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[*The*] ***File*** [*on the Cosmic*] ***Track*** [*and Individual*] ***Dough***[*tiness*]: Introduction and Notes for a Translation of the Ma-wang-tui Manuscripts of the *Lao Tzu* [*Old Master*]

by
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[The] ***File*** *[on the Cosmic]* ***Track*** *[and Individual]* ***Dough****[tiness]*: Introduction and Notes for a Translation of the Ma-wang-tui Manuscripts of the *Lao Tzu [Old Master]*

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Nota bene: There are two printer's errors in the main title as it appears on the cover.
Webmaster's note: The note above refers to the original, printed edition.

For Heidi, Dan, Denis, Jean, Becky, Tom, and all the other lovely denizens of Heavenly Harrison House.

La plus ancienne de toutes les sociétés,
et la seule naturelle, est celle de la famille.
J. J. Rousseau
Du Contrat Social

When above the heaven had not yet been named,
And below the earth had not yet been called by a name;

....

When they had not yet been called by their names,
and their destinies had not yet been fixed:
Then were the gods created in the midst of Apsu and Ti amat.
Lahmu and Lahamu they brought into being;
they were called by their names.

e-nu-ma e-liš la na-bu-u ša-ma-mu
šap-liš am-ma-tum šu-ma la zak-rat

....

šu-ma la zuk-ku-ru ši-ma-ta la ši-i-mu
ib-ba-nu-ma ilū qé-reb-šu-un
(il)laḫ-mu (il)la-ḫa-mu šu-ta-pu-u šu-nu iz-zak-ru

Enuma Elish, I.1-2, 8-10
The Babylonian Genesis

Contents

Abbreviations and Symbols

A, B	Silk manuscripts of the *Tao Te Ching* recovered from Ma-wang-tui
BG	*Bhagavad Gītā*
(B.)I.E.	(Before) International Era = (B.)C.E., (Before) Common Era
F	Fu I's "Ancient Text" of the *TTC*
M	Serial numbers of the tetragraphs in *Mathews' Chinese-English Dictionary*
MSM	Modern Standard Mandarin
OS	Old Sinitic
(P)IE	(Proto-)Indo-European
SC	Semantic classifiers of sinographs
Skt.	Sanskrit
TTC	*Tao Te Ching*
Up.	*Upaniṣad* (chiefly referring to the Skt. text of Radhakrishnan)
→	replace with; emend to
*	(P)IE and OS reconstructions (approximate values only)
√	etymological root

Preface

Next to the Bible and the *Bhagavad Gītā* (*BG*), the *Tao Te Ching* (*TTC*) is the most translated book in the world. Well over a hundred different renditions of the Taoist classic have been made into English alone, not to mention the dozens in German, French, Italian, Dutch, Latin, and other European languages. There are several reasons for the superabundance of translations. The first is that the *TTC* is considered to be the fundamental text of both philosophical and religious Taoism. Indeed, the Tao or Way, which is at the heart of the *TTC*, is also the centerpiece of all Chinese religion and thought. Naturally, the different schools and sects each bring a somewhat different slant to the Tao, but all subscribe to the notion that there is a single, overarching Way that encompasses everything in the universe. As such, the *TTC* shares crucial points of similarity with other major religious scriptures the world over.

The second reason for the popularity of the *TTC* is its brevity. There are few bona fide classics that are so short, yet so packed with food for thought. One can read and reread the *TTC* over and over scores of times without exhausting the insights it offers.

The third aspect which accounts for the wide repute of the *TTC* is the fact that it is supposedly "very easy to understand" (LXX.2 and see the note thereto) when actually it is exceedingly impenetrable. Paradox is the essence of the *TTC*, so much so that even scholars with a solid grounding in Classical Chinese cannot be sure they have grasped what the Old Master is really saying in his pithy maxims. This deceptive ease which masks tortuous difficulty is both a challenge and an invitation, a challenge to the honest scholar and an invitation to the charlatan. Since no one can fully plumb the profundity of the *TTC*, even the amateur cannot be held responsible for misrepresenting it. Hence the plethora of translations, many by individuals who command not one iota of any Chinese language. In the words of the eminent Dutch Sinologist, J.J.L. Duyvendak (p. 1):

> Not only do translations made by competent Sinologues vary considerably, but there also exists a multitude of so-called translations made by people who try to make up for their entirely imaginary or extremely elementary knowledge of classical Chinese by philosophical speculations which often are completely foreign to the Chinese spirit. With due acknowledgement of the interest which this Chinese classic has been able to arouse in a large circle, one cannot help regretting that the *Tao-tê-ching* has thus become the object of the worst dilettantism.

It is precisely because of my annoyance at the sheer presumptuousness of those who pretended to convey the words of the Old Master to others, when they themselves had not the slightest idea how to read them, that I vowed two decades ago I would never be so bold as to add my own voice to the cacophonous chorus of *TTC* paraphrasts. Two unexpected and celebrated events, however, conspired to make me recant. One was the egregiously large advance and effusive national publicity awarded to an absolute tyro a couple of years ago who dared to dabble with the daunting *TTC*. Although the individual concerned will remain mercifully unnamed, I felt duty bound to reclaim translation of the *TTC* as the proper province of the conscientious Sinologist.

The other prod was the recent discovery of two ancient manuscripts in China which made it possible to produce a totally new translation of the *TTC* far more accurate and reliable than any that has hitherto been published. This is the first translation of the *TTC* based from its very inception wholly on these newly found manuscripts. The manuscripts came from a place in central China called Ma-wang-tui, not far south of the Yangtze River. I shall describe the manuscripts and their importance for *TTC* studies in the next section of the front matter and in the first part of the introduction. Here I should like only to acknowledge my gratitude to those scholars who have done pioneering Sinological studies on the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts of the *TTC*, particularly William G. Boltz and Robert G. Henricks.

Once I assumed the task of creating an entirely fresh translation of the *TTC*, I became preoccupied with endless details, such as how to convey the meaning of the second word in the title. I spent two full months trying to arrive at a satisfactory translation of *te*. Walking through the woods, riding on the train, buying groceries, chopping wood -- the elusive notion of *te* was always on my mind. The final choice of "integrity" is based on a thorough etymological study of the word, together with a careful consideration of each of its 44 occurrences in the text. In some particular instances, perhaps another word such as "self," "character," "personality," "virtue," "charisma," or "power" might have fit better, but "integrity" is the only word which seems to be plausible throughout. By "integrity," I mean the totality of an individual entity together with its moral consequences, good or bad. We shall return to explore this concept in much greater depth in the second section of the introduction.

Whether seeking the right English word for *te* or coping with unusual Chinese tetragraphs[+] that were not to be found in any dictionary, my paramount guide throughout has been Philology. Only by the most rigorous application of this noble science can we hope to come close to a full understanding of ancient texts. Also accompanying me in my labors was Poesy. Without her, I would have betrayed the *TTC* badly.

After an intensive period of work on the translation, I turned my attention to the introduction. There, too, I have endeavored to break virgin territory. The first part shows how the *TTC* represents the accumulated wisdom of centuries, not the enterprise of a single author. As such, the real title of this book should be something like *Sayings of the Old Masters*. For the sake of convenience and familiarity, nonetheless, I continue to refer to it as the *TTC*. The next part is an exhaustive etymological examination of the three words that make up the customary title of the book, together with explanations of the name of the presumed author and two other key terms.

Another radical approach to the *TTC* set forth in this book is the recognition that it bears an intimate relationship to that other best known oriental classic, the *BG*. Having read both of them in their original languages repeatedly and attentively over the past two decades, I have come to believe that they are connected in an essential way. In the introduction and the textual notes, I have also discussed many points of similarity between the two traditions for which the *BG* and the *TTC* serve as the fountainheads, namely Indian Yoga and Chinese Taoism. The resemblances between the *BG* and the *TTC* are so numerous and the parallels are so close that they could not possibly be entirely unrelated. Completely independent origination is virtually ruled out on the grounds of the remarkable resemblances in details both simple and complicated. At present, there are only three conceivable explanations for how this could have transpired: 1. China borrowed the Yogic system and its attendant practices from India; 2. India borrowed Taoism and its attendant practices from China; 3. both India and China were the recipients of inspiration from a third source. Much research remains to be done, of course, before a conclusive answer can be given for this intellectually stimulating conundrum. We must also await the results of more thorough archeological excavation, particularly in Sinkiang (the Chinese part of Central Asia), through which the famous Silk Roads passed, and along the southeast coast of China, where ships from India and Arabia regularly arrived. Nonetheless, the currently available data indicate an Indian priority that can be traced back to at least the second millennium and maybe even the third millennium Before the International Era (B.I.E.).

It is ultimately of little consequence whether Taoism is indebted to Yoga or Yoga to Taoism. What really matters is that they are both unique manifestations of a common human heritage. This is the light in which I have endeavored to view them in this little volume.

Swarthmore
May 15, 1989

[+] I prefer this equivalent of the native term *fang-k'uai-tzu* (literally "square graph," this might also be rendered as "carregram" -- Peter Daniels' suggestion -- or "quadrigram") over the quaintly ambiguous "character." Another, perhaps still more preferable, native term is "sinograph" (*han-tzu*).

Author's Note

These materials were originally intended to accompany my *Tao Te Ching: The Classic of Integrity and the Way* which was published by Bantam Books in September, 1990. When I was informed by my editors that the remarks herein, although expressly intended for the layman, were too scholarly in nature, it became necessary for me to rewrite completely the introduction and notes to the published translation. The contents of the two versions are now quite dissimilar. The Bantam introduction (now actually an afterword) is but a pale reflection of what I had originally written. Because there are ideas and information in these pages that may still be of interest to some, I have decided to issue them in the present form.

The fact that there are no sinographs given in these pages is the result of an initial verbal agreement with Bantam that I could use Mathews' dictionary serial numbers to designate them. Subsequently, like so much else, even these were dropped from the published version. Because many of the textual notes have to do with variant graphs, I have retained the Mathews' numbers in this version just as they appeared in the first draft of my book.

It should also be noted that I accepted the offer to do a translation of the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts of the *Lao Tzu* long **before** I learned that Robert Henricks was working on one for Ballantine. Nor did I know then that Elling Eide had already completed a draft translation of the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts of the same text. I was aware of D. C. Lau's 1974 publication from Hong Kong, but his translation did not deter me from going ahead with my own because it was based so heavily on his earlier (1963) rendition of the received text that it could not really be considered as an attempt to take the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts on their own terms.

Sinological Usages and Principles of Translation

The topics that need to be discussed in this section are somewhat technical, so those readers who are interested only in ideas and history may turn to the introduction, while those who just want to savor the *TTC* itself are invited to skip directly to the translation. For the Sinologist, however, and for those who are curious about what Sinologists do, the following observations are vital.

Since there are so many different systems for spelling out Chinese languages (more properly designated as Sinitic languages, since there are also dozens of non-Sinitic languages spoken within the territory of China), I must first explain my own choice and say a few words about the crucial distinction between script and language. The transcription system used in this book is a slightly modified form of Wade-Giles romanization. I have picked Wade-Giles because it remains the Sinological standard and because nearly all libraries continue to use it for the cataloguing of Chinese authors, titles, and subjects. Furthermore, of the various competing systems, Wade-Giles is actually closer than most others to scientific notations such as the International Phonetic Alphabet. Above all, the title of the classic is already widely known in the English-speaking world by its Wade-Giles transcription. Conversion to another romanization would render the title unrecognizable to many who are already familiar with it as the *Tao Te Ching*.

There are only two transcribed terms (Yin and Yang) in the entire text, and these have already been accepted into English. Thus there is no need to set forth here the whole Wade-Giles system, but it does behoove us at least to learn the correct pronunciation of the title and the name of the presumed author, Lao Tzu. *Tao* sounds exactly like Dow (as in Dow-Jones), *Te* is pronounced like Duh (as in "Duh, I dunno" but with a rising intonation), and *Ching* is almost the same as Jean with a -g sound stuck on at the end. Hence, *Tao Te Ching* might be phonetically transcribed for American speakers as *Dow Duh Jeang*. The Lao part of Lao Tzu sounds like "louse" minus the final sibilant. Tzu sounds not like "zoo," as many Americans tend to pronounce it, but rather like "adze" with the initial vowel missing.

As a matter of fact, neither *Tao Te Ching* nor Lao Tzu originally sounded the way we pronounce it now. It is purely a Sinological convention to cite ancient terms according to their Modern Standard Mandarin (MSM) pronunciations. This is often quite misleading, however, since MSM is so far removed from the sounds of ancient Sinitic languages that any resemblance between them is usually unrecognizable by all but those who are highly trained specialists. The problem is less acute for other modern Sinitic languages such as Cantonese, Taiwanese, and Shanghainese which preserve the ancient sounds much better.

Let us look briefly at just two simple monosyllabic words from ancient Sinitic languages. The first is pronounced in MSM as *mu* ("eye"), a term that has been used principally in book language for at least the past thousand years, the spoken Sinitic languages using instead such words as MSM *yen-ching*, Wenchow *ngau-vu-tsi*, Meihsien *muk-tsu*, Amoy *bat-tsiu*, and so forth. The same single tetragraph, *mu*, is read in isolation as *muhkh* in Taiyuan, *mong* in Hankow, *moekh* in Yangchow, *mokh* in Suchow, *mo* in Wenchow, *muk* in Canton, *bak* or *boek* in Amoy, *mak* in Swatow, and so forth. In Middle Sinitic reconstruction (about the year 600 I.E.), the same tetragraph would have been read roughly as *myuk* and in Old Sinitic (about 600 B.I.E) approximately as **myuhkw*. Before the invention of tetragraphs and before Sinitic and Tibetan languages split off from their parent stock, the etymon was probably pronounced something like *myikw*. It has cognates in a wide variety of Himalayan and far northwest Indian languages.

The second monosyllabic word to be considered is MSM *ch'üan* ("dog"), also now a bookish word, replaced in spoken MSM by *kou* (sounds like English "go"). In Tsinan, this tetragraph would be read *ch'üã*, in Taiyuan as *ch'üeh*, in Hankow *ts'uan*, in Yangchow *ch'üih*, in Suchow *ch'if*, in Wenchow *ch'ü*, in Changsha *ch'üẽ*, in Shuangfeng *t'ui*, in Nanchang *ch'üoen*, in Amoy *k'ian*, in Swatow *k'ieng*, in Fuchow *k'eing*, in Meihsien *k'ian*, in Canton *hün*, and so forth from north to south in China. Around 600 I.E., the tetragraph used to write this word would have been pronounced approximately as *k'iuehn* and around 600 B.I.E. roughly as **k'ewan*. Surprising as it may seem, **k'ewan* is definitely cognate with Greek *kuon*, Latin *canis*, Tocharian

A *ku* (cf. MSM *kou*!), Italian *cane,* French *chien,* Irish *cū,* German *Hund* (<**kwn-to*), English "hound," and so forth, all of which may be traced back to the IE root **kwon.* The fact that two such basic words as those for "eye" and "dog" have a Sino-Tibetan root on the one hand and an IE root on the other indicate that the origins of Sinitic languages are extremely complicated.

The purpose of all this regrettably rather arcane philology is to explain why it is so important to refer to reconstructions of Middle and Old Sinitic languages in our attempts to comprehend the meaning of ancient texts. If we delude ourselves by relying solely on the MSM pronunciations of sinographs, we are certain to distort, wildly at times, the meanings of crucial passages. Unfortunately, although much progress has been made during the past century by the great Swedish Sinologist, Bernhard Karlgren, and his successors, historical phonologists still do not agree completely on the spelling of Middle Sinitic, much less on Old Sinitic such as that in which the *TTC* was written. Therefore, I must state emphatically that the OS reconstructions provided in this book are highly tentative and are only intended to give an idea of the approximate sounds of the presumably standard Sinitic topolect (*fang-yen*) about 2,600 years ago. Another point to be borne in mind is that I have eschewed all special phonological symbols that are normally employed by phonologists in transcribing languages. Instead, in order not to intimidate and confuse the layman, I have simplified the transcriptions by using only the usual 26 letters of the alphabet, plus three or four diacriticals that are widely recognized.

For similar reasons, no tetragraphs have been used in this book which is directed primarily at the nonspecialist. There are, however, a few places -- particularly in the notes -- where reference to the forms of certain tetragraphs is indispensable. In such cases, I have cited their serial numbers in *Mathews' Chinese-English Dictionary* (M). Mathews' numbers are provided only for the purpose of identification of the visual shapes of the tetragraphs. The definitions provided therein are often not adequate for the study of the *TTC* and other early Chinese texts.

Most people who are illiterate in or unfamiliar with sinographs are utterly baffled by them and consequently entertain many false notions about the way they function. While it is not possible to give a full accounting of the nature of the tetragraphs here, I can recommend with great enthusiasm the writings of John DeFrancis on this subject. For our immediate objective of coming to grips with the *TTC* as a written text having a background in oral wisdom, some basic facts need to be stated explicitly at the outset. Above all, it must be realized that the tetragraphs are neither coequal to nor coeval with Sinitic languages. That is to say, the tetragraphs are only the primary **script** for writing Sinitic **languages**. Throughout history, Sinitic languages have also been transcribed in many other scripts, including Roman and Cyrillic in more recent times.

One very important aspect of the tetragraphic script is that it is not strictly phonetic. The vast majority of sinographs consist of one part that conveys some information about the sound of the syllable represented and another part that conveys some information about the meaning of the syllable represented. We may call these, respectively, the phonophore (sound-carrier) and the semantic classifier (abbreviated as SC). Neither of these components taken by itself is sufficient to specify precisely the meaning and the sound of the intended syllable. For example, there is a phonophore (M2004) pronounced variously in MSM as *hai, ho, hu, kai, k'o,* and so forth. If we add to this phonophore the SC for flesh, we obtain a tetragraph pronounced *kai* that means "big toe." In other words, the reader knows from the phonophore that the tetragraph sounds something like *hai, ho, hu, kai,* or *k'o,* and he knows from the SC that it has something to do with flesh.

This procedure obviously has both its advantages and disadvantages. One advantage is that the inclusion of a semantic component permits an elliptic writing style. Polysyllabic words in the spoken languages tend to get chopped down to monosyllabic size. Thus *chih-tao* ("to know") is often written as *chih, lin-se* ("stingy") can get by as *lin* alone, *shan-tzu* ("fan") is reduced to *shan,* and so on. Foreign words borrowed into Sinitic languages are often treated in the same fashion. Hence "aluminum" becomes just *lyu,* "manganese" ends up as *mang,* "uranium" turns out to be *you,* and Buddha (MSM Fo-t'o, Middle Chinese *biuet-d'a*) survives merely as Fo. Unfortunately, since it is not possible to utter semantic classifiers in speech, tremendous ambiguity usually ensues when written Sinitic languages are read aloud. That is why, unlike the tetragraphic script, spoken Sinitic languages are decidedly polysyllabic. Polysyllabicity provides the necessary redundancy and specificity for aural intelligibility. The myth that Sinitic languages are monosyllabic is wholly

an artifact of the tetragraphic, morphosyllabic script. Instead of *kai* ("big toe"), whose sound by itself might also signify such diverse things as "present," "rare," "boundary," "a hundred million," "terrace," "roots," "ought," and "prepared," Mandarin speakers much prefer to use the bisyllable *mu-chih* (also means "thumb") or the trisyllables *chiao-mu-chih* and *tsu-mu-chih*. There is, consequently, a tremendous gulf between the extremely terse written Sinitic languages and the far more voluble spoken languages. Although efforts have been undertaken, particularly within the past 70 years, to bridge that gap by encouraging authors to write more like they speak, the very nature of the tetragraphs causes an ineluctable slide back into more highly monosyllabic phraseology for all but those who are most conscientiously determined to maintain a purely vernacular diction.

Historically, there is no ineradicable linkage between the words of Sinitic languages and the tetragraphs that are used to write them. To give only a couple of examples, the very common word *lai* ("to come") is written with a tetragraph that originally signified a stalk of grain (probably a type of wheat). There is an ancient bisyllabic word, pronounced *wei-i* in MSM and defined as "twisting, turning, winding (as a mountain path"), that over the centuries has been written with as many as two dozen different pairs of tetragraphs. There are numerous words in Sinitic languages for which there are no secure tetragraphs. This is particularly the case with non-standard topolects such as the languages of Suchow, Fukien, Amoy, Swatow, and so forth, but it is even true of Pekingese (e.g. *mali* ["quickly"], *dier* ["let's go!"], *ts'uiber* ["lackey"], etc.) which is supposedly the foundation for MSM.

The explanation for this seemingly chaotic situation lies in the fact that both the shapes and the sounds of sinographs which are used to write Sinitic words have varied enormously over the past three thousand and more years since they were invented. The extremely common tetragraph meaning "there is not, there are no, nothing," etc. which is now pronounced in MSM as *wu* depicts an indeterminate object (consisting of eight rather densely packed brushstrokes) over a fire. About two thousand years ago, it was pronounced approximately as *myag* and supposedly showed a multitude (about forty, actually) of people and a forest. The earliest (about 3,100 years ago) forms of the tetragraph, however, clearly depict a dancing figure with long tassles hanging from his/her sleeves. That is to say, the original form of the tetragraph used to write *wu* ("there is not") had nothing whatsoever to do with forests or fires but very much to do with shamanistic dancing. Even more confusing for the neophyte, the tetragraph was merely borrowed to represent the negative because the two words ("shamanistic dancer" and "there is not") sounded somewhat similar. It then became necessary to create a new form to convey the meaning of "dance" which, as we have seen, was the original signification of the tetragraph that had been co-opted by the negative. The derivation of the tetragraphs used to write "come" (*lai*) and "there is not" (*wu*) demonstrates one of the most frequent means for generating tetragraphs for verbs and abstract concepts. Namely, the pictographic form for a concrete noun ("wheat" and "shamanistic dancer") is borrowed to represent a verb or abstraction that sounds somewhat like it and then a new (usually expanded) tetragraph is created to convey the meaning of the noun for which it originally stood. Once again, it is obvious that this process would lead to a tremendous breach between spoken Sinitic languages and the written tetragraphs, just as there is between modern and ancient forms of the tetragraphs, and between modern and ancient pronunciations of Sinitic words.

All of these dissonances between the realms of oral and written discourse in China pose enormous difficulties for the philologist, especially when he is dealing with a text like the *TTC* which had its origins in proverbial wisdom that first circulated orally and only came to be written down much later. During the transition from vocalized oral expression to tetragraphic written formulation, a profound transformation occurred. What were once purely strings of sound possessed of rhythm, tone, accent, and pause that elicited in the mind of the auditor certain associated meanings became visual patterns spaced equidistantly on a flat surface that provide truncated semantic and phonetic clues to the thought of the author. Loquency gave way to laconicism, affording great latitude to the imaginative interpreter.

The central role of imagination and intuition in the reading of Classical Chinese accounts for the great diversity of opinion among the exegetes. It is for this reason that I have tried to reach beyond the commentators to the text of the *TTC* and even, whenever possible, to get beyond the

tetragraphic text to the spoken language that inspired it. This may seem an impossible task to the novice, but there are rigorous linguistic methods that permit us to extrapolate from the terse tetragraphic statements of the classics significant features of the oral formulations from which they were drawn. It is rather like the paleontologist's recreation of a Devonian amphibian on the basis of a few fossilized bones or the forensic reconstruction of an entire skull on the basis of a molar, a bicuspid, a mandible, half a maxilla, one ethmoid, and a quarter of the occipital bone.

Unlike most translators of the *TTC*, I place very little credence in the traditional commentators. More often than not, they simply lead one astray, if one's objective is to understand the *TTC* itself rather than the commentators' own philosophical and religious programs. Because of a series of startling archeological discoveries (oracle bones, bronze inscriptions, jade plaques, pottery marks, etc.) during the course of this century, we know far more today about the development of the Chinese script and Sinitic languages than did scholars at any time in the past. This is not to deny that there are items of value in the work of the early commentators, only to caution that they are often egregiously wrong because they were limited both by their sources and their methods. Most important of all, we are in possession of the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts which are hundreds of years earlier and far more reliable (as my notes repeatedly demonstrate) than any previously known texts of the *TTC*. Consequently, even though 40 or 50 later editions sometimes agree on a certain reading, they may all be wrong simply because they did not have access to such early manuscripts as we do.

The first principle of translation subscribed to herein is always to use the oldest available manuscript except when it is defective (i.e., has lacunae, is torn, is illegible, etc.) or can be proven to be in error, in which case I rely on the next oldest text. When none of the early texts makes sense, I search for homophonous and near-homophonous cognates. Only when that fails to yield a reasonable reading do I suspect an orthographical error and begin to look for a tetragraph whose shape might have been mistaken for the one in question. My first assumption (borne out by many years of work on other ancient Chinese manuscripts) is that the author or scribe knew very well the sound of the word he wanted to record but was not always certain of the proper tetragraph which should be used to write it. I emend the text only as a last resort; fortunately, that happens exceedingly rarely in the present work.

Another unusual feature of the present translation is its format. The layout of the words on the page is very carefully calculated to manifest the linguistic structure of the Classical Chinese text. By paying attention to the arrangement of the words of the translation, the reader will be able to discern various grammatical, syntactical, and stylistic features of the original. Placement of particles, parallelism, antithesis, and so forth are all more or less evident in the physical appearance of the translation. This is in contrast to nearly all premodern Chinese texts which consist of vertical columns having the same or roughly the same number of tetragraphs. Read from top to bottom and from right to left, they were almost always devoid of punctuation, indentation, and typeface changes to assist the reader in deciphering them. Most, but not all, of the *TTC* may be divided into rhymed sections. The rhyme schemes, in turn, fall into many different categories. Only occasionally do I employ rhyme in the translation, approximating its effects for the modern American reader instead by such devices as consonance, assonance, and other poetic techniques to which we are more accustomed.

This leads to the thorny matter of the chapters in the *TTC* and whether or not they are legitimately applied to the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts. I have retained the conventional chapter divisions (marked by roman numerals) for the convenience of readers who are already familiar with the *TTC* in its traditional guise and for ease of reference. Readers will quickly notice that the order of the chapters in the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts is not the same as that of the received text. For example, the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts begin with chapter XXXVIII, chapter XL is preceded by XLI, chapters LXXX and LXXXI (the final chapters of the received text) come before LXVII, and so forth. The division into 81 chapters has no validity whatsoever in terms of the original collection of the Old Master's sayings. The preponderance of the 81 chapters are pastiches consisting of two or more parts. There is often no particular reason why they are joined together, other than the wishes of the editors to have a tidy text. Conversely, in several cases, portions of the *TTC* that are separated by chapter breaks in the received text might better be joined together. One

chapter (XVIII), for example, begins with a conclusion ("Therefore..."). It is futile to attempt to provide any rational basis for the division into 81 chapters since the number is purely arbitrary and has no organic bearing on the systematic ordering of the text. This particular number (*ekāśīti* in Skt.) was probably picked up from the Buddhists by whom it was favored inasmuch as it is the square of nine, which was itself fraught with all manner of symbolic significance for Indian mystics. One of the most hallowed Buddhist scriptures, the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, also had 81 divisions.

While not fully punctuated, the older of the two Ma-wang-tui manuscripts occasionally has scribal marks that indicate where pauses should be made and stanzas separated. This is often helpful for understanding the text and contrasts sharply with the vast majority of Classical Chinese texts written before this century which consisted solely of very long strings of equidistantly spaced tetragraphs. It should be noted that the breaks marked on the older of the two Ma-wang-tui manuscripts are sporadic and do not always coincide with the chapter divisions of the received text. Indeed, they sometimes come in the middle of a chapter of the received text. This is further evidence that the chapter divisions of the received text have little validity in terms of the original composition of the *Lao Tzu*.

As for annotations, there are two different approaches that might have been followed. On the one hand, there is the heavily annotated translation that so bristles with technical flourishes as to scare away all non-Sinologists. On the other hand, there is the translation that is totally devoid of commentary and that often leaves the lay reader guessing and wondering at every turn. I have tried to strike a happy balance between these two extremes by providing notes that would satisfy the curiosity or puzzlement of the beginner and the legitimate needs of the Sinologist, but by placing them at the back of the book so as not to clutter up the pages of the translation. For the same reason, the notes are keyed to the text by line and word rather than by superscript numbers. In general, my aim has been to make the translation completely integral and self-explanatory. Hence, there should be no need to consult the notes or the introduction upon a first reading of the *TTC* itself. The notes and the introduction are intended for those who reread the text and require additional commentary in the course of their deeper analysis and reflection.

My chief goal in undertaking this translation has been to create a thoroughly new English version of the *TTC*. During its preparation, I intentionally avoided consulting other translations so that I would not be influenced by them. Aside from not wanting to be repetitive and stale, I did not wish to be trapped by facile solutions bequeathed by the received text, its editors, commentators, and translators. The Ma-wang-tui manuscripts, I believe, deserve a fresh examination on their own terms, one not burdened by two millennia of religious and philosophical exegesis. As a tribute to their unexpected re-emergence in our midst, that is what I have endeavored to provide. If others wish to amalgamate the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts with the received text, that is their prerogative, but it is not what I have set out to do here. For those who are interested in learning about later interpretations of the *TTC*, several previous translations that include extensive commentaries and explanations are listed in the bibliography.

The primary duty of the translator is to convey, as nearly as possible, a semblance of the original text in his own language. To do so, he must pay attention to form, content, style, diction, and sound. It is not enough merely to transfer the **meaning** of the original text; he also needs to replicate its **effects**. If a text is somewhat rough in places, he should resist the temptation to ameliorate it; if it is lyrical, his own verse should sing. Because of the history of its composition, the style of the *TTC* varies greatly. I have striven to recreate in my own rendition the various voices we hear speaking out of the past -- the Taoist mystic, the political strategist, the utopian architect, the anti-Confucian philosopher, the prescient poet, the meditative yogin. If the reader is able to hear with any degree of fidelity more than one of the strains in this thought-provoking concertstück, my efforts will have been amply rewarded.

Introduction

[a] The Oral Background of the Text

There is nearly universal acceptance among scholars and devotees of the *TTC* alike that its author was Lao Tzu (or Laocius in the Latinized form of the name). As we shall substantiate in the next section, this is a rather peculiar cognomen for the presumed author of one of the most influential books ever written, for it means no more than "Old Master." Frantic efforts have been made to identify the Old Master with such shadowy figures as Li Tan, Li Erh, Master Lao Lai, Lao P'eng, an archivist of the Chou dynasty, and others.[1] Nonetheless, a dispassionate review of the available evidence can only lead to one conclusion: there is not a single shred of reliable biographical information concerning the identity of the Old Master. We simply must admit that we do not know who he was, where and when he was born, what his occupation was, or anything else about him. All we have is a collection of sayings attributed to him that seem to have begun to coalesce sometime during the fourth century B.I.E. and was probably written down during the second half of the third century B.I.E.

It is not unreasonable to assume that there must have been a prototype for the Old Master. Someone, after all, did originate a group of more or less coherent sayings that espouse a minimalist political strategy heavily laden with mystical overtones. Ultimately these sayings came to be written down in terse, code-like Classical Chinese and were identified first as the book of the Old Master and much later as the *TTC*. We cannot rule out the possibility that more than one individual was responsible for formulating the sayings now attributed to the Old Master. Thus our philosopher may actually be a collective personality. This is not to ignore the fact that an ample hagiographical tradition soon enveloped the Old Master in a web of intriguing legend and that adherents of Taoism put great faith in it. Yet it is obvious that there are apocryphal aspects to the personality of the Old Master. Many sayings attributed to him in other books that **predate** the written versions of the *TTC* are missing from the latter. This is an entirely different -- and more troubling -- matter than the accretion of forged materials around an author **after** the appearance of his book. It implies that the *TTC* is a **selection** of proverbial wisdom from a larger body of sayings attributed to one or more Old Masters, rather than a newly created work falsely ascribed to a prominent figure with the intention of increasing its stature.

If the *TTC* was not the product of an identifiable author, how do we explain its palpable existence? The answer to this question is fairly straightforward: the *TTC* is the result of a period of oral composition that lasted approximately three centuries (mid-sixth through mid-third) and an editorial and commentarial process that is still going on today but was essentially completed by the end of the third century B.I.E. with some significant revisions and "improvements" during the second half of the second century and the first half of the third century I.E.

Numerous vestiges of orality remain in the *TTC* and fall into several different categories. We shall examine one or two examples of each type. In most cases, many more could be adduced. One of the most striking features of the *TTC* is that, in spite of its brevity, it includes a great deal of repetition. It may be argued that this could be the result of a conscious attempt to emphasize certain important doctrines, but this contention does not bear up under scrutiny. As we shall see in the textual analysis which follows, the repetitiousness of the *TTC* is the result of the historical process whereby it became a text.

Sometimes the repetition is very close (as between LII.9ff and LVI.4ff or IV.5-7 and LVI.7-9) and other times it is exact (XXXII.1 and XXXVII.1). Occasionally we encounter the replication of what is essentially the same metaphor, even when it is quite complicated (XI.1-9). Such superficial modifications and variations are hallmarks of oral delivery. Numerous additional instances of repetition are cited in the notes.

A detailed textual examination of the Ma-wang-tui silk manuscripts of the *TTC* shows that they are replete with gross homophonic orthographical errors.[2] This is a fair indication that they had only recently evolved from an oral tradition. By the third century I.E., with the establishment of the received text, all of the miswritings are "corrected." Unfortunately, as the notes to this

translation prove, the "corrections" themselves are often wrong. The real challenge is to discover what word from the spoken language lies behind the tetragraph(s) used to represent it.

The *TTC* is full of internal evidence that it is a collection of proverbial wisdom which previously must have circulated orally. On the one hand, we encounter completely isolated adages (XXXII.1, XXXVI.10, XXIII.1). On the other hand, we come across obvious quotations (XLI.10ff, XXXV.10ff, LVII.15ff). In several instances, traces of editorial activity are revealed unmistakably. Chapter XIX opens with three statements or sayings (lines 1-6) that are explicitly labeled as such (line 7). It closes with a set of succinct maxims (lines 11-16), apparently from a different source, which the compiler subsumes to them. Chapter XXII begins thus: "If it is bent, it will be preserved intact...." Lines 28-29 of the same chapter identify this statement as an "old saying" and declare that it is quite true. There can be no doubt that chapter XXII consists of at least two very different types of material: proverbial adages and editorial comments. It is not always easy to sort them out in other chapters because they are seldom so clearly marked as in this case. Nonetheless, evidence of editorial tampering abounds. Most often, it is displayed in the jarring juxtaposition of prosaic exegesis and orally imbued poetic wisdom.

The ubiquitous statements of definition ("This is called...", e.g. LII.19, LIII.14) betray the heavy hand of an editor or compiler who is afraid his reader will not comprehend the message of the poetry he has gathered. If we insist on attributing these clumsy remarks to the Old Master himself, it is a bizarre kind of self-exegesis indeed that he indulged in. The inclusion of explanatory comment in the text is frequently obtrusive (L.20-21, LXVI.3-4, XIII *passim* and see the note to lines 6-7) and can hardly be ascribed to a mystic or poet.

Another type of evidence for the oral provenience of the *TTC* is the adoption of mnemonic devices and formulaic language. They stand as relics of a stage when the sayings of the Old Master had to be handed down by word of mouth, rather than with brush and ink. Often the same grammatical pattern recurs over and over again in successive lines (II.5-10, VIII.6-11, XV.8-21, LIV.4-8, 9-13). Chain arguments are favored so that a whole series of propositions are linked together thus: if A then B, if B then C, if C... (LIX.4ff.). There is extensive employment of parallelism (XII.1-10, XVIII.2-9). The high sententiousness (e.g. LVI.1-2) of many of the most memorable passages of the *TTC* confirm our suspicion that at its core is a body of perduring homiletic wisdom.

The Old Master is perhaps best represented in chapters such as XXXIII which consist entirely of a series of apothegms and maxims uncontaminated by any editorial insertions. Some chapters, however, are pure patchwork and barely cohere (e.g. XX, one of the longest chapters, which has several lines that surely seem to belong elsewhere). A few chapters, conversely, are beautifully crafted and would appear to have been composed as integral texts. The literary value of LXXX, for example, is deservedly high, for it presents a well-constructed picture of an imaginary primordial utopia in simple yet attractive terms with no discernible traces of oral composition. It is probable that chapters such as this were created expressly for the *TTC* by the editor(s) responsible for the first written version(s) of the Old Master's sayings.

The matter of editorial intervention is vital for a correct understanding of the nature of the *TTC*. As a specimen of the ways in which it is revealed, let us scrutinize in greater depth the phenomenon of the pseudo-conclusions which seem to be everywhere in the *TTC*. Chapter XLII, for example, contains two "conclusions" (lines 14-16 and 17-19) that follow one another in immediate succession. Both begin with the conjunction "therefore" which seems to imply a logical progression from what precedes. However, unless one makes an extremely forced interpretation, the first "conclusion" does not follow and the second is definitely a *fallacia consequentis*. Chapter XVIII even begins with the conclusional marker "therefore," although it shares no conceivable connection whatsoever with the preceding chapter. It is not surprising that all later editors simply removed the marker, but taking such liberties seriously distorts the true composition of the text.

The same sort of pattern recurs frequently in the *TTC*. Another extreme example of a pseudo-conclusion may be found in LXXI (cf. XXXIV) where the statement "Thus, he has no defects" serves no other purpose than to give the appearance of deductive argumentation. Indeed, more often than not, markers such as "therefore," "thus," and "for this reason" in the *TTC* do not really serve to connect an argument with its conclusion. How, then, do we explain their common

occurrence at what seem to be crucial junctures? The answer lies in the very nature of the text itself. Those who first began to compile the scattered bits of proverbial wisdom attributed to the Old Master used these and other devices to give the appearance of a coherent text. In fact, a critical reading of the *TTC*, even in the Ma-wang-tui versions, can only lead to the realization that it is burgeoning with *non sequiturs*, repetitions, and other obvious vestiges of its derivation from an amorphous corpus of homiletic sayings. Wishing to produce a written text that could be preserved as the canonical focus for an emerging school of thought, the initial editor(s) of the Old Master's adages attempted to mold them into an integral text. Because of the enormous respect accorded to the *TTC*, particularly after the founding of Taoist religious sects from the late second century I.E. on, dedicated readers have always assumed that the classic was constructed from start to finish by a single guiding intelligence. Consequently, they have attempted to interpret it as though they would any other closely reasoned philosophical discourse. The results, while displaying valiant determination to make sense of the book as a whole and of its constituent parts, are often sheer gibberish. The very frustration of the exegetes at not being able to make everything in the *TTC* fit together neatly has only served to fuel further obfuscation. A substantial measure of the fascination which this small scripture has harbored for adherents of Taoism for more than two millennia stems from their inability to comprehend its overall structure. The same is true, of course, of many early religious texts, but the problem is particularly acute with the *TTC* because it is so laconic. The Old Master's fondness for antinomy, antithesis, and negation only heightens the sense of mystery that surrounds this short collection of epigrams and aphorisms.

Probably the most skeptical approach to the *TTC* was that of Herbert Giles (1886), the distinguished Professor of Chinese at the University of Cambridge from 1897-1932. Basing himself on evidence (or lack thereof) drawn from such early Chinese texts as the *Analects* of Confucius, the *Chronicle of Tso, Master Chuang, Mencius, Master Han Fei, Master Huai Nan,* the *Records of the Grand Historian,* and the *Explanation of Script,* he declared that the received version of the text is a forgery concocted **after** the beginning of the International Era. In this, I am inclined to agree with Giles, except to point out that the "forgery," if that is what we may call it, was already substantially a *fait accompli* at least two centuries before the time fixed by him. More often than not, the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts agree with the general outline of the received version, which means that both textual traditions largely shared a common fund of sayings attributed to the Old Master. Giles conclusion stands: we still have no positive means to ascertain that the Old Master wrote a book with the title *TTC* (or with any other title, for that matter). Giles strove valiantly to separate out the pristine sayings of the Old Master that were "sandwiched ... between thick wads of padding from which little meaning can be extracted except by enthusiasts who curiously enough disagree absolutely among themselves." (1901, p. 58) In his dissection of the *TTC*, Giles had many more still harsher barbs to fling. It is odd, however, that he never evinced the slightest skepticism about the historicity of the Old Master as the genuine author of the sayings attributed to him. For this reason, his analysis ultimately fails. To put the *TTC* in the proper perspective, it is essential not only that we recognize its oral background; we need to arrive at an approximate date for emergence of the sayings and for their commitment to writing.

The traditional dates for the Old Master are usually given as about 580-500 B.I.E. The chief grounds for this are the numerous apocryphal versions of a pious legend about an encounter between him and Confucius (naturally the Old Master comes out on top). Yet neither is the Old Master nor his book ever mentioned in the *Analects* of Confucius (551-479).[3] The same is true of the *Chronicle of Tso* (completed 463), which was a commentary on Confucius' *Spring and Autumn Annals* of his home state of Lu for the period 722-481 B.I.E. Likewise, we find no mention of the Old Master or his book in the work attributed to Mencius (372-289), the second great Confucian sage. Disappointment also ensues when we search for the Old Master in the *Mecius* (*Master Mo*), the canons of a noteworthy populist philosopher who lived (480-400?) between the times of Confucius and Mencius. We would expect that Master Chuang (355?-275?), who was roughly contemporary with Mencius, might have mentioned a book by the Old Master, should one have existed during his lifetime, since he is generally considered to have been a follower of the Way of the Old Master. Although he fails to do so, he does refer to the Old Master

in the last chapter (33) of his book entitled "All Under Heaven" which is a survey of the major thinkers in China up to and including Master Chuang himself.[4] If the sayings of the Old Master had already been committed to writing by his time, one would expect that Master Chuang (or his successors) would have taken especial care to record their wording accurately. Yet, in his exposition of the Old Master's thought,[5] there is only one instance (*TTC*, XIX.15-16 and XX.1-2) where he comes close to quoting his presumed predecessor exactly (insofar as the Old Master is represented in the *TTC*). All of Master Chuang's other quotations from the Old Master reflect well enough the general principles of his presumed guru, but present his sayings in a jumbled fashion -- if we take the *TTC* as a standard. The same is true of virtually all other quotations purporting to come from the Old Master in sources that date from before the second half of the third century B.I.E. Only in extremely rare cases do they tally exactly with his words as recorded in the *TTC* and in most cases they only vaguely approximate the overall tenor and import of various parts of the *TTC*. The situation improves drastically as we approach the second century B.I.E.

The sayings of the Old Master are first quoted or referred to in Warring States and Western Han period works such as *Master Chuang, Master Kuan,* the *Spring and Autumn Annals of Mr. Lü, Master Huai-nan, Master Han Fei, Records of the Grand Historian,* and *Intrigues of the Warring States*. It therefore seems highly improbable that a work attributed to the Old Master could have been compiled before 476 B.I.E., the advent of the Warring States period. In terms of intellectual history, the Old Master represents a Yoga-like quietist reaction against the hierarchically-oriented, bureaucratically-minded ideology of Confucius and his followers. The Old Master's digs against humanism (*jen*), righteousness (*i*), etiquette (*li*), filial piety (*hsiao*), and so forth are manifestly directed at the Confucian school. This could not likely have come to pass before about the middle of the fourth century B.I.E. because Confucianism itself had not solidified sufficiently until then to be viewed as a threat to more spiritually minded individuals.

Another noteworthy factor in the development of the teachings of the Old Master was his intimate association with the Yellow Emperor during the Ch'in (221-206 B.I.E.) and Western Han (206 B.I.E. - 8 I.E.) periods. Whereas the Old Master (Lao Tzu) was deemed to be the teacher par excellence of mystically efficacious statecraft, the Yellow Emperor (Huang-ti) was revered as the mythical perfect ruler, the presumed inventor of many aspects of Chinese civilization, and the supposed founder of the Chinese race. Together, they served as the focus of a Huang-Lao cult that flourished along the eastern coastal region of Shantung.

Linguistically, the *TTC* is something of a hodgepodge in which are embedded usages from various regions and periods.[6] It is impossible on the basis of the language of the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts or of the received text to draw any firm conclusions about either the provenance or the date of the classic. On the basis of language usage alone, it would be very risky to assign an overall date before about the middle of the third century.

Taking into consideration the international situation, political conditions within China, intellectual trends, linguistic features, textual references, and strong internal evidence of oral evolution, the chronology of the nascent *TTC* is approximately as follows. The first sayings of a proto-Taoist Old Master or Masters resembling the wisdom of Indian *ṛṣis* (see the next two sections of this introduction) started to circulate around the middle of the sixth century B.I.E. By the middle of the fifth century, the sayings associated with the Old Master(s) began to take on an increasingly anti-Confucian coloring. Also detectable is an anti-Mohist animus which sprang from overattention to the populace on the part of Master Mo and his followers to the detriment of the ruler. The composition of the *Master Chuang* book (a literary text from its very inception) and other comparable works not long after the beginning of the third century may have provided the stimulus to assemble under the putative authorship of the Old Master the wise sayings attributed to him during the course of the previous three centuries. The codification of the *TTC* was probably essentially finished by the middle of the third century and the first written exemplars must have appeared by about that time, setting the stage for the Ma-wang-tui silk manuscripts on which the present translation is based.

During the latter part of 1973, thirty silk manuscripts were excavated from Han tomb number 3 at Ma-wang-tui (literally "Horse King [Skt. *aśva-rāja*] Mound [i.e., tumulus, kurgan]")

in the city of Changsha, Hunan province. They had been buried in the tomb of the son of Li Ts'ang (died 186 B.I.E.), Marquis of Tai and Prime Minister of Changsha. The son died in 168 B.I.E., so the manuscripts recovered from his tomb must date from before that time. Among the manuscripts were two nearly complete texts of the *TTC* which we may refer to as A and B. Based on the style of the calligraphy and the observation of taboos concerning the names of Han dynasty emperors, A has been dated to sometime between 206-195 (alternatively 221-206) and B to sometime between 194-180 (alternatively 206-195). This means that they are at least four and a half centuries earlier than any previously available text of the *TTC*. If we take into account the actual date of extant manuscripts and texts inscribed on stone, the gap is still greater.[7]

The next major stage in the evolution of the *TTC* after the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts was the appearance around the beginning of the third century I.E. of the standard recension (referred to in this introduction as the *textus receptus* or received text) together with three notable commentaries, the Hsiang-erh, the Ho-shang Kung, and the Wang Pi. The suddenly renewed attention to the *TTC* and the proliferation of commentaries around the end of the Eastern Han dynasty must be related to the millennial Taoist rebellions attendant upon the breakup of the empire and to the rapid spread of Buddhism which had a profound impact on religious Taoism. It is no wonder that the deification of the Old Master occurred at about the same time. Master Han Fei (270?-233 B.I.E.) had earlier elucidated 22 passages from the *TTC* in chapters 5 and 6 of the book named after him while Master Huai-nan (d. 122 B.I.E.) had explained 41 passages in chapter 12 of the book that goes by his name, but they had both used the Old Master for their own purposes (Legalist and Eclectic respectively). Neither pretended to be a Taoist per se.

Only the first half of the Hsiang-erh commentary, preserved in a Tun-huang manuscript, survives. We know nothing of its author except that he exhibited extreme Yogic proclivities. The next commentary, and the oldest complete one, is that by the brilliant Wang Pi (226-249) who died at the age of 23.[8] After it comes the Ho-shang Kung ("Gentleman Who Lives by the River," though I suspect that this may be a Taoist euphemism for the homonymous "Monkish Gentleman" [M2115c1,4] -- the same exchange between the word for "monk" and the expression "by the river" [M2111-M5669] was known in Hong Kong rural onomastics as late as the 1950s -- James Watson, unpublished manuscript) about whose author we are also totally in the dark.[9] Where the Wang Pi commentary is more philosophical and metaphysical, the Ho-shang Kung commentary is more religiously oriented and places heavy emphasis on longevity.

What is important to observe is that both bring their own doctrinally laden agendas to the *TTC* and, as such, are not reliable guides where a sound philological understanding of the original text is desired. Aside from minor details, the versions of the *Tao Te Ching* that they present are nearly identical and may be collectively designated as the received text, although the Wang Pi version is favored by the majority of scholars. Before the discovery of the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts, there were altogether half a dozen major recensions of the text that date from before the ninth century I.E. The differences among them are not great, but careful scholarship requires that all of them be taken into account. Yet even when all of the six previously existing editions are consulted, a host of baffling questions remain.

It is only with the emergence of the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts that a substantial number of these problems can be solved. The chief reason for this is that they preserve many credible readings which later editors and commentators changed for political, polemical, and philosophical purposes, or simply because they could not comprehend them. This is not to assert that the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts necessarily constitute the Urtext of the *Old Master,* only that they bring us much closer to it than any of the previously available recensions.

There was a renewed attention to the *Tao Te Ching* and a proliferation of commentaries upon it around the end of the Eastern or Later Han dynasty (25-220 I.E.). This was undoubtedly related to the millennial Taoist rebellions attendant upon the breakup of the empire and to the concurrent rapid spread of Buddhism which had a profound impact on religious Taoism. It is not surprising that the deification of the Old Master occurred at about the same time. The Old Master was described as a god in an inscription on a votive tablet erected in 165 I.E. and there is even a record of a joint sacrifice to the Old Master and the Buddha in the year 166.

All of the Taoist sects that sprang up after the middle of the second century looked to the Old Master and his book for inspiration and validation. The most lasting of these sects was the "Way of the Celestial Masters" founded in the year 142 I.E. by Chang Tao-ling after he received a revelation from T'ai-shang Lao Chün ("Exalted Lord Old [Master]") and urged his followers to adhere to the teachings of the *Tao Te Ching*. His successors functioned as so-called "Taoist Popes" until the middle of this century when the 63rd holder of the title sought refuge from Communism in Taiwan. The Yellow Turbans, the most powerful of the late Han Taoist groups, worshipped a Huang-Lao Chün (a composite of "Lord of the Yellow [Emperor] and Old [Master]"). Although their messianic rebellion was quelled in 184 I.E., its occurrence demonstrates the persistent strength of the Huang-Lao cult that may well have been involved in the formation of the *Tao Te Ching* itself five centuries before at the end of the Warring States period.

The head of the Yellow Turbans was Chang Chüeh, but many of the other charismatic leaders of similar uprisings that took place around the same time and during later centuries on a smaller scale were from the Li clan. Often they identified themselves as avatars of a certain Li Hung who was a first-century B.I.E. chieftain from the western part of China. It would appear that the tenuous identification of the Old Master with the surname Li was due to the intense involvement of members of that clan in the early formation of Taoistically inclined movements. For similar reasons, the partially Turkic T'ang royal family (who by chance bore the same surname) considered themselves to be the Old Master's descendants. They reaffirmed his divinity in an edict of the year 666 and established an official course of study on the Taoist classics in 737. It may also be significant that the major geographical focus of most of the early Taoist social movements was in Szechwan, a part of China that was remote from the political center and that had good connections through Yunnan, Tibet, and Kansu with points farther west. In any case, there is no doubt that the solidification of the *Tao Te Ching* as a classic worthy of publication and annotation was due to its veneration by a succession of fervent religious leaders during the more than four hundred years of the Western and Eastern Han dynasties.

Because most ancient Chinese texts are difficult to read, the commentaries and subcommentaries attached to them can have a huge impact on a reader's understanding, especially of one that is so extraordinarily opaque and refractory as the *Tao Te Ching*. Since the second century, more than 1,500 commentaries have been devoted to the *TTC*. We would do well to heed the words of Arthur Waley (p. 129) before citing them in our attempts to make sense of the original *TTC*:

> All the commentaries, from Wang Pi's onwards down to the 18th century, are 'scriptural'; that is to say that each commentator reinterprets the text according to his own particular tenets, without any intention or desire to discover what it meant originally. From my point of view they are therefore useless.

By no means does this imply that the various commentaries have no intrinsic value of their own as records for the study of intellectual and religious history. Indeed, since 1949, it has even become possible to read the Old Master as espousing a materialist philosophy acceptable to Marxism! In the early stages of the evolution of the *TTC*, before the text became fixed, this sort of willful interpretation was commonplace. To be sure, there are numerous instances where the political and governmental concerns of the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts are transmuted in the received text to more mystical and sacerdotal ends.

The original *TTC* is actually a very political book. Elsewise, why so much attention to gaining all under heaven (e.g. XLVIII.7 and 11, LVII.3)? Clearly, the aim of the author(s) was to show the way to achieve hegemony over the empire. The sage, who appears so often in the *TTC*, is the ideal ruler with the heart of a yogin, an unlikely blend of India and China. The best way to control is through minimal interference and by keeping the people simple (i.e., without knowledge and without desires), two pervasive themes of the *TTC*. As members of a modern, democratic society, we may find reprehensible chapters such as III which advocate filling the bellies and emptying the minds of the people. But if we understand them as exemplifying a kind of third-

century B.I.E. realpolitik, they begin to make sense as antidotes to the turbulent conditions that prevailed in society. Although there is much in the *TTC* of a mystical, metaphysical quality, the text as a whole is manifestly designed to serve as a handbook for the ruler. Perhaps this is the most intriguing aspect of the *TTC* for a late twentieth-century reader -- the audacity to combine cosmic speculation and mundane governance in a single, slender tome. Some of the mundanity has been leached out of the received text by the religious preoccupations of those who were responsible for it, but in the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts it is still quite obvious.

Next to the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts, by far the most important edition for anyone who strives to comprehend the *TTC* as it existed during the late third century B.I.E. is that of Fu I (555-640) which is usually referred to as the "ancient text" (*ku-pen*). It is ostensibly based largely on a text of the *TTC* said to have been found in the year 574 in the tomb of one of Hsiang Yü's concubines. Hsiang Yü was a renowned military and political personage at the end of the Chou dynasty who lived from 232-202 B.I.E. and was from the state of Ch'u. This is additional evidence that the *TTC* probably first came to be written down during the latter part of the third century B.I.E. and in what were then considered to be the southern reaches of Chinese civilization. This puts the apparent source of the *TTC* in a region that had access to Indian Yoga both by land (to the southwest) and by sea (to the southeast), a factor that will receive due attention in the next two sections of the introduction. It is also highly significant that Fu I's ancient text derives from the very same area as do the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts. Furthermore, it is possible that the Ma-wang-tui and Fu I texts were among the very first attempts to write down the *TTC*.[10] As such, they would still have had restricted local circulation at the time Ssu-ma Ch'ien (145-90?) was writing his *Records of the Grand Historian*. Even though he had travelled to the region where the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts and the text of Fu I were found when he was younger, his "biography" of the Old Master is extremely vague and confusing about the various individuals whom he feebly attempts to identify as the thinker and makes no mention at all of the *TTC*. We might add that Fu I showed extraordinarily good judgement in not unduly regularizing the ancient text from the tomb of Hsiang Yü's concubine according to the received text. Consequently, we are able to use it to good advantage as a complement to the A and B Ma-wang-tui manuscripts.

While there are significant differences between the Ma-wang-tui and received texts of the *TTC*, they resemble each other to such a degree that we may conclude they are part of the same broad textual tradition. That is to say, they constitute different recensions of a single parent work. Therefore, even the received text -- when used judiciously -- is of some value in our reading of the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts. That is why certain studies of the *TTC* carried out after the advent of "evidential learning" (*k'ao-cheng-hsüeh*) during the eighteenth century partly under the tutelage of the Jesuits and other Western scholars, being of sufficient philological rigor, are occasionally useful in our efforts to understand the original *TTC*. By and large, however, the solution to most of the problems confronting the researcher who would comprehend the meaning of the original *TTC* are to be found in the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts and the Fu I text together with other materials contemporaneous with them.

Because of the discovery of the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts and the advancement of critical modern scholarship, specialists are currently in a better position to elucidate the original *TTC* than at any time during the past two millennia and more. By employing the methods of close textual analysis and comparative religion, we now realize that oral composition played a significant role in the rise of the *TTC* and that there are telling echoes of Yoga in the earliest strands of the text. While none of the examples cited in the first half of this section taken alone would be sufficient to vouch for the fundamentally oral derivation of the *TTC*, their cumulative weight is overwhelmingly persuasive. As for the Indian inputs to the *TTC*, we shall examine some of them in the next two sections.

[b] The Title

Now that we have become acquainted with the historical background of the *TTC*, the most pressing task is to acquaint ourselves with the title and a few key terms. By exploring unrestrainedly the three words that make up the title and three other basic words that are intimately connected to the book, we will gain a more profound understanding of its overall import.

It may come as a bit of a shock for those who are fond of the *TTC* to learn that, strictly speaking, the title is something of a misnomer. In the first place, the book was originally known simply as the *Old Master*, just as numerous other works of the Warring States period went by the names of the thinkers with whom they were most closely associated. The appellation "classic" only became attached to it during the succeeding Han period by Taoist religionists. We can be fairly certain that orthodox Confucians would never have awarded it that honor. The *Way [and] Integrity Classic* (the literal meaning of *TTC*) is actually a plausible enough name for the book, except that the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts begin with the thirty-eighth chapter of the received text, so a more proper designation would be *Integrity [and] Way Classic*, i.e. *Te Tao Ching*.

The exact date at which the classic became known as the *Tao Te Ching* is unclear. Ma Hsü-lun (p. 7) claims that this title was already used during the Western Han period (206 B.I.E.-8 I.E.), but all the sources he cites where it actually occurs are from a much later time, even though they purport to draw on Han texts. According to his biography in the *History of the Chin Dynasty* (*Chin-shu*, written during the first half of the seventh century), the famous calligrapher Wang Hsi-chih (321-379) once copied out the *TTC* in exchange for some fine geese that had been raised by a Taoist who lived in the mountains. This is probably the first explicit mention of the classic by this title. The next reliable occurrence of the title *TTC* is in the "Bibliographical Treatise" (*Ching-chi Chih*) by Chang-sun Wu-chi (d. 659) *et al.* which is included in the *History of the Sui Dynasty*.[11] This would seem to indicate that the classic was well known by its now customary title by no later than the Sui period (589-618). The facts and dates cited here are in accord with the presumed chronology of the elevation of the *TTC* to scriptural status during the breakup of the Han dynasty and the rise of Taoist religion that began at about the same time.

The *TTC* is also known popularly as the *Classic of Five Thousand Graphs*, but the number 5,000 is entirely whimsical. Extant versions actually range from 5,227 to 5,722 graphs in length. Ma-wang-tui manuscript B, by its own reckoning, originally consisted of 3,041 + 2,426 = 5,467 graphs. The repeated attempts to prune the classic down to exactly 5,000 graphs are but another example of the self-fulfilling hagiographical impulse to shape the thinker and his book into a neat, preconceived package.

Perhaps the safest way to refer to the object of our inquiry would be simply as the *Old Master* or *Sayings of the Old Master*. However, since the book is already known so widely as the *TTC*, it behooves us to explain the meaning of this title as thoroughly as possible. Inasmuch as this involves a brief excursion into philology, we must first offer a few words of caution concerning Sinitic languages and the Chinese script. The most important thing is to reiterate the clear distinction that needs to be made between the spoken languages and the script. The Chinese script is ostensibly a device for recording on a surface the sentiments and sounds of the languages. Yet the script is definitely not equivalent to any of the languages and, in many instances, there is an enormous gap between the two. We must be wary of using visual analysis of the ideographic and pictographic components of a tetragraph alone to arrive at the presumed meaning of the word from the spoken language that it is meant to convey. The phonology of Sinitic takes precedence over the script as it does with any language when one is trying to extract meaning.

The Chinese script may be technically described as morphosyllabic. In layman's terms, this means that the individual graphs convey both meaning and sound but neither with complete fidelity. The Sinitic language group, just as other major language groups, consists of a number of ancient and modern tongues.[12] Although the differences among them are at least as great as those between English and German, French and Italian, Czech and Russian, the modern languages (Cantonese, Fukienese, Mandarin, etc.) are often erroneously styled "dialects" because of the mistranslation of the Chinese term *fang-yen* ("topolect") and certain nonlinguistic political

constraints. The differences between modern Sinitic languages and ancient ones are even greater. They are, in fact, comparable to the divergencies between Sanskrit and Hindi or between Latin and Italian.

Most Sinitic languages have never received a written expression. Those who become literate are forced to learn at least passively the standard language of government (usually a regularized form of that spoken in the capital). Or, in pre-modern times, they learned the version of classical book language then current. It must be observed that the classical language has not functioned as a spoken tongue for at least two thousand years and there is mounting evidence which leads us to believe that it may never have been an accurate reflection of speech. The highly elliptical character of classical Chinese makes reading it an almost code-like exercise requiring enormous training and patience. Because the Chinese script was systematized at a time when the vernacular languages were not written down, there is a large gulf between the phonological information it conveys and the actual sounds of living Sinitic languages. Thus the tetragraph which speakers of MSM pronounce as *shu* ("tree") was pronounced *źyu* in Ch'ang-an (the capital of the T'ang dynasty) around a thousand years ago and something like **dyugkh* around 1,600 years before that. The reconstruction of the sounds of Middle and especially Old Sinitic is still in a rather primitive state, but it is essential if further progress is to be made in our comprehension of ancient Chinese civilization.

One of the most exciting recent developments in Chinese historical linguistics has a direct bearing on our investigation of the title of the *TTC*. This is the discovery that there are unmistakable linkages between Old Sinitic and Indo-European languages.[13] Tsung-tung Chang has published over 200 proposed equivalences and is preparing a common lexicon for OS and IE that will include more than 1,500 basic words. Since the work is still in its infancy, we do not yet know the exact nature of the relationship (i.e. whether it is due to extensive borrowing, to some more fundamental kind of kinship, or a combination of the two). Investigators in this new field are heartened by the corroboration their work is receiving from archeology. It is now universally accepted, for example, that the chariot of the Shang dynasty burials around 1200 B.I.E. is virtually identical with that of the Caucasus a couple of centuries earlier.[14]

Various distinctive metal implements (knives, axes, arrowheads, toggles, etc.) have been excavated from a continuum of easily travelled steppe land that runs all the way from northern China, through South Siberia, to Northern Europe.[15] Wherever material culture is exchanged, so too are ideas and words. Thus we feel fully justified in pointing out the Indo-European cognates to all of the key terms that will be discussed in the remainder of this section. We believe, furthermore, that this practice will serve powerfully to illuminate the meanings of these terms for our readers as well as to demonstrate the non-exotic, non-peripheral quality of Chinese civilization. No longer may China be excluded from discussions of world history, for it has always been very much a part of the ebb and flow of human events and ideas. It is only our constrictive historiography that has hitherto underestimated China's place in the evolution of mankind.

THE WAY / *Tao* (pronounced *dow*)

The central concept of the *TTC*, of Taoist philosophy and religion, and indeed of all Chinese thought is Tao. The translation of Tao as "Way" is an easy matter, but our comprehension of the term will be heightened by a closer look at its early history. The archaic pronunciation of Tao sounded approximately like **d[r]og*. There was also a very early bisyllabic variant of the same expression which was pronounced **dog-ragh* (MSM *tao-lu*, M6136.76), signifying in fused form **drog*, **dorg*, or the like. The purpose of the second tetragraphic syllable was to make explicit the *r* sound. This is cognate with the PIE root **drogh* ("to run along") and IE √**dhorg-* ("way, movement"). Related words in a few modern IE languages are Russian *doroga* ("way, road"), Polish *droga* ("way, road), Czech *draha* ("way, track"), Serbo-Croatian *draga* ("[path through a] valley"), and Norwegian dialect *drog* ("trail of animals; valley" [cf. "run" with the same meaning in West Virginia and southern Ohio]). The latter two examples may help to account for the frequent and memorable valley imagery of the *TTC* (IXL.8-9, 23-24; XLI.14; LXVI.1-4; VI.1; XV.20-21; XXVIII.3-4, 10-11; XXXII.18-19 and see particularly the textual note thereto): ways

and valleys, it would appear, are bound together in our consciousness. The nearest Skt. cognates to Tao (**d[r]og*) are *dhrajas* ("course, motion") and *dhrāj* ("course"). The most closely related English words are "track" and "trek," while "trail" and "tract" are derived from other cognate IE roots. Following the Way, then, is like going on a cosmic trek. Even more unexpected than the panoply of IE cognates for Tao (**d[r]og*) is the Hebrew triliteral root *d-r-g* for the same word and Arabic *t-r-q* which yields words meaning "track, path, way, way of doing things" and is important in Islamic philosophical discourse. Tao indubitably had its roots deep in elemental human experience.

The fundamental connection between Tao and track has recently received confirmation from a completely unexpected source. Inspired by Robert Nozick's notion of tracking value, Chad Hansen (1990) has suggested that it is like following the Tao. Neither Nozick nor Hansen were consciously aware of the etymological relatedness between the two terms, and yet their insights have brought Tao and "track" together in a context that is appropriate for the *Tao Te Ching*.

The tetragraph for Tao (**d[r]og*) first occurs in bronze inscriptions where it was made up of an element pictographically signifying "head" that indicated very roughly the sound of the word and a surrounding component that implies travel to a stopping place or goal. Since the word Tao (**d[r]og*) obviously existed long before the tetragraph later used to write it, elaborate analysis of the visual shape of the tetragraph contributes little to our fundamental understanding of the word itself which is, after all, but a string of sounds with associated meanings.

As a religiophilosophical concept, Tao is the all-pervading, self-existent, eternal cosmic unity, the source from which all created things emanate and to which they all return. We may well ponder the fact that this description could serve equally well for Brahman, the central principle of Indian philosophy and religion. Just as the Tao exists in the myriad creatures, so is Brahman present in all living beings. Brahman, like the Tao, is unborn or birthless (Skt. *aja;* MSM *wu-sheng*) and without beginning (*anādi; wu-shih*), both important ideas in *Master Chuang* and in later Taoism. *Wu-sheng,* in particular, becomes a standard epithet for the Mother Queen of the West, the main female deity in Taoism (cf. *Śvetāśvatara Up.*, III.21), who incidentally is strikingly reminiscent of the *mātṛ, devī, śrī,* Rājñī (all names for the mother goddess) worshipped by Śakti devotees as part of Tantric ritual in Kashmir from ancient times.

A frequent image in Indian religions is that of a way leading to unification with Brahman, i.e. *Brahma-patha* (*patha* being cognate with "path"). It has been beautifully described in the ancient *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* (IV.iv.8-9). The Buddhists translated this into Chinese as *Fan-tao,* literally "Brahman-Way," a striking expression which brings together these two manifestations of cosmic unity. Yoga, which we will have much to say about in the next section of the introduction, is often thought of as a discipline that serves as a path to Brahman. In the *BG,* Krishna (who is an avatar of the godhead), repeatedly encourages Arjuna to follow his way (*vartman,* also rendered as Tao in Buddhist Chinese). An even more common word for the way in Indian religions is *mārga.* In Buddhism, for example, it was thought of as the means for escape from the misery of worldly existence. Among the many translations of *mārga* into Chinese were the following: Tao, *sheng-tao* ("sagely way"), *cheng-tao* ("correct way"), *sheng-tao* ("way of victory"), *chin-tao* ("way of progress"), and so forth. Judging from these and other usages, the adaptability of Tao to Indian religious concepts, including Brahman, is unquestioned.

INTEGRITY / *te* (pronounced *duh*)

The second word in the title of the *TTC,* namely *te,* is far more difficult to handle than the first. A sample of its intractability may be gleaned from the astonishing sweep of the following thoughtful renderings which have previously been applied to it: mana, sinderesis, power, life, inner potency, indarrectitude, charisma, and virtue, to name only a few of the brave attempts to convey the meaning of *te* in English. Of these, the last is by far the most frequently encountered. Unfortunately, it is also probably the least appropriate of all to serve as an accurate translation of *te* in the *TTC.* Much of the confusion surrounding the term *te* in the study of the *TTC* stems from the fact that, after appropriation by Confucian moralists, it did indeed gradually come to mean "virtue" in a positive sense and not merely the Latinate notion of "manliness, strength, capacity." *Virtūs* would be an acceptable translation of *te* but, regrettably, the English word "virtue" has taken the

same moralistic path of evolution as that followed by MSM *te*. To illustrate how far we have departed from the Old Master, *tao-te* as a bisyllabic word has come to mean "morality" which is surely not what he had in mind by *tao* and *te*. To return to our exploration of the latter term alone, in the very first chapter of the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts (actually only in B, since the first 16 graphs are missing in A), we encounter the expression *hsia-te* (XXXVIII.3) which means "inferior *te*." Another common expression that was current about the same time as the *TTC* is *hsiung-te* (M2808.12) which signifies "malevolent *te*." If we were to render *te* as "virtue" in such situations, we would be faced with unwanted and unacceptable oxymorons. It is plain that we must seek a more value-neutral term in Modern English. To find what that might be, let us begin by looking intently at the etymology of the Chinese word, after which we will describe the tetragraph used to write it.

The sound of MSM *te* may be reconstructed for the early Chou period (between about 1100 and 600 B.I.E.) as approximately **dugh*. The meanings it conveys in texts from that period are the following: "character," "[good or bad] intentions," "quality," "disposition," "personality," "personhood," "personal strength," and "worth." There is a very close correlation between this complex of meanings and words deriving from PIE √**dhugh* ("to be fit, of use, proper; acceptable; achieve"). Because of the manifold uncertainties surrounding the signification of *te* (**dugh*) in *TTC* and the obstacles to felicitous translation that it presents, it will be necessary to list many more cognates for it than we did for Tao (**d[r]og*).[16] In Old Frisian and Old Norse, we have *duga* ("to be of use, fit strong, capable; avail, suffice"). Old Norse also has the nominative *dugr* ("strength"). In Russian, we have *duzhiĭ* or *dyuzhiĭ* for "strong, robust" and in Polish we find *duzy* with the same meaning. Irish has *dūal* (from **dhughlo-*) with the meanings "becoming fit, due, proper." It would be possible to trace similar cognates deriving from PIE √**dhugh* through Greek, Persian, and other languages, but we need cite only Hittite *tukka* ("to fall to a person's share") to show that this root had wide reach in both time and space. But we must now zero in on those instances which will be of particular benefit in illuminating Chinese *te* (**dugh*).

There is a Teutonic (i.e. Gothic) verbal root **dugan-* deriving from PIE √**dhugh* that yields a whole series of words which share affinities with *te* (**dugh*). These are Old High German *tugan,* Middle High German *tugen,* and Modern German *taugen,* all of which mean "to be good, fit, of use." Also to be noted are Old High German *tugundī* ("ability"), Middle High German *tugent* ("skill, worthiness, virtue"), Middle Low German *doge[n]t* ("ability, power, selfhood" [N.B.]), and Modern German *Tugend* ("virtue" [N.B.]) which shares the same type of progression from personal power to positive quality as *te* (**dugh*). The cognate Gothic *daug* and Old High German *toug* both mean "have worth" as does Old English *dēah* or *dēag*. Old English *duguth* ("power, majesty, virtue") is also relevant for showing the linkage between personal ability and approbatory judgement. Finally, there is another cognate group of words relating to Modern English "doughty" (meaning "worthy, valiant, stouthearted") that deserves consideration: Middle English *douhti, dohti,* or *dühti* ("valiant") < late Old English *dohtig,* earlier Old English *dyhtig* ("valiant") with which we may compare Modern German *tüchtig* ("fit, capable, brave") < Middle High German *tühtec* ("good for something"). The Modern English, Middle English, and Old English words for "doughty" derive from Old English *dugan* ("to be of worth or use, able, fit, strong") which itself appears in Modern English guise as "dow" (meaning "to be able, to have strength or ability"). These words show obvious parallels with Middle Low German and Middle Dutch *duchtich,* Danish *dygtig,* Swedish *dugtig,* and Icelandic *dygdhugr,* all of which have the same approximate meanings as "doughty." It is no accident that the Modern Dutch translation of *te* in the title of the *TTC* is *deugd* ("quality, virtue") which is both etymologically exact and stylistically apt.

Based on the evidence cited above, we may conclude that, rendered strictly etymologically, the closest word in modern English to *te* (**dugh*) is "doughtiness."[17] Aside from its cumbersomeness, there are other factors to consider before adopting "doughtiness" as a translation of *te*. One is a general perception among Chinese scholars that *te* (**dugh*) is somehow linked to another word pronounced the same in MSM but which means something altogether different ("get, obtain, take [N.B.], achieve") and may be reconstructed approximately as **tuk* for the early Zhou

period. This is comparable to the Germanic root *tak-* which yields "take" and "tackle" and is derived from PIE √**tag* ("touch, handle"). English words ultimately derived from the latter include "tact," "contact," "tangible," "attain," and "integrity." The tetragraph used to write *te* (**tuk,* "take") shows a hand **hold**ing a cowry.

Te (**dugh,* "doughty") is also often said to be related to a word meaning "straight" pronounced *chih* in MSM and reconstructed roughly as **dhyek* for the early Chou period. The reason for this assumption has nothing whatsoever to do with the genuine etymology of the word *te* (**dugh*) itself, but is a result of the decomposition of the tetragraph used to write it. In its earliest form, the graph was composed of an eye looking **straight** ahead (hence the imagined connection with *chih* [**dhyek*]) and a sign that stands for walking along a given path. Later, a heart was added beneath the eye, presumably to show that *te* (**dugh*) was somehow related to the mind.

Where does all of this abstruse but essential etymology and phonology leave us? As it is used in the *TTC, te* signifies the personal qualities or strengths of the individual, one's personhood. *Te* is determined by the sum total of one's actions, good and bad, hence it is possible to speak of "cultivating one's *te.*" Like karma, it is the moral weight of a person, which may be either positive or negative. *Te,* in short, is what you are. Yet *te* does not exist in a vacuum, for it is the actualization of the cosmic principle in the self. *Te* is self-nature or self-realization, but always in relation to the cosmos. The embodiment of the Way, *te* may be said to constitute the character of all entities in the universe. Each creature, each object has its own *te* which is a particular manifestation of the Tao. There is here almost an exact parallel with the Indian concept of *ātman* ("soul," probably deriving from a word meaning "breathe") and Brahman (the all-pervading, self-existent power, the essential divine reality of the universe; literally "growth, expansion, swelling [of the spirit or soul]"). *Jīvātman* ("the living soul") is the self, whereas *paramātman* ("the utmost soul") is none other than Brahman. Thus the quintessential Hindu formula, *tat tvam asi* ("that thou art"). In other words, you are one with the universe. Tao and Brahman both represent cosmic unity, while *te* and *ātman* stand for the individual personality or character. Just as the *BG* portrays the absorption of the separate soul (*ātman*) into the cosmic Unity (Brahman), so does the *TTC* describe the assimilation of the individual personality (*te*) into the eternal Way (Tao).

The closest felicitous English approximation of *te* as it is used in the *TTC* is "integrity." In simplest terms, integrity means no more than the wholeness or completeness of a given entity. In this, it resembles *te* which is the selfhood of every being in the universe. Also like *te*, integrity may have an ehtical dimension in the sense of probity or adherence to a set of values. Samuel Johnson, in chapter 41 of *Rasselas*, expresses the ambivalent quality of integrity when he declares that "Integrity without knowledge is weak and useless, and knowledge without integrity is dangerous and dreadful." The usual translation of *te* as "virtue," a uniformly positive and approbative quality in Modern English, subverts the moral ambiguity of the term as it appears in the *TTC.* Further justification for "integrity" as the equivalent of *te* in this translation of the *TTC* is given in the preface.

CLASSIC / *ching* (pronounced *jeang*)

Having come to grips with *te* (**dugh*), we are now in a position to explain the last word of the title, *ching.* This is the standard term in Chinese for "classic" or "scripture." Its basic meaning, however, is "warp of a fabric" and from this is derived the idea of "pass through," "experience," "transact." *Ching* comes to mean "classic" because it also signifies the **threads** which were used to hold manuscripts together. Indeed, translators of Buddhist texts into Chinese most appropriately used *ching* as an equivalent for Skt. *sūtra* which is usually the final word in the titles of Buddhist scriptures. *Sūtra* literally means "thread" (cf. English "suture") and probably derives from √*siv* (defined by the cognate English word "to sew") which applies to the stitching that holds the leaves of a manuscript together. As a bibliographical term, it refers to compositions that consist of short sentences or aphoristic rules.

We may reconstruct the OS sound of *ching* as **gwing.* Minus the final nasalization, this is very close to PIE √**gwhi-* ("thread"). The suffixed form of the latter is **gwhi-slo-* which appears

in Latin as *filum* ("thread"). English words ultimately derived from the Latin are "filament," "fillet," and "file" (in the sense of "line"). The latter may be traced back through Middle English *filen* and Middle French *filer* which means "to string documents on a thread or wire" and is reminiscent of Chinese *ching*. Other IE cognates are Lithuanian *gysla*, Latvian *dzīsla*, Old Prussian *-gislo*, and Church Slavonic *žila*, all of which mean "vein," and Lithuanian *gija* ("thread"), Armenian *jil* ("sinew, cord"), and Welsh *gewyn* ("sinew, nerve"). Note that the latter, like Chinese *ching* (**gwing*) has a nasalized ending.

The tetragraph used for Chinese *ching* (**gwing*) was originally written as M1117. This is traditionally said to represent streams flowing underground, but almost certainly depicts the warp of a fabric on a loom. It was later augmented for clarity's sake by the addition of the SC for "silk" (hence M1123). The original form of the graph then became a phonophore in numerous other tetragraphs that have roughly to do with the idea of "passing through" or "running lengthwise." *Ching* (**gwing*, M1123) itself acquired the extended meanings of "experience," a signifier of past action, "transact," "invariable rule," "plan out," and, as we have already seen, "classic."

In strictly etymological terms, then, the title *TTC* means "track-dough[tiness]-file" and would originally have been pronounced roughly as **d[r]og-dugh-gwing*, had the title in its current form already existed during the Chou period. Since all three words of the title *TTC*, while conceptually linked to Indian notions such as Brahman or *mārga*, karma or *ātman*, and *sūtra*, appear to be etymologically more closely related to European terms, it is conceivable that both China and India may have received the ideas they represent from some such Europoids as the Tocharians or their predecessors who lived in Central Asia and that China may have received them more directly than did India. These are speculations, however, that await the findings of archeology for confirmation.

OLD MASTER / *Lao Tzu* (pronounced *láu dze*)

Now that we have mastered all three words of the title of the *TTC*, let us have a closer look at the name of its presumed author. In the first section of this introduction, we have already seen that his name, Lao Tzu, means merely "Old Master." Some interpreters have forced from Lao Tzu the meaning "Old Boy" and concocted weird tales of his having been born with a full head of white hair and other such twaddle to support their position. There are so many precedents for Warring States and later thinkers being styled "Master" (*tzu*) that there is not much point in debating the issue. We need name only a few to show that the name Lao Tzu fits well within the established pattern: K'ung Tzu (Master K'ung, Confucius), Meng Tzu (Master Meng, Mencius), Mo Tzu (Master Mo, Mecius), Wen Tzu (Master of Civility, alleged to have been a disciple of the Old Master), Kuei-ku Tzu (Master of Ghost Valley), and so on. Hence we may refer to our putative author as Lao Tzu (Old Master, Laocius) without imagining all sorts of fantastic folderol about eighty-year old babies.

From a study of its occurrences in ancient oracle bone and bronze inscriptions, we know that the tetragraph for *lao* ("old," M3833) was originally written with another tetragraph (M3299) that had a similar appearance but faced in the opposite direction and is now pronounced *k'ao* in MSM. The change from *k'ao* to *lao* has never been satisfactorily explained. A careful examination of the available evidence provides some useful clues.

The archaic pronunciation of *k'ao* ("aged;" we shall ignore subsequent meanings that became attached to the tetragraph) was approximately **khaur*. Many scholars assert that the word may have ended with a glottal stop instead of *-r*, but the exact quality of the final is still very much a matter of debate. The best guess at the intended meaning of the tetragraph used to represent **khaur* is that it showed a person with long (presumably white) hair. This immediately calls to mind PIE √**kei-* which refers to various shades of color. In particular, it yields the suffixed o-grade form **koi-ro-* which appears in Germanic **haira(z)* (note especially the *-z* ending) which means "gray-haired," hence "old, venerable," hence "lord." The resonances with *k'ao* (**khaur*) are startling. Other close IE cognates, among dozens that could be named, are English "hoar" (< Middle English *har, hor* < Old English *hār* ["gray, gray-haired, old]), and Old Norse *hárr* ("hoary, old").

How, then, do we account for the change from *k'ao* to *lao*? The answer would seem to lie in an attempt at assimilation to the Indian word *ṛṣi* (alternate English form "rishi"). The *ṛṣi* were ancient singers of sacred hymns, inspired poets and sages who were viewed as the Vedic patriarchs. With *ṛṣi* we may compare Old Irish *arsan* ("a sage, a man old in wisdom") and *arrach* ("old, ancient, aged"). Buddhist translators from the second century I.E. on rendered *ṛṣi* into Chinese with a word (MSM *hsien*) that means basically "transcendent" but which is often translated loosely and inaccurately in English as "immortal." *Hsien* is written with a tetragraph (M2707) whose earlier form was composed of two parts meaning "transcendent" and "man" but since the Han period it has normally been written with components that mean "mountain" and "man." It was Arthur Waley (p. 114) who made the penetrating observation that the "mountain-men" described in early Taoist texts were none other than Indian *ṛṣi*. Here lies our clue for the switch from *k'ao* to *lao*. The OS reconstruction of *lao* is approximately **ruhw* with perhaps an indeterminate final. If we reconstruct *tzu* as roughly **(t)syuh*, the resultant combination **ruhw-(t)syuh* is quite close to *ṛṣi* (cf. the Japanese pronunciation of Lao Tzu as Rōshi). It appears that **khaur-(t)syuh* would have been the earliest form of the name, that it had IE cognates, and that it meant simply "the hoary one." Through increasing contact with Indian holy men during the period when the wise sayings that would later come to constitute the *TTC* were circulating in China, assimilation with the Skt. word *ṛṣi* resulted in the new word **ruhw-(t)syuh* (MSM Lao Tzu) and a variant tetragraph was invented to distinguish **ruhw* ("old") from **khaur* ("hoary").

We shall not devote special study to the etymology of the *tzu* part of Lao Tzu, for it was originally merely a nominal suffix or ending as in *chün-tzu* ("princely man" or "gentleman") and many other ancient terms. It was only later, through confusion with a separate word signifying "boy" or "child" written with the same tetragraph, that the second syllable of the name took on an independent meaning. This accounts for the fanciful attempts to describe Lao Tzu as an "old boy."

To complete our etymological excursus, we shall look briefly at two key terms from the body of the *TTC* text. These are *sheng-jen* ("sage") and *ch'i* ("vital breath"). While the former occurs over thirty times and represents the ideal Taoist ruler, the latter occurs only three times but is extremely important nevertheless because of its role in the development of Taoist meditation techniques.

SAGE / *sheng-jen* (pronounced *shuhng-zren*)

There are a whole series of interesting parallels between Chinese *sheng* (OS **syang*, "sage") and English "sage." The first and most obvious is the similarity of their sounds. Still more striking, however, is the fact that both of them are related to perceptivity. The tetragraph used to write *sheng* (**syang*) shows this clearly by its having an ear as its SC (see also the note to XLVII.8 at the back of the book). The PIE root for "sage" is √**sap-* ("to taste, perceive"). There are a number of related English words deriving from this root (through Latin *sapere* ["to taste, have (good) taste, be sensible, wise]") that directly reflect the percipient quality of the ancient root: sapid, sapient, savant, sapor, savor, savy. "Sage" itself goes back to the same Latin word through Old French *sage* (cf. Italian *saggio* and Provençal *satge*). Note also Old English *sefa* and Old Saxon *sebo*, both of which mean "mind." Other cognates are Old Saxon *afsebbian* ("to perceive"), Old High German *antseffen* or *intseffen* ("to notice"), Oscan *sipus* ("knowing"), and Armenian *ham* ("taste or juice," from **sapno-*). It would thus appear that the essential feature of both Chinese *sheng* (**syang*) and English "sage" is their perceptivity. *Jen* quite simply and literally means "human," for a discussion of which see the note to XXXVIII.7. *Sheng-jen* is thus "sage person."

VITAL BREATH / *ch'i* (pronounced *chee*)

The analogies between Chinese *ch'i* ("vital breath") and its Western equivalents are even more uncanny. In the first place, virtually the same metaphysical concept of material energy coursing through the body and the universe exists in the Chinese tradition as *ch'i*, in the Indian tradition as *prāṇa*, in the Greek tradition as *pneuma*, in the Latin tradition as *spiritus*, and in the Hebrew tradition as *ruaḥ*. What is more, the Chinese word is almost certainly cognate with certain Western terms. Reconstructing the archaic sound of *ch'i* according to later rhyme categories in

which it was placed, we obtain roughly **k'ied,* although it may be suspected that the oldest form of the word must have been something like ***kvept.* There is little question about the early Chinese understanding of the meaning of *ch'i* (**k'ied / **kvept*), because the pictograph used to represent it (M554, but M552 is closer to the original shape) shows a few wisps of vapor rising. This calls to mind the PIE root **kwēp* ("to smoke," "to be emotionally agitated," etc.) and its derivatives. Most prominent among them is English "vapor" itself whose lineage is as follows: Middle English *vapour* < Old French *vapeur* < Latin *vapor* ("steam, vapor"). Other IE cognates are Lithuanian *kvepiù* ("to emit an aroma"), *kvẽpti* ("to blow the breath"), *kvepuoti* ("to breathe"), *kvãpas* ("breath, vapor, smoke"), Lettish *kvēpt* ("steam, smoke"), Greek *kapnós* ("smoke, vapor"), and so forth. Most amazing is the cognate Sanskrit verb *kupyati* ("he swells with rage, is angry") which literally means "he is smoking, steaming [mad]." This is precisely the same very common idiomatic usage as in MSM *t'a ch'i-le* or *t'a sheng ch'i[-le]* ("he is angry"), literally "he is generating vapors," the origin of which has long puzzled even native speakers.

The following are brief expositions of several other key terms in the *TTC.*

BEING, NON-BEING / *yu, wu* (pronounced *yo, woo*)

This pair of terms literally means "there is" and "there is not." Together, they constitute the ontological ground upon which the phenomenal world is played out. The Tao, ineffable and without attribute, is identified with non-being, yet it is the source of all creation, which is characterized as being. The OS pronunciation of *yu* may have been approximately *yex.* This would seem to link it with English "is" which goes back to IE √**es-* ("to be"). Cf. Skt. *ásti* ("is"), Latin *est,* Church Slavonic *jestŭ,* etc. *Wu* is the same word with a negative prefix.

NON-ACTION / *wu-wei* (pronounced *woo-weigh*)

If Tao and *te* are the most significant static or nounal concepts in the *TTC,* this is certainly the most important dynamic or verbal notion set forth in the classic. It is also the most difficult to grasp of all the Old Master's ideas. *Wu-wei* does not imply absence of action. It indicates, rather, spontaneity and noninterference, that is, letting things follow their own natural course. For the ruler, this implies reliance on capable officials and the avoidance of an authoritarian posture. For the individual, it means accomplishing what is necessary without ulterior motive. Some commentators have explained *wu-wei* as connoting "non-purposive" or "non-assertive" action. The OS pronunciation of *wei,* which means "to act as, be make, do," was roughly *wjar.* This is quite likely cognate with English "were." Cf. IE √**wes-* > Germanic **wos-* > Old English *wæs, wære, wæron,* etc. *Wu* is simply the negative which we have already discussed above.

MYRIAD CREATURES / *wan-wu* (pronounced *wawn-woo*)

Literally "ten thousand objects," this expression refers to all things in the universe that have existence or being, in contrast to their origin which is without existence. The figure "ten thousand" is designed to signify the vast variety of creatures and things in the world which, again, stands in opposition to the unity of the Tao whence they spring. The OS pronunciation of *wan-wu* was roughly **myanh-var* (many topolects still preserve the *v* initial of the second syllable; the *-r* final later became a *-t*). There is little doubt that this expression is fully cognate with English "many varieties." The connection between **myanh* and "many" is obvious without even having to cite earlier IE antecedents. Still more striking is the affinity between Chinese *var* and the IE root **var-* of "variety" since both originally referred to the variegated or multicolored fur of animals (cf. English "vair" and "miniver"). The earliest tetragraph used to write *wu* actually depicts a speckled bovine. It was only by extension that both the IE and the Sinitic words acquired the abstract connotations of "various" and thence "various objects."

UNHEWN LOG / *p'u* (pronounced *pooh*)

This is the most frequent metaphor in the *TTC* expressing the utter simplicity of the Way. Those who coined the phrase "Tao of Pooh" have captured a deeper truth than they themselves

may be aware of. The OS pronunciation of *p'u* was *phluk*. This is almost certainly cognate with the English word "block" which probably derives from the IE root *bhelk* ("beam").

REVERSAL, RETURN, REVERSION or RENEWAL / *fan, kuei, fu* (pronounced *fawn, gway, foo*)

All of these terms suggest the continual reversion of the myriad creatures to the cosmic principle whence they arose. This is the "myth of the eternal return" so well analyzed by the great authority on comparative religion, Mircea Eliade. The OS reconstruction of *kuei* is roughly **kwyed* and that of *fan* roughly **pran*. Since there are Sino-Tibetan roots for both (respectively **kwyerd* ["turn in a circle"] and **pran* ["turn around"]), we should not expect to find any IE cognates. The OS reconstruction of *fu* (literally "go / come back") is roughly **byok*. A close cognate, written with the same tetragraph (M1992), may be tentatively reconstructed as **byog* and means "again." This reminds us of words like *paky* in Church Slavonic and *öfugr* ("turned backwards") in Old Norse that derive from IE √**ap(o)-*. Note the initial labial consonants and the velar finals.

NATURE / *tzu-jan* (pronounced *dze-zrawn*)

The two syllables literally mean "self-so." This expression is also sometimes translated as "spontaneous." It implies that things are what they are by themselves; no agent causes them to be so. This idea is greatly elaborated by later Taoist commentators of the "abstruse" persuasion. The OS reconstruction is approximately **sdyelv-lyan* which would seem to indicate a connection with the Germanic equivalents **selbh-lik* ("self-like"). We should note that the final sound of **sdyelv* is very uncertain, as is the initial of **lyan*, although we may also observe that some topolects still preserve an *l-* initial. There is little doubt that the nasal ending of **lyan* is merely a product of the phonological or grammatical environment in which it occurs, for this syllable is clearly related to *ju (*lyag), jo (*lyak), erh (*lyeg),* and so forth, all of which mean "like, so, -wise" and which, like Germanic *-lik* (Modern English "-like, -ly") serve as adverbial and adjectival suffixes.

At the end of this introductory essay, we shall provide justification from the history of civilization for the wide-ranging approach to core Taoist terminology advocated here. But first we must examine more closely the rudiments of Taoist religion and thought.

[c] Taoism : *Tao Te Ching* : : Yoga : *Bhagavad Gītā*

From our examination of the oral background and of the title of the *TTC,* we have already seen hints of possible Indian influence on its formation. In this section, we shall provide philological evidence of a close connection between the *TTC* and the *BG.* We shall also attempt to demonstrate that the religio-philosophical schools for which they stand as the primary texts, namely Taoism and Yoga, are related in a fundamental way.[18]

Since we are by now familiar with the rise of the *TTC,* let us begin this section with a brief glimpse at the history of the *BG.* We must first recognize that, unlike the *TTC,* the *BG* has an explicit narrative context in that it forms an essential part of *parvan* (book) VI of the great Indian epic *Mahābhārata.* This fact is also evident from its very title which means "Song of the Lord [i.e. Krishna]." The *BG* actually consists of a very long dialogue between the warrior Prince Arjuna and Krishna, an avatar of the god Vishnu, who doubles as his counselor and charioteer. This takes place on the battleground called Kurukṣetra ("Field of the Kurus") as the war between the Pāndavas and the Kauravas is about to commence. When the two armies draw up their ranks and face off, Arjuna becomes depressed at the thought of having to fight against many of his acquaintances and relatives (especially his cousins, the sons of Dhṛtarāṣtra) who are in the opposing camp. He questions whether he should throw away his weapons and submit to a sure death or participate in a war that, no matter how just, is certain to result in much slaughter. Krishna reminds him that it is his duty to be a warrior and embarks on a long disquisition concerning action, to which we shall return momentarily.

The *Mahābhārata* (*Great Epic of the Bhārata Dynasty*) recounts events that took place between about 1400 and 800 B.I.E. Some authorities place the composition of the *BG* as early as the fourth century B.I.E. when the first layers of the epic came to be written down. Others hold that parts of it (particularly those that emphasize devotion to god) are of a somewhat later date than the bulk of the *Mahābhārata.* The Epic-Purāṇic Skt. in which the *BG* is written could locate it anytime between about the fourth century B.I.E. and the second century I.E. In any event, both the epic and the *BG* clearly underwent a long period of oral transmission before they were committed to writing.[19]

The chief lesson Krishna has to offer Arjuna is that altruistic or disinterested action (*niṣkāma karma*) leads to realization of Brahma. That is to say, one should act without regard or desire for the fruits (*phala*) of one's action. This is repeated over and over again in countless different formulations. These passages are of extreme importance for understanding the enigmatic concept of "non-action" (MSM*wu-wei*) that is so prominent in the *TTC.* "The person of superior integrity takes no action," says the Old Master, "nor has he a purpose for acting" (XXXVIII.5; cf. XLIII.6, 8; XLVII.10; and LVII.16). We are told straightaway to "act through non-action" (MSM *wei wu-wei,* LXIII.1) and that "through non-action, no action is left undone" (*wu-wei tse wu pu wei,* XLVIII.5-6). In spite of the fact that it occurs a dozen times and is obviously of axial importance for the Old Master's teachings, we can only vaguely surmise from the *TTC* what the specific implications of *wu-wei* ("non-action") are. When we read the *BG,* however, we discover an exceedingly elaborate analysis of the nature and purpose of non-action. The ideal of action without attachment (III.25) is conveyed in many guises throughout the *BG,* e.g. *akṛta* ("non-action," III.18), *akarma* ("inaction," III.8; IV.16-18), *nāiṣkarmya* ("freedom from action or actionlessness," III.4), *karmaṇām anārambhān* ("non-commencement of actions," III.4), and so forth. Krishna refers to himself as the "eternal non-doer" (IV.13) and states that the Yogin should think, "I do not do anything" (V.8). He declares that he "sits indifferently unattached by these actions" (IX.9). Elsewhere, he condemns sitting and remembering (III.6). All of this reminds us of the "sitting and forgetting" (*tso-wang*) advocated by the Taoists which later developed into a type of meditative practice.

If one acts in Brahman, having abandoned attachment, he will not be defiled by evil "any more than a lotus leaf by water" (V.10), an eloquent image that subsequently gained broad currency in China. It is not actions themselves that are to be eschewed, only undue concern for their results ("fruits" [*phala*], in the language of the *BG*) which binds one to desires. Repeatedly,

Krishna enjoins Arjuna to relinquish actions prompted by desire (e.g., XVIII.2). Similarly, there is a linkage between actions and desires in the *TTC* as well (see especially the middle of XXXIV and the latter part of LVII).

To give an impression of the intensive method of discourse employed by Krishna in his elaboration of action and non-action, we may quote the following series of stanzas:

> Actions do not befoul me;
> I have no desire for the fruit of action;
> Thus he who comprehends me
> Is not bound by actions.
>
> They having known this, action was performed
> Also by the ancients, seeking release.
> Therefore perform action
> As it was earlier performed by the ancients.
>
> "What is action? What is non-action?" thus,
> Even the poets are confused in this matter.
> This action I shall explain to thee,
> Having known which, thous shalt be released from evil.
>
> One must know the nature of action
> And also the nature of wrong action,
> As well as the nature of inaction.
> The way of action is profound.
>
> He who perceives non-action in action,
> And action in non-action,
> Is wise among men;
> He performs all action in a disciplined manner.
>
> He who has excluded desire and purpose
> From all his enterprises,
> And has consumed his karma in the fire of knowledge,
> Him the wise men call a pandit.
>
> He who has abandoned all attachment to the fruits of action,
> Always satisfied, not dependent,
> Even when proceeding in action,
> Does, in effect, nothing at all.
>
> Performing action with the body alone,
> Without wish, restrained in thought and self,
> With all motives of acquisition abandoned,
> He incurs no evil.
>
> Content with gain by chance,
> Transcending the dualities (i.e., pleasure, pain, etc.), free from envy,
> Constant in mind whether in success or in failure,
> Even though he has acted, he is not bound.
>
> (IV.14-22, tr. Sargeant, pp. 214-222)

In the end, Krishna counsels Arjuna to rise above the dichotomy of action and non-action.

Aside from this striking fundamental resemblance between the *TTC* and the *BG* with regard to non-action, there are numerous other affinities between the two works. To name only a few of the major themes that appear in both works, they share a concern for the relationship between the multitude or aggregate of created beings (Skt. *bhūtagrāma, sarvabhūta, prajā;* MSM *wan-wu*) and the eternal cosmic principle whence they arise. Both focus on being and non-being (*sat, asat; yu, wu*). Both are preoccupied with the significance of wisdom or knowledge (*jñāna, vijñāna; chih, ming*) and nescience or ignorance (*ajñāna; yü, pu-chih*). Both texts strongly emphasize becoming free from desires and not prizing rare and costly goods. Both are concerned with birth, (long) life, and death. Like the *BG,* the *TTC* openly discusses the purposes of war and the obligations of a soldier (e.g. XXX.6-18, XXXI, LXVIII, and LXIX). Key terms encountered in both texts are those for "return" (*āvṛtti; fan, fu, kuei*), "subtlety" or "fineness" (*sūkṣmatā; hsi, wei*), "disorder" (*saṃkara; luan*), "affairs" (*samārambha; shih*), "desire" (*kāma; yü*), "tranquility" (*prasāda; ching, ning*), "taste" (*rasa; wei*), "supreme" (*parama; chi*), "percipient sage" (*paśyata muni; sheng-jen*), and "peace" (*śānti; an, ho*). This list could easily be extended to several times its present length,[20] but the point is already clear: the *TTC* and the *BG* agree in so many vital areas large and small that we can hardly ascribe the convergence to utter coincidence.

Entire stanzas of the *BG* read like miniature foreshadowings of the *TTC.* In a burst of nominatives that would have warmed the heart of the Old Master when contemplating the Way, Krishna unfolds his all-encompassing nature:

> Intelligence, knowledge, freedom from delusion,
> Patience, veracity, self restraint, tranquility,
> Pleasure, pain, becoming, passing away,
> And fear and fearlessness,
>
> Non-violence, impartiality, contentment,
> Austerity, charity, fame, disrepute,
> The manifold conditions of beings,
> Arise from Me alone.
> (X.4-5, tr. Sargeant, pp. 414-415)

There are even whole passages in the *TTC* where the imagery and wording so closely and in such a peculiar manner resemble those of the *BG* that it is difficult to attribute them to sheer accident. In *BG,* III.38, the obscuring of a mirror by dust as a metaphor for the clouding of the mind is almost identical to *TTC,* X.6-7. Even more startling is the likeness between *BG,* VIII.12 and *TTC,* LVI.4-5. The former begins with "closing all the doors (of the body),[21] shutting up the mind in the heart" and then goes on to direct the practitioner to channel his vital breath (*prāṇa*) up into his head to establish himself in Yogic concentration. *TTC,* LVI.4-5 states that the practitioner "stopples the openings of his heart, closes his doors." Since these two lines are repeated verbatim in *TTC,* LII.9-10, it would appear to be a key conceit taken over directly from Indian Yoga into Chinese Taoism. The Skt. word *saṁyamya* translated as "closing" also means "restraining, controlling of the senses, suppressing, etc." and is well rendered by *sai* ("stoppling, blocking") in the Chinese. We are dealing here with a very unusual set of Yogic technical procedures with a long history to which we shall shortly turn, so it would appear to be impossible to attribute the Chinese parallel passage to chance independent invention. The manifestly Yogic content of *TTC* is also to be seen in the beginning of chapter X, especially lines 4-5 which advise the practitioner to focus the breath until it is supremely soft.

By no means may we assert that the "author" of the *TTC* sat down with a copy of the *BG* in hand and proceeded to translate it into Chinese. Our knowledge of the evolution from oral traditions of both texts precludes such a simplistic scenario. Yet there are too many close correspondences between the *BG* and the *TTC* simply to ignore them. The most probable explanation is that the *BG* was transmitted to China in the same fashion that it was initially transmitted within India -- by word of mouth. Particularly memorable images and powerful

expressions would have been transferred virtually verbatim. In most instances, however, what the founders of Taoism absorbed from Yoga were radically new ideas concerning man and his place in the universe and a complementary physiological regimen. Considering the immense linguistic, social, and philosophical differences between China and India, it is astounding that the kindredness of the *BG* and the *TTC* shines through so conspicuously.

We must now address the sensitive issue of the precedence of Yoga versus that of Taoism for, given the complexities of the dating of the *TTC* and the *BG*, if we rely strictly on these two sources alone, it is conceivable (though unlikely) that the Chinese classic might have influenced the Indian scripture. We shall discover that certain distinctive aspects of Yoga which also show up in Taoism can be traced back in India beyond the first millennium B.I.E. and are systematically described over and over at great length, whereas in China they only begin to appear at the earliest around the middle of the first millennium B.I.E. and are presented in a confused and cursory fashion until after the advent of Buddhism around the beginning of the I.E. when they are reinforced by a new and more coherently conveyed wave of Indian influence.[22] In short, if Indian Yoga did not exert a shaping force upon Chinese Taoism, the only other logical explanation is that both were molded by a third source. Since no such source is known, we can only assume an Indian priority and wait for additional data from future archeological discoveries. It is improbable, however, that new data would significantly alter our present understanding, because the case in favor of Indian priority is already massive.

The first item of evidence from the Chinese side is an isolated inscription on ten pieces of jade making up a small knob that is datable to approximately the year 380 B.I.E. (Kuo Mo-jo, p. 9):

> In moving the vital breath (*hsing ch'i*) [through the body, hold it deep and] thereby accumulate it. Having accumulated it, let it extend (*shen*). When it extends, it goes downward. After it goes downward, it settles. Once it is settled, it becomes firm. Having become firm, it sprouts (cf. Yogic *bīja* ["seed" or "germ"]). After it sprouts, it grows. Once grown, then it withdraws. Having withdrawn, it becomes celestial (i.e. *yang*). The celestial potency (M409 = M411) presses upward, the terrestrial potency presses downward. [He who] follows along [with this natural propensity of the vital breath] lives, [he who] goes against it dies.

Without addressing the choppy, convoluted style in which it is written, we need only point out that every essential element of this inscription can be traced to Indian texts that date from between 900-200 B.I.E. For example, the *Maitrī Up.* (II.6) offers an elaborate exposition of the five types of breath (*prāṇa, apāna, samāna, udāna, vyāna*), their movement upward and downward and throughout each limb, as well as their relationship to life and death (cf. VI.21). The whole second *khaṇḍa* (section) of the *Muṇḍaka Up.* has so many close parallels to the *TTC* that it deserves the most thorough study by serious students of the Taoist classic. Here I shall cite only a part of the sixth stanza which bears obvious resemblance to one of the most celebrated passages of the Old Master (XI.1-3 [cf. the second note to the first line]):

> Where the channels (*nāḍī*) come together
> Like spokes in the hub of a wheel,
> Therein he (imperishable Brahman as manifested
> in the individual soul [ātman]) moves about
> Becoming manifold.

In one of the earliest *Upaniṣads,* the *Chāndogya* (VIII.vi.6), we find an exposition of the microcosmology of the human body that certainly prefigures Taoist notions of a much later period:

> A hundred and one are the arteries (*nāḍī*) of the heart,
> One of them leads up to the crown of the head;

> Going upward through that, one becomes immortal (*amṛta*),
> The others serve for going in various directions....
> (translation adapted from Radhakrishnan, p. 501)

This is not just an isolated occurrence, for the same conception is restated in the *Kaṭha Up.*, II.iii.16 (cf. also the *Taittirīya Up.*, I.vi.1 and the *Praśna Up.*, III.6-7, 12).

Yogic concentration of all the senses upon the self is clearly evident in the *Chāndogya Up.* (VIII.15). In the *Maitrī Up.* (VI.25), Yoga is mentioned specifically by name and defined in a manner that would fit Taoism almost as well. *Ātman* and Yoga are joined in the *Taittirīya Up.* (II.iv.1) and, in the *Kaṭha Up.* (I.ii.12), Yogic re-integration of the supreme soul (i.e. "the self") is described (*adhyātma-yoga*). In the same text (II.iii.11), Yoga is defined as "the firm restraint of the senses." By the time of the *Yoga Sūtras* and *Yoga Upaniṣads* (the earliest layers of which date to no later than the second century B.I.E.), the complete pre-Tantric Yogic system had received explicit and elaborate codification in written form. Patañjali, who wrote the first three books of the *Yoga Sūtras* around the second century B.I.E.,[23] recognizes (I.1) that he was not the creator of yogic techniques but only wanted to present them in a rigorously systematic fashion. Those who take the trouble to read attentively the early Indian texts just cited, particularly the classical *Upaniṣads*, will realize that they adumbrate the entire philosophical, religious, and physiological foundations of Taoism, but not its social and political components which are distinctively Chinese.

Still further back in time, the *Atharva Veda* (900 B.I.E. or before) has a very long chapter dealing exclusively with the vital breath and its circulation (to mention only one aspect that is pertinent to Taoism). Although the entire chapter deserves quotation and careful examination by all conscientious students of Taoism, we have space to present only nine stanzas here:

> When breath with thunder roars at the plants, they are fertilized, they receive the germ, consequently they are born abundantly.
>
> Rained upon, the plants spoke with breath (saying): You have extended our life, you have made us all fragrant.
>
> Homage, breath, be to you breathing up, homage to you breathing down; homage to you turning away, homage to you turning hither; here is homage to all of you.
>
> Your dear form, breath, and your even dearer form, also the healing power that is yours, of that put in us, that we may live.
>
> Breath is the shining One (the Queen), breath the Directress, all revere breath; breath is the sun and the moon, breath they say is the Lord of Creatures.
>
> Man, while still in the womb, functions with nether and upper breath; when you, breath, quicken him, then he is born again.[24]
>
> When breath has rained with rain upon the great earth, plants are generated, and all herbs that exist.
>
> Who is lord over this (all) of every source, over all that moves, whose bow is swift among (against?) the unwearied ones, -- O breath, homage be to thee.
>
> O breath, turn not away from me; you shall be no other than myself. I bind you to myself, breath, like the child of the waters, that I may live.
> XI.iv.3, 6, 8-9, 12, 14, 17, 23, 26; tr. Edgerton [1965], pp. 104-106)

These are by no means the only verses in the *Atharva Veda* that are germane to the study of Taoism. Chapter X.ii, to cite only one, deals with the structure of the human body and includes, among others, the following pertinent verse: "Who wove in him the upper breath, who the nether breath, and the crosswise breath? What god set the circulating breath in this Man?" (X.ii.13; tr. Edgerton [1965], p. 89) It is interesting to observe that, in contrast to the hieratic and aristocratic cult of the *Ṛg Veda*, the *Atharva Veda* represents many facets of popular religion. These include both presumably pre-Aryan elements as well as beliefs and customs that are astonishingly similar to those of ancient German peoples.

If there were still any doubts about the vast antiquity of Yogic physiological discipline in comparison with similar Taoist practices, one need only recall that *āsana* ("postures") have been found represented on seals and statuettes from Mohenjo Daro and Harappā, sites of the Indus Valley civilization that date back to around 2500 B.I.E. Although we cannot be certain that the individuals so depicted are actually engaged in meditation (*dhyāna*), it is noteworthy that some elements of Yoga, as Eliade has asserted, must have preceded the arrival of the Aryans in the South Asian subcontinent. Yoga is reflected as well in many ancient archeological monuments of India and Farther India (Pott). Specific meditational postures are already mentioned by name in the Indian epic *Mahābhārata* of which the *BG* forms a part. These include the *maṇḍūkayoga* ("frog yoga") and *vīrāsana* ("posture of a hero").

The next piece of evidence from the Chinese side is quite well known and has been cited by most competent authorities as providing crucial data for the origins of Taoist physical exercises. It comes from one of the later chapters of the *Master Chuang* and may be dated roughly to 250 B.I.E.:

> Blowing and breathing, exhaling and inhaling, expelling the old and taking in the new, bear strides and bird stretches -- [these activities are designed] to achieve longevity and that is all. They are favored by those who [through] channeling [of the vital breath] and flexions [of the muscles and the joints wish to emulate] the longevity of Methuselah.[25]

Consisting merely of 35 tetragraphs, this short paragraph nonetheless confronts the investigator with enormous difficulties. We shall respond to them one at a time after pausing to observe that Master Chuang (more precisely, the author of this particular passage of the book entitled *Master Chuang*) evidently does not include himself among those who subscribe to such practices.

The first three phrases are surely meant to indicate various breathing techniques such as the Yogic *śvāsa-praśvāsa, puraka, rechaka, kumbhaka, kapālabhāti, śitalī, śitakārī, sama vṛtti, viṣama vṛtti*, and the like. They are marred only by a lack of technical precision concerning their aim and proper performance. Here, as elsewhere throughout this passage from *Master Chuang*, the voice of the author is that of a somewhat bemused and skeptical onlooker rather than the practiced initiate.

The succeeding two tetragraphs, "bear strides," have been misinterpreted by traditional commentators for the past two millennia as meaning "bear hanging," "bear rocking," and other stabs in the dark. The problem lies with the second tetragraph (M1123) whose normal significations ("classic," "past," "manage," "arrange," "warp," "constant rule") make little sense in combination with the tetragraph for "bear." Once again, a recently unearthed document from Ma-wang-tui comes to the rescue. Another silk manuscript from Han tomb number 3 consists of painted designs of gymnastic exercises that date to 168 B.I.E. or before. Originally, the manuscript showed over 40 exercises, but only 28 survive intact in its present fragmentary condition. Of these, 18 have labels of between one and six tetragraphs that help to identify them. There are also six additional labels for exercises that have been damaged beyond recognition or that are missing altogether. We are extraordinarily fortunate to have depicted in the last of these exercises (the twenty-eighth) the problematic bear posture mentioned by Master Chuang. It clearly shows a man who is mimicking the hulking movement of a bear that has reared up on its two hind legs, hunching and rolling its shoulders as it swings its forepaws back and forth. The exercise is

plainly labeled *hsiung-ching* which is the same as the exercise mentioned by Master Chuang, except that the second syllable is written with a slightly different tetragraph. Instead of M1123 (the semantics of which has been discussed above on pp. 25-26), the silk manuscript gives M1117. The presumed meaning of M1117 is "streams running underground" and the actual meaning is "warp" which make even less sense in combination with "bear" than does the tetragraph M1123 in *Master Chuang*. Master Chuang and the painter of the silk manuscript may both have intended to write the homonymous word that is now represented by M1125 ("pass by, approach"). Regardless of the tetragraphs used to write it, the pictorial evidence definitively solves the meaning of *hsiung-ching*.

We must now embark on a brief digression concerning the general characteristics of the 28 exercises depicted on the fragmentary silk manuscript from Ma-wang-tui. One striking feature is that many of them are named after birds and animals (wolf, kite, sparrow hawk, ape, crane, and so on). This immediately reminds us of Yogic *āsana* ("postures") that are patterned after the movements or poses of similar (and sometimes even identical) creatures: eagle, swan, peacock, crane, heron, cock, pigeon, partridge, tortoise, fish, monkey, lion, camel, frog, horse, cow, dog, crocodile, snake, locust, scorpion, and so on. We may say that is natural for man to imitate animals when devising physical exercises, but there are other grounds for believing that Taoist gymnastics and Yogic postures did not develop entirely independently.

Let us discuss, in the first instance, the native designations for these practices in India and in China. The Chinese word is the bisyllabic *tao-yin*[26] which means "leading, guiding, channeling, duction (an old English term that we may revive for this purpose)" and basically signifies the directed movement through the body of *ch'i* ("vital breath") as well as the controlled extension or drawing out of the limbs, muscles, and joints of the body. This sounds suspiciously close to Yogic breath control (*prāṇāyāma,* from *prāṇa* ["vital breath"] and *āyāma* ["lengthening, extension]"). *Prāṇāyāma* is the rhythmically restrained drawing in and out of the breath, precisely what the Taoist adept engaged in *tao-yin* attempts to achieve. It is mentioned by name in the *Manu-smṛti* (*Institutes of Manu,* VI.71-72; see Kuvalayānanda, p. vi), a codification of social relationships during the first millennium B.I.E., and is frequently found in the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* which dates to the first half of the same millennium.

The names of many of the postures on the silk manuscript from Ma-wang-tui are incomprehensible on their own terms. Viewed in the light of Yoga, however, we can gain some idea of what they were probably intended to signify. For example, number 11, *yin-hu > yang-hu* ("upward breathing") shows a man with his lungs fully expanded and chest puffed out like a proud conqueror. This is strongly reminiscent of *ujjāyi prāṇāyāma* which derives from *uj* ("upwards" or "superior") and *jaya* ("victory, triumph, success") plus the standard Skt. term for "breath control. Number 22, *mu-hou huan yin li chung* defies analysis unless information is supplied from the Yogic tradition. *Mu-hou* (roughly OS **mug-gug*) means "monkey" and probably ultimately derives from the same African word as English "macaque." It also reminds us of Skt. *maraṭāsana* ("monkey posture"). *Huan* undoubtedly refers to the strange snorting, humming, and hissing sounds emitted during advanced Yogic breathing exercises as is evident from the simian facial expression of the man in the drawing. *Li-chung,* which is totally unintelligible without recourse to Indian sources, seems to be a vague attempt to render some such expression as *pratiloma* or *viloma,* both of which mean approximately "against the grain" and refer to precise techniques employed in *prāṇāyāma.* Number 11, *yin-hsi t'ung* recalls Skt. *jānulagnāsana* ("touching the knees posture"). Number 24, *tso yin pa wei* (or *kuei*), from the oddly skewed perspective, appears to be a feeble attempt to represent some such contorted posture as the *āṣṭāvakra* ("eight crooks or bends"). Number 17 is labeled simply *hsin → shen* ("stretch") which, both in name and posture, is virtually identical to *prasārita pādottānāsana.* There are, indeed, numerous terms in Yoga to describe various types of stretching (*uttihita, uttāna, prasārita,* etc.) that are absolutely central to Yogic physical exercise. Many of the remaining postures on the silk manuscript resemble Indian *āsana* either in name or attitude, although it would appear that, unlike his Indian counterpart, the Chinese practitioner preferred to remain fully clothed (only 7 out of the 28 figures bare their torsos and legs) and standing (at least 24 figures).[27] Perhaps this is

due to climate or to an innate sense of propriety, or both. Over a third of the figures on the silk manuscript are women.

To return to our discussion of the passage from *Master Chuang*, after "bear strides" comes "bird stretches." While not among the surviving postures and labels on the silk manuscript from Ma-wang-tui, it clearly echoes several Indian *āsana*. The next phrases show that Master Chuang disparages the pursuit of physical longevity, perhaps a sly dig at the Old Master and his ilk. We are reminded of the frequent remarks in the *Manu-smṛti* (*Institutes of Manu*) that the goal of mankind should be to achieve undifferentiated union with Brahma(n), not the mere individual immortality of the ancestral *pitṛ* ("fathers"), that is, the *janitṛ* ("begetters") of the family or tribe. P'eng-tsu ("Ancestor *Pwahng," translated above as Methuselah), who according to legend is said to have been good at *tao-yin* ("duction") and is often identified with the Old Master himself, has much in common with the *pitṛ* that merits further investigation. At least one strand of the *TTC* itself, however, is definitely opposed to deliberate life extension and breath control (see LV.16-17, LXXV.9-15 and the note to line 10, XXXIII.8).

Although this is not the place to explore them in depth, the Indian resonances in *Master Chuang* are even greater than they are in the *TTC*. The author confesses that *Master Chuang* is his favorite early Chinese text. Its unfettered imagination, colorful language, and verbal pyrotechnics mark it as one of the most important literary monuments of antiquity. We can only hope that a qualified researcher will one day devote to *Master Chuang* the philological expertise that is necessary to certify its true value and place in world literature and thought. The short passage from *Master Chuang* that we have just examined is an example of the sort of work that needs to be done. It shows that Chinese texts, like those of all other civilizations, have clear linkages that reach beyond the boundaries of a single political entity.

There are so many correspondences between Yoga and Taoism, even in the smallest and oddest details and throughout the prolonged history of their development, that we might almost think of them as two variants of a single religiophilosophical system. To review but a few of the dozens that might be named, both conceive of conduits, tracts, channels, or arteries (Skt. *nāḍi;* MSM *mo* or *mai*) through which the vital breath or energy flows, the main channel (*suṣumṇā-nāḍi;* cf. Sino-Japanese *ching-tung-mai*) originating in the "root" or "tail" region (*mulādhārā cakra; wei-lü*) then passing through the spinal column (*merudaṇḍa; chia-chi-ku* or *chi-chui-ku*) and flanked by two subsidiary channels (*iḍā, piṅgala; jen-mo, tu-mo*). At death, the energized soul of both the Yogin and the Taoist adept emerges from the bregma (junction of the sagittal and coronal sutures at the top of the skull -- *brahmarandhra; miao-men*) to merge with the world-soul (Brahman; Tao), hence it is called the Way to Brahman (*Brahmavartman*) or the Marrow Way (*sui-tao*). Both Yoga and Taoism maintain that there are certain points where the energy is held or bound (*bandha; luo*) and that there are "supports" (*ādhara; chih*) which guide the vital breath. Both envisage wheels or fields (*chakra; t'ien*) where this energy generates heat (*tapas; tan*). Practitioners of both disciplines are said to possess an outer radiance (*tejas; kuang*) that reflects a refined inner essence (*ojas; ching*). In their Tantric forms, both are obsessed with semen retention (*ūrdhvaretus* or *maithunasya parāvṛttau; huan-ching* [said to repair the brain]), not a typical preoccupation of religious practitioners that one might expect to find springing up spontaneously in two such dissimilar cultures. Both Yoga and Taoism also share a close association with internal and external alchemy. Both resort to the use of various charms, sacred syllables, and talismans (*guruvaktrata, dhārani, mantra,* etc.; *chüeh, fu, lu,* etc.) as aids in meditation and for conveying secret knowledge. Both maintain that advanced accomplishment in their respective disciplines affords the practitioner special powers (*siddhi; ch'eng*) such as the ability to walk on water without sinking or on fire without getting burnt. Claims of levitation have also been announced by those who style themselves Taoists and Yogins. This is only the most cursory glance at a few of the more obvious analogies between Taoism and Yoga. There are, of course, copious variant schemes and terms in both traditions, but particularly in Taoism as it developed in different parts of China and at different times.

We have cited above many early Indian texts which outline Yoga philosophy, yet they can only have constituted but a small fraction of what was transmitted orally in fuller form. Hence it is not possible in every case to provide specific textual references for the sources of Indian influence

on the development of Taoism. For example, it would be difficult to pinpoint a single Indian source for the microcosmic physiological conception of the human body so characteristic of Taoism, yet we know that it was already securely in place in India long before being elaborated in China. So pervasive was the Indian impact upon the growth of Taoist metaphysics that the latter – especially in its formative stages – is not wholly intelligible without consulting its Yogic background. Our appreciation of Chinese thought in general is enhanced by the recognition that, in fact, it is intimately connected to world philosophy. When we encounter Neo-Confucian metaphors for the dissolution of an entity into the universal vital breath that compare the process to salt being mixed in a soup, it heightens our level of understanding if we are aware that this is a common Indian image going all the way back to the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* (II.iv.12) and the *Maitrī Up.* (VII.11).

With the rise of well organized indigenous religious sects in China during the second half of the second century I.E., all of the ostensibly Indic flavor of Taoism, it would seem, should have been eradicated, and yet it continues to surface in unpredictable ways. In the biography of Hua-t'o (**ghwa-thā*), the most famous physician of ancient China, we hear him speak thus:

> "When the ancient transcendents[28] engaged in the practice of duction,[29] they strode[30] like a bear and turned their heads backward like an owl. They elongated[31] their waist and limbs and moved all of their joints, seeking to stave off old age. I have a technique called 'the exercise[32] of the five animals.' The first is the tiger, the second is the deer, the third is the bear, the fourth is the ape, the fifth is the bird. They may also be used to get rid of illness and are beneficial for the legs and feet."[33]

Hua-t'o's healing techniques, which were considered by Chinese at the time to be preternaturally efficacious,[34] possess distinct similarities to Yogic therapy and āyurvedic medicine. Furthermore, the eminent Chinese scholar, Ch'en Yin-k'o, has shown that Indian stories definitely constitute a significant portion of the biographies of Hua-t'o in the *History of the Later Han Dynasty* and in the *History of the Three Kingdoms.* Indeed, Hua-t'o's name itself in all likelihood is but the abbreviated transcription (minus the initial *a-* sound) of the Skt. word *agada* which means no more than "medicine."

By now, it is hoped that even the most hardened skeptic and the most ardent Chinese isolationist will admit that Yoga and Taoism are not wholly unrelated. But how do we account for this historically? The usual dogma is that China was virtually cut off from the rest of humanity until about the middle of the second century B.I.E. This is simply wrong, but fortunately archeological discoveries and anthropological fieldwork are beginning to prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that, with rare exceptions, all of mankind -- including China -- has been continuously interacting across the face of the globe since the origin of the species. It is also often claimed that China and India did not have any significant cultural intercourse until after the beginning of the I.E. This, too, is demonstrably false, for there is now available artifactual evidence of Buddhism in China from no later than the middle of the first century B.I.E.[35] China is mentioned by name, particularly as the source of silk, in a number of still earlier Indian texts. Trade between India and China, through a variety of overland and ocean routes, flourished well before the time at which the sayings of the Old Master came to be written down. Whenever trade occurs between two countries, mutual cultural borrowing is inevitable.

The rise of Taoism is not just a matter of Sino-Indian cultural relations. A tremendous intellectual ferment convulsed the entirety of Eurasia around the middle of the first millennium B.I.E. Within the brief span of approximately a century, the following major systems of thought were articulated or adumbrated: Pre-Socratic Greek philosophy (Thales and Anaximander of Miletus), Confucianism, Mohism, Upanisadic Hinduism, Jainism, Taoism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, and Biblical Judaism. It is quite improbable that these great movements were utterly independent phenomena. Indeed, they were undoubtedly closely tied to the explosive

growth in the use of iron during the preceding two centuries.[36] The political manifestation of the widespread use of iron in China was the breakup of the feudal Chou empire into seven main and many lesser Warring States (Chan-kuo) around 475 B.I.E. After more than 250 years of prolonged fighting, the state of Ch'in emerged as the leading power that was able to reunite China in 221 B.I.E. It is significant both that the original Ch'in base was far to the northwest and that, as those who have visited the site of the famous terra cotta warriors who protected the First Emperor of the Ch'in in death can attest, her armies were well equipped with iron and advanced metallic alloy implements. The consolidation of the Chinese state under the First Emperor of the Ch'in probably thus represents the last eastward wave of the conquests of Darius and Alexander.[37] This interpretation has been forcefully corroborated by the recent discovery in Sinkiang ("New Borders" -- the Chinese controlled part of Central Asia) of a large copper statue of a West Asiatic warrior that is preserved in the regional museum at Urumchi. He dates to approximately the fourth century B.I.E. and is depicted in a kneeling posture almost identical to that of many infantrymen in the army of the First Emperor of the Ch'in. Hence the flow of Indian intellectual and spiritual influence into China that resulted in the rise of Taoism was undoubtedly mediated by an exceedingly complex mix of peoples from West and Central Asia. This may help to explain who "the ancients" were that speak with such a biblical ring in *TTC,* LXII.15-16, LXIII.5, etc. The same process was repeated later during the penetration of Buddhism into the heartland of China when Iranian-speaking peoples, among others, played a crucial role in its transmission. Also, just as with Buddhism, Indian ideas instrumental in the rise of Taoism must have been brought to the south and central Chinese coast by trading ships of various nations which sometimes carried religious personages, paraphernalia, and scriptures.

It may be objected that, in the case of religious and philosophical phenomena such as Buddhism and Taoism, the flow of culture seems so unfairly lopsided from India to China. This is truly an enigma until we remember that the Middle Kingdom has always been celebrated abroad for its material innovations (silk, gunpowder, the compass, paper, printing, and so forth) but not for spiritual and intellectual achievements. Chatterji (p. 96) astutely observes that only about half a dozen Chinese words were adopted into Sanskrit whereas Buddhologists are poignantly aware of the more than 35,000 Sanskrit terms that were transcribed or translated into Chinese. The only plausible explanation for this astounding disparity is the extreme difficulty and only partially phonetic nature of the Chinese script. This tremendous obstacle to the passage of Chinese ideas beyond the realm of tetragraphic usage seems to have been perceived, if only dimly, by the renowned Sung period encyclopedist, Cheng Ch'iao (1104-1162), in his "Preface to the *Seven Sounds.*"[38]

In any event, Taoism (as well as other aspects of Chinese civilization) certainly did not materialize in a complete vacuum. As more thorough archeological and anthropological studies are carried out on the periphery of China and as more unrestricted philological studies are undertaken on early Chinese texts, it becomes increasingly apparent that Chinese civilization is an integral part of the development of world civilization. Those who attempt to seal it off hermetically from the rest of mankind, for whatever purpose or from whatever motive, not only distort Chinese history, they fail to comprehend the true nature of human history outside of China.

In his landmark comparative study, *Sufism and Taoism,* Toshihiko Izutsu discerns what he calls "the two pivots of a world-view," namely "the Absolute and the Perfect Man." Izutsu sees these twin pivots (Tao and *te,* as it were) developing independently in different places and ages. Nonetheless, it would be difficult to prove that Sufism and Taoism were absolutely unrelated, either directly or indirectly. This is especially the case when we consider that both Persia and China had commercial, cultural, and political ties with each other and with India during the period when Sufism developed. Similarly, given the unmistakable resemblances between Taoism and Yoga, it would be virtually impossible to prove that they have no historical connections whatsoever. Even Joseph Needham, the great partisan of the autonomy of Chinese technology, is persuaded by the evidence to admit that there must have been some sort of influence operating between these two systems of thought.[39]

Sino-Indian interaction in the development of Taoism was by no means restricted to the obvious similarities between the *BG* and the *TTC*. The whole of Taoist philosophy, in a sense, may be considered an adaptation of Yoga to the Chinese environment. Thus the Old Master, Master Chuang, and Master Lieh all reveal distinct Indian proclivities at the same time as they are quintessentially Chinese. Taoist religion, too, shares much with Indian Buddhism. Its canon, ecclesiastical establishment, hierarchy of deities, ritual, and rules for communal living all are marked by Indian inspiration, and yet they have been domesticated in a way that makes them seem very much at home in China. Taoism, in turn, laid the foundations for the rise of perhaps the most genuinely Chinese of all Buddhist sects, Ch'an (Middle Chinese *dźiaen*), which we know in its Japanese guise as Zen (both of which names are truncated transcriptions of Sanskrit *dhyāna* ["meditation"]). The circles and cycles of cultural interflow never cease.

[d] Conclusion

One of the goals of this introduction has been to show that the *TTC*, from its very inception, was intimately linked to peoples and places outside of China. This is not, however, to overlook the special features of the *TTC* itself. The sayings of the Old Master have a style and socioreligious character all their own. We certainly may not claim that there was any sort of direct borrowing between the "authors" of the *BG* and the *TTC*. Considering the impersonal manner in which both texts were composed, the likelihood of one being the consciously adopted model for the other is preposterously small. Besides, the *TTC* was as much, if not far more, the product of internal sociopolitical events as it was the reaction to radically new religiophilosophical stimuli from without. Consequently, it comes to qualitatively different conclusions from those of the *BG*. The Chinese classic emphasizes political skills and social harmony in preference to the theistic orientation of the Indian scripture. The *BG* is essentially a manual of spiritual discipline that has applications in the real world; the *TTC* is basically a handbook for the ruler with mystical overtones. The *BG* advocates control of the mind and ultimate liberation; adherents of the *TTC* espouse the indefinite protraction of the physical body.

As was pointed out in the very first sentence of the preface, aside from the Christian Bible, the only other book in the world that has been so often translated as the *TTC* is the *BG*. Now that we have come full circle, it may be observed that this is not just happenstance, for both the *TTC* and the *BG* explore universal themes of human existence in ways that are as vibrant in the twentieth century as they were over two millennia ago. Although in the complex global and technological arena of today we may not accept all of their solutions to hard political, social, economic, and philosophical problems, there is much in both the *TTC* and the *BG* that is still instructive. Let us mine them carefully.

[e] Endnotes

1. Specialists may consult the extensive scholarly debates in Ku Chieh-kang, ed., *Discussions*, vol. 5, pp. 303-519, esp. pp. 516-518, and vol. 6, pp. 387-682 which prove that the *TTC* was not the product of one man or one period. See also Ma Hsü-lun, pp. 10-19. For a sober assessment of the alleged historicity of the Old Master, see Kaltenmark's treatment in *Lao Tzu and Taoism*, pp. 5-12. For legends concerning Lao Tzu in religious Taoism, consult Seidel, *Divinisation*. On Lao Tzu as the embodiment of the Tao, see Schipper, "The Taoist Body" and *Le corps taoiste*, especially chapter 7.

It is curious that two of the names most commonly associated with the Old Master, Erh (M1744) and Tan (M6027), have to do with the ears. The first, of course, is simply the usual Chinese word for "ear," but the second indicates that the Old Master's ears were elongated or pendulous (*tan* is glossed as *man* [M4330] in the *Shuo-wen [Explanation of Script]*). In any event, it is certain that the Old Master's outer auditory appendages were conceived of as conspicuous physical features by the time Ssu-ma Ch'ien attempted to create his first biography. Now, the Buddha was considered to possess 32 *mahāpuruṣalakṣana* ("[auspicious] mark, sign [on the body indicating] a great man," that is to say, physical attributes). He was also held to possess 80 lesser attributes called *anuvyañjana* ("minor physical characteristics"). Of the latter, the 68th was *pīnāyatakarṇa* ("large, fleshy ears"). Representations of the Buddha, beginning from the earliest examples at Mathurā and Gandhāra in the second century I.E., have always depicted him with enormously distended ear lobes. In India, long ears were signs of sageliness even before they became a noticeable feature in the Buddhist iconographical tradition (cf. Skt. *lambakarṇa* ["pendulous ear"], *āyatakarṇa* ["stretched ear"], and *dīrghakarṇa* ["long ear"]). The 72nd of the *anuvyañjana* is *pṛthulalāṭa* ("prominent forehead"), a sign of wisdom. Chinese representations of the God of Longevity (Shou-hsing), with whom the Old Master is sometimes identified, also emphasize this iconographical feature. These preliminary observations (many more could be named if space allowed) would seem to warrant a careful comparison of the legendary descriptions of the Old Master and ancient Indian sages.

2. In this respect, they are perhaps even more egregious than the popular narratives from Tun-huang, Kansu province previously studied by the author (Mair, 1983 and 1989). The latter, however, are complicated by the gross mixing of classical and vernacular levels of language that is relatively absent in the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts.

3. Although the bulk of the *Analects* was probably written down by followers of Confucius within a century of his death, chapters 16-18 and 20 as well as a few other scattered passages -- some of which appear to have been influenced by Taoism -- were likely added as much as another century after that time.

4. This chapter is later than the seven "inner chapters" and may very well not have been written by Master Chuang himself.

5. Cf. Watson, tr., pp. 371-372. Sayings from the Old Master are referred to sporadically elsewhere in *Master Chuang*, but except for such celebrated passages as the pair of paradoxical aphorisms that opens *TTC* LVI (cited twice almost exactly as they occur in *TTC*), most of the quotations read more like loose prose paraphrases.

6. This impression is based on the work of Karlgren, Waley, and numerous historical linguists as well as the personal observations of the author.

7. Before the discovery of the Ma-wang-tui silk manuscripts, the oldest known texts of the *TTC* were that inscribed on a stele in the Lung-hsing Temple in I-chou, Hupeh province dated 708 I.E. and a Tun-huang manuscript now in the possession of Princeton University that is held to date to

the year 270 I.E. There are altogether over 50 manuscripts of the *TTC* from Tun-huang, mostly dating from the mid-T'ang period (circa 750).

8. We are fortunate to have two complete translations of the Wang Pi commentary by Rump and by Lin.

9. Integral translation by Erkes.

10. Since A and B are written in quite different calligraphic styles and B did not copy from A (see Boltz, 1984 and 1985), there must have been at least one earlier generation of written texts. That would take us back to about the middle of the third century B.I.E., which is the time we estimated above (p. 17) for the appearance of the first written exemplars of the *TTC*.

In a carefully argued examination of the so-called Wang Pi recension of the *TTC*, Rudolph Wagner has proven that it was significantly changed by subsequent editors so as to resemble the Ho-shang Kung recension more than the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts whereas, in fact, the original text of the *TTC* that Wang Pi wrote his commentary upon was closer to the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts in its wording. Since, however, it was not identical with them, there must have been at least one earlier parent text from which the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts, Fu I's "ancient text, another "ancient text" by the Sung scholar Fan Yingyuan, and the original Wang Pi text derived. This is the same conclusion we arrived by independent means above on p. 20.

11. See Wei Cheng, *et al.*, *Sui Shu* (K'ai-ming ed.), ch. 34, p. 2449a.

12. Properly speaking, we should refer to these languages as Sinitic in contradistinction to the so-called minority languages of China such as Mongolian, Uighur, Chuang, and so forth which are not part of the same group. The Sinitic language group is part of the still largely hypothetical Sino-Tibetan language family.

13. Shafer (1963 and 1965), Pulleyblank (1974-1975 and work in progress), and a handful of other historical linguists have posited a genetic relationship between Sino-Tibetan and Indo-European. The intellectual climate not being favorable for a prolonged and exhaustive assault on this difficult topic, so far no disquisition has been published that deals with it in a comprehensive manner.

14. Shaughnessy.

15. The present author has completed the manuscript of a monograph in which archeological evidence is used to demonstrate a multitude of transcontinental Eurasian interconnections (not the least of which is writing) during the second and first millennia B.I.E.

16. Among numerous other standard sources, the following references were consulted: Klug (pp. 795b-796a), Walde (vol. 1, p. 847), Pokorny (vol. 1, p. 271), and Mann (p. 215b).

17. The earliest recorded examples of the use of the word "doughtiness" in English (see *Oxford English Dictionary*, vol. D, p. 619b) are remarkably similar to the environments in which *te* (**dugh*) appears.

18. There is no disputing the high place awarded to the *TTC* by religious and philosophical Taoists alike. As for the *BG*, Iyengar (p. 21) calls it "the most important authority" on Yoga philosophy. The *Yoga Sūtras* of Patañjali, to which we shall have occasion to refer below, are the chief guide to Yogic practice. The *BG* is also widely considered to be the most important scripture of Hindu religion as a whole.

19. There were undoubtedly accretions and interpolations both to the epic and to the *BG* in the centuries after their initial composition. It is curious that Sinha, who attempts to arrive at a primitive fourth-century B.I.E. *BG,* by getting rid of what he views as all the later additions, comes up with a text of 84 stanzas that is about the same length as the *TTC.* This is in contrast to the present *BG* which consists of 700 stanzas in 18 chapters.

20. See the textual notes for further examples of correlations between the *BG* and the *TTC.*

21. Altogether nine in number, these are the eyes, nostrils, ears, mouth, organ of generation, and organ of excretion.

22. The eminent French Orientalist J. Filliozat had come to a similar conclusion but for different reasons than I shall adduce here. The great German scholar A. Conrady was also pointing in the same direction when he discerned a rich assemblage of Indian stories and motifs in Sinitic and pre-Ch'in literature such as *Master Chuang, Intrigues of the Warring States,* and *Songs of the South.*

After having completed this introduction, I came upon the learned article of L. S. Vasilyev comparing Tao and Brahman as "phenomena of initial supreme harmony." Through close textual and philosophical analysis, Vasilyev links Tao and *te* inextricably with Brahman and *ātman.* This substantial work eminently deserves, indeed urgently requires, a complete translation into English. Future researchers on the origins of Taoism who ignore it do so at their own peril.

Still later, I came across the 1954 article by the art historian Alfred Salmony who noticed particular evidence that India exerted iconographic influence on China during the late Eastern Chou period (7th-3rd c. B.I.E.).

23. The fourth, or parts thereof, may have been added several centuries thereafter. According to Feuerstein (1979), who has submitted the *Yoga Sūtras* to searching textual analysis, there is only one possible minor late interpolation. The rest of the sūtras, as their form and regular title suggest, belong to about the time of the famous grammarian, Patañjali, as we would have expected.

24. This may help to account for the "womb breathing" (MSM *t'ai-hsi*) of the Taoists.

25. *Concordance to Chuang Tzu,* ch. 15, p. 40.

26. Sometimes written with the same tetragraph (M6136) as that used to represent the word meaning "Way," this is a separate though etymologically related word. Strictly speaking, it should be written with M6137 to show the distinction.

27. Mentioned already in the *Yoga Sūtras* (II.46), *āsana* quite literally means "sitting [in a peculiar posture]," although not all *āsana* are performed while seated.

28. *Hsien,* usually translated by such fanciful terms as "immortal, fairy, genie," and the like, is normally written with a tetragraph (M2707) that consists of the SC for man and a phonophore which, by itself, means "mountain," the implication being that a *hsien* is a recluse. An earlier tetragraph (also given at M2707) for the same word, however, consisted of the SC for man and a phonophore that indicates "ascent to a height." Hence it is appropriate to render *hsien* as "transcendent" on philological grounds alone, but there are other reasons as well. The *hsien* were, in fact, never considered to be immortal in the absolute sense but only to have attained long or extended life through elimination of desire. They also subscribed to various dietary and physical regimens which indubitably rarefied their corporeality. It should be noted that *hsien-chia* or "School of Transcendents" was a synonym for the Taoists.

29. *Tao-yin* (M6136.f.3 = M6137.5), often rendered as "the [practice of] Taoist breathing exercises" or "Taoist gymnastics," more literally means "leading, guiding, channeling," as explained above on p. 36.

30. The tetragraph used to write this word is M1123. See pp. 25-26 above for a lengthy discussion of its meaning.

31. Literally, "guided and pulled."

32. Literally, "game" or "play."

33. *History of the Later Han Dynasty* (K'ai-ming ed.), ch. 112b, p. 890d.

34. Porkert (p. 159) holds that they were centuries ahead of the written Chinese medical literature.

35. The author is currently preparing an article which will introduce the hard data for this assertion to Sinologists. The reader's attention is also drawn to the recent study of Xinru (Hsin-ju) Liu which abundantly documents the flourishing trade and religious exchanges between China and India during the first six centuries of the International Era. Since there were no radical innovations in transportation until many centuries after this period, we have every reason to believe that the level of communication between Chinese and the West (including India) was not measurably greater after the beginning of the International Era than it was before.

36. Calder, p. 169. Cf. Benjamin Schwartz's comments on the Axial Age (initially proposed by Karl Jaspers in his *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte* [Zurich: Artemis, 1949], ch. 1: "Die Achsenzeit") on pp. 2-3 of his *The World of Thought in Ancient China.*

37. Cf. Maspero (1978), "The Scientific Movement and Foreign Influences," pp. 372-380.

38. Translated by Victor H. Mair in *Xin Tang,* 7 (August, 1986), 134.

39. Pp. 257-288. Needham's single item of evidence for breath retention "being taken very seriously already in the –6th-century [*sic,* i.e. sixth century B.I.E.]" (p. 280) in China must be revised downward to 380 B.I.E. See Kuo Mo-jo, p. 9.

Textual Notes and Commentary

Some of the following annotations are directed to the specialist while others are intended primarily for the general reader. The two types are generally distinguishable by the brevity and non-verbal quality of the former as opposed to the discursive, sentential nature of the latter. The sign of equation (=) indicates that the tetragraph in question is a homonym or orthographical variant of the tetragraph which follows the sign. An arrow (⟶) signifies emendation of a tetragraph in the text to the designated tetragraph following the sign. B or F alone indicate that I choose one of these two readings over that in the primary manuscript because I consider it superior.

I had originally intended to use Roman numerals to designate the conventional chapters and Arabic numerals to designate the order of the chapters in the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts. Unfortunately, the editors at Bantam would not permit Roman numerals and the designers made it virtually impossible to keep line numbers in the text. I am sorry for the inconvenience that this is certain to impose upon those who wish to consult these notes. There were also several last-minute changes in the wording, numbering, and arrangement of the published version of the translation which have not been taken into account in the following notes

XXXVIII.7 **humaneness** Like "righteousness" and "etiquette" in lines 9 and 11 below, this is an important element of Confucian ideology. It is obvious that the author of this chapter takes a rather dim view of all three. *Jen* ("humaneness") is cognate with the homonymous *jen* ("human [being]") and both are probably ultimately related to PIE √**dhghem,* the root for "human," which means basically "earth." Cf. Persian *zamīn* ("earth, land"), Russian *zemlya* ("land"), and probably also OS **zim* (=MSM *jen*). Hence, we may think of humans and *jen* as "earthlings" or those who spring from humus. The tetragraph for *jen* ("humaneness") shows a man with the sign for "two," thus "[the way] a man [should relate to or treat] others." The usual translations for *jen* are "benevolence," "charity," "altruism," and so forth. Although several of them are closely associated with certain historical secular and theological movements, I believe the use of some such term as "humanism," "humanitarianism," "humaneness," or "humanity" as a rendering for *jen* is almost obligatory to show the intimate relationship of this Confucian ethical concept to *jen* ("human [being]"). The Confucian ideal of humanism and the Western tradition of Humanism share an emphasis on the achievements and concerns of mankind, but we may distinguish them by following the usual practice of capitalizing the latter. The other word for man or people in the *TTC,* MSM *min,* is obviously cognate with English "man." Cf. IE √**man* or √**mon* and OS **myuhn,* Skt. *manu* ("the thinking one, the creature with a mind"), etc.

XXXVIII.14 **coerces** = M3122.

XXXVIII.23 **afterwards** = F.

XXXVIII.25, 31 **attenuation** = F.

XXXVIII.35 **the one** = F.

IXL.8 **the valley** = M3483.

IXL.11 **right** The usual Sinological translation of this term is "rectitude." Here and elsewhere, it might well be interpreted as "correct governance," with which it is closely cognate in Sinitic languages.

IXL.13 **it implies that** B = M7079.

IXL.14, 17, 20, 23, 25 **ever** More literally, "incessantly."

IXL.15 **rend** = F.

IXL.28 **fall** = M1690.

IXL.32 Both A and B have an emphatic particle in this line whose inclusion in the English translation would lead to undesirable arrhythmia and asymmetry.

IXL.36 "**hapless**" = M3490. See also XLII.10.

IXL.37 Literally, "This their humility's basis? Not indeed."

IXL.39 **praise** Much confusion has arisen over the inclusion of SC159 ("cart") in this tetragraph (M7618 as in B). This is a common enough miswriting in the silk manuscripts and in other ancient

texts for the simple particle in A (M7615). In either case, from the sense of the passage as a whole, it is clear that M7617 (as given in F) was the intended reading.
IXL.42 **jingling** B = F. The tetragraph with M4192 as phonophore and SC96 did not exist at the time of the composition of *TTC*. Hence the tetragraph in B with SC113 was borrowed to represent the sound of the underlying binome from the spoken language.
XLI.2 **scarcely** = M1066.
XLI.11 **dim** replacing SC150 with SC109.
XLI.13 **bumpy** M4245.
XLI.15 **grimy** with the meaning of the same phonophore plus SC203 as in F. Cf. XXVIII.9.
XLI.22 **great** = F.
XLI.22 **form** = F.
XL.1 **Reversal** Cf. *Muṇḍaka Up.*, II.i.1 where all kinds of creatures are said to issue forth from the immutable (*brahman*) and **return** to it. Also see *TTC* XVI.3-4, XXV.12, LXIV.31, etc.
XL.4 Compare this line with *Chāndogya Up.*, VI.ii.1.
XLII.6 **embrace** —> M4938.
XLII.5-6 I have left the technical terms Yin and Yang untranslated because they have already become a part of English vocabulary. While their significance in Chinese dualistic cosmology is known as the passive, female principle and the active, male principle respectively, it may also be useful to understand these terms in their more primitive senses of shadeward and sunward, hence lunar and solar.
XLII.7 **vapors** MSM *ch'i* ("vital breath"), for a discussion of which see the introduction, pp. 27-28.
XLII.12 **Things** = F.
XLII.12 **diminished** = M5548.
XLII.16 **also** = M3021.
XLII.18 **tyrant** = M668.25.
XLIII.6 **I** = B.
XLV.3 **empty** = M1523b, as in B.
XLV.4 **impaired** = M1716.
XLV.7 **awkward** The recurrent rhyming phonophore in this passage (lines 5-7), M1409, is related to the phonophore, M4766, of this troublesome tetragraph. Hence M1622 (SC149 + M1409, "stammer") and M4609a (SC149 + M4766, "stammer") probably ultimately represent the same etymon in the spoken language. Note also that M1273 and the same phonophore (M1409) with SC86 instead of SC64 were interchangeable in the sense of "clumsy, unskillful." It is clear that the tetragraph in question (SC86 + M1409, "awkward") was meant to extend the pair of terms in the parallel positions of the previous lines, both of which include the phonophore M1409 and both of which signify ineptitude or contortion. The correctness of this interpretation is borne out by B which has M1274 (SC120 + M1409, "impediment") for the problematic graph.
XLV.8 **Bustling about** = M6729.
XLV.9 **Standing still** —> SC117 + M1168 = M1154.
XLV.10 **still** —> M1171.
XLVII.3 **peering** = M3648, 3649.
XLVII.8 **sage** Following Boltz ("The 'Hsiang erh' *Lao tzu*," pp. 101-102 note 17), I had originally used "audient sage" as an equivalent of *sheng-jen* throughout. A less obtrusive rendering suggested to me by Denis Mair is "heedful sage." However, since discovering that English "sage" by itself has the same etymological basis in perception (see the introduction, p. 27) as does *sheng*, I have removed the qualifier "audient" as an unnecessary redundancy. The restriction of *sheng* to auditory sense perception is an artifact of the tetragraph used to write it which includes as one of its components the drawing of an ear. In point of fact, it also includes a drawing of a mouth which, together with the ear, were probably meant to convey the notion of "senses." The final component most likely was intended to approximate the sound of the word.
XLVII.9 **understands** = M4524.
XLVIII.3 **again** = M7539.
XLIX.1 **mind** The Chinese word *hsin* means both "heart" and "mind."

XLIX.2 **people** B → M2770.
XLIX.5 **attained** B (M6162) → M6161 (as in F).
XLIX.10 **self-effacing** = M2475.
L.13 **avoid** = M5108.
L.13 **rhinoceroses** stands for M5603, as does the tetragraph in B.
L.17 **jab** = M1422 or M6435.
L.18 **fasten** = M6834.
L.18 **claws** = F.
L.19 This line bears a striking resemblance to *BG,* II.23: "Weapons do not pierce this (the embodied one)."
LI.2 **forms** = M2759.
LI.6 **conferred upon** = B.
LI.15 **protects** A is missing and B has "rehearses" which is probably meant to stand for the homophonous "cover" of F, the source of my reading.
LI.16 The negative particle in this and each of the following lines implies an object ("them") after the verb.
LI.17 **presume** = F.
LI.18 **control** That is to say, it does not exercise dominion over them.
LI.19 Almost identical to the last line of chapter X.
LII.3 **Having** = B.
LII.9 **orifices of your heart** This crucial tetragraph has been misread by the editors of the Ma-wang-tui texts. Manuscript A clearly shows a mouth (signifying an opening) over a heart inside a door. Although this is a unique tetragraph, its meaning is obvious enough and is that given in the translation. Judging from the tetragraphs used in B and in all the other editions to represent the underlying word, it must have been pronounced something like *thuadh* in OS. In ancient Chinese medicine, it was thought that the life breath (*ch'i*) flowed through the openings of the heart. It would seem that the author of the *TTC* is here grappling with the problem of how to preserve one's vital energy. Because of the oddly arresting quality of the vocabulary here and in the parallel passage below (LVI.4-5), I have intentionally employed slightly obscure English phraseology.
LII.10 Referring, presumably, to the senses. The same narrowing of consciousness is frequently described in very early Indian texts in almost exactly the same terms. See Feuerstein (1974), p. 104. Cf. *Kaṭha Up.,* II.ii.1; *Chāndogya Up.,* III.xiii.1-7 where the different types of vital breath which pass through these gates are outlined with precision; *BG,* V.13; and especially VIII.12 which is quoted in the introduction, p. 32.
LII.11 **suffer** Following Ma Hsü-lun, I interpret this tetragraph as having SC104 added to it.
LII.14 **salvation** Although this tetragraph is slightly damaged on B (it is altogether missing on A), enough of it remains to see that it is definitely not M486 ("brambles") as given by the Ma-wang-tui text editors. It should be read M1193 as in all other editions.
LII.18 **inheritor** This tetragraph is partly missing on manuscript A. It is likely that the scribe intended to write M2995 as on B.
LII.18 **calamity** = M7242.
LIII.1 **were** The tetragraph after that for "I" is only partially legible on manuscript A but seems to begin with SC64 ("hand") which would indicate that it was meant to go together with the following tetragraph ("to have"). B has M629 which is the source of my "slightest."
LIII.5 **mountain trails** = the same tetragraph with SC46 added.
LIII.15 There is an obvious pun here between "bandit" (*tao*) and "the Way" (*Tao*). For similar reasons, the thief is mentioned in *BG,* III.12.
LIV.1, 2 **firmly established, tightly embraced** More literally, "well planted," "well wrapped."
LIV.7 **abundant** = M1897.
LIV.13 The emphatic particle at the end of this line in B (A is lacking) is functionally equivalent to *tsai* at the end of the same line in F.
LIV.15 "This" signifies the Way. One knows the nature of all under heaven through observing things in accordance with the Way. Cf. XXI.17 and the note to LVII.4.

LV.3 **Wasps** M1880 as it actually occurs on manuscript A.
LV.3 **spiders** = M124.
LV.3 **scorpions** M2124 as it actually occurs on manuscript A. This stands, as it often does, for the more complicated tetragraph M2644.
LV.3 **snakes** M5698 as it actually occurs on manuscript A.
LV.11 **essence** The tetragraph may also quite literally be interpreted as "semen."
LV.12 **hoarse** = M2521 with SC30 added.
LV.15 The primary manuscript (A) adds "to know" at the beginning of this line. Since it is also present in B and in the received text, which also has "to know" at the beginning of line 14, it is likely to have been the intended reading for both lines. Because it sounds awkward in English, however, I have omitted it from the translation.
LV.14-17 **implies, requires, is, entails** The Chinese text has the same word (MSM *yüeh,* "to say, call") for all of these English verbs.
LVI.4 **openings of his heart** Cf. LII.9 above. The tetragraph as it appears here shows a heart inside of a gate. This is conventionally interpreted as meaning "depression" or "melancholy" (i.e., the heart-mind closed up). From context, comparison with other manuscripts and early editions, and above all from the parallel passage cited at the beginning of this note, it is evident that this is not precisely what the author had in mind here. He intended, rather, to indicate the apertures of the heart.
LVI.4-6 See commentary to LII.9-10.
LVI.7 **the dust** The mundane world.
LVI.8 **Files away** = M6798.
LVI.9 There is no missing tetragraph between "Unravels" and "his."
LVII.1 **Rule** = M1021.
LVII.2 **craft** = F.
LVII.4 Neither A nor B answer this question, but F has the concise rejoinder "Through this," implying the Way. Cf. XXI.17 and LIV.15.
LVII.9 **the more** M6935 = M6937. The same holds true for lines 11 and 12.
LVII.11 **strange** Following F for this one tetragraph in the sense of M2625.
LVIII.1 **anarchic** The tetragraph in B (A is missing) probably stands for a cognate of M7133, hence "haphazard, desultory, confused, chaotic."
LVIII.2 **honest** = M1489.
LVIII.15 **angular** = F.
LVIII.16 **arrogant** = F ("reckless, unrestrained").
LVIII.17 **dazzling** = F.
LIX.2, 4 **thrift** The author may have chosen the wrong word, but he wrote *se* (M5447) which means "stingy, mean, miserly, grasping." It sounds odd to have the Old Master advocating such behavior to one who would "rule men and serve heaven." He is not, however, here advocating extreme parsimony or frugality. Instead, he is advising the potential ruler to husband his own integrity. This becomes clear in lines 7ff.
LIX.5 **prepared** = M4997. I have omitted "in advance" from the translation since it is redundant in English.
LIX.16 The last tetragraph in this line is equivalent to that in the same position in F and means "root."
LX.2 **oversees** = M3912.
LX.3 **demons** MSM *kuei,* often rendered as "ghost." A more exact translation might be "specters" or "lemures," as in ancient Roman religion.
LXII.2 **treasure** = M4949.
LXII.8 **son of heaven** The emperor.
LXII.10 **large [circular]** = M3712a.
LXII.12 **would be better** B (literally, "would not be as good as").
LXII.12 **to sit down** Presumably to meditate.
LXII.12 **this** The Way.

LXII.15 Cf. *St. Matthew,* VII.7 ("seek, and ye shall find") and VII.8 ("he that seeketh findeth"). These sayings of Jesus surely must be based on pre-Christian sentiments since we find them voiced already in the *TTC* at the other end of the continent.
LXII.16 Cf. Apocrypha, *Ecclesiasticus,* II.1 ("the Lord ... forgiveth sins").
LXIII.3 Closely reminiscent of *BG,* II.59.3.
LXIII.5 Cf. St. Paul's injunction to "overcome evil with good" in *Romans,* XII.21.
LXIII.13 **never** = F.
LXIII.16 **assents** = F.
LXIII.21 **even** = M7528.
LXIV.10 **basketful** With SC118 ("bamboo") added.
LXIV.12 **begins** = B.
LXIV.29 **goods** SC154 instead of SC130.
LXV.1 **ancients** B.
LXV.7, 8 **Ruling** = M1021.
LXV.9, 10 **mindful[ness]** More literally, "always to know."
LXVI.15 **push him forward** F.
LXVI.16 **without contention** B.
LXXX.2 **military devices** F.
LXXX.4 **moving elsewhere** A and B both have M2468, as does F.
LXXX.5 **boats** = M1291.
LXXX.9-10 Cf. the quipu of various primitive societies.
LXVII Manuscripts A and B differ significantly in this chapter. Because A is severely damaged, I take B as the primary text, except for lines 17-19, and use A for purposes of collation.
LXVII.4ff Everywhere the word "[un]conventional" (= M2606 as in F) appears in this passage, there is a pun with the homophonous "small" (written with M2605, both are pronounced *hsiao* in MSM).
LXVII.8 **three treasures** This expression is identical to the ancient Indian *triratna* or *ratnatraya.* Indeed, when Chinese Buddhists later translated these terms into their own language, they used the same two words (MSM *san-pao*) as here. In India, the notion of Three Jewels was common to various religious persuasions, each of whom interpreted it in different ways. To the Buddhists, it referred, of course, to the Buddha, the Dharma (his law or doctrine), and the Sangha (the Buddhist community). For the Jains, it signified *samyag-darśana* ("correct perception or insight"), *samyag-jñāna* ("correct knowledge"), and *samyak-cāritra* ("correct conduct"). The expression *ratnatraya* occurs in the titles of numerous Buddhist and Jain texts and even in those of some Vedānta and Śaivite (Hindu) treatises. It is not at all strange that the Taoists would take over this widespread ancient Indian expression and use it for their own purposes.
LXVII.9 **guard** = F.
LXVII.9 **cherish** = F (M4946, the same tetragraph as in the previous line for "treasure").
LXVII.10 **compassion** = M6965. Cf. Skt. *karuṇa* which the Chinese Buddhists subsequently translated with the same tetragraph as that used here by Lao Tzu.
LXVII.26 **war** = M147.
LXVIII.7 **parity** B = M5019.
LXIX.2 **be host** Take the initiative.
LXIX.5 **retreat** = B.
LXIX.8 **baring** = B.
LXIX.10 **driving back** = M3122.
LXIX.11 **misfortune** = B.
LXIX.12 **foe** = B.
LXIX.14 **well-nigh** = B.
LXIX.14 **treasures** Cf. LXVII.8 and note thereto.
LXIX.16 **opposing** B, although the reading in A ("raise") means approximately the same thing.
LXX.1-5 Compare the candid comments of Ssu-ma T'an, father of the great historian Ssu-ma Ch'ien (145-c.90 B.I.E.): "The Taoists propound 'non-action' which is also called 'non-inaction.'

In reality, it is easy to practice but their words are hard to understand." See *Records of the Grand Historian* (K'ai-ming ed.), 130.279a.
LXX.8 **ignorance** Cf. Skt. *ajñāna* ("nescience"), a key term in *BG.*
LXXII.3 **limit** = M2532, i.e., "constrict," "make narrow."
LXXII.4 **suppress** = M7231, "to weary" in the causative sense.
LXXIII.2 **survive** = F.
LXXIII.5 **dislikes** = F.
LXXIII.7 **war** = M147.
LXXIII.13 **relaxed** = the same phonophore plus SC120.
LXXIII.15 **Heaven's net** This seems to be a veiled reference to *indrajāla* ("Indra's net"), mentioned several times already in the *Atharvaveda.* Cf. also the net of Brahman in *Śvetāśvatara Up.,* V.3.
LXXIV.2 **threatening** = B.
LXXIV.3 **fear** = B, graphic error in A. Note that the graph for "fear" is preceded in A directly by M2107 ("ever") without an intervening particle. This indicates that M803 in line 1 of B (this line is missing in A) is an enclitic and not a conjunction.
LXXIV.4 **devious** Omitted in A; the tetragraph is B = F.
LXXIV.9, 11 **surrogate** = B.
LXXV.2 **taxes** = F. For "overtaxation," the manuscripts more literally say "the collection and consumption of [too] many taxes."
LXXV.10 Many ancient Chinese rulers were almost fanatical in their pursuit of longevity. They resorted to all sorts of bizarre regimens and extravagant practices, including the ingestion of cinnabar (mercuric sulfide) which, of course, had the opposite effect on their life spans of what they desired, and the dispatching of innocent youths into the ocean to find the Isles of Immortality. It is ironic that Lao Tzu, the supposed author of this indictment against longevity (cf. also XXXIII.8), would be made the emblem of life extension by many of his devotees. In truth, however, there are contradictory statements concerning the prolongation of life in *TTC* (cf. XLIV.11, L.12, LV.21, LXXVI.9, XXIV.5, XXII.3, XXX.22).
LXXVI.3 **stiff** = M2107 with SC75 added for the first syllable plus M2748 (as in B) for the second. I had originally chosen "renitent," a somewhat unusual word in English (it means the opposite of pliant and so fits perfectly here) to match this uncommon Chinese expression.
LXXVI.3 **straight** Or "rigid." The first graph of this bisyllabic word = B.
LXXVI.6 **dry** = F.
LXXVI.6 **withered** = F.
LXXVI.11 **snap** The tetragraph in A is M2107, to which SC75 should be added. As in line 3, where it appears with SC140, it is probably intended to stand for a word in the spoken language that meant essentially "to lie out stretched flat and immobile like a felled tree or cut grass" and is undoubtedly cognate with words meaning "horizontal" such as those represented by M2104 and M2106. All of these words are pronounced *heng* in MSM and must have sounded something like **gheng* in OS. The tetragraph in B ostensibly means "dread [the axe?]" but, inasmuch as its archaic pronunciation was approximately **kyeng,* it may be a near-homophonous miswriting of the same word as that represented in A.
LXXVI.11-13 **inflexible, unyielding** MSM *ch'iang* ("strong, violent, powerful, forceful").
LXXVII.1 The bow is a favorite metaphor in early Indian texts. Cf. *Muṇḍaka Up.,* II.ii.3-4.
LXXVII.2 **pressed down** = F.
LXXVII.4 **reduced** = F.
LXXVII.15-17 Cf. II.18-21.
LXXVIII.5 **soft** → F.
LXXIX.5 This line is corrupt in A, so I follow B.
LXXIX.5 **contract** = F. The imagery employed here is that of the system of tallies in ancient China whereby debtors were given the left-hand side of a piece of wood or bamboo that was split in half and creditors were given the right-hand side. When the latter wanted to collect from the former, they went to them with their side of the tally as proof of the loan and demanded payment.
I.1 Cf. the title of the small book by Swami Ramdas: *The Pathless Path.*

I.2 Reminiscent of the famous Vedānta formula *neti neti* ("not this, not that") indicating that Brahman is not designatable. See *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.*, II.iii.6. Cf. also the *Kena Up.*, I.5 where it is said that Brahman cannot be expressed in speech.
I.3-4 There would appear to be a contradiction between these two lines because "origin" and "mother" seem to mean the same thing. The editor(s) of the received text accordingly changed "myriad creatures" in the third line to "heaven and earth" in order to make it look like there was a difference in content between the predicates of the two lines. Yet both of the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts clearly have "myriad creatures" in each of these lines. This powerfully confirms the very careful scholarship of Ma Hsü-lun and Chiang Hsi-ch'ang who earlier in this century proved by referring to citations in Ssu-ma Ch'ien's "biography" of the Old Master, Wang Pi's commentary, the *Wen Tzu*, and other sources that both lines should definitely read "myriad creatures." The real distinction between the two lines lies in the fact that the "nameless" refers to the Tao (the "origin") while the "named" signifies the fecund phenomenal universe ("mother") as it evolves **after** the primal beginning. Thus we see that although "origin" and "mother" are gramatically and syntically parallel, they are not semantically identical.
I.7 **subtleties** = M4474.
I.9 **manifestations** = M686.
II.4 **this** The editors of A have misread this tetragraph as M6956. The manuscript actually has SC149 plus the right half of M2211. The scribe must have intended to convey the same vocable represented by M2211 as in B and F.
II.5 The final particle *yeh* of this and the next four lines signals no more than a pause. Note that the fifth line lacks *yeh* because it is immediately followed by the short summarizing statement in line 11.
II.7 **form** = F.
II.9 **Tone** B, i.e. " musical sounds."
II.13 **sage** = B. The homophonous orthographical error ("sound" for "sage," cf. XIX.1) may be telling. The sage is one who is aware of the voices of the people (cf. the note to XLVII.8). This reminds us of the Bodhisattva of Compassion, Avalokiteśvara (Kuan-shih-yin), whose name literally means "Perceiving the Sounds of the World."
II.16 **rise up** = F.
II.19 **presume** = F.
II.18-21 A strict application of grammar would require that the myriad objects of creation serve as the subject of these four lines, but cf. LXXVII.16-17.
III.16 **hostile** This expression has been misinterpreted by all commentators, both modern and ancient. The tetragraph in question (M1981) is commonly understood as a negative. Consequently, it has almost invariably been omitted from the text to avoid an obviously inappropriate double negative ("dare not refrain from action"). I suspect that puzzlement over what to do with this tetragraph already troubled the earliest redactors of the received text, for several exemplars have erroneously replaced it with the even more explicitly negative M5379. Virtually all other editors simply (and equally erroneously) dropped it from their texts. No one seems to have understood the graph in its primary sense of "contrary, usurpatory" (cf. the etymological meaning of the identical phonophore in M1983 ["to oppose"], M1986 ["to expel"], etc.) which fits perfectly here and is the source of my translation.
IV.1 Cf. XLV.3.
IV.4 **like** = F.
V.2, 4 **straw dogs** Used for sacrificial purposes, these were discarded indifferently at the conclusion of the ritual.
V.6 **bellows** The bellows (Skt. *bhastrikā*) is a basic form of *prāṇāyāma* (see introduction, p. 36) going back at least to the *Yoga Up.* in which the vital breath is forcibly drawn in and out with a kind of pumping action.
V.8 **pumps** I suggest that the tetragraph in A has a foot SC (no. 157) because the bellows envisaged by Lao Tzu was pedal operated. Cf., however, VIII.11 where the same graph would appear to indicate simply "motion."
V.9 The expression "hear much" in Chinese means "to be learned."

VI The best analysis of this short but very important chapter is by Conrady (1932).
VI.1 **Valley** = F (M3483, cf. M7670).
VI.6 **insubstantial** The manuscripts read simply "seem to exist."
VI.7 **consumed** = M1082.
VII.3 **they do not live for themselves** Literally, "not self live" which could also mean "are not born of themselves" (self-generated).
VII.8 **withdraws** = B.
VII.12 **Is this** = M7615c (rhetorical particle).
VIII.1 **is like** = B. The tetragraph in A was probably intended to represent the word in the spoken language that lay behind M5593.
VIII.2 **also** = M7539.
VIII.2 **struggles** = B. I know of no commentators who have correctly interpreted this and the following lines.
VIII.9 **governance** = F.
IX.1 See note to LXXVII.1.
IX.3 **temper** = M1422. Literally, "to test [by running the finger over the edge of the blade]."
IX.3 **razor sharp** = M3174.
IX.4 **preserve** = F.
IX.6 **be able** This sense is made explicit in B.
IX.7 **haughty** = B.
IX.9 **withdraw** = B.
IX.9 **finished** = B.
X.1 **While** The tetragraph that I have translated as "while" has caused so much bewilderment among translators and commentators that one famous modern scholar interpreted it as meaning "carrying [one's perplexed bodily soul] on one's head" and the renowned T'ang emperor, Hsüan-tsung, shifted it to the end of the previous chapter as a sort of exclamation point (!)! The majority of less daring scholars have simply pretended that it does not exist. Without here going into all of the painstaking philological and prosodic proof that would be necessary to demonstrate it fully, the function of this particle standing at the head of the chapter is to serve as what may technically be called an initial aspectual auxiliary.
X.2 **Cultivate the soul** Later commentaries attempt to make this mean "animus and anima" (the male and female / yang and yin / light and dark / spiritual and physical souls), but that is just a wild, arbitary conjecture without any philological basis whatsoever. The word I have translated as "cultivate" actually has a well-documented physiological signification in early Chinese medical texts.
X.4 **Focus** = F.
X.4 **Focus your vital breath** This phrase serves well as a translation of *prāṇāyāma* (see introduction, p. 36).
X.5 **like** Understood from the syntax, this word was inserted into the text by some later editors.
X.6 **Cleanse** = M6229.
X.6 **mirror** The heart. Ample justification for this interpretation may be found in the commentary of Ch'en Ku-ying, p. 99 note 6. See also the brilliant and learned article by Paul Demiéville on the spiritual mirror. Cf. *Kaṭha Up.*, II.iii.5.
X.7 **make it free of blemish** See the introduction, p. 32.
X.8 **enliven** = M2401.
X.9 **cunning** Literally "knowledge," cf. LXV.5,7. It is curious that "cunning" and "know[ing]" are cognate, both deriving from IE $\sqrt{*gnō}$. The equivalent Sinitic word (MSM *chih*) usually means "to know," but occasionally in the *TTC* (see XVIII.4) is better translated as "cunning."
X.10 **gate of heaven** There is a tremendous variety of opinion among the commentators over the signification of this expression. Some hold that it refers to the sense organs (ear, mouth, eyes, nose [cf. the note to LII.10 above]), others that it stands for the institutions of government, the processes of nature, the place where the soul goes in and comes out, the place in the Polar Star where the Lord of Heaven sits, a particular trigram of the *Book of Changes*, and so on. Still

others see in this passage a sexual metaphor or a description of Taoist yoga. In truth, several levels of interpretation are possible. The ambiguity may well have been intentional.
X.11 Remain passive. Literally, "can be female (bird)?"
X.13 **action** F, to avoid duplication with line 9 above.
X.15-17 Cf. chapter LI.16-19 which ascribe the same attributes to the Way.
XI.1 **spokes** = F.
XI.1 This celebrated metaphor of thirty spokes converging on a single hub was almost certainly inspired by the Indian fondness for using wheel images to demonstrate philosophical concepts. See, for example, *Śvetāśvatara Up.*, I.4; *Praśna Up.*, VI.6; *Muṇḍaka Up.*, II.ii.6; and especially *Praśna Up.*, II.6 which puts *prāṇa* at the center of the hub.
XI.4 **Clay** = F.
XI.4 **pot** Cf. *Chāndogya Up.*, VI.i.4.
XII.1 **five** This chapter has three pentads but later Chinese authors elaborated many more. They are all ultimately based on the notion of Five Phases / Elements / Agents (water, fire, wood, metal, earth) that became popular in China about the same time as the *TTC* was taking shape. It is noteworthy that the notion of Five Elements also occupies a prominent place in Indian metaphysics. Indeed, there were two sets (or, perhaps more accurately, two aspects) of the Five Elements in India, a greater and a lesser. The lesser are the five rudimentary or subtle elements (*pañca-tanmātrāṇi*): *śabda* ("sound"), *sparśa* ("touch"), *rūpa* ("color"), *rasa* ("flavor"), and *gandha* ("smell"). Three of these are represented in this chapter of *TTC*. The greater are the five gross elements (*pañca-mahābhūtāni*): *pṛthivī* ("earth"), *ap* or *āpas* ("water"), *tejas* ("fire"), *vāyu* ("wind"), and *ākāśa* ("ether"). In rare Indian enumerations, the same Five [Gross] Elements occur as in the standard Chinese list (metal, wood, water, fire, earth). A similar conception existed in ancient Greek and Iranian philosophy and probably reflects an underlying pan-Eurasiatic system of thought.
XII.1 **five colors** Skt. *pañca-varṇa* or *pañca-kāma-guṇā*. These are the five primary colors: *nīla* ("blue"), *pīta* ("yellow"), *lohita* ("red"), *avadāta* ("white"), and *kṛṣṇa* ("black"). They are the same as the five colors in China. Note that the brahman wears over his shoulder a cord made up of threads of these five colors.
XII.2 **blind** = B.
XII.5 **Goods** = B.
XII.6 **falter** = F. More literally, "obstructed."
XII.7 **five flavors** Salty, bitter, sour, acrid, sweet. Cf. Skt. *pañca-rasa*.
XII.8 **dull** = B. Or "jaded."
XII.9 **five tones** Traditional Chinese scales have five notes (*do, re, mi, sol, la*). Cf. Skt. *pañca-tūrya*.
XII.13 This formulation obliquely recalls our saying about a man's eyes (appetite) being bigger than his stomach (real needs). In other words, the sage understands human psychology with regard to desires.
XII.15 **adopts** = B.
XIII.1, 4, 9 **favor(ed)** = F.
XIII.2 **affliction** = B.
XIII.1-2 These two enigmatic sayings have never before been interpreted in such a fashion that they both make some sense and fit with the following sentences. More literally, "favor is a disgrace comparable to being startled; honor is a great disaster comparable to the body." I suspect that these are very old sayings that were far from transparent even to the contemporaries of the *TTC* author or compiler. That explains why he makes such an obvious effort (not altogether successful) in this chapter to explain them.

On the human body being an affliction, compare the following passage from the Greco-Buddhist text attributed to Nāgasena and entitled *Milindapañha [Questions of Menander]*, 73.24:

> The body, your majesty [i.e., Menander, an Indo-Greek king], has been likened to a wound by The Blessed One [i.e., the Buddha]; and, therefore, they who have

retired from the world take care of their bodies as though they were wounds, without thereby becoming attached to them. And The Blessed One, your majesty, has spoken as follows:

"This monstrous wound hath outlets nine,
A damp, wet skin doth clothe it o'er;
At every point this unclean thing
Exudeth nasty, stinking smells." (Warren, tr., p. 423)

XIII.3 **What** = B.
XIII.6, 7 More literally, "To find it is, as it were, startling, / To lose it is, as it were, startling." This entire chapter is fraught with awkward *scholia*. The original core of the chapter probably consists solely of the paired aphorisms in the first two lines. All of the rest is commentary, much of it (especially lines 3-13) quite pedestrian.
XIII.17 **then** Functions like M4612.
XIII.17 **entrusted** = F.
XIII.19 **then** = M3137, functions like M4612. More literally, "[in] such [a case]...."
XIII.19 **can** = B (M3381). The A manuscript is damaged on the left side of this graph. A small black mark in the top left corner has led some editors to read it as M2109 (interrogative particle), but this does not make any sense in the context, is not supported by any later texts, and is not justified by what remains of the graph on the A manuscript itself.
XIV.2, 4, 6 **"subtle," "rare," "serene"** The Chinese syllables for the three imperceptible qualities of the One enunciated at the beginning of this chapter all rhyme. Their order in later editions (including F) of the *TTC* is "serene," "rare," "subtle." The sounds of these syllables were approximately **yuh-hsyuh-wuh* in late OS. A few early texts also have the semantically unrelated variant **kyud* (M409) instead of **yuh*, but this is merely an orthographic error since **kyud* and **yuh* look similar when written hurriedly. The **yuh-hsyuh-wuh* sequence led to the interesting (and provocative) speculation on the part of several distinguished nineteenth-century Sinologists that Yahweh (i.e. Jehovah, the Tetragrammaton [YHWH] which seems to mean "the one who exists") or Īśvara (the self-existent divine power of Hinduism) may have been the ultimate inspiration for the triune Chinese epithet. The discovery of the Ma-wang-tui texts, which have the sequence **wuh-hsyuh-yuh*, casts doubt on this particular attempt to link Chinese conceptions of Unity with notions of ineffable godhead elsewhere in Asia (unless it were an intentionally cryptic distortion of a sacred word). Nonetheless, the question of how to account for the arrangement **yuh-hsyuh-wuh* in the received tradition remains. Furthermore, this is a typical Chinese method of analyzing polysyllabic foreign words, viz., breaking what was originally a phonetic transcription into its component syllables and then assigning Chinese tetragraphs with superficially appropriate meanings to each of them. The same device has long been common in India as well for explicating technical terms. See *Chāndogya Up.*, I.iii.6-7; VIII.iii.5; *Advaya-tārakopaniṣad*, 16-17 (Ayyaṅgār, tr., p. 8); and the well-known but wholly false etymologizing of the two syllables of *haṭha* (literally "violence" or "force") as "solar" and "lunar." Finally, the *TTC* itself says unmistakably just below in line 9 of this chapter that the three qualities are bound together as one unit. For all of these and other reasons which must be omitted because they are even more complex, the three syllables for "subtle," "rare," and "serene" should be thought of as constituting a single word whose identity has not yet been firmly established.
XIV.9 **bound together** = M3693.
XIV.11 **distant** The proper identification of this word has caused much consternation and confusion among the commentators. I read it on A as M7519 = M7520 and on B as M4539. Since these two tetragraphs were often used in combination during the period when the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts were being written down to indicate the notion of something being far-fetched (see M7520.7), it would seem to be clear that this accounts for the tetragraph on B. M7519 was also frequently combined with the tetragraph I have rendered below in line 12 as "blurred" to convey the notion of "fritter away time" (see M7520.2).

XIV.19 **amorphous** = F (for the second syllable of the word).
XV.2 **profound** = F. Or "abstruse."
XV.8 **hesitant** = F. This adjective and all others in the even lines down to line 20 are followed by an emphatic particle (M2110) that might be rendered in English by inversion ("hesitant they were"), by exclamation ("hesitant!"), or by a combination of both ("hesitant they were!"). For simplicity's sake, I have opted for a strong pause marked by the line break.
XV.11 **neighbors** = F.
XV.15 **ice** = M4062.
XV.15 **melts** = F.
XV.17 **unhewn log** = B.
XV.20 **expansive** = F.
XV.21 **valley** = F (cf. VI.1). The word "broad" has been added to the translation both for cadence and to reflect the implied meaning of the Chinese line.
XV.22 **stilled** = B.
XV.23, 25 **gradually** = B.
XV.24 **inert** = F.
XV.24 **set in motion** = F.
XV.26 **preserved** = F.
XVI.1 I view the final particles of this and the next line as emphatics, not as copulatives. Literally, "arrive empty limit indeed" and "maintain stillness thorough indeed."
XVI.2 **utter** B = F.
XVI.5 **abound** = M7749.
XVI.11 **reckless** = F.
XVI.14 **ducal impartiality** The author is playing on the two meanings of *kung* ("duke" and "public, just, fair, equitable").
XVI.18 **permanence** F.
XVI.19 **end** = B.
XVII.1 **Preeminent** = F.
XVII.4 **despise** = F.
XVII.6 **(then)** = F, omitted from the translation. Grammatically, this word belongs to the previous clause of the Chinese sentence.
XVII.10 **people** = B.
XVII.11 Literally, "We [are] self-so." The word for "self-so" in Chinese languages is *tzu-jan* (MSM pronunciation given). It is often translated as "nature." See the discussion of this term in the introduction, p. 29
XVIII.1 **Therefore** See the introductory materials, pp. 13 and 15.
XVIII.3, 5, 7, 9 **(then)** See XVII.6.
XVIII.6 **six family relationships** Those between father and son, elder and younger brother, husband and wife. These sentiments are exactly the opposite of Confucianism which stressed that humaneness and righteousness, especially as applied to familial and other hierarchical relationships, were responsible for the preservation of the Way in society.
XVIII.7 **filial piety** B. The overall context of the argument and the existence of the very common expression "filial piety and compassion" which fits perfectly here make it highly unlikely that we should take this and the following tetragraph directly as given in A (literally, "rearing and affection"). The same holds for line 4 in chapter XIX.
XVIII.7 **parental kindness** = F.
XVIII.8 **disarray** = M4520 + SC85, for the first tetragraph of this bisyllabic word.
XIX.1 **sagehood** = B = F.
XIX.2 **fold** = B.
XIX.4 See the two notes above to XVIII.7.
XIX.8 **civilizing doctrine** Taking *wen* in the sense of *wen-chiao.*
XIX.10 More literally, "Let there be something which is appended to them."
XIX.15-16 The last two lines of this chapter are attached to the beginning of the following chapter in the received text. Nonetheless, the rhyme scheme, the structure, the argument, and the wording

all seem to indicate that they belong here. If, however, we understand lines 1-4 of chapter XX as an attack on pedantry (as Master Chuang appears to have done), it is conceivable that they should be placed ahead of them in that chapter. In any event, few of the chapter divisions in the received text of the *TTC* have any validity (see the introduction, pp. 12-13). The chapters of the *TTC* are not really integral units; rather they are, by and large, arbitrary chunks of the text, often with little or no internal consistency.

XX.7 **confusing** = F.
XX.8 **!** = M6650 (for the exclamation).
XX.10 **feasting** = M2560.
XX.19 **fool** = B.
XX.21 **ordinary** = F.
XX.22 **confused** = F.
XX.23 **searchingly exact** = B.
XX.24 **vague and uncertain** = M7133.
XX.27 **blurred** = M2276.
XX.30 Judging from the number of tetragraphs missing from A at this point, the *men* (SC169) in B is extraneous and should be deleted. Many interpreters attempt to make "desires" the subject of this line and modify it with "my." That clearly will not work, however, because of the conjunction followed immediately by a verb in the next line, which means that the subject of this line must also pertain to the next line.
XX.30 **stubborn** The editors of B have misread M7707 (= F) as M7173.
XX.32 The last two graphs of this line can be interpreted in at least four different ways: "the nourishing mother," "nourish the mother," "eat the mother," "[draw] nourishment [from] the mother." Most interpreters, following the Ho-shang Kung commentary, opt for the last, although grammatically it is the most strained. My translation is a transform of the first, which is attested in the "Nei-tse [Inner Rules]" of the *Li chi [Record of Rites].* In any case, all agree that "the mother" refers to the Way.
XXI.4, 5, 7 **blurred** = M2276.
XXI.9 **cavernous** = F.
XXI.9 **dark** = F.
XXI.10 **essence** = F.
XXI.15 **father** = B.
XXI.17 Compare the Upaniṣadic formula *etad vai tat* ("this verily is that"). Cf. LXII.12.
XXIV.1 **puffed up** = M1476. Cf. "to pant" (M1443) in several of the earliest (Hsiang-erh) texts of the received version. The two tetragraphs are close both in meaning and in sound.
XXIV.1 **stand** The "endure" (M1188) of the same early texts mentioned in the previous note is an orthographical error for "stand" (M3921) of the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts, but one which introduces an important religiopolitical difference. The two tetragraphs are similar in appearance, especially when written hurriedly, and hence easily confused.
XXIV.2 **(He) who** B.
XXIV.2 **distinction** = M185.
XXIV.7 **baggage** Previous commentators have taken this tetragraph (M2754) to mean either "conduct" or "form," neither of which fits in the present context. The meaning I have given it, which is perfectly apt, is attested from such ancient expressions as *chih hsing* (M1021 M2754, "to put one's baggage in order").
XXIV.9-11 Cf. XXXI.4-6.
XXII.3 **preserved intact** B.
XXII.5 **straightened** B.
XXII.29 **indeed** = F.
XXIII.2, 3 **last** = M1500.
XXIII.6 **much less** *you* = M7539, *k'uang* = F.
XXIII.11 **a man who fails** B.
XXIII.12 Following B. Though damaged, A appears to read the same.

XXIII.13 There is a pun with "obtains" for "[awards] integrity," both of which have the same sound.
XXV.3 **Silent** = B.
XXV.3 **amorphous** = M3963.
XXV.4 **unchanging** = F.
XXV.10-11 **flowing ever onward** = F.
XXV.24-25 Literally, "The Way [takes as its] law [being] self-so." Cf. note to XVII.11.
XXVI.1 **light** = B.
XXVI.2 **Calm** = B.
XXVI.4 **whole** = F.
XXVI.4 Cf. *Kaṭha Up.*, I.ii.21: "Sitting, he travels afar; lying, he goes everywhere." Cf. *TTC*, XLVII.8.
XXVI.5 **cart** = F.
XXVI.6 **courtyard walls** = M2263.
XXVI.6 **[noisy] inn** = M3559.
XXVI.7 **rises above** = F.
XXVI.11 **footing** Literally, "taproot."
XXVII.2 **tracks** = M288.
XXVII.4 **flaw** The second tetragraph of this term = F. The preceding negative has been translated as "-less." "In his delivery" has been added for clarity.
XXVII.6 **tallies** = F.
XXVII.6 **counters** = F.
XXVII.17 **resources** = M6661. For both A and B, this line may more literally be rendered as "[nor when it comes to] objects [does he] abandon [any] resources."
XXVII.18 **inner** = M3008 with SC61 on its left side. The basic meaning of the tetragraph is "inherited" and its secondary meaning is "intelligence."
XXVII.21, 22 **foil(s)** = B, literally "capital."
XXVII.25 **deluded** = B.
XXVIII.5, 6 **desert(s)** = B.
XXVIII.8 **innocent** "White" in the sense of *chieh-pai* (M772-M4975).
XXVIII.9 **insulted** This word (MSM *ju*) is both cognate and homophonous with a word meaning "blackened, sullied, besmirched, soiled" that is written with the same phonetic (M3154) plus SC203. Cf. XLI.15 and line 16 below in this chapter.
XXVIII.15 **whiteness** Added from B.
XXVIII.19, 20 **err** = M6163.
XXVIII.21 **infinity** Literally "limitless[ness]."
XXVIII.22 **unhewn log** = B.
XXVIII.23 "Implements [of government]," in other words, "tools" or "subordinates."
XXVIII.27 The Chinese word for "carving" is a double pun in that the tetragraph used also means "to institute" and sounds like the word written with M1021 that means "to rule."
XXIX.10 **puffed up** Cf. the first line of chapter XXIV and the note thereto. "Shiveringly silent" is derived from a word whose most basic signification is "breath catches."
XXIX.11 **meek** More literally, "may be filed down."
XXIX.10-11 I have followed F for these two lines which are missing in A and corrupt in B.
XXIX.12 **pile up** = M5011 (and probably cognate with M5000, literally "doubling" hence "multiplying"); "acquisitive."
XXIX.12 **collapse** Literally, "to fall, sink, let fall." Note that the unique tetragraph in A is written with the SC for "hand," hence "slough off, renounce, relinquish;" "renunciative." For this line I have followed B while referring to A.
XXIX.17 **extravagance** = M5696.
XXX.6 **general** Understood from the context.
XXX.11 **proud** = F.
XXX.22 Cf. the end of chapter LV.
XXXI.4-6 Cf. XXIV.9-11.

XXXI.14 **placidity** = M6365 + M6043 or M1154. There is little doubt that this is the word intended, although the orthography of the tetragraphs used to represent it in A and B is rather vexed, especially for the second syllable. It would appear that the scribes in both cases were trying to write some such tetragraph as M3258, whereby they meant to represent the sound of M6043, or M1543, whereby they meant to represent the sound of M1154. Be that as it may, this is a bisyllabic expression from the spoken language that was written in many different ways in old texts. It is obvious that there were no fixed tetragraphs to represent its morphemes.
XXXI.27 **deputy** = B.
XXXI.32 **bewail** = F. The frequent attempt to render this tetragraph as meaning "to attend" is too strained to deserve our credulity.
XXXI.32 **grief** = F.
XXXII.7 **suffuse** = M7635.
XXXII.7 **dew** = F.
XXXII.8-9 These two lines are often misinterpreted to mean that the dew will spread itself evenly without any command from the people. Apart from the awkardness of the thought, this interpretation ignores the fact that grammar requires "people" to be the subject of the reflexive verb in line 9. More literally, "[As for the] people, no one orders them, but [they] themselves [are] equitable thereat."
XXXII.10-11 The four tetragraphs of these two lines literally read "begin cut / institute are names." The next line reads literally "names also since are."
XXXII.13 In dividing up the undifferentiated cosmos.
XXXII.16 **In metaphorical terms** = F.
XXXII.18 **is like** = F. "Comparable to."
XXXII.17-19 More literally, "The Way's existence in all-under-heaven is like [the relationship] between small streams and river-sea." These lines offer but the barest glimpse of the magnificent parable recorded by Master Chuang at the beginning of his seventeenth chapter entitled "Autumn Waters" (*Master Chuang*). Cf. LXVI.1-2 above. The image of many streams (individual entities) flowing into the ocean (*brahman*) was a favorite of ancient Indian authors. See, for example, *Chāndogya Up.*, VI.x.1; *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka,* II.iv.11; IV.v.12; *Praśna Up.*, VI.5; *Muṇḍaka Up.*, III.ii.8; *BG,* XI.28.1-2; and especially *BG,* II.70 (tr. Sargeant, p. 155):

> Like the ocean, which becomes filled yet remains unmoved (*acala*) and standing still
> As the waters enter it,
> He whom all desires (*kāmās*) enter and who remains unmoved
> Attains peace; not so the desirer of objects of desire.

XXXIII.6 **willfulness** More literally, simply "will" or "determination."
XXXIII.8 **but** Added from B, although the adversative conjunction is evident from the juxtaposition of the two verbs in A.
XXXIII.8 **dies but is not forgotten** The received text reads this as "dies but does not perish" where "perish" is homophonous and cognate with "forget." Here is a good example of the imposition of a religious interpretation on the *TTC* that was not present in the original. Few commentators have questioned the absurdity and illogicality that results from the unwarranted emendation: "He who dies but does not perish has longevity."
XXXV.7 **passer-by** = F.
XXXV.11 **bland** = B.
XXXV.12-15 Cf. XIV.1, 3.
XXXVI.1 **contract** = M2476.
XXXVI.2 **momentarily** = M3453b.
XXXVI.12 **profitable instruments** Cf. LVII.8.
XXXVII.3 **transformed** = B.
XXXVII.5, 6 **restrain** = F.
XXXVII.9 **still** = B.

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