fluid of a man, when he dies, become virulent? Can it injure people or not?—It cannot injure people.

Thus we hold that the dead do not become ghosts, are not conscious, and cannot hurt people. Consequently, it is evident that the ghosts, which are seen, are not the vital force of dead men, and that, when men have been hurt, it cannot have been done through this vital force.

head like that of Yao, a neck like that of Kao Yao, and shoulders resembling those of Tse Ch'an.<sup>1</sup> But from his waist downward he is by three inches shorter than Yü. He is worn out like a stray dog." Tse Kung informed Confucius. Confucius laughed heartily and said, "My appearance, never mind, but like a stray dog! just so, just so."<sup>2</sup>

In the matter of Confucius' appearance the man of Chêng was wrong. He was not clever, and his method was very superficial. Confucius made a mistake with Tse Yü, and T'ang Chü was in the wrong with T'sai Tse, as the man of Chêng in looking at Confucius did not apprehend his real appearance. Judging from his mien Confucius was deceived with Tse Yü, and going by words he was in error in regard of T'sai Yü.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The appellation of Kung Sun Ch'iao, a famous minister of the Chêng State in the 6th cent. B.C.

<sup>2</sup> A quotation from *Shi-chi* chap. 47, p. 12v. Cf. Legge, *Analects, Prolegomena* p. 78.

<sup>3</sup> One of the disciples of Confucius, whose character was not quite on a level with his fluency of speech, wherefore the Master said of him, "In choosing a man for his gift of speech, I have failed as regards T'sai Yü."

## CHAPTER XXV.

Long Life and Vital Fluid (*Chi-shou*).

The fate which every one receives is of two kinds, one determines those events which he must encounter, the other is the fate of strength and weakness, of long or short life. The events to be encountered are war, fire, crushing, and drowning, etc.; strength and long life, weakness and short life are connected with the copiousness and scarcity of the received fluid. War and fire, crushing and drowning can supervene, therefore there is not necessarily a period of invariable length for what has been received as fate.<sup>1</sup>

If the limit of strength and long life be a hundred years, then the fluid of those who do not reach a hundred years must be insufficient.

When the fluid is copious, the body becomes strong, and the body being strong, life lasts long. On the other hand, when the vital force is scanty, the body is weak, and with a weak body life is short. A short life is accompanied by much sickness. If the span be short, people die soon after they are born, and are annihilated, before they are fully developed. That is because their vital fluid is too little and too weak.

Those imbued with a copious and a strong fluid do not all at once end their lives. If people do not meet with any accidents, and, leading a quiet life, become exhausted and worn out, until they die for want of vitality, it is owing to the insufficiency of their vital fluid, which they have completely used up. Their fate is similar to that of those who expire soon after their birth and are cut off, before they have grown up. In all these cases the deficiency of the fluid is the reason, why those persons do not live a hundred years.

The fluid which fills men is either full and abundant—then they are strong and vigorous, or scanty and poor—then they are weak and feeble. Imbued with a full quantity, they are strong,

<sup>1</sup> What has been received as fate is the vital fluid or life. The length of life depends on the quality of this fluid, but it can be shortened by accidents, such as war, fire, etc. coming from abroad, before vitality is exhausted, and death would occur under normal conditions.—The Chinese word used here, 命 means "fate" as well as "life."

and live long, filled with a small dose, they are weak, and lose their bodies.

When Heaven and Earth produce things, sometimes these things do not grow to their full growth, and when father and mother engender a child, sometimes its full development is checked. It happens that a plant bears a fruit, but that this fruit withers, dies, and drops, and it also happens that people have a son who is killed in his youth. Had this fruit not withered, it would also have completed one year, and had the son not been killed, he would likewise have lived a hundred years. The decay of the fruit and the death of the son are brought about by the weakness of their vital force. Although their forms be complete, their feeble fluid does not suffice to fill them.

When the cries of a new-born infant are shrill and piercing, it will live long, when they are whining and pitiful, it will die young. Why? Because, when the new-borns receive their fate of longevity or short life, the greater or smaller quantity of their fluid forms their nature.<sup>1</sup>

When a mother nurses her child at longer intervals, it will be fit for life, whereas, when she nourishes it very frequently, it will die. Why? Because the nursing at intervals shows that the fluid is copious, and the child is strong. The frequent suckling proves the insufficiency of the vital fluid and the weakness of the baby.

A fondling is a son anterior to whom another son has already been brought up and died. They say that such a fondling cannot live, and call it a fondling. The idea is that, another son having already died, the mother is too anxious about the new one, and spoils his nature. The former son is dead, and the fondling is doomed, because he is nursed much too often. His fluid being too feeble, he cannot thrive. Though he may grow up, he is too easily affected by external influences. He will always be the first to catch a disease, and his alone will prove incurable.

A fate of a hundred years is the proper one. Those who cannot complete a hundred years, though they have no proper fate, still have a fate. In the same manner the proper height of the human body is ten feet.<sup>2</sup> Therefore a man is called *chang fu*,<sup>3</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> And this nature becomes manifest by the way in which the new borns cry. Strong babies have strong voices, weak ones give only a whine.

<sup>2</sup> On the Chinese foot see p. 320 Note 1.

<sup>3</sup> Wang Ch'ung explains the term *chang fu* 長夫: "young man" as originally meaning a man of ten feet — *chang*.

*chang-jen* is an honorary designation for an old gentleman and an old lady.<sup>1</sup> A man not measuring ten feet has not the proper height, but nevertheless he possesses a body. A body cannot be declared to be no body because of its falling short of ten feet. And so fate cannot be said to be no fate on account of its not coming up to a hundred years.

Heaven does not distribute long and short fates, of which every one would obtain either. We may say that man receives his fate in his fluid from Heaven, which is the same, whether he finishes it sooner or later. There is a saying to the effect that, if somebody aspires to royalty and does not succeed, this pretender can remain a leading prince. Leading princes are unsuccessful pretenders to royalty. A pretender should rise to royalty, as a long life ought to come up to a hundred years. Unable to become a king, he retires and continues a leading prince, and thus he who cannot attain to a hundred years resigns himself to a premature death.

A king and a pretender do the same, but are given different names, the one an honourable, the other a contemptible one. A long and a short life are caused, as it were, by the same fluid, but they are of different duration, either long or short. How do we know that he who does not live a hundred years, and dies an untimely death, possesses a fate of a hundred years all the same? Because his bodily frame is as big and as tall as that of others. A body that has lived a hundred years does not differ from another of fifty years. The bodies not being different, the vital fluids cannot differ either. Birds and animals have other bodies than man, hence the length of their lives must differ from the human.

How can we prove that human life, if it be long, lasts a hundred years? There are such cases in the world, and the Literati say that during the time of universal peace people used to be very tall, and live about a hundred years, which was the effect of the harmonious fluid. In the Canon of Yao, Yao says, "I have been seventy years on the throne."<sup>2</sup> He wished to abdicate, and found Shun. Shun was tried and had occupied the throne thirty years,<sup>3</sup> when Yao retired owing to his old age. Eight years afterwards he expired. Ninety eight years had elapsed until his decease.<sup>4</sup> But he

<sup>1</sup> 丈人. A husband thus addresses his father and mother in law.

<sup>2</sup> Quotation from the *Shuking* Pt. I, chap. III, 12 (*Legge* Vol. III, Pt. I, p. 25.)

<sup>3</sup> The *Shi-chi* chap. 1, p. 20 (*Chavannes, Mem. Hist.* Vol. 1, p. 69) writes twenty years.

<sup>4</sup> In that case Shun cannot have reigned for him longer than 20 years, for 70 + 30 + 8 = 98.



must already have lived, before he ascended the throne. Counting all these numbers together we arrive at an aggregate sum of over a hundred years.

It is further stated that "Shun was thirty years old, that he was tried thirty years, and that he was on the throne fifty years, when he went on high and died,"<sup>1</sup> which makes just one hundred years.<sup>2</sup>

Wên Wang said to Wu Wang, "I am a hundred years, and you are ninety. I will give you three years of mine." Wên Wang was ninety-seven years old, when he died, and Wu Wang ninety-three, when he departed.<sup>3</sup>

The Duke of Chou was a younger brother of Wu Wang. Between brothers there is generally no greater difference than ten years. After the death of Wu Wang, Chou Kung became regent. Seven years later he returned the government, and retired owing to old age. That would make about a hundred years. The Duke of Shao was an elder brother of the Duke of Chou. At the time of King K'ang<sup>4</sup> he was still Senior Tutor, which would make more than a hundred years.

Sages are endued with the harmonious fluid, therefore the years of their destiny have the proper number. The harmonious fluid is conducive to a tranquil government. Therefore during the age of universal peace the number of tall and long-lived persons was particularly great. One hundred years is the proper number of years of a long human life, as autumn is the proper time for the fate of plants, since plants live until autumn, when they die.

Plants perishing before or after autumn are similar to men whose life either exceeds or falls short of a hundred years. The time before or after autumn corresponds to more or less than a hundred years. Some plants fade already after they have pierced the earth, as men may die soon after their birth. Other plants may pass the autumn without withering just like men whose years may eventually be from one hundred to three hundred.

<sup>1</sup> Quotation from the *Shuking* (*Shun-tien*) Pt. II, Bk. I, chap. VI, 28 (*Legge* Vol. III, Pt. I, p. 51).

<sup>2</sup> The computation gives 110 not 100 years. We should read "he was tried twenty years" instead of thirty, the reading adopted in the *Shi-chi* and defended by several old commentators. Cf. *Legge's* notes to the passage and *Chavannes* *loc. cit.* p. 91 Note 2.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from the *Liki*, *Wên Wang shih-tse* (*Legge*, *Sacred Books* Vol. XXVII, p. 344). The commentators are at a loss, how to explain that Wên Wang was only ten years older than his son, Wu Wang, and how he could give him some of his years.

<sup>4</sup> 1078-1053 B.C.

It is on record that *Lao Tse* lived over two hundred years.<sup>1</sup> The Duke of *Shao* became one hundred and eighty years old. *Kao Tsung*<sup>2</sup> reigned one hundred years, and King *Mu* of the *Chou* dynasty likewise one hundred.<sup>3</sup> Including the time before his ascension, there must have been upwards of one hundred and thirty-four years altogether.

<sup>1</sup> *Sse Ma Chien* mentions this report in his biography of *Lao Tse* (*Shi-chi*, chap. 63, p. 3). Some said that *Lao Tse* became over 160 years old, others that he lived over 200 years, prolonging his life by the practice of virtue.

<sup>2</sup> The *Shuking* Pt. V, Bk. XV, 5 (*Legge* Vol. III, Pt. II, p. 467) expressly states that *Kao Tsung* = *Wu Ting* enjoyed the throne for fifty and nine years, not for a hundred. He reigned from 1324-1266 B.C.

<sup>3</sup> Thus the *Shuking* (*Lai-hsing*) Pt. V, Bk. XXVII, 1 (*Legge* Vol. III, Pt. II, p. 588) as *Wang Ch'ung* and others understand the passage (On *Legge's* different view of his notes). According to the *Shi-chi* King *Mu's* reign lasted but 55 years. It is usually reckoned from 1001-947 B.C.

# LUN-HÊNG.

PART I.

PHILOSOPHICAL ESSAYS OF WANG CH'UNG.

TRANSLATED FROM THE CHINESE AND ANNOTATED

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